



# PHONICS &



# EARLY READING POLICY

## Our Philosophy

At Carr Lodge, we value the importance of phonics as the prime approach to teaching decoding skills. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background. Our Phonics lessons are fast pace and engaging, but not distracting. Children are aware of the consistent routines and structure of a phonics lesson and they are aware of the expectations at each point in the lesson with repetitive and rewarding activities, that help secure prior learning and develop new learning. Effective and consistent classroom management strategies are in place to ensure no time is lost and children show high levels of engagement at every point in the lesson. With our rigorous planning and robust assessment processes, we ensure that all children make good progress in learning to read. Opportunities to apply Phonics and develop reading skills is also fundamental to our approach, ensuring we support children to become fluent readers with an appreciation of books and a love of reading.

## Phonics

At Carr Lodge Academy we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/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 Carr Lodge Academy, 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 Carr Lodge Academy, 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.

## 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.

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

### Daily Keep-Up Sessions

- Any child who needs additional practice 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 or Year 3 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 Phonics Passport and other assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- If any child in KS2 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics ‘catch-up’ lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

### Reading Practice Sessions

- 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
  - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
  - 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 Year 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

**Children in Reception and Year 1 will have access to the following books at home:**

- **The Little Wandle decodable reading practice book** – This is accessed at home via Collins E-books. This is the book the children have been reading in their teacher-led reading practise sessions and they can share their success at home. The children should be able to read this with 90% fluency. Class teachers will communicate with parents so they can search for the correct book on the app.
- **Additional decodable book-** This is an additional reading book that can be used at home to support the children with their reading practise. We use these books to give children an opportunity to engage with a physical book in addition to their E-book. These books also ensure children can access reading materials in the event of technical errors.
- **Class Library Books-** These are to encourage reading for pleasure and language development. These are for parents to read with the children – the children should not be asked to read this book independently.

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. All parents are made aware of the phase their child is currently working on and additional resources (sound mats Inc. tricky words) are sent home to support the families with home learning. Foundation Stage parents are invited into school for Phonics workshops in Autumn Term to ensure they are familiar with Phonics and how they can support their child. Year 1 parents are invited into school for a Phonics workshop in Spring Term to explain the process of the Phonics Screening Check.

## Ensuring consistency and Pace of Progression

- 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 Carr Lodge and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- Our school environment boasts many age-appropriate reading nooks; which children are encouraged to visit for free-reading opportunities.
- 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.
- The school celebrate World Book Day and have other fun incentives such as 'Blind Date with a Book' and 'Speed Date'



## 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** 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 Reading Lead who monitors children's progress and plans to support where necessary

### **Statutory assessment**

Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics screening check in the Summer Term. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

### **Ongoing assessment for catch-up**

Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:

- their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
- formal Phonics assessments using the Phonics Passport
- the appropriate half-termly assessments to ensure progress has been made before moving on

### **Phonics Passport**

The Phonics Passport moves with children from EYFS- Y2 and in KS2 for those children who are receiving intervention for Phonics. This is to ensure children's prior learning is tracked and built upon without the need for additional assessments.

## **Phonics resources**

All EYFS and KS1 classrooms have visual prompts to support the teaching and learning of Phonics and Early Reading.

**Displays** - Classrooms have display which model our approach to teaching reading through the three main strands: decoding, prosody and comprehension. A 'Grapheme Chart' (Reception) or 'Grow The Code' is displayed in all classrooms in Reception- Year 2.

**Wall Friezes** - In Reception, all graphemes are displayed with both lower-case and upper-case representations of the letters for the graphs.

**Phonics mats** - Sound mats/grapheme charts/grow the code are available in every classroom. In Reception and Year 1 these include both the grapheme and mnemonic to promote independence.

**Font** - All Phonics resources use printed font, not cursive or pre-cursive fonts.

**Little Wandle Word/Grapheme Cards** - Reception and Year 1 classes have their own set of word cards and grapheme cards which are used in Phonics lessons. For catch up sessions in Year 2 and KS2, a separate resource box is used with all resources available.

**Due to the new research on cognitive overload, we do not use songs or actions to support the teaching and learning of Phonics.**

*Children with special educational needs may require additional resources. These are to be discussed with the Phonics Lead and SENCo.*

## **Consistent Strategies**

Strategies used to support teaching and learning in Phonics lessons are those promoted in the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised SSP. Teachers may also use other simple classroom management strategies to ensure the lessons are delivered with good pace and rigour. Strategies you would see in every Phonics lesson:

- **"Segmenting Fingers"** are used to help children segment and count the phonemes in a word. We do this with palm facing out, left to right from thumb (left hand - left to right).
- **Tap Tap sweep** is used to model the reading process. We point to each individual grapheme as it is said then drag finger underneath all of word as it is blended.
- **Sound Buttons** are used to support children with recognising the graphemes within a word. We use dots for individual letter graphemes and a line for diagraphs and trigraphs.

- **“Copy me” (hand to ear)** is used to show expectations of children repeating.
- **“Shuffle time”** is used to maintain interest while word cards are re-shuffled ready to review in a different order.

The vocabulary we use when teaching, assessing and planning Phonics is that promoted in the [Glossary of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Terminology](#) document.