

**A bad system will beat a
good person every time.**

W. Edwards Deming



The way to build a
complex system that
works is to build it from
very simple systems
that work.

**Where there is a WILL;
there is a way.**

**Phonics and Early Reading
Policy
Little Wandle**





At Portland Spencer Academy we **ASPIRE** in all we do. We believe that for all of our children to become confident communicators, fluent readers and writers, phonics must be taught daily through a systematic and structured phonics programme.

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

A complete SSP validated by the Department for Education



As part of our high quality curriculum we teach phonics daily, using **Little Wandle** as our vehicle and providing high quality interventions where needed. This ensures all children 'keep up' and become confident and fluent readers and writers. We have a strong focus on the development of language skills because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills which provide the foundations for early reading and writing.

Our approach is based on the context of our school and the children we serve.



The Context of Portland Spencer Academy

Portland Spencer Academy is a 2 form primary school situated in Bilborough, Nottingham. We have a nursery setting, with up to 75 children.

The school is situated in an area of significant deprivation. There is:

- o high social care involvement;
- o generational workless families;
- o low aspirations;
- o poor health, including very high levels of poor mental health amongst parents;
- o multiple housing issues including homelessness;
- o low literacy levels among some parents

EAL proportions are increasing as are the number of children identified with SEND (*20 more children than last academic year*). On entry, there are low levels of oracy and language acquisition alongside poor social, emotional and personal development.



Our Phonics Approach

At Portland Spencer Academy we believe that for all of our children to become fluent readers and writers, phonics must be taught through a systematic and structured phonics programme.

We use the **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised** to plan and provide daily engaging phonics lessons. In phonics, we teach children that the letters of the alphabet represent a different sound, that these can be used in a variety of combinations and are put together to make words. The children learn to recognise all of the different sounds and combinations that they might see when they are reading or writing. Our phonics teaching starts in Nursery and follows a very specific sequence that allows our children to build on their previous phonic knowledge and master specific phonic strategies as they move through school. As a result, all of our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words that they might discover. At Portland we also model these strategies in shared reading and writing both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum.

Intent of phonics at Portland Spencer Academy

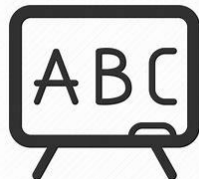
Taught daily



DfE approved scheme



Environment



Reading Leader



Assessment and interventions



CPD and monitoring



Phonics is taught daily at Portland in F1, F2, Year 1 and Year 2 following the DfE approved scheme of 'Little Wandle'. All children have a phonics lesson taught daily at the expected level. In addition, additional interventions are provided for children working below the expected level or children who are not making sufficient progress. This is to ensure that these children 'keep up', rather than having to 'catch up' with their peers.

Phonics is also woven through the continuous provision and the environment to enable children to regularly practice and consolidate their new learning.

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 using Phase 1 and this is continued in Reception and follows 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. 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.

Classrooms have a phonics display to showcase the phonics learning that is happening that week. This supports children to look back and identify the GPC's that have been taught over the week as they 'grow the code'. The use of visual picture prompts on the 'grow the code' chart acts as a memory hook to support children in identifying the correct grapheme/phoneme correspondence for each letter. Sound mats are also available in the classroom to support children when working independently.

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 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.

Assessment is part of daily and weekly practice in phonics to ensure children are making good progress. Assessment informs the class teacher of gaps, both individual and cohort specific, and this information is used to shape future plans.

In Reception and Year 1, at the end of the week there is a review session which recaps the learning from the week. There are also whole review weeks to address gaps identified by the class teacher's ongoing formative assessment. Each child has an individual phonics tracker which is updated regularly. This information analysed to show the progress children are making and swift interventions are planned for those at risk of falling behind with daily 'keep up' sessions following the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme. Children who are in Y2-Y6 and need 'catch up' sessions are assessed through teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as half termly summative assessments.

Learning walks and monitoring are completed regularly to ensure that phonics practice is consistent across school and leading to good progress for all children. Learning walks are captured using the 'drop in sheets' and next steps planned accordingly.

CPD is delivered regularly to all staff at school, phase and individual level. This tailored approach to CPD ensures phonics teaching is of high quality ensuring all children make good progress.



Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Portland Spencer Academy,, 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.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Portland Spencer Academy, 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.

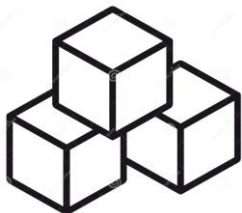
Comprehension

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 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 of phonics at Portland Spencer Academy

Foundations for phonics in Nursery



In Nursery, we build the foundations for phonics by providing a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children. These experiences meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy' and include: sharing high-quality stories and poems, learning a range of nursery and action rhymes, activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending skills.

We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending skills in Reception.

Daily phonics lessons



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.

