



NORTHSIDE Primary School

Phonics Policy
Last review: March 2024

Rationale

At Northside, it is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of their background and different learning needs.

Key Principles

Phonics

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/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; 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 aim for all children to read confidently for meaning and be equipped with the tools to tackle new and unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Northside Values

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| RESPECT | Children are taught to be responsible and care about the books that they read. |
| PRIDE | Children take pride in their phonics knowledge and ability to sound out words phonetically for reading and writing. |
| INCLUSION | All children take part in phonics, which is adapted and tailored to their individual needs. |
| CHALLENGE | Children challenge themselves when decoding words and reading with fluency. |
| CREATIVITY | Children use new vocabulary in their story writing. |
| RESILIENCE | Children work hard to use their phonics in all lessons when reading and writing. |

In Practice

- All adults -in our school- have been trained to teach reading to ensure a consistent approach. 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-out 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 all adults have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- Summative data is used to identify children who need additional support and highlight any gaps in their learning.

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy'- for all children. 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.

Nursery (two and three year olds)

This provision concentrates on developing spoken language, sentence structure and vocabulary. This is through sound discrimination, high quality books and learning Nursery Rhymes.

Nursery (three and four year olds)

In this provision, children continue to develop their spoken language and vocabulary through stories and nursery rhymes. They then begin to identify sounds within words through oral segmenting and blending. Children are exposed to letters and sounds within the environment but formal phonics sessions do not begin until the children are 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: phonics 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 words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Targeted Support

- Any child who needs additional practice has Keep-up support sessions, 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 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. 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 and have been designed to ensure children catch up- to age-related expectations in reading – quickly.
- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions also read their reading practice book to an adult-daily.

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.
 - we use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids.
 - which 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. 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 of the Autumn term. 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.
- We continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home Reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - Reading Road Map 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.
 - Children in Year 1, who are identified as working at greater depth in reading, will be given an additional reading book from the school library to take home. This is to continue to develop their love of reading and encourage further decoding practice.

Assessment

We identify any child needing additional support, as they need it, and plan for appropriate support.

- Assessment for learning:
 - is used daily, within class, to identify children needing Keep-up support.
 - is completed, 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 Keep-up support that they need.
- 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.
 - They are completed 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.
 - 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 access any book at age-related expectations.
- 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 provide appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory Assessment

- Children in Year 1 complete the Phonics Screening Check. Any child who does not pass the check will re-sit the check in Year 2.

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

- Children in Year 2 to 6 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 3, 4 and 5 books for age 7+.