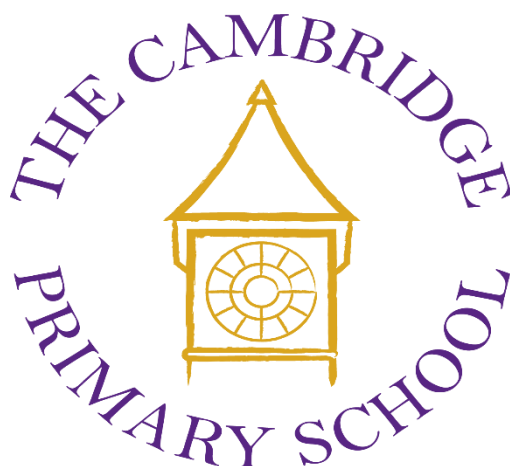


THE CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Inspiring Minds Together'

PHONICS & EARLY READING POLICY

2026



Date of Approval:	May 2026
Date of Next Review:	May 2027

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Phonics and Early Reading Policy

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” Frederick Douglass

The teaching of phonics and early reading at The Cambridge Primary School is of the highest priority. We are committed to ensuring that every child will learn to read, regardless of ability, need or background. Giving pupils the key skills in English, enables them to access material in all curriculum areas, and provides a foundation for their learning throughout their school career and beyond. We are committed to inspiring every child to be excited about books and motivated to read for pleasure.

INTENT

At the Cambridge Primary School, we intend:

- for every child to be a reader
- for early readers to have the skills to decode words in order to be able to read fluently
- for children to understand what they have read
- for children to respond with curiosity about what they and others have read
- for children to become enthusiastic and motivated to read for pleasure
- to develop children’s confidence in reading a wide variety of genres and text types
- to develop children’s knowledge of a wide range of authors and illustrators

IMPLEMENTATION

Phonics

At the Cambridge Primary School, we will implement:

- A consistent, systematic high quality, whole school approach to teaching phonics which begins almost immediately as children enter Reception and is carried through until at least the point where children can read almost all words fluently. The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Programme is used in its entirety in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 whilst those children continuing with phonics support past this point, will follow the Rapid Catch-up or SEND programme. Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised is a systematic, synthetic approach which is recommended for teaching children to read (Rose Review 2006, Bold Beginnings 2017, The Reading Framework 2023, The Reading Framework: Teaching the foundations of literacy (July 2023, updated 2024).
- Daily morning lessons to ensure phonics teaching is prioritised. These follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised four-part structure with time to revisit old learning, new learning, blending and segmenting. Children are immersed in activities to learn new sounds, apply them to read words, practise letter formation and to build up a bank of tricky words.

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- A clear progression through the programme so children are taught from the simple (Phase 2) to the more complex grapheme phoneme correspondences (Phase 5) and tricky words. Opportunities to review and revise learning daily, weekly and across terms and years is included in order to move learning into children's long term memory.
- There are planned opportunities throughout the curriculum to extend phonics teaching and learning beyond 'dedicated phonics time'. Consequently, learning is applied, reinforced and relevant connections are identified for the children.
- There may be some teaching in ability groups across lower school as this ensures teaching is targeted so every child achieves at an appropriate pace.
- Ongoing formative assessment is used to ensure every child 'keeps up' with the phonics provision. This is closely monitored by the Phonics Subject Lead to ensure all children are making progress and the right provision is in place.
- Keep up sessions offering immediate additional practice for those children who are identified as not keeping up with their peers. Identified children will take part in regular, short intervention groups with a focus on pre-teaching and overlearning. This is aimed at building confidence and successfully retaining what they have learnt.
- Close monitoring of children making the slowest progress through:
 - Summative assessments (each half term)
 - Phonic screening check practice (each half term)
 - Data analysis (each term following data check points)
 - Pupil progress meetings (each term following data check points)
- Data analysis of the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check which is responded to with adjustments to planning and teaching.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure phonics is of high quality and consistent across the school.
- A supportive learning environment, with displays and table prompts showing sounds and key words accompanied by recognisable images that are consistent across all year groups.
- Regular staff training to develop subject knowledge, confidence and ensure phonics teaching and learning is consistent across Reception, Key Stage 1 and 2 (where necessary).

Reading

At the Cambridge Primary School, we will implement:

- A reading expert strategy:
The reading experts at The Cambridge Primary School have a shared understanding that reading is an essential skill for everyone. Reading is for enjoyment and for learning. We strive to create a reading culture where reading is prioritised and at the heart of everything we do. A whole school approach that combines both reading pleasure and achievement for all.
- Story time, when the children are read aloud to on a daily basis in every year group. This is for the children's enjoyment with the main aim of motivating them to read for pleasure. Texts will be ambitious for each year group with rich language to develop the children's vocabulary. Additionally, it will develop

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their knowledge and confidence to discuss a wide range of authors, illustrators, variety of text types and genres.

