



Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Approved by:	Head – R Hancock	Date:01.09.2025
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At Norbreck we follow the DFE validated Little Wandle letters and Sounds and all staff were trained in the 2021-2022 academic year. New staff who have arrived will also have training. Each member of staff has a personal login for Little Wandle and the website is continually updated with CPD opportunities that are accessible to all.

The context of our school

It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Norbreck, 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. At Norbreck, 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 (oracy) are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

At Norbreck, 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, everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

Implementation

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.

- Children in Year 2 recap Phase 5 before beginning *Little Wandle's Bridge to Spelling*.

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.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions two or 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 alongside teacher assessment.
 - 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, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

- Each week, the children take home the fully decodable text that they have read in the reading practice sessions and this ensures success is shared with the family. (Previously, we trialled ebooks but many parents expressed a wish for a real reading book so we stopped this in April 2023.)
 - Reading for pleasure books (sharing 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.

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 Leaders and SLT will be using the Audit and Prompt cards to 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 Norbreck 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.
- Each Reception class visits the local library regularly.

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:
 - Each term 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 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 and Year 3 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments.