

## **Phonics and early reading policy** **2024-2025**

### **The context of our school**

Our schools are situated in the heart of each village serving their local communities as well as Harrogate, Knaresborough and Wetherby. There are 43 children on roll at Follifoot Church of England Primary School and 108 children on roll at Spofforth Church of England Primary School. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background and that it promotes a lifelong love of reading from the very beginning of their school journey.

### **Intent**

#### **Phonics (reading and spelling)**

At the Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth Schools we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching pre-phonics activities in Nursery using Little Wandle Foundations. From Reception we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At the Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth Schools, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

### **Comprehension**

At the Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth Schools, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. The reading Leader for our school is Mrs R Simpson.

## Implementation

### Foundations for phonics in Nursery

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:
  - sharing high-quality stories and poems
  - learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
  - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
  - attention to high-quality language.
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

### Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 25 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress:
  - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
  - Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

### Daily Catch-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has daily Catch-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Catch-up sessions use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- We timetable daily Rapid catch up sessions for any child in Year 2 (from the spring term) or KS2 who is not fully fluent at reading (determined by the Little Wandle Fluency assessment). These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Rapid catch up assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch up resources – at pace.

### **Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week**

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:
  - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
  - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids in the 'Application of phonics to reading'
  - are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
  - decoding
  - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
  - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.
- In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding use the wordless books from the Little Wandle Foundations collection.
- In Years 1 and 2, we continue to teach reading in this way.
- In KS2 any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books follow the Rapid Catch up programme.

### **Home reading**

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
- We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

### **Additional reading support for vulnerable children**

- In Reception and Year 1 vulnerable children read their reading practice book to an adult daily.

### **Ensuring consistency and pace of progress**

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.

- Lesson templates, Prompt cards and How to videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Reading Leader and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

### **Ensuring reading for pleasure**

*'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.'* (OECD 2002)

*'The will influences the skill and vice versa.'* (OECD 2010)

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

- We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at Follifoot and Spofforth Primary Schools and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Great books, rich texts and wonderful poems are at the heart of our text based English Curriculum.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner or a selection of books that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of texts.
- In Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed. There is also books that children can read themselves because they are at the correct phonetic level.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).
- Each KS2 class conducts a weekly book battle in which the children complete a short presentation about a book they have been reading for pleasure.

## Impact

### Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- **Assessment for learning** is used:
  - daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
  - weekly in the review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** is used:
  - every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Catch-up support that they need.
  - by SLT and scrutinised through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.
  - A phonics screening is carried out every half term to assess progress against this statutory assessment.

### Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the statutory Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

### Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the Little Wandle Rapid catch up assessments and Little Wandle Fluency assessments.

