A COMPLETE PHONICS RESOURCE
TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

Moat Farm Infant School
Phonics and early reading policy

Last reviewed on:	October 2026
Next review due by:	October 2028
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The context of our school

Moat Farm Infant School is an inner-urban school built over 70 years ago and is larger than most primary schools, there are 360 school places from Reception to Year 2. The school has a full-time Nursery which operates both a part-time morning spaces for 3-year-olds and a full-time option. School also offers provision for 2-year-olds in the afternoon.

We cater for children and families from an area that is typified by high levels of social need and deprivation. There is a wide range of ethnic groups in the community and that is reflected within our school, White British children being our highest percentage group followed by Indian children being our next biggest group. The percentage of children with English as an additional language tends to be around 25%. We have a higher percentage of children who join our school late (after September), compared to other infant schools nationally.

It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Moat Farm Infant School, 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 Little Wandle Foundations in our Nursery and then, 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 Moat Farm Infant School, 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 Moat Farm Infant School, 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:
    - 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.
- Little Wandle Foundations is aligned to the non-statutory guidance on Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. We use it as part of our wider provision for Communication and Language, and Literacy. It supports children to:
    - develop their phonological awareness, including rhyme, alliteration, syllables, initial and voice sounds, and oral blending
    - love stories and rhymes, and learn by heart a bank of familiar favourites
    - increase their vocabulary and confidence to talk
    - improve their listening and ability to take part in back-and-forth conversations.
- We believe that the priority in Nursery should be to build the foundations for phonics for all children. Research tells us that disadvantaged children start Nursery behind their more fortunate peers. By leaving formal phonics teaching to Reception, Foundations allows us to devote more time to working with children who need extra help to develop the skills and behaviours that underpin successful reading.

Language and nursery rhymes in Reception

- Research tells us that nursery rhymes can support children to develop their language, their awareness of sounds within words and even their later reading (Bryant et al. 1989).
- We use the Little Wandle Rhyme time films to complement and reinforce our Phase 2 teaching.

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 3 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 practise 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 lessons for any child in Year 2 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 the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the keep-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 on pages 11–20 of '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: teaching children to use phonic knowledge to read words
  - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
  - comprehension: using dialogic talk to help children to understand the text.
- In Reception these sessions start in Week 5. Initially, children will read wordless books. In these sessions, children review GPCS and are taught blending using teacher-led blending. Once children can blend, they progress onto decodable books matched to their secure phonic knowledge.
- Children read each book three times to develop phonemic awareness, vocabulary and comprehension as well as book behaviours.
- In Year 2, we ensure children complete reading the core programme decodable books (up to Phase 5 Set 5). To exit the programme, we complete the final fluency assessment to ensure children can read with adequate speed and accuracy: approximately 60 words per minute with 90%+ accuracy.
- In Year 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Teaching reading: Fluency programme

- We teach reading to children in Year 2 and above who have exited the core programme using Little Wandle Fluency.
- Each Fluency reading lesson is approximately 20 minutes. The structure of every lesson is the same:
  - A pre-read to practise reading words and to support vocabulary

- Children read aloud for ten minutes and the teacher 'taps in' to hear every child read
- Focussed teaching of prosody, repeated reading and comprehension through discussion.

- We use Assessment for Learning (AfL) and our professional judgement to assess each child's progress in reading, so we can ensure that they have the right books to meet their needs.
- Comprehension is taught through dialogic talk and teachers use their AfL to quickly address misconceptions and develop children's curiosity and engagement with each book.

Home reading

- Decodable books will be set online and sent home to ensure success is shared with the family.
  - We ask parents to listen to their child read the same book three times to develop phonemic awareness, vocabulary and comprehension as well as book behaviours at home.
  - Reading for pleasure/library 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

- Children who receive additional phonics keep-up sessions read their reading practice book on a on to one basis to an adult in school.

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 Moat Farm Infant School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has reading books to encourage 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 corner 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 can share comments with the adults in school and the adults will write if they read with the child on a one-to-one basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- The school library is made available every play time to KS1. Children across the school have opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author webinars and national events etc).

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 who require daily keep-up support, as well as words and GPCs that need additional teaching
  - to plan repeated practise throughout the day to ensure all children secure learning
  - weekly in the Friday review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** are uploaded onto the Assessments tracker for Reception and Year 1. These are used:
  - to generate visual reports (pupil heatmaps, pupil trends and books levels, and a summary analysis) for individual children, classes and whole year groups
  - by teachers, Reading Leaders and SLT who drill down and look at the data at GPC, word, tricky word and sentence level
  - by SLT to scrutinise and plan how to narrow the attainment gaps between different groups

  We assess:
  - every six weeks to assess progress and to identify gaps in learning that need to be reviewed or retaught
  - to establish if learning is secure for more than 70% of children before new content is taught
  - to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the keep-up support that they need

  We reassess every child who is not on track every three weeks.

- **Fluency assessments** measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:
  - in Year 2, when children are reading the Phase 5 Set 3, 4 and 5 books
  - to assess when children are ready to exit the programme

- A placement assessment is used:
  - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child that does not pass the check re-sits it in Year 2.