

Phonics and Early Reading at Balcombe CE Primary School

Intent

At Balcombe CE Primary School, we are determined that every child will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities.

Children will be exposed to a wealth of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction to develop their vocabulary, language comprehension and engender a genuine love of reading and a keen interest in a range of texts. We work to inspire them to become life-long readers who enjoy books and have a desire to read for pleasure.

We also want every child to read widely in order to gain a rich knowledge across the curriculum. By offering a wide range of texts we aim to broaden their minds and experiences to allow them to empathise with the world in which they live and support the development of their cultural capital.

In order for the children to have the will to read, and be able to read to learn, they need to have secure skills in reading so that they can read with fluency and comprehension. Reading is at the heart of our whole curriculum underpinning every subject area.

Reading is such an important life skill that it is imperative we enable them to become independent readers who can easily process information, fully engage in all learning and be well prepared for their next stage of their education.

We will ensure that our youngest readers by the end of KS1 will be confident and fluent at decoding so that they can access a wide range of age appropriate reading material. We want them to meet age related expectations for reading, with the aspiration to exceed them.

For those children who face challenges along their reading journey, we will ensure that teachers and leaders take swift action to adapt practice and provide effective interventions, ensuring that children are able to make the best possible progress and reach those age related expectations, or exceed them.

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Balcombe CE Primary School, we want to ensure that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. In order to achieve this, we teach reading using 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 our school.

At Balcombe, 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.

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

Daily phonics lessons in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

- We teach phonics for approximately 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as soon as is appropriate. 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 – 3 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.
 - Children in Year 2 will revise Phase 5 in the Autumn term.

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, after the revision sessions in the Autumn term, is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check. These children 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.
- We also timetable daily phonics sessions for pupils in year 3 and above if they are also not fully fluent at reading.
- These short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions in addition to a daily phonics session

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions.
These:
 - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of children
 - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised** assessments and book matching phonics skills
 - 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 when children are confident and blending sounds to read words. 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 Years 2 and 3, 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 for pleasure books or 'Sharing books' also go home for parents to share and read to children.
 - We 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 planning maps each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.
- The Reading Leader and SLT 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.' (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 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 of Balcombe 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 Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times.
- 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 Centre for Literacy in Primary Education to support us in researching the most up to date books for children.

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** are 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 the Reading Leader, SENCO and SLT 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
 - with children following the Rapid Catch-up programme in Years 2+, 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 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:
 - with any child new to the school in **Reception, Year 1** and **Year 2** 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 it in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for Rapid Catch-up in Years 2+

- Children in Year 2+ 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+.
- 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.

Impact

By the end of KS1 children will have the phonic and word skills, as set out in our Balcombe School English Progression Documents, to be confident and fluent at decoding and reading a wide range of age appropriate reading material.

By the end of KS2 children will have acquired all the skills, knowledge and understanding, again, as set out in our English Progression Documents, to be able to read and comprehend a range of age appropriate material across the curriculum. They will be ready for their forthcoming secondary education.

Our assessment systems, as described above, will ensure that for those children who face challenges along their reading journey, teachers and leaders take swift action to adapt practice and provide effective interventions so that children make the best possible progress towards age related expectations, or exceed them. The Reading Leader along with the English Lead, SENCO and Senior Leadership Team, monitor all the children across the school to ensure that every child can access the support they need, should they need it.