BRIDGEWATER
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Phonics and Early Reading Policy

July 2026 by Miss E. Lovell-McNamee

Little Wandle
LETTERS AND SOUNDS
REVISED
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Phonics (Reading and Spelling)
At Bridgewater Primary School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach Phonics and Early 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 document, 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 Bridgewater 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 areas of the curriculum.

Comprehension
At Bridgewater Primary School, we value reading as a vitally important 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 Phonics 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 curriculum and provision, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme.

Implementation
Nursery start teaching 'Foundations for Phonics' in the second half of the Autumn term. 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.

We teach phonics for 20 - 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 Phases 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell wordsusing Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

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 secure at Phase 5 Set 5 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 short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed toensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in Reading.

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 LittleWandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and Collins Big Cat Little Wandle Letters and Sounds revised books.
- 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 notoverload 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 3. Children who are not yet decoding have dailyadditional 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 child who still needs to practise Reading with decodable books.

The decodable Reading Practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with thefamily.

- Reading for pleasure 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 onlineand through workshops

To ensure consistency and pace of progress every member of teaching staff, support staff and senior leaders in our school have been trained to teach Reading, so we have the same expectations of progress.

- We all use the 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 Phonics 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.

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 Bridgewater 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.
- Children from 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 is regular and effective.
- All children have the opportunity to take home a library book, every week, to share with their parent/carer.

Phonics planning

All teachers follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised planning. The planning follows six-week planning and assessment cycles. Each half term has five weekly plans followed by a revision week, carefully planned to individual class needs. Each weekly plan has five daily lessons, including a review lesson.

Impact

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 for Reception and Year 1 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 Catch-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.

Fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:

- in Year 1, when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
- 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 ready any more fully decodable books.

A placement assessment is used:

- 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

- 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 in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for Rapid Catch-up in Years 2 to 6

Children beyond Year 1 are assessed through:

- the Rapid Catch-up initial assessment to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate teaching
- the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching
- the Rapid Catch-up fluency assessments when children are reading the Phase 5 Set 5 books for age 7+.
- The fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They also assess when children are ready to exit the Rapid Catch-up programme, which is when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute.

Phonics and Inclusion

At Bridgewater Primary School, we teach Phonics to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Through our Phonics teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination and English as an Additional Language(EAL).

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – including:
classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessment using SONAR and other materials allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning Phonics and Early Reading

SEND adaptations for Phonics and Early Reading:

Cognition and Learning	
Barriers	**Provision**
Understanding Word finding skills Articulation Sequencing (including retaining instructions) Processing speed Attention and Listening Comprehension skills Understanding of key vocabulary	• Pre-teach key knowledge and vocabulary, then ensure multiple and regular exposure to these words. • Consider accessibility of worked examples. • Consider the use of displays and make sure vocabulary is related to learning for that lesson. • Use the working walls and whiteboard to show the focus of each lesson and how it fits in the sequence of lessons. • Use symbols, images or objects to make it more accessible. • Use of Grow the Code • Use of writing frames to prevent cognitive load. • Encourage use of mind maps/ pictures/ flow charts and visual organisers. • Choice of font and sizing. • Use of working walls.
Communication and Interaction	
Barriers	**Provision**
Processing of instruction Retention Accessing texts Working memory Making links Linked low self esteem General gaps	• Recognition that some vocabulary may be challenging for many children. Give specific contextual use of words, with images to support understanding. • Pre-teach key vocabulary, ensure multiple and regular exposure to these words. • Label equipment with symbols and words. • Check children's understanding by getting them to reiterate what you have asked them. • Give children time to process and formulate. • Reduce adult talk and length of input. • Use of working walls. • Further opportunities to embed language through application of it contextually, orally.
Physical and Sensory	
Barrier	**Provision**
Artificial lighting Classroom noise/busy-ness Tone and volume of adult voices Core strength and finemotor skills Fatigue	• Label new equipment and processes to help develop vocabulary • Consider ventilation and positioning of children for anything that may have an odour • Ask for specialist advice on equipment for children with particular SEND e.g. tactile ridges on measuring glassware for children with a visual impairment. • Use of sensory aids as part of usual provision eg gloves, audio/visual support. • Consider pupil sensory audits and adaptations.

Processing difficulties	• Use of technology including iPads and laptops. • Break writing times up into small bursts with active breaks facilitated. • Use of concentration aids. • Finger-strengthening exercises and busy fingers tasks. • Use of working walls. • Use of standing desks, wobble boards, flexibility over where children write, thera-bands, writing slopes.
Social Emotional and Mental Health	
Barriers	**Provision**
Emotional well-being Anxiety around completing tasks Changes in routine Lack of structure/open-endedness of task Blank page Lack of clarity- what is expected Feeling constrained by content/ outcome (demand avoidance)	• Consistency of approach reduces children's anxiety - it allows children to predict what will happen. • Provide an overview of the lesson elements so the children know what is coming. • Pre-teach the child some of the elements of the lesson etc. • Use of working walls • Consider carefully the groupings – prepare the children by o ensuring they are aware of the group they will be working in. • You may need to specifically teach the skills of cooperation and interaction for practical work. • Controlled choices • Clear expectations (i.e. 3 sentences, 1 paragraph) • Use of adult scribe, my turn your turn, paired work • Deliver task in short achievable bursts rather than all at once • Use of laptop, whiteboards, choice of writing tool • Opportunities to develop social skills including being taught these discretely to support engagement in group work and collaborative learning. • Teacher modelling of 'getting stuck' and positive attitudes o towards perseverance. • Rewarding and praising effort, not only academic content

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Resources

All classrooms, from Nursery to Year 6 display large Little Wandle Lettersand Sounds Revised 'Grow the code' or 'Grapheme' charts.

Small grapheme mats and 'grow the code' charts are used to support writing in Reception and Year 1. Years 2- 6 have 'grow the code' charts in their writing folders.

Reception and Year 1 classrooms display large grapheme friezes, according to thePhase(s) being taught

All lessons are supported with Collins Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised graphemecards and word cards.

Videos on Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised are used as a resource to support CPD for all staff.

Monitoring and review
The Phonics Lead and SLT carry out a programme of monitoring and evaluation of the teachingand learning of Phonics. Reports are made to the Governing body. Teachers are given a summary of the main findings as well as individual feedback.

Signed: Miss E. Lovell
Date: July 2026