

Reading Policy, including Early Reading and Phonics



Pendragon Community Primary School

Version 1.1

Reviewed by The Full Governing Body

Date of Review March 2026

Date of next Review March 2029

Contents

1. Aims
2. Legislation and guidance
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Teaching and Learning
5. Monitoring arrangements
6. Link with other policies and documents

Aims

Pendragon Primary School is passionate about ensuring that every child will learn to read, regardless of background, needs or abilities. Children will be exposed to a wealth of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction throughout their time at school to develop their vocabulary, language comprehension and acquire a genuine love of reading and a keen interest in a range of texts. We aim to inspire them to become life-long readers who enjoy books and have a desire to read for pleasure.

In order for the children to have the will to read, and be able to read to learn, they need to have secure skills in reading so that they can read with fluency and comprehension. Reading is at the heart of our whole curriculum underpinning every subject area. We want every child to read widely, and to gain a rich knowledge across the curriculum. By offering a wide range of texts we aim to broaden their minds and experiences to allow them to empathise with the world in which they live. Reading is such an important life skill that it is imperative we enable them to become independent readers who can easily process information, fully engage in all learning and be well prepared for their next stage of their education.

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Pendragon Primary School we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach Early Reading and Phonics through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in 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 learning to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Pendragon Primary 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.

Comprehension

At Pendragon Primary 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.

By the end of KS1, children will be fluent at decoding, and by the age of 11, we aim for children to be able to:

- read with confidence, fluency and good understanding, drawing upon a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct;
- have an interest in a wide range of reading materials and read spontaneously for enjoyment and pleasure;
- read confidently to acquire information;
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading;
- meet age related expectations for reading, with the aspiration to exceed them.

2. Legislation and guidance

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 (2013) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The head teacher

The head teacher will:

- Work with staff, parents and governors to determine the strategic development of the Reading policy and provision in the school.
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEND and/or a disability.

3.2 The Governor/s

They will:

- Work with the head teacher and SENDCO to determine the strategic development of the Reading policy and provision in the school.

The Governing Body will review this policy in line with the Policy review schedule at FGB.

3.3 Class teachers and teaching assistants

The teachers and learning support assistants are responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in reading through the monitoring and evaluation of the subject. This will involve:

- monitoring of pupil progress
- conference with pupils regarding all areas of reading
- analysing data
- monitoring the provision of reading in line with the subject monitoring policy
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- purchasing and organising resources
- keeping up to date with recent reading developments
- analysis of SATs results to identify areas for development
- checking that assessment for reading is carried out in line with the school's assessment policy

4. Teaching and Learning

4.1 Implementation

We teach early reading through one systematic, synthetic phonics programme: *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*. This is taught with fidelity, consistency and continuity from EYFS until the end of Year One, or later if pupils need more support, with clear expectations about pupils' progress term-by-term.

Daily Phonics – Early Years and Year 1

Phonics is the way we teach decoding skills, in order to give children, the most efficient method to read words and one which will set them up for life. In the phonics sessions and throughout the day, children have opportunities to practice applying their phonic skills and to read words with the new grapheme, phoneme correspondence. This enables the learning to be committed to their long-term memory.

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day.
- We follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress:
 - Children in Early Years 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 Phases 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Lessons follow the format of:

- Recall and review - short, pacy review of prior learning;
- Teach - introduction of new learning with strong teacher modelling;
- Practise and apply - children practice and apply the learning;
- Review of key learning - reinforcement of the key learning and addressing any misconceptions identified during the lesson;
- Apply to reading - children then apply their phonic skills to reading fully decodable books matched to their reading ability.

Teaching Reading

Early Years and Year 1

Early Years have three reading sessions per week and in these sessions we teach the application of reading skills. The children read in groups with fully decodable books, carefully matched to the children's phonic ability.

These sessions:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids.
- 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 Years 2 and above, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Years 2-6

Children in years 2 to 6 have whole class reading sessions three times per week where there is a focus on content domains that build-up throughout the weeks which ensure that the children understand the specific skills of language comprehension and are confident in the rigour, pace and expectations of the end of year group assessments. The texts are high interest texts related to their current topic to ensure coherence throughout the curriculum. Children will be exposed to a range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction throughout the year within these sessions.

4.2 Inclusion

Our intention is that every child will read. If there is a very specific difficulty creating obstacles for a child, we carefully analyse the issue and consider a precise response in order to support the child to overcome the barriers. Specific, tailored intervention and repeated practice will equip them with the key skills to enable them to read. Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND) includes:

- Little Wandle SEND program for those who require smaller steps or small group work.
- Analysis of formal tests, including SATS, and writing assessments by the curriculum team to identify targets groups, including those of higher ability. Those of lower ability are assessed against criteria on the continuum and targets to enable progress are set for the children using this for speaking and listening, reading and writing;
- Deployment of teaching assistants and additional adults to support targeted groups and individuals

both within the classroom and in intervention groups under the guidance of the class teacher to ensure full curriculum entitlement. Supporting staff are involved in the planning, recording and assessment of children's reading activities and development via regular meetings with their class teacher;

- Provision for specific individual reading needs identified via their APDR. or EHCP.
- Support for parents to assist in helping their children develop specific skills. Parents of children with Special Educational Needs are kept informed of their children's progress in reading via their APDRs and are also involved in the review process.