- Regular opportunities for children to read to adults in school. In Reception, and Year 1 children take part in 'reading practice sessions.' Children participate in three reading practice sessions, complemented by the Little Wandle Scheme, ensuring confidence and fluency through decoding, prosody, and comprehension. This reading book is sent home for the children to then read alongside their parents to develop fluency as they become more confident. In Year 2, the children access the 'fluency scheme' in a similar way to the 'reading practice' sessions that ran in previous year groups. This programme is designed for children who have completed the phonics programme and can read accurately but need support to develop reading fluency and prosody (reading with expression and understanding).
- Children in Year 2 and Key Stage 2 who have been identified as needing additional phonics support will have specific interventions planned for them using the Rapid Catch Up Programme or the SEND Programme in line with Little Wandle. Children will still have a 'learn to read' book that is closely matched to their ability and the scheme they following.
- English planning that is linked, inspired and supported by high quality, engaging and relevant texts. Stories form the basis for weekly continuous provision in Reception and an English teaching sequence in Key Stage 1 and 2. This leads to daily discussion about the text where children are encouraged to respond to what they and others have read with questioning and debate.
- A structured reading system. This consists of:
 - 'Learn to Read' that are fully decodable books from a range of reading schemes to introduce a wide variety of literature. They are organised in groups that match the teaching sequence of the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. They will match as closely as possible, the sounds and words each child is currently learning so any words the children do not recognise, can be decoded using phonic knowledge and not by any other strategy, for example, using the pictures. A child will keep their 'Learn to Read' for a week with the intention of reading it daily to develop fluency, pace and prosody.
 - 'Love to Read' books are aimed at developing and inspiring a love of reading through the shared experience of reading together. These books contain sounds and tricky words that do not match those the children are currently learning so they are not expected to be able to decode them.
- The discrete teaching of reading:
 - Children in Reception and Year 1, will take part in small group reading practice sessions.
 - There are three sessions weekly with a specific focus on the skills of decoding, prosody and comprehension.
 - Sessions follow the Little Wandle guidance and have been planned by the English lead for consistency.
 - Children in Year 2 also take part in small group reading practice sessions. This is part of the Little Wandle 'fluency scheme' and is designed for children who have completed the phonics programme and can read accurately but need support to develop reading fluency and prosody.
 - Class teachers and Learning Support Assistants lead the sessions.
 - In Key Stage 2, children take part in whole class guided reading lessons to develop fluency and comprehension skills.

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- There are regular events to engage pupils with the joy and wonder of a wide range of text types so they are confident, enthused and motivated to read for pleasure. Events include Book Buddies, Mystery Readers, World Book Day, visiting authors, and reading challenges.
- A supportive learning environment with engaging books in every classroom
- Monitoring of the planning, teaching and assessment to ensure reading is of high quality and consistent across the school.
- Ongoing formative assessment of every child during their weekly read with an adult will ensure their 'Learn to Read' is clearly matched to their ability and their comprehension skills are developing. Those experiencing difficulty decoding will be supported through phonics intervention and any difficulties with comprehension skills can be targeted during lesson time in focus groups.
- Close monitoring of children making the slowest progress through:
 - Data analysis (each term following data check points).
 - Pupil progress meetings (each term following data check points).

Time allocations

Phonics is taught for half an hour in the morning every day across Reception and Year 1. Year 2 children complete their spelling programme or targeted phonic interventions during this time. Spelling and handwriting practice is split up into smaller chunks of learning for Reception. Year 1 complete an additional phonics catch up of an afternoon.

Meeting the needs of all our learners

At the Cambridge Primary School, we follow Little Wandle's recommended structure of teaching phonics as a whole class however if we believe children are best supported this can be taught in ability groups. This enables the teaching to be targeted more accurately so every child receives the correct amount of support and challenge to ensure they blend words to begin reading as quickly as possible.

The 'Learn to Read' books are fully decodable and match as closely as possible, the sounds and words each child is currently learning to enable them success and develop the confidence to 'see' themselves as readers.

Phonics keep up sessions are taught in a more practical way to appeal to all learning styles.

Reading comprehension is taught during reading practice sessions (EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2) and as a whole class (KS2). To enable the children to fully focus on developing their understanding of the different aspects of reading, sometimes, the text is read to the children by an adult or partner. Film and images are also used. As the children work together, under the guidance of the teacher, they are supported by the skills they all possess to share understanding and ideas. This in turn promotes learning and progress.

Children requiring extra support for phonics and reading are identified swiftly through rigorous assessment. Extra support is available through pre-teaching and overlearning with the aim of enabling them to make rapid progress to 'keep up'. If progress is not made, extra intervention and specialist support will be investigated.

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All children are stretched and challenged in phonics as they learn and recall new sounds and key words. Regarding reading comprehension, stretch and challenge occurs at every level as children are required to explain and reason their understanding of a text.

Parents as Partners

Research has also repeatedly shown that parental involvement in their child's schooling is a more powerful force than other family background variables, such as social class, family size and level of parental education. We recognise and value the important role parents play in education as they know their child best. Consequently, we encourage parents to engage in an active partnership with the school.

Parents have the opportunity to attend phonics and reading workshops at school to gain further insight into how they are taught and how they can support their child. There is information on the school website and in the children's Reading Records. Every week, parents in Reception and Year 1 receive a home learning letter containing focus sounds and words from the week's learning. Parents are expected to read with their children daily and their comments are encouraged in the Reading Records.

IMPACT

At the Cambridge Primary School, the impact will be seen through:

- Internal monitoring including learning walks, lesson observations, pupil conferencing, whole school moderation, book and planning scrutiny. This will ensure teaching, learning and assessment is of high quality and consistent across the school.
- Pupils commenting on a love of reading during pupil conferencing.
- External moderation of phonics and reading with schools within the EEEA Trust and local authority group moderation meetings. This provides an external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments.
- Our tracking and assessment system, which enables formative and summative assessment to be recorded. Leadership and class teachers analyse the data to review the attainment and progress of individual and key groups of children. Any children who are not on track to make expected progress are tracked during pupil progress meetings that are held each term following data checkpoints.
- Rapid, effective support for children in danger of falling behind or those experiencing significant difficulty, to enable them to keep up.

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