

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School

Early Reading and Phonics Policy

Review Date: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027



Our School

Holy Trinity School has been at the heart of the Seaton Carew community since the mid 1800s. Today we benefit from a new building in which our 210 pupils learn. We have a 26 full time equivalent nursery which offers both 15 and 30 hour places to our pupils before admission to the main school. We were one of three schools who formed the DNDLT, which has now grown to include many schools. We have a range of pupils from a variety of backgrounds. We recognise that it is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

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 phonics in Nursery and 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. 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

We value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, our aim is for all children to 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, monitors and supports our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

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 daily and 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

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week (R-Y2)
- These sessions:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of children or led by members of our UKS2 Early Reading Team
 - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments (R/Y1/Y2)
 - 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

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 – parents are aware that reading for pleasure books are not necessarily phonically matched to their child and are to be shared together for enjoyment

- 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

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher and teaching assistant 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.
- Screens for use in phonics teaching have been developed to support teachers with their delivery of phonics

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 of our school and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has 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/Reception/Year 1, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Nursery/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. School may also keep separate logs to monitor in-school reading.
- 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.
- Our children are also encouraged to read our 50 Recommended Reads per year group.
- Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (e.g. local library visits, author visits and workshops, national events)

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 additional support
 - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings
- **Summative assessment** is used:
 - half termly to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support
 - by Reading Leader and SLT to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check in June.
- Children who do not meet the standard will resit in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children identified are supported with phonics and reading through intervention in school.
- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment and summative assessment.

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