



Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively.

Ecclesiastes 4:9

“Together We Are Great”

At Great Chesterford C. of E. Primary Academy, we aim to provide the best possible education for each child within the context of a caring Christian community. Our school values underpin all aspects of school life, including behaviour and relationships within our school. Our school values are: God’s Guidance, Respect One Another, Excellent Behaviour, Aiming High and Tremendous Teamwork.

Our Golden Rule is: “to treat others as you would like to be treated”.

Our curriculum promotes the spiritual, cultural, intellectual, moral, mental, physical, health and social well-being of each child. We strive to provide a high standard of education for all children, irrespective of gender, culture, ability or aptitude. Phonics and early reading skills are taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, which will enable each and every child to develop confidently to the very best of their ability. We want every child to have the reading and writing skills needed to access all areas of the curriculum and to promote a culture of reading for pleasure.

Aims and Objectives

Through our teaching of phonics and reading, we aim for every child to read fluently and confidently, with expression and an excellent understanding of the text. This policy outlines how phonics and early reading is taught in Key Stage 1 and Reception (Early Years Foundation Stage). It also outlines how phonics will be taught for those children who need additional support in Key Stage 2. It should be read in conjunction with the school’s English policy.

Teaching Phonics

We use Little Wandle Letters and Sounds (LWLS) as the basis for all our phonics and early reading teaching. Information regarding the programme can be found on their website:

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/>

Phonics and early reading are taught as follows:

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

Phonics is taught daily from Week 2 of the Autumn term in Reception. We follow the LWLS order of teaching. 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 (this is sometimes extended into the Autumn term of Year 2) with fluency and accuracy.

Any child in Reception and Year 1 who needs additional practice has “Keep-up” support lessons which follow the LWLS order of progression and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition so that every child secures their learning.

Daily phonics and spelling in Year 2

Once all the Year 1 content has been taught and assessed, a five-week Phase 5 review is taught. This ensures that children secure the trickier elements of Phase 5 and can apply this alphabetic knowledge in both reading and spelling. Once the Phase 5 review is secure; we teach the Little Wandle spelling units.

Rapid Catch Up

Children in Years 2 to 6 who do not have secure phonic knowledge have phonics teaching which follows the Rapid Catch-up programme. These short, sharp lessons have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading. Children are assessed every four weeks using the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching.

Early Reading

In Reception and KS1, we teach reading practice sessions three times a week. Children are taught in small groups, using books matched to their secure phonics knowledge. Each reading practice session has a clear focus, 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 Year 2, children complete the core reading programme of decodable books (up to Phase 5 Set 5). To exit the programme, they complete a fluency assessment to ensure they can read with adequate speed and accuracy: approximately 60 words per minute with 90%+ accuracy.

Equality and Inclusion

All children in school are entitled to have access to high quality phonics teaching. The Keep Up, Rapid Catch Up and SEN teaching programmes are differentiated to take into account specific needs. Where appropriate, a child's One Plan will include a phonics target. Additional individual or small group short phonics sessions may also be used to provide extra support.

Role of Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants delivering LWLS attend relevant training sessions. Teaching staff incorporate into their planning the role of the teaching assistant during the phonics session. This ranges from leading a phonics session with a group of children, supporting whole class teaching or leading a reading group. Teaching Assistants liaise closely with the teacher, give feedback on the children's progress and may also undertake LWLS assessments.

Role of Parents

Reception Class parents are invited to attend a reading workshop that explains how phonics is taught in our school. Information regarding phonics, reading and spelling is also covered in the "Meet the Teacher" meetings for Years 1 and 2.

Parents/carers are asked to listen to their child read their decodable book (up to Phase 5 Set 5). This should be a "celebration" read and an opportunity to share their child's learning. Additionally, children in Reception Class, and Year 1 may be given sounds or tricky words to revisit regularly at home.

Class library books also go home for parents to share and read to children.

Classroom Displays

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 have a phonics and tricky word display which is used regularly to support the children's learning. All classes have a reading area for children to access quality texts independently.

Role of Subject Co-ordinator

The English Co-ordinator and Phonics Lead oversees the implementation and delivery of phonics teaching. They offer their expertise and guidance to other staff members and, where appropriate, lead staff training. They are also responsible for ordering any resources required.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

Assessment takes place daily during lessons to identify children who require additional support, as well as words and GPCs that need immediate additional teaching.

Every six weeks, the LWLS assessments are used to assess progress and to identify gaps in learning that need to be reviewed or retaught.

Children not on track will be reassessed more regularly to enable tailored support.

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 to plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

Fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments.

Statutory assessment

The Department for Education requires Year 1 children to undertake a phonics screening check during the summer term. The screening test requires children to decode real and made-up words. Children who do not meet the standard set by the Department for Education will undertake a further check at the end of Year 2. Parents are informed of their child's results with their school report.

Monitoring

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher, Co-ordinators and Governing Body.

Evaluation, Review and Revision

This policy was written in October 2024. It was drawn up in consultation with, and reflects the consensus of, the Headteacher, members of the teaching staff and members of the Governing Body. It will be reviewed in three years' time or before, if it is felt appropriate.

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| Signed: <i>Amy Gargeant</i> | Date: 2 nd October 2024 |
| Headteacher | |
| Signed: <i>Nick Patterson</i> | Date: 6 th November 2024 |
| On behalf of the Governing Body | |
| Next Review Date: | October 2027 |