



Bishop Bridgeman C.E. Primary School

Part of Archbishop Temple Multi Academy Trust

We Work, We Play, We Care, We Pray

“Love God, Love Yourself, Love Your Neighbour” Luke 10:27

‘EARLY READING AND PHONICS’ CURRICULUM POLICY

RATIONALE

Bishop Bridgeman is determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. We believe the teaching of phonics is extremely important in providing children with skills which will enable them to access reading and writing and to tackle unfamiliar words. It is therefore our intention that we provide effective phonics teaching from the earliest opportunity, which meets the needs of our children.

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. Pupils are taught how to:

- Recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes;
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make- such as ‘sh’ or ‘oo’;
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to ‘de-code’ new words that they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

To support pupils’ language comprehension teachers throughout early years and key stage 1 provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to engage with a range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction texts and have these read to them.

It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, to support their forthcoming secondary education.

INTENT

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Bishop Bridgeman, 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/Reception 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. At Bishop Bridgeman, 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, 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.

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:

- o sharing high-quality stories and poems
- o learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
- o activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
- o 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 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. 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 Keep-up lessons 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.

If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 20 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

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
- 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 have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books. In Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

A decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. Free choice 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.

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 Bishop Bridgeman and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner 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, children have access to the reading area every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- 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.
- 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).

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 Keep-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.

The *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* placement assessment is used: with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan to provide appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory assessment

Children in Year 1 sit the 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
- the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* placement assessment
- the appropriate half-termly assessments.

IMPACT

Pupils develop secure skills in reading by having the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle and decode unfamiliar words effectively. Pupils at Bishop Bridgeman achieve well in national assessments based on their varied starting points. Pupils are ready to continue their reading journey and development of broader skills. The expectation set out by the programme is that children will be secure within phase 3 and working within phase 4 by the end of reception. By the end of year 1, children should be secure at phase 5 and should have achieved the year 1 national curriculum spelling objectives. By the end of year 2, children should have achieved the year 2 national curriculum spelling objectives.

Prepared by: Mrs V. Smith

Reviewed: January 2025

Next review date: January 2026

