



**A COMPLETE PHONICS RESOURCE  
TO SUPPORT CHILDREN**

# Alverton Primary School Phonics and Early Reading Policy



## The context of our school

It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background. Alverton Primary School currently has 306 children on roll from Reception to Year 6. Our Nursery setting takes children from age two and currently has 87 pupils on roll.

64% of pupils live in the 0 - 30% most deprived areas and linked problems of unemployment, poor skills, low incomes and poor housing mean that our school, at the far end of Cornwall, is situated in an area of extreme need.

From Reception to Year 6, 15% of our pupils are assessed as SENS and four pupils currently have an EHCP. 22.5% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

2.9% of children currently on roll have English as an Additional Language.

In 2023 - 2024, our average attendance was 93.4%.

## Intent

At Alverton Primary School we value reading not only as a crucial life skill but something that brings joy. Our overarching aim is that by the time children leave us they read confidently for meaning and enjoy reading widely and often for pleasure. Through our curriculum and whole school culture, we encourage our children to see themselves as enthusiastic, confident and capable readers for both pleasure and purpose.

## Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Alverton Primary School we believe that all our children have the ability to 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 (Phase 1)/Reception (Phase 2) 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.



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As a result we give our pupils a robust strategy to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Alverton 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. We have a strong focus on vocabulary and language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

### Comprehension

Our reading sessions focus on decoding, comprehension, fluency and prosody. We ensure our readers are equipped with the tools to not only tackle unfamiliar vocabulary but to also ask and answer a range of stimulating questions about what they are reading. From EYFS onwards VIPERS question stems are used to develop comprehension of a wide range of carefully selected texts during individual, group and whole class reading sessions. In KS2 Whole Class Reading and Novel Study sessions allow children to explore and engage with a variety of texts and genres.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have an English lead who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person monitors and supports our phonics and 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 successfully developing phonemic awareness and 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



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possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.

- Children make a strong start in Reception with daily Phase 1 activities as the children complete their staggered start and Phase 2 teaching beginning 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.

### Year 2 and beyond

- Assessment at the beginning of Year 2 (and into LKS2 as necessary) quickly identifies any gaps in learning. Teaching or intervention is then planned accordingly for whole classes/groups/individuals using the principles of the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.
- In Year 2 children continue to develop their reading skills as well as following the National Curriculum programme for Spelling.

### High quality intervention ensures that every child learns to read

- Reception and Year 1 who need additional practice have regular targeted intervention delivered by a trained adult. Intervention is based on summative and formative assessment and use the same principles as class teaching using the same procedures, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- Children in Year 2 who are not fully fluent at reading or have not passed the Phonics Screening Check have regular targeted intervention. We understand that 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 plan intervention accordingly.
- Children in Year 3 to 6 acknowledged to have gaps in their phonic understanding have a range of highly personalised interventions to enable them to make progress in reading and writing.

### Teaching reading

- We teach children decoding, fluency and comprehension using **Collins Big Cat for Letters and Sounds** books which are fully matched to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme (up to Turquoise book band).



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- From Monday to Thursday children read **and re-read** teacher-chosen decodable books which are closely matched to their current phonic ability to enable them to achieve reading success with a familiar book. On Friday they self-select a “weekend book” from their current book band to encourage reading for pleasure and parents are aware that more support may be needed with this.
- In Reception and KS1 children read with an adult at least twice a week (individually or in a reading group dependent on ability).

### Home reading

- Children take home their reading practice book daily (as well as their self-selected “weekend book” and books from the school library) and we have high expectations for frequency of reading at home.
- 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 identified as needing extra support read with an adult at least 4 times a week.

### Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- All staff have received training in phonics and 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 so leaders know exactly at which stage each phase it at.
- Ongoing training, professional development and monitoring ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The English lead (and SLT) monitor teaching and learning in classes and intervention sessions.

### 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)*



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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 Alverton Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an engaging selection of books that encourages a love of 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 Nursery/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. Frequency of reading is monitored and addressed where necessary.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and share their recommendations with others.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times which are timetabled. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (Book Oscars, Book Fairs, author visits and workshops, 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 needing intervention
  - weekly to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** is used:
  - regularly by class teachers to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan targeted intervention
  - by SLT/English lead to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.



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### Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Gaps in learning are identified and intervention planned accordingly. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2. Results for 2023 were 94% pass with 100% pp pass.

### Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children beyond Year 2 with gaps in learning are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment (as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments as appropriate) and personalised intervention programmes are put into place.