



# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

### Reading Matters

- Reading sits at the heart of Wheatcroft's core values and ethos as an essential life skill.
- We are committed to instilling a love and enjoyment of reading in ALL children.
- We are committed to ensuring that EVERY CHILD will learn to read to a high standard of fluency and understanding, regardless of their background, needs or abilities.
- We are committed to closing the 'word gap' by expanding children's vocabulary and deepening their understanding of the texts they are reading.



### The context of our school

Our school currently has 31.4% Pupil Premium, 21.4% SEN and 9 EAL pupils on roll (accurate as of January 2023.) It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to **all** learners, regardless of their background, needs or abilities.

At Wheatcroft, 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. By following this programme with fidelity, we are able to meet all current national expectations for the teaching of phonics. We also chose this programme because of the emphasis it places on reading for pleasure. This programme aligns with our belief that as educators, teaching children to be confident, fluent readers is our most important priority.

Reading is fundamental to education. Proficiency in reading, writing and spoken language is vital for pupils' future success. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching the curriculum. Being a confident and fluent reader gives children the key to unlock the rest of the curriculum.



# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

### How we teach reading:

#### Phonics (reading and spelling)

We start teaching phonics in Bluebells (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 unfamiliar words as they read. At 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 Wheatcroft, 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, our Reading Leader drives the early reading programme in our school. They model, monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme.

### Implementation -

#### Foundations for phonics

- We prepare our children for learning phonics by teaching oral blending and phonemic awareness.
- 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 – using the Poetry Basket resources.
  - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
  - modelling high-quality language through regular interactions
  - Helicopter stories – used to record children's story ideas and bring them to life by retelling and role play.
- We ensure all children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Bluebells (Reception).



# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

### 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.**
- When we segment to blend (sound out to read) we press 'sound buttons' and sweep our finger under the word to blend it together.
- When we orally segment to write (say a word broken into sounds) we count the sounds on our phoneme fingers and then sweep our finger across when blending it back together. This helps us understand how many sounds we need when writing words.

### Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

**The ongoing assessment of pupil's phonic progress is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify any pupil who is falling behind the programme's pace. If they do fall behind, targeted support is given immediately.**

- Any child who needs additional practice has regular 'Keep-up' support, taught by a fully trained adult. This might be a 1-1 or a group intervention depending on the needs. Keep-up lessons and interventions 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 and above 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 Rapid Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.
- 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.



# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

### Teaching reading in Reception and Year 1: 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.
  - 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 Bluebells these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups or 1 to 1, 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 shared with parents via the e-book library.
- One additional decodable reading book goes home each week for independent practice. These books are always matched to the child's phonemic awareness.
- A reading for pleasure book (library book/ sharing book) also goes home for parents to share and read to children.
- We share the research behind the importance and impact of sharing quality children's books with parents through parent meetings, leaflets and Class dojo.
- 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 decodable book as often as possible at school.



# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



***'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'***

### 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 believe in the power of reading to transform children's lives. We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure culture.

- 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 Wheatcroft and our local community as well as books that open doors into other worlds and cultures. We choose books that will help to grow a love of reading and to cultivate empathy.
- We continue to develop inviting book corners that encourages a love for reading. We showcase these books and talk about them to entice our children to read a wide range of texts.
- 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. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this weekly 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 'Book Bay' (the school library) is made available for all classes to use at protected times. Children across our 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 'Everybody read! Resources' provided by Little Wandle to grow our teachers' knowledge of current books, the most recent research and to grow our own Reading for Pleasure practice.





# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

### Impact -

The children at Wheatcroft school understand the importance of reading and the wide-ranging benefits it can bring to their lives. They enjoy reading for pleasure and purpose, engage in meaningful book talk and enjoy talking about the books and authors they enjoy.

### 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.

**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 to 6, 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.

**Placement assessment** is used:

- with any child new to the school in [Reception](#) and [Year 1](#) to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

**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.



# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

### Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child who does not pass the check re-sits it in Year 2.
- Any child who does not pass the re-sit in Year 2, will continue to be supported in Year 3 and beyond through targeted Keep-up interventions. They do not have to re-sit the phonics screening check in Year 3.

### Ongoing assessment for Rapid Catch-up in Years 2 to 6

- Children in Year 2 to 6 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.



# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

### Our Teaching Progression:

#### Reception

| Autumn 1 Phase 2 graphemes                | New tricky words |
|---|------------------|
| s a t p i n m d g o c k c k e u r h b f l | is I the         |

| Autumn 2 Phase 2 graphemes   | New tricky words  |
|--|---|
| ff ll ss j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th ng nk<br>• words with –s /s/ added at the end (hats sits)<br>• words ending in s /z/ (his) and with –s /z/ added at the end (bags sings) | put* pull* full* as and has his her go no to into she<br>push* he of we me be |

\*The tricky words 'put', 'pull', 'full' and 'push' may not be tricky in some regional pronunciations; in which case, they should not be treated as such.

| Spring 1 Phase 3 graphemes  | New tricky words                     |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| ai ee igh oa oo oo ar or ur ow oi ear air er<br>• words with double letters<br>• longer words | was you they my by all are sure pure |

| Spring 2 Phase 3 graphemes  | No new tricky words      |
|---|--------------------------|
| Review Phase 3<br>• words with double letters, longer words, words with two or more digraphs, words ending in –ing, compound words<br>• words with s /z/ in the middle<br>• words with –s /s/ /z/ at the end<br>• words with –es /z/ at the end | Review all taught so far |

| Summer 1 Phase 4  | New tricky words   |
|---|--|
| Short vowels with adjacent consonants<br>• CVCC CCVC CCVCC CCCVC CCCVCC<br>• longer words and compound words<br>• words ending in suffixes:<br>–ing, –ed /t/, –ed /id/ /ed/, –est | said so have like some come love do were here little<br>says there when what one out today |

| Summer 2 Phase 4 graphemes   | No new tricky words      |
|--|--------------------------|
| Phase 3 long vowel graphemes with adjacent consonants<br>• CVCC CCVC CCCVC CCV CCVCC<br>• words ending in suffixes:<br>–ing, –ed /t/, –ed /id/ /ed/, –ed /d/ –er, –est<br>• longer words | Review all taught so far |





# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

### Year 1

| Autumn 1   | Review tricky words Phases 2–4  |
|--|---|
| Review Phase 3 and 4<br><b>Phase 5</b><br>/ai/ ay play<br>/ow/ ou cloud<br>/oi/ oy toy<br>/ea/ ea each | Phases 2–4: the put* pull* full* push* to into I no<br>go of he she we me be was you they all are my by<br>sure pure said have like so do some come love were<br>there little one when out what says here today |

\*The tricky words 'put', 'pull', 'full' and 'push' may not be tricky in some regional pronunciations; in which case, they should not be treated as such.

| Autumn 2 Phase 5 graphemes   | New tricky words   |
|--|--|
| /ur/ ir bird<br>/igh/ ie pie<br>/oo/ /yoo/ ue blue rescue<br>/yoo/ u unicorn<br>/oa/ o go<br>/igh/ i tiger<br>/ai/ a paper<br>/ee/ e he<br>/ai/ a-e shake<br>/igh/ i-e time<br>/oa/ o-e home<br>/oo/ /yoo/ u-e rude cute<br>/ee/ e-e these<br>/oo/ /yoo/ ew chew new<br>/ee/ ie shield<br>/or/ aw claw | their people oh your<br>Mr Mrs Ms ask*<br>could would should our<br>house mouse water want |

\*The tricky word 'ask' may not be tricky in some regional pronunciations; in which case, it should not be treated as such.

| Spring 1 Phase 5 graphemes   | New tricky words  |
|--|---|
| /ee/ y funny<br>/e/ ea head<br>/w/ wh wheel<br>/oa/ oe ou toe shoulder<br>/igh/ y fly<br>/oa/ ow snow<br>/j/ g giant<br>/f/ ph phone<br>/l/ le al apple metal<br>/s/ c ice<br>/v/ ve give<br>/u/ o-e o ou some mother young<br>/z/ se cheese<br>/s/ se ce mouse fence<br>/ee/ ey donkey<br>/oo/ ui ou fruit soup | any many again<br>who whole where two<br>school call different<br>thought through friend work |



# Wheatcroft CP School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy



*'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.'*

| Spring 2 Phase 5 graphemes  | New tricky words       |
|---|------------------------|
| /ur/ or word<br>/oo/ u oul awful could<br>/air/ are share<br>/or/ au aur oor al author dinosaur floor walk<br>/ch/ tch ture match adventure<br>/ar/ al a half* father*<br>/or/ a water<br>schwa in longer words: different<br>/o/ a want<br>/air/ ear ere bear there<br>/ur/ ear learn<br>/r/ wr wrist<br>/s/ st sc whistle science<br>/c/ ch school<br>/sh/ ch chef<br>/z/ ze freeze<br>schwa at the end of words: actor | once laugh because eye |

\*The tricky words 'half' and 'father' may not be pronounced as this in some regional pronunciations; in which case, they should not be treated as such.

### Summer 1: Phonics screening check review – no new GPCs or tricky words

| Summer 2 Phase 5 graphemes  | New tricky words  |
|---|---|
| /ai/ eigh aigh ey ea eight straight grey break<br>/n/ kn gn knee gnaw<br>/m/ mb thumb<br>/ear/ ere eer here deer<br>/zh/ su si treasure vision<br>/j/ dge bridge<br>/i/ y crystal<br>/j/ ge large<br>/sh/ ti ssi si ci potion mission mansion delicious<br>/or/ augh our oar ore daughter pour oar more | busy beautiful pretty hour<br>move improve parents shoe |