

Thurnham C E Infant School



Phonics and Spelling Policy

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Position	English Leader
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Policy for the Teaching of Phonics and Spelling in EYFS and KS1

Introduction

High quality phonic teaching secures the crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable children to read fluently and automatically thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

The Rose Report made it clear that high quality phonics should be taught systematically and discretely as the prime approach used in the teaching of early reading. We adopt this principle at Thurnham.

This policy is underwritten by our school Christian values of kindness, trust, sharing, respect, love and friendship. These all form an integral part of all Phonics and Spelling teaching.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At **Thurnham Infant 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 **Thurnham Infant 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

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

- 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 up to 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 lessons 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 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 *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources - at pace.

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 approximately six children
 - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments
 - 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, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

- A decodable reading 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 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 **Thurnham** and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book area 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 Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Parents are encouraged to share home reading thoughts and comments with us on Seesaw. Class teachers will notify parents through Seesaw of any concerns about reading.

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 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.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.
- This is a statutory assessment for all children in Year 1 (first introduced in 2012). It is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard.
- Children who do not achieve the appropriate threshold at the end of Year 1 will receive support from the school to improve their phonic decoding skills. These children then retake the phonics screening check towards the end of Year 2.
- The phonics screening check comprises a list of 40 words that children read one-to-one with a teacher. The list is a combination of both real and nonsense words. As nonsense words are new to all children, they do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or large visual memory of words.
- The nonsense words will be shown to children alongside pictures of imaginary creatures to show the child that it is a nonsense word and not a word which they will already know.
- Teachers will report to parents whether their child met the required standard to ensure they are aware of their child's progress in developing phonics skills.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments.

Year 2 teach the National Curriculum for Spelling, as well as any catch up Phonics required.

Recovering the Curriculum in 2022

During 2022, Year R and Year 1 will be recovering Phonics and catching up with the Little Wandle Progression. Both year groups will be teaching extra Phonics sessions and teaching both individual and group Keep up sessions

Equality Statement

We will take into account the needs of all pupils in terms of abilities and stage of development. Pupils with Special Education needs will be entitled to the same access to Phonics as their peers. In planning lessons, teachers will identify challenge for all pupils, modifying or adapting the task and/or equipment to include the least able and to stretch the most able children. Teachers will liaise with the SENCO and additional adult support will be sought if needed.

Conclusion

The ability to decode and spell is a specific skill which needs to be learned by children. Children at Thurnham will secure automatic decoding skills and progress from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" for purpose and pleasure. The ultimate goal of learning to read is comprehension. To achieve this, teachers are clear about which activities are designed to teach children to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help children develop high-level comprehension skills.

EYFS and KS1 staff ensure the application of phonics and spelling skills across all areas of learning so that children understand how to make use of their learning across the curriculum.

Children are reminded of our school Christian values of kindness, trust, sharing, respect, love and friendship in all of their phonics and spelling learning.