



Phonics at Birklands Primary School

At Birklands Primary School, we strive to teach children to read and write effectively and quickly. The ability to efficiently decode is essential and therefore our aim is to teach core skills of segmenting and blending through the systematic teaching of phonics. We want children to understand the relationship between sounds and letters and know that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. Our aim is for children to make sustained progress in learning to read fluently and write with confidence in an enjoyable way. These fundamental skills not only hold the key to the rest of the curriculum but also have a huge impact on children's self-esteem and future life chances. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

The impact of this is that through the teaching and learning of Phonics we:

- Show high levels of achievement and exhibit very positive attitudes towards phonics.
- Acquire a secure knowledge of phonics and make sustained progress in learning to read words rapidly.
- Participate in the learning of phonics knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic and enjoyable way
- Develop a love of reading

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Birklands 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 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. Once children have completed the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revisited programme in year two, children will then move onto the Sounds and Syllables spelling programme.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Birklands Primary 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 Birklands 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.

We're teaching every child to read with Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised

A complete SSP validated by the Department for Education



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.

· By including the above into our curriculum, we can 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 who is not fully fluent at reading or have 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.



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.
 - 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.

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 to identify children who need keep-up support and identify gaps in learning. We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following:

- Regular phonics assessment
- Previous phonics screening tests
- Phonics screening results at the end of Year 1
- Analysis of independent writing
- End of Key Stage assessments
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar tests