



# Phonics and Early Reading Policy

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## Key Document Details

**School Name:** Gorse Hill Primary School  
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## The Vision, Value and Context of our school

### Our CARE Values

At Gorse Hill School, we encourage all members of our community to *'be the best version of themselves, all of the time.'* We do this through the teaching and living of our CARE Values which encourage our pupils to take care of themselves, others and the environment they live in.

C

WE SHOW COURAGE WHEN FACED  
WITH A CHALLENGE

A

WE SHOW APPRECIATION FOR THE  
RIGHTS, FAITHS AND BELIEFS OF OTHERS

R

WE RESPECT AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR OURSELVES, EACH OTHER  
AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

E

WE AIM FOR EXCELLENCE THROUGH  
HAVING HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Gorse Hill School is located in the centre of Swindon and serves the Gorse Hill and Pinehurst catchment areas. Within our school population, we have a significantly high proportion of pupils and families for whom English as an additional language (62%). Our proportion of pupils who are in receipt of pupil premium and for whom SEN is an additional barrier to learning is broadly in line with national. To support learners to acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding of the world that they require to grow to be successful, healthy and happy citizens, our whole school curriculum intent is based on four Golden Threads which are: knowledge and skills rich, experience rich, language rich and values and community.

### Intent

#### Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Gorse Hill 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 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, it is our intention that all children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Gorse Hill 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

At Gorse Hill School, 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 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.
- 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 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 or 3 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.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

### 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 and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of ['Application of phonics to reading'](#)
  - 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 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 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.
  - We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds e-library to give children access to books.

### 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 Gorse Hill 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.
- In Nursery/Reception/Year 1, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Nursery/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.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. It must be booked via the school booking system. 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).

To promote reading for pleasure at Gorse Hill Primary School, we have a reading spine that is used in Nursery to year 2 to ensure that children learn a range of high-quality stories by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1.

- All children at Gorse Hill School will have opportunities to learn the following stories and rhymes. We believe that these high-quality texts will support the children's language acquisition &

development whilst promoting a strong love of learning. The children will know them well enough to use them in their play and be able to sing/retell using the appropriate story language.

This overview is a suggested list for the class read alouds. It is regularly being evaluated and updated to suit the needs of each class and to include new and more diverse texts where appropriate. More books than these are shared with the children too throughout the year.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Nursery	The wheels on the bus Wind the bobbin up Tommy Thumb I want my potty – <b>Tony Ross</b>	Incey wincey Humpty Dumpty Twinkle, twinkle little star Dear Santa – <b>Rod Campbell</b>	Hickory Dickory Twinkle, twinkle chocolate bar If you're happy and you know it Dear Zoo <b>Rod Campbell</b>	5 Current Buns 5 Little Ducks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, once I caught a fish... Wriggle and Roar – <b>Julia Donaldson</b>	5 Little Speckled Frogs Hey Diddle Diddle Old Mac Donald Monkey Puzzle – <b>Julia Donaldson</b> Ahh spider – <b>Lydia Monks</b>	5 Little Men in a flying saucer Head, shoulders, knees and toes I'm a little tea pot Elmer – <b>David McKee</b> I want to do it by myself – <b>Tony Ross</b>
Reception	We're Going on a Bear Hunt - <b>Michael Rosen</b> The Tiger who came to tea – <b>Judith Kerr</b> Rosie's Walk – <b>Pat Hutchins</b>	Oi Frog Oi Dog Oi Aardvark Oi Cat <b>Kez Gray</b> There's a Bear on my Chair – <b>Ross Collins</b>	Squash and a Squeeze Smartest Giant in Town Room on a Broom <b>Julia Donaldson</b> Whatever Next – <b>Jill Murphy</b>	Smeds and Smoos Tiddler Snail and the whale The Gruffalo's Child <b>Julia Donaldson</b> The Way Back Home – <b>Oliver Jeffers</b>	The Enormous Turnip We're Going on a Lion Hunt – <b>David Axtell</b> We're Going on a Picnic – <b>Pat Hutchins</b> Jasper's Beanstalk – <b>Nick Butterworth</b> The Very Hungry Caterpillar – <b>Eric Carle</b>	Tad – <b>Benji Davies</b> Somebody Swallowed Stanley – <b>Sarah Roberts</b> Mr Gumpy's Outing – <b>John Burningham</b> The Gingerbread Man
Year 1	The Colour Monster – <b>Anna Llenas</b> The Worrysaurus – <b>Rachel Bright</b> What the Ladybird Heard Next – <b>Julia Donaldson</b> The Squirrels Busy Year – <b>Martin Jenkins</b>	Toy's in Space – <b>Mini Grey</b> Cinnamon – <b>Neil Gaiman</b> Tidy – <b>Emily Gravett</b> It's a no money day – <b>Kate Milner</b>	Wild – <b>Emily Hughes</b> Here We Are – <b>Oliver Jeffers</b> Out and About – <b>Shirley Hughes</b> You can't take an elephant on the bus – <b>Patricia Cleveland</b>	I want my hat back – <b>Jon Klassen</b> Zog – <b>Julia Donaldson</b> Can't you sleep little bear? – <b>Martin Waddell</b> The Gigantic Turnip	I am Henry Finch – <b>Alexis Deacon</b> Amazing Grace – <b>Mary Hoffman</b> Traction Man – <b>Mini Grey</b> Owl Babies – <b>Martin Waddell</b>	George's Marvellous Medicine – <b>Roald Dahl</b> The Heart in the Bottle – <b>Oliver Jeffers</b> Avocado Baby – <b>Jon Burningham</b> The Lion Inside – <b>Rachel Bright</b>

Year 2	<p>Little Red – <b>Lynn Roberts</b></p> <p>Flat Stanley – <b>Jeff Brown</b></p> <p>Augustus and his smile – <b>Catherine Raynor</b></p> <p>Where the Wild Things Are – <b>Maurice Sendak</b></p>	<p>The Owl who was afraid of the dark – <b>Jill Tomlinson</b></p> <p>Jazz Dog – <b>Marie Voigt</b></p> <p>I am Whole – <b>Shola Oz</b></p>	<p>The Day the Crayon's Quit – <b>Drew Daywalt</b></p> <p>Robot and the Blue Bird – <b>David Lucas</b></p> <p>Bill's New Frock – <b>Anne Fine</b></p>	<p>The Secret Sky Garden – <b>Linda Sarah</b></p> <p>The Magic Faraway Tree – <b>Jacqueline Wilson</b></p> <p>The Invisible Boy – <b>Trudy Ludwig</b></p> <p>Gorilla – <b>Anthony Browne</b></p>	<p>Giraffe, The Pelly and Me - <b>Roald Dahl</b></p> <p>The Ugly Five – <b>Julia Donaldson</b></p> <p>The Darkest Dark – <b>Chris Hadfield</b></p>	<p>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory - <b>Roald Dahl</b></p> <p>The Invisible String – <b>Patrice Karst</b></p> <p>Sulwe – <b>Lupita Nyong'o</b></p>
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All children will have exposure to a range of poetry and non-fiction texts that link to the topic/theme that they are learning about.

## 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.

### Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments.