



QUEENSMEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

Phonics and early reading policy

Aims

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Queensmead Primary Academy, 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 children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result of this, all our children can tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Queensmead Primary 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 Queensmead Primary 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.

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.
- From October all nursery pupils will follow the Little Wandle Foundations programme. This will be delivered in short, discreet session 5 times a week in small groups.
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Key Stage One

- We teach phonics for 40 minutes a day, during two 20 minutes sessions. 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.
- Phonics sessions will include:
 - Review: A recap of previous sounds taught using the **Little Wandle** planning documents to activate prior knowledge.

- Teach: New GPC (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence) is taught using **Little Wandle** planning – this includes the teaching approaches stated in the **Little Wandle** planning documents.
- Practise: Read words containing new GPC
- Apply: Reading and/or writing words or sentences containing the GPC.
- 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.

Year 2 Spelling

- In year 2, once the children have completed the Little Wandle programme, they will then be taught the Little Wandle 'Bridge to Spelling' programme before moving onto the spelling units. This offers a continuity between phonics and spelling patterns.
- Little Wandle Spelling begins with a five-week review of Phase 5.

Phase 5 review

- The Phase 5 review ensures the children have secured the trickier parts of Phase 5 and can apply this alphabetic knowledge both to read and spell.
- Each lesson will be 25–30 minutes and closely mirror the structure and resources from the core programme.
- The Phase 5 review lessons will follow this structure:
 - Revisit common graphemes, and unusual graphemes found in useful words
 - Teach the children to investigate 'where in the word' a sound appears and then make the 'best bet' for its spelling by learning what the most common spellings are at the beginning, middle and ends of words.
 - Recaps Phase 5 tricky words.
 - Provide opportunities to practice and apply learning by spelling carefully selected words and dictation sentences.

Bridge to spelling

- The Bridge to spelling lessons will include:
 - Introduce children to key spelling terminology.
 - Children will be taught to add sound buttons.
 - Children will complete activities that will feature throughout the programme, ensuring the children become familiar with teaching and learning routines.

Spelling units

- Once the learning covered in the Bridge to spelling is secure, the children will move on to the Year 2 Spelling units. The Spelling units (Spring and Summer) will be taught in 20-minute lessons, five times a week.
- These lessons will follow the **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Spelling planning documents** and will include the basic principles of quick review, teach and practise and apply, review spelling rule.

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.

Rapid Catch Up

- Every child in Year 2 or above who cannot read at age-related expectations needs urgent targeted support so they can access the curriculum and enjoy reading as soon as possible. Little Wandle Rapid Catch-up is a complete catch-up programme that mirrors the main phonics programme but has a faster pace. It has been created to help children catch up quickly.
- We timetable daily rapid catch-up lessons for any child in Year 2 or above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check.

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. Once fluent readers, the children in year 2 move onto fluency texts levels 1 to 5. Children can move to Fluency 1 when they are reading at 60-70+ words per minute and have read the Phase 5 Set 5 books for at least five weeks.

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is accessible to the children 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 Queensmead Primary Academy 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 year 1 and 2 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.

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.
 - [Year 1 fluency assessments](#). At the beginning of year 2, for children reading Phase 5 Set 3 to Set 5 books, alongside your professional judgement, to help you decide when they are ready to move on to Little Wandle Fluency.
- The [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised placement assessment](#) is used:

- with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan 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 catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
 - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
 - the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* rapid catch-up assessment
 - the appropriate half-termly assessments.