More able learners are identified as part of our formative and summative assessment procedures. We provide for their needs through a framework of high quality first teaching, which focuses on ensuring the children are challenged appropriately. In addition, we focus on developing their learning behaviours, including, greater reflection, problem solving and enquiry, making connections, higher order thinking skills and independent learning. The progress of more able learners is tracked to ensure they reach their full potential

4.3 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

All class teachers and supporting adults involved in the reading process keep records of children's performance related to specific objectives and assessment foci. Whole class reading sessions, whether following the Little Wandle model in Early Years and Year 1 or the whole-class reading model in Year 2 upwards, all have a specific teaching focus for the taught session. Teachers carefully plan reading sessions throughout the year to ensure a variety of genres and reading objectives are taught to the children. Teacher assessments of children's reading understanding and progress (through observation, discussion and written work) are kept up to date regularly.

Early Reading and Phonics Assessments

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 phonics lessons to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - weekly in the Review phonics lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** for Early Years and Year 1 is used:
 - every six weeks (each half term) to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the support that they need. If children are not secure in their phonics and application to reading, then further focused practice will be put in place to enable them to become fluent, able readers. 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. We plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.
 - SLT scrutinize progress. For Early Years and Year One, this is completed using 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.
- **Fluency assessments** measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:
 - in Year 1, when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
 - with children following the Rapid Catch-up programme in Years 2 to 6, when they are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
 - to assess when children are ready to exit their programme. For Year 1 children, this is when

they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute. At these levels, children should have sufficient fluency to tackle any book at age-related expectations. After exiting their programme, children do not need to read any more fully decodable books.

- A **placement assessment** is used:
 - with any child new to the school in Reception and Year 1 to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.
- The **Rapid Catch-up assessment** is used
 - with any child new to the school in Year 2 and above to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

Ongoing assessment for Rapid Catch-Up in Years 2 to 6

Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:

- the Rapid Catch-up initial assessment to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate teaching
- the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching
- the Rapid Catch-up fluency assessments when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books for age 7+. The fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They also assess when children are ready to exit the Rapid Catch-up programme, which is when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute.

Reading Assessment in Year 2-6 (post Little Wandle)

Children's reading progress continues to be closely monitored once children have exited the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme at the end of Year 1. In addition to on-going teacher assessment against reading objectives for each year group, children complete standardised reading comprehension assessments at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer term. These are NFER reading comprehension tests in Years 3, 4, and 5. Year 2 and 6 complete SATS papers as a tool for assessment.

National Statutory Assessments

Reading elements of the children's language and English skills are assessed in the first term of the Reception class using Early Learning Goal baseline assessments. Reception children are assessed throughout the year against the Early Learning Goals. Their progress within *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* and its corresponding assessment system enables the Reception teacher to make accurate judgements about the children's reading confidence and understanding to make a final summative judgement the end of the EYFS. Children are formally assessed at the end of Year One when they undertake the Phonic Screening Check, and again in Year Two if they did not meet the required standard previously. In Year Two onwards, formal summative assessment of reading comprehension is undertaken via SATs tests and other assessments which contribute towards the overall Teacher Assessment of reading. At the end of KS2, children in Y6 complete the Reading SATs assessment which will determine whether they are reading at, above or below Age Related Expectations.

4.4 Staff Development

Teachers are expected to keep up to date with subject knowledge and use current materials that are available in school or through regular English related professional development courses. Training needs are identified as a result of whole school monitoring and evaluation, performance management and through induction programs. These will be reflected in the School Improvement Plan. The reading subject lead will arrange for relevant advice and information, such as feedback from courses or newsletters, to be disseminated. Where necessary, the reading lead will organise school based training. Additional adults who are involved with intervention programs will receive appropriate training that may be school based or part of central training.

4.5 Resources and Accommodation

A comprehensive range of resources is available in school. Every class has a selection of reference books e.g. dictionaries, thesaurus etc. and a class library. Additionally, each class has its own class library where books relate specifically to the current topic and learning. There is an emphasis on quality and appropriateness of books. Teacher resources are located in classrooms. Fully decodable books that run alongside the Little Wandle phonics scheme can be found in the Lower Phase area as well as outside Poplar class for 7+ books. The school library contains a range of fiction and non-fiction books that have been contextually grouped in ages.

4.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher and the reading lead monitor reading. Having identified priorities, the SLT including reading lead construct an action plan that form part of the School Improvement Plan. This forms the basis for any monitoring activities and will clearly identify when, who and what is to be monitored and how this will take place e.g. classroom observation, planning scrutiny, work sampling etc.

5. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the reading subject leader **every 3 years**. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the governing board.

6. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to our policies on:

- English
- Writing