

Our curriculum guide: Phonics and Early Reading

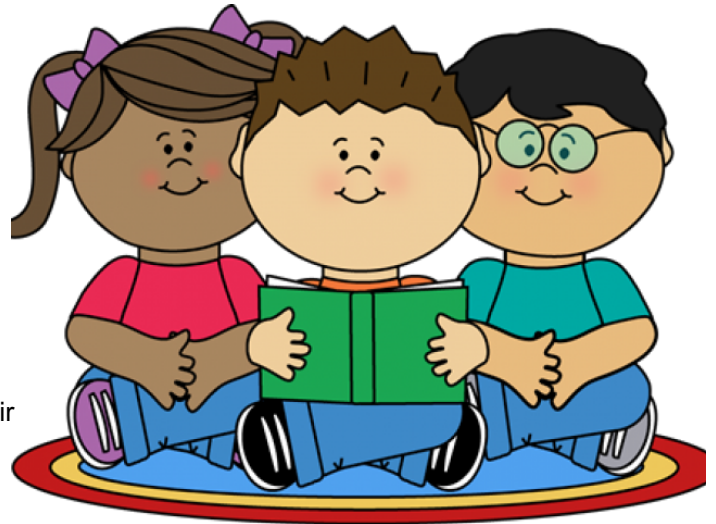
Date: September 2023 and reviewed on an on-going basis

Introduction

This Curriculum Guide is based on the original 2021 model policy from Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised.

It relates to Phonics and Early Reading, which forms part of the core subject of English in The National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2014). This document often refers to practice in Early Years and Key Stage 1; there is a separate document settling out provision for Reading in Key Stage 1, although naturally there is some overlap. This Curriculum Guide sits alongside similar documents for Early Years, Writing, Maths, Science and Topics and others.

We want Sphere Federation schools to be happy and healthy places to learn. This core aim permeates our schools and their ethos, whether in the classroom or around and about school. (At St James' CE Primary, this is expressed with one additional element: 'happy and healthy place to achieve and believe'.)



Children need to learn to read as quickly as reasonably possible, so they can move from **learning to read**, to **reading to learn**, giving them access to fantastic fiction and non-fiction full of fascinating facts.

We believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers.

To support us, we teach reading through **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised** (hereafter shortened to 'Little Wandle'), which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme.

We follow the Little Wandle expectations of progression (see Appendix: Full progression overview), 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.

In Sphere Federation 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.

In Sphere Federation schools, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, we want them to read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. We want our readers to be equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.



Phonics and Early Reading in school: Key features

Everyone who teaches phonics does so with fidelity to the Little Wandle programme.

Through **pace**, **practice** and **participation** by all children,
our expectations of progression are aspirational yet achievable.

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

(This section applies to Scholes (Elmet) Primary and St James' CE Primary only.)

- 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

(This section applies to all three Sphere Federation schools.)

- We teach phonics for 30 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.
- Friday's session is a review of the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- So that our children make a strong start in Reception, teaching begins as early in the school year as possible, typically in Week 2.
- We follow the Little Wandle expectations of progress (see Appendix: Full progression overview):
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 grapheme-phoneme correspondences (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 grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) with fluency and accuracy.
- We use a 'Decoding Mantra' so children know how to tackle new words:
 1. Spot the digraph (or trigraph etc)
 2. Say the sounds (add sound buttons, if needed)
 3. Read the word

thump

painting

explode

should

Daily Keep-up lessons to ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- We timetable daily phonics sessions for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use Little Wandle assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace. Sessions may be provided for older children, too, depending on need.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions at least four 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 assessments and book matching grids (pages 11–20 of Little Wandle's '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.
- In Year 2, we continue to teach reading in this way (although there may be variations depending on the class needs). In Year 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

- After the sequence of reading practice sessions, the decodable reading practice book is accessible at home as an e-book; this is for two main reasons:
 - to ensure success is shared with the family: after the sequence of reading practice sessions, children are confident with the text and so this is an opportunity to celebrate the progress made
 - to provide an opportunity for one or two more reads of the text
 - e-books offer various benefits, which include: e-books can be read in lots of different contexts, meaning a child can read in different households; we can monitor how often the e-books are being accessed; and after reading the reading practice book several time in school, children may welcome a change of medium for the book.
- Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children – see below.
- Using Little Wandle parents' resources and our own materials, we 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 individual children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions 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 Early Reading Leader and school leaders regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Reading beyond Little Wandle

Once children are secure with Phase 5 phonics, their fluency is checked using Little Wandle's fluency checks. Children should be reading 60-70+ words per minute on the Phase 5, set 5 text, with an accuracy rate of 90%+. If they can do this, they are ready to move on from Little Wandle's Decodable Reading books to Little Wandle Fluency books. This might happen in Year 1 or Year 2.

in the Little Wandle Fluency books, there are ten stages with four titles in each stage. Each book has six chapters. A typical routine is that children read the first four chapters in school (Chapter 1 on Monday, Chapter 2 on Tuesday...) and then read the final two chapters at home.

