



Hartington C of E Primary School



Hartington C of E Primary School

*"Caring & sharing as part of God's family"
"Loving our neighbour as we love ourselves" - Luke 10:27*

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Hartington C of E Primary School

Reviewed by	T. Blackwell
Job Title	Head Teacher
Reviewed	September 2025
Date of Next Review	September 2026

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Hartington C of E Primary School context:

The percentage distribution of ethnic groups, SEN status and those eligible for Pupil Premium funding can fluctuate greatly due to the small numbers of children at the school. However, currently the school is predominantly populated by White-British children, with a range of ability on entry, low percentage of Pupil Premium eligibility (11%) but with a large SEN group, significantly above the national average at 23.2% of children compared to a national average of 12.6%. Despite the fluctuation in percentages due to numbers, this seems to be a consistent theme of the last few years. The school experiences much in-year mobility. However, it is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Our Intent

Phonics (Reading and Spelling)

At Hartington Primary 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 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 able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Hartington 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. This helps to build a solid foundation of being able to read throughout the entirety of the content within all subjects.

Comprehension

At Hartington Primary School we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave the school, our target is to ensure all of our readers read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Following structures programmes our children are equipped with the skills to not only tackle unfamiliar vocabulary, but also to ask questions and extend their own personal 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, all teaching staff have access to training and opportunities for personal development to support the delivery of the early reading programme in our school. Staff are 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

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 Phases 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.*

Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has 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 and above 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 Rapid Catchup assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.
- These short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

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 no more than six children o we 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 o prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression o 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 Years 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

- **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. We share the research behind the importance and impact of sharing quality children’s books with parents through discussion, information on the website and the Everybody read! resources.*
 - *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 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 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 Hartington Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- All classrooms have access to a range of books to help promote and encourage a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In 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 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.
- 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 ensures to have a yearly visit by an author to also help promote a love of reading and books which can take place with other schools or in isolation to ensure the profile of books and reading is one of importance and a priority.

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 Keep-up support*
- *weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.*
- **Summative assessment for Reception and Year 1 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.*
- **Fluency assessments measure children’s accuracy and reading speed in short assessments. These are delivered via the ‘Assess fluency in reading’ programme recommended by the LA Literacy Adviser and which makes direct links to the current reading and phonics schemes.**
- **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. The school has also purchased the seven plus books to support children in need of intervention in KS2.*
 - *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.*

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.***

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 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.**

