



# Coton-in-the-Elms Primary School

## Early Reading and Phonics Policy

Version	Last Review	Reviewed by	Next review	Comments
1	September 2022	L. Dennis	September 2024	Based on Little Wandle model policy from English Hub
2	January 2025	C. Macfarlane	February 2026	Includes reference to school now having access to online books via Collins Hub.  Further detail included about reading for pleasure offer.
3	February 2026	C. Macfarlane and Karen Burton	February 2927	Updated to reflect resources used and methodology

*Perseverance    Enjoyment    Awe and Wonder    Compassion    Excellence*

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# INTENT

## 1. Introduction

As stated in the 2014 National Curriculum, 'skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school'. At Coton-in-the-Elms C of E Primary School, we are passionate about ensuring all children become confident and enthusiastic readers and writers, and we believe that Phonics provides the foundations to support children in developing the skills required in order for this to become achievable. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

## 2. Ethos & Aims

### Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Coton-in-the-Elms C of E Primary 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 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.

### Comprehension

At Coton-in-the-Elms C of E Primary 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 trained in the effective methods for teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support staff, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

# IMPLEMENTATION

## 3. How is it taught?

### 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.

- In Year 1 at the end of the day, we also review the sounds that we have learned to support and aid retrieval.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins immediately in 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.

### **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.
- 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.
- At the beginning of each session we use flashcards with the sounds/words that are in the book and then we place these sounds on the table, ensuring everyone in the group can see them. As we read the words on the flashcards, we place them on the table next to the sound they contain, for example moon, would go next to the oo sound.
- At the end of the reading session, we revisit the flashcard sounds again to support retrieval.
- 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 also use Collins Hub which is an online portal for the children to access a range of books, set by their teacher. We use Collins Hub during the school holidays. The books set on Collins Hub support the children's abilities.

## 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 Coton-in-the-Elms C of E Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures. We offer children in Reception and Year 1 an opportunity to vote for the story they want for story time, by placing a gem next to the book of their choice.
- We have instilled a culture for Reading for Pleasure into Coton school and the children take part in DEAR (drop everything and read) time on a daily basis.
- 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.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading record, which is in the pupil planner. 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. If children have read more than 5 times every week, they have a treat on a Friday. At the moment, they are invited into school with their slippers and a teddy as part of their DEAR time.
- 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 timetabled for every class to use weekly. 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). Children visit the local library on an annual basis and enjoy having the 'Big Red Bus' arriving every summer.
- In the children's planners we also promote the book awards for each year group. The children receive a bronze sticker for reading 5 of the book challenges, a silver sticker for 10 of the book challenges and a gold sticker for all 20 of the book challenges. The challenges ensure the children read a range of different books, poems and texts, including a variety of authors and a book recommended by the teacher. The children who complete the book award, are put into a draw to win a prize of a Kindle.
- Each class have access to the books from the Book Award challenge, via the main school library or class library.

#### 4. Planning & Progression

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. The training is available on the Little Wandle website for staff to revisit when they need to. These videos are also used as part of the instructional coaching model when/if needed.

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.

#### 5. Support for SEND Pupils & Inclusion

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.

Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics 'Keep-up' sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily.

## 6. Cross Curricular Links

At Coton-in-the-Elms CE Primary School we 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.

We want to foster a lifelong love of reading by exposing our children to various literature across all curriculum areas. We believe reading opens up a new world for children and gives them the opportunity to explore new ideas, visit new places, meet new characters and develop a better understanding of other cultures.

Reading and quality literature is implicitly interwoven into our curriculum through the use of key texts to expose our children to various genres and famous authors and to enhance the variety of exciting topics that we teach.

## IMPACT

### 7. Assessment & Recording

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.
- 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* placement assessment
  - the appropriate half-termly assessments.

## 8. Monitoring

The subject leader and SLT will scrutinise the data on 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.

All teachers delivering phonics will complete the six online training modules annually. Once all appropriate members of staff have completed the online training modules on the whole school CPD page the subject leader can request a CPD analysis report which will identify areas for staff improvement.