Other books such as short chapter books, picture books or non-fiction texts might also be chosen by the child, with guidance from their teacher.

When children finish reading Little Wandle books, they are able to read far more, but we continue to teach reading and have reading practice sessions. Children are unlikely to be reading at 90 words per minute in Year 1, and so not able to read with fluency and comprehension – yet. Continued reading instruction in Year 2 is therefore crucial in order to teach fluency and enable children to become readers for life.

Teachers continue to teach reading, either taking an approach similar to that set out by Little Wandle or moving to whole class Reading Skills sessions. Either way, **reading aloud is still crucial** for these children: *'For those pupils who lack reading fluency and skill to begin with, silent reading is less likely to be profitable...Children who struggle when reading texts aloud do not become good readers if left to read silently; their dysfluency merely becomes inaudible.'* (Seidenberg: Language at the Speed of Sight, 2017).

Ensuring reading for pleasure

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 texts carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of texts, including texts that reflect our pupils and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

- Every Early Years and Key Stage 1 classroom has access to an inviting book area that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In Nursery and Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free-flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record. We expect parents / carers to record comments to share with school; school staff write in this regularly 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.
- The school library is available for classes to use at protected times.
- Children across school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of reading for pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).
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'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)

Reading skills summary

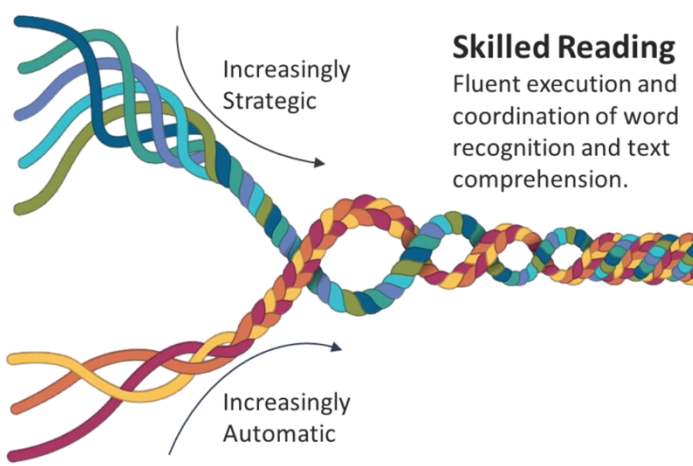
The skills of reading are illustrated well in this 'reading rope':

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) *Handbook of Early Literacy*. NY: Guilford Press.

Monitoring and evaluating

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

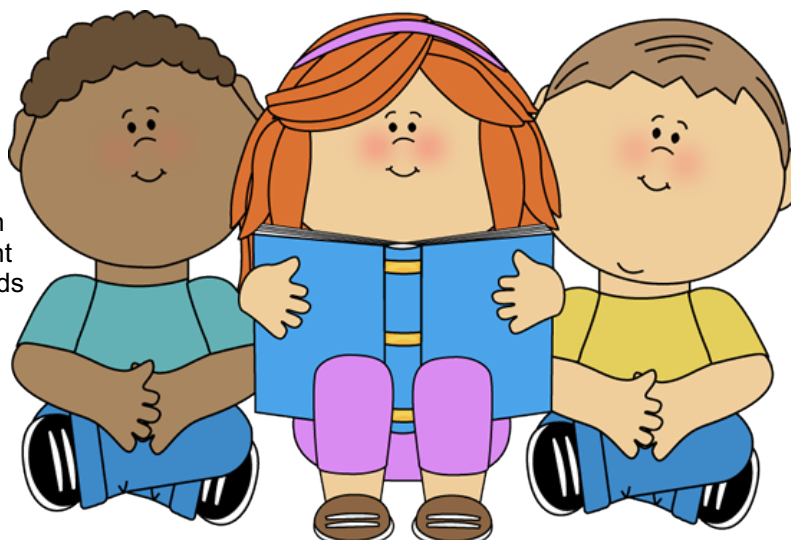
- **Assessment for learning** is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs), words and spellings
- **Summative assessment** is used:
 - 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 Keep-up support that they need.
 - by senior leaders to track progress and ensure early and effective intervention

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the national 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 and a grapheme-phoneme check of all sounds taught in the programme



Appendix: Full progression overview

This overview shows the progression of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and tricky words that we teach term-by-term. The progression has been organised so that children are taught from the simple to more complex GPCs, as well as taking into account the frequency of their occurrence in the most commonly encountered words. All the graphemes taught are practised in words, sentences, and later on, in fully decodable books. Children review and revise GPCs and words, daily, weekly and across terms and years, in order to move this knowledge into their long-term memory.

Reception

Autumn 1 Phase 2 graphemes	New tricky words
s a t p i n m d g o c k c k e u r h b f l	is I the

Autumn 2 Phase 2 graphemes	New tricky words
ff ll ss j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th ng nk words with –s /s/ added at the end (hats sits) words ending in s /z/ (his) and with –s /z/ added at the end (bags sings)	put* pull* full* as and has his her go no to into she push* he of we me be

*The tricky words ‘put’, ‘pull’, ‘full’ and ‘push’ may not be tricky in some regional pronunciations; in which case, they should not be treated as such.

Spring 1 Phase 3 graphemes	New tricky words
ai ee igh oa oo oo ar or ur ow oi ear air er words with double letters longer words	was you they my by all are sure pure

Spring 2 Phase 3 graphemes	No new tricky words
Review Phase 3 words with double letters, longer words, words with two or more digraphs, words ending in –ing, compound words words with s /z/ in the middle words with –s /s/ /z/ at the end words with –es /z/ at the end	Review all taught so far

Summer 1 Phase 4	New tricky words
Short vowels with adjacent consonants CVCC CCVC CCVCC CCCVC CCCVCC longer words and compound words words ending in suffixes: –ing, –ed /t/, –ed /id/ /ed/, –est	said so have like some come love do were here little says there when what one out today

Summer 2 Phase 4 graphemes	No new tricky words
Phase 3 long vowel graphemes with adjacent consonants CVCC CCVC CCCVC CCV CCVCC words ending in suffixes: –ing, –ed /t/, –ed /id/ /ed/, –ed /d/ –er, –est longer words	Review all taught so far

Year 1

Autumn 1	Review tricky words Phases 2–4
Review Phase 3 and 4 Phase 5 /ai/ ay play /ow/ ou cloud /oi/ oy toy /ea/ ea each	Phases 2–4: the put* pull* full* push* to into I no go of he she we me be was you they all are my by sure pure said have like so do some come love were there little one when out what says here today

*The tricky words 'put', 'pull', 'full' and 'push' may not be tricky in some regional pronunciations; in which case, they should not be treated as such.

Autumn 2 Phase 5 graphemes	New tricky words
/ur/ ir bird /igh/ ie pie /oo/ /yoo/ ue blue rescue /yoo/ u unicorn /oa/ o go /igh/ i tiger /ai/ a paper /ee/ e he /ai/ a-e shake /igh/ i-e time /oa/ o-e home /oo/ /yoo/ u-e rude cute /ee/ e-e these /oo/ /yoo/ ew chew new /ee/ ie shield /or/ aw claw	their people oh your Mr Mrs Ms ask* could would should our house mouse water want

*The tricky word 'ask' may not be tricky in some regional pronunciations; in which case, it should not be treated as such.

Spring 1 Phase 5 graphemes	New tricky words
/ee/ y funny /e/ ea head /w/ wh wheel /oa/ oe ou toe shoulder /igh/ y fly /oa/ ow snow /j/ g giant /f/ ph phone /l/ le al apple metal /s/ c ice /v/ ve give /u/ o-e o ou some mother young /z/ se cheese /s/ se ce mouse fence /ee/ ey donkey /oo/ ui ou fruit soup	any many again who whole where two school call different thought through friend work

Spring 2 Phase 5 graphemes	New tricky words
/ur/ or word /oo/ u oul awful could /air/ are share /or/ au aur oor al author dinosaur floor walk /ch/ tch ture match adventure /ar/ al a half* father* /or/ a water schwa in longer words: different /o/ a want /air/ ear ere bear there /ur/ ear learn /r/ wr wrist /s/ st sc whistle science /c/ ch school /sh/ ch chef /z/ ze freeze schwa at the end of words: actor	once laugh because eye

*The tricky words 'half' and 'father' may not be pronounced as this in some regional pronunciations; in which case, they should not be treated as such.

Summer 1: Phonics screening check review – no new GPCs or tricky words

Summer 2 Phase 5 graphemes	New tricky words
/ai/ eigh aigh ey ea eight straight grey break /n/ kn gn knee gnaw /m/ mb thumb /ear/ ere eer here deer /zh/ su si treasure vision /j/ dge bridge /i/ y crystal /j/ ge large /sh/ ti ssi si ci potion mission mansion delicious /or/ augh our oar ore daughter pour oar more	busy beautiful pretty hour move improve parents shoe