

A COMPLETE PHONICS RESOURCE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

Phonics and early reading policy

Our Vision

In our phonics lessons at Crooksbar Primary School, children learn vital skills to prepare them for fluency in and enjoyment of reading throughout their education and beyond. We allow all children to experience success in their early reading through high-quality teaching and timely, targeted support.

Children are given a range of opportunities to apply their understanding of GPCs in their reading and writing, offering a strong foundation for all learning as they progress through school.

All children demonstrate excellent understanding of the terminology used in phonics and can successfully apply feedback related to their phonetic understanding to correct spellings and read texts of increasing difficulty.

Those who fail to achieve a passing score in the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1 are targeted with consistent, personalised interventions to support them as they transition and progress through Year 2 and Key Stage 2. Staff across all key stages work closely to provide a seamless progression of phonics inputs, matched to individual children's ability.

We aim for phonics to provide children with the earliest understanding of a range of wonderful stories so that we can support them in embedding an early love of reading. Phonetically decodable books allow children to independently explore characters and plots that interest them, in preparation for accessing more complicated texts as they move through school.

As stated in *The Reading Framework (2021)*, we must find the balance between consistent implementation of a systematic, synthetic phonics programme and harnessing an early love of stories and reading. We believe that our teaching at Crooksbar supports this and sets all of our children up for great success in reading and beyond.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Crooksbar 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 Nursery and follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression](#), which ensures that 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 of our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Crooksbar 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 language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

At Crooksbar 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.

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.

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:

- o sharing high-quality stories and poems
- o learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
- o activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
- o 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 every 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 where teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.

As a school, we follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress:

- o 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.
- o 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.

Daily Keep-Up Sessions and Rapid Catch-Up Sessions

Keep-Up Sessions ensure every child learns to read.

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 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 Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid

Catch-up resources – at pace. These sessions take place at the same time as all other phonics teaching, first thing on a morning in small groups. They have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

In KS2, some children may still have gaps in their phonics knowledge. These specific gaps are addressed in Rapid Catch-Up Sessions that offer children the opportunity to rehearse decoding skills, as well as allowing them to read fluently using a matched decodable book.

All Keep-Up and Catch-Up sessions and assessments are monitored and moderated by class teachers and reading leaders to ensure that children receive the best possible targeted support.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week.

These sessions:

- o are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of around six children
- o use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids as well as teacher judgement
- o are regularly monitored by class teachers and reading leads

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:

- o decoding: sounding words out and blending to increase fluency
- 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 Year 2, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Children accessing Rapid Catch-Up in KS2 read in this way as part of their sessions.

Those who complete the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme then take part in Fluency Sessions, using *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* books that seamlessly follow on from the main scheme. These Fluency Sessions are delivered in small groups of around 4 children and take place three times per week. These sessions are taught by a fully trained member of staff.

Children who demonstrate fluent reading in Year 2 and KS2 may access colour banded books as a bridge to free reading in order to increase their confidence and stamina. After this, children are able to select a free reader from carefully curated bookshelves in their classrooms. Class teachers will monitor the suitability of these books through regular 1:1 reading.

Home reading

Decodable reading practice books are taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.

Reading for pleasure books (sharing 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 workshops, leaflets 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 are identified using our "Read With Me" lists and read their reading practice book to adults in school as much as possible beyond their three reading practice sessions.

A range of supplementary support including referrals to appropriate external agencies (OT, SALT and EP) will be implemented if necessary to meet the specific needs of pupils.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

Every member of staff in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we all 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 Leaders and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching.

Reading Leaders use the summative data to identify children who need additional support, share gaps in learning and next steps with class teachers, and monitor this further support.

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 Crooksbarrow Primary School 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.

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. Adults in school monitor reading and communicate with parents where necessary to support their reading at home.

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 through the Reading Challenge in KS2.

The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. It must be booked via the school booking system. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).

We use the Everybody read! resources to grow our teachers' knowledge of current books, the most recent research and to grow our own Reading for Pleasure practice.

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:

- o daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
- o 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:

- o 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.
- o 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 one-minute assessments. They are used:

- o in Year 1, when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
- o 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
- o 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:

- o 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:

- o 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 their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' summative assessments.