Keep up lessons



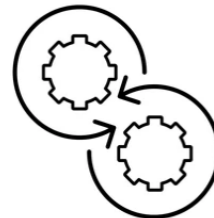
Any child who needs additional practice has daily 'Keep-up support', taught by a fully trained adult. 'Keep-up' lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning. Additional daily phonics lessons happen for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not yet 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.

Reading groups



We teach children to apply their reading skills through reading practice sessions. These are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of children using books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book matching grids. 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) and comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

Consistency and pace



Every adult at Portland Spencer Academy has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress across school. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load to enable their working memory to focus on the 'to be learned' material. CPD at Portland is iterative and may be pitched at the whole school, specific year groups or individual teachers. This tailored approach ensures our teaching is of the highest quality. Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme to ensure consistency across classes and year groups. The use of lesson templates, prompt cards and 'How to' videos ensure all teachers and additional adults have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson. In addition, the Reading Lead and SLT use the audit and prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching and regularly review and analyse the summative data to identify children and adults who need additional support.

Love of reading



We value reading for pleasure highly at Portland as 'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.' (OECD 2002). We read to the children every day using books which reflect the children at our school and our local community, as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures. Every classroom has an inviting book corner, with books that are refreshed regularly to entice children to read a wide range of books.

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 on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school. As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments to reflect on the books they have read. Regular visits to the local and school library as well as the opportunities to engage with a wide range of reading events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc) all aim to promote a love of reading.



How do we teach phonics?

- In Nursery, children follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised 'Foundations for Phonics' guidance. The focus is on daily oral blending and language development through the use of high quality stories, songs and rhymes.
- In Reception and Y1, children follow the progression within Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. Phonics is taught daily and there is a review session on a Friday.
- Phonics starts in Reception in week 2 of Autumn 1 to ensure that the children make a strong start.
- Reception lessons start at 10 minutes, with daily additional oral blending – increasing to 30 minutes as soon as possible. By the end of Reception, children will have been taught up to the end of phase 4.
- Y1 lessons are 30 minutes long. By the end of year 1, children will have been taught up to the end of phase 5.
- In Y2-Y3, phonic lessons are taught daily to children where appropriate – following the model of Little Wandle by plugging specific gaps identified through assessment.
- In Y2-Y6 there are planned short, sharp phonic 'catch-up' sessions following a set model to address specific reading/writing gaps.



What will my child learn and when?

The programme overviews for Reception and Year 1 shows the progression of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and tricky words that your child will learn term-by-term. The progression has been organised so that children are taught from the simple to more complex GPCs, as well as taking into account the frequency of their occurrence in the most commonly encountered words. All the graphemes taught are practised in words, sentences, and later on, in fully decodable books. Children review and revise GPCs and words, daily, weekly and across terms and years, in order to move this knowledge into their long-term memory. Children need to learn to read as quickly as reasonably possible, so they can move from learning to read, to reading to learn, giving them access to the treasure house of reading. Our expectations of progression are aspirational yet achievable. Children who are not keeping up with their peers should be given additional practice immediately through ‘keep-up’ sessions.

Click on the link to see the **‘Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised 2021: Programme progression Reception and Year 1 overviews’**.

https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Programme-Overview_Reception-and-Year-1-1.pdf



Reading practice sessions through story groups

- Children across Reception, Year 1, Year 2 (and beyond if appropriate) apply their phonics knowledge by using a full matched decodable reader in a small group reading practice session.
- These sessions are 15 minutes long and happen three times a week. There are approximately 6 children in a group.
- The sessions follow the model set out in Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised for story groups.
- The children will also read this book in school on a 1-1 basis with an adult with a focus on decoding.
- Children who are not decoding, take part in an oral blending lesson, following the model set out in Little Wandle Letters and Sound Revised.

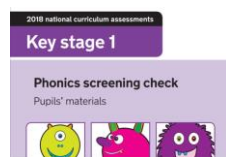
Impact of phonics at Portland Spencer Academy

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 and weekly in the 'Review lesson' to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spelling. 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 Reading Lead, class teachers and SLT scrutinise this information through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to identify and narrow any attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Statutory assessments



Children in Year 1 sit the statutory Phonics Screening Check. Regular mock testing will take place over the year to enable children to become familiar with the test format. These scores are tracked to ensure children are making progress and identify children at risk of falling behind. Children will receive additional daily 'keep up' interventions if required. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2 and additional interventions and 'keep up' sessions will be delivered throughout Year 2 from both the class teacher and through the use of apps including Nussy, Phonics Play and Preparing for Literacy.



How can I help my child at home?

If you are a parent and would like more information about how to support your child with phonics at home, please speak to your child's class teacher or follow the link to find the Reception and Year 1 overview as well as videos of the sound pronunciations, letter formation sheets and other helpful resources.

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>



**Phase 2 sounds taught in
Reception Autumn 1**



**Phase 2 sounds taught in
Reception Autumn 2**



**Phase 3 sounds taught in
Reception Spring 1**