

# Phonics Rationale

## **Lister Infants Phonics Rationale**

### **“Respect for all, Learners for Life”**

Our school motto is the motivation behind our school and what makes our school curriculum unique. It is our core belief that entwines and leads the curriculum at our school.

#### **Vision**

At Lister Infant School we aim to create a safe, happy, caring and inclusive school where children, staff, parents and visitors feel valued, are encouraged to succeed, are treated with respect, love learning and activity work together to be the best they can be.

We strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One and believe this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete Phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a ‘Reading for Pleasure’ culture.

#### **Intent**

At Lister Infant School we provide a high quality Phonics curriculum that is accessible by all, underpinned by our school values, ‘Respect for all, Learners for Life.’ We believe that all children should get the best teaching possible in this crucial area so we deliver the important skills and knowledge of phonics through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach to ensure all children achieve and succeed to their highest potential. This approach has been shown to provide a quick and efficient way for most young children to learn to read and write words on the page, fluently and accurately and we endeavour for children to develop this skill so that it becomes automatic. ‘The ability to read is the key to educational achievement. Without a basic foundation in literacy, children cannot gain access to a rich and diverse curriculum. Poor literacy limits opportunities not only at school, but throughout life, both economically and in terms of a wider enjoyment and appreciation of the written word’. (Education and Skills Committee). It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

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.

## **Phonics (reading and spelling)**

At Lister Infants, 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 Lister Infants, 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 Lister Infants, 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.

## **Implementation**

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised is divided into phases 2, 3, 4 and 5, with each phase building on the skills and knowledge of previous learning. Children have time to practise and rapidly expand their ability to read and spell words. They are also taught to read and spell 'tricky words', which are words with spellings that are unusual and cannot be segmented or blended (sounded out).

## **Phonics Progression**

Nursery – Foundations for Phonics (Speaking and Listening)

Reception – Phase 2/3/4

Year 1 – Phase 3/4 and Phase 5

Year 2 – Spelling programme along with keep up sessions for Pupils who need to pass the Phonics Screening Check

## **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.
- We 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.

Phonics is still taught daily throughout Year 2 in our school, however, there is a greater emphasis on the spelling strategies. When spelling words, children will learn to choose the correct spelling patterns to represent the sounds in words. Good phonics knowledge and skills help all children to read words fluently and spell words confidently, but they need to understand what they are reading and understand the processes and purposes for writing too.

Outside of the phonics session we give lots of opportunities to apply the new skills that they have learned in all the lessons that they do. The more opportunities they are given the sooner they will become confident with these skills.

## **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 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.

### **Teaching reading:**

We currently teach reading through a daily phonics lesson, individual one to one reading and shared reading using 'Steps to Read' with the whole class four times a week. Children who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions will read their reading practice book to an adult daily whilst other children read around three times a week. All children read with reading experts using decodable books for early reading.

### **However from spring term 2021 we are moving to group reading for those on decodable books.**

- Children will be taught to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These will:
  - be 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 and book matching grids
  - be 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**

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
  - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children each week using the Lister Home Library.
  - 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.

### **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 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 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 Lister Infants 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 Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Nursery/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.
- We provide class visits to the local library.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. It must be booked via the school booking system. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).

## **Inclusion**

Our school is an inclusive school and in each class there are children with a range of additional needs including ADHD, Dyslexia, Speech and Language, ASD and moderate learning difficulties. Our school recognises that children, with these different needs, benefit from an adapted lesson to allow all children to be successful and access activities at a level appropriate to their skills and needs. Resources are used to cater to the needs of individuals and support provided by staff as necessary. Any pupils with special educational needs are identified and teachers ensure lessons are catered to suit to every pupil's needs through adapting tasks, using resources and staff as necessary. We want all our pupils to apply what they know with increasing fluency and independence.

## **Family links**

Parents have a considerable contribution to make to a child's success in school. They are strongly encouraged to be fully involved in their child's education. Parents are invited to review their children's school books (during open afternoons and parent evenings) and to support their child in responding to their teacher's feedback. Parent comments are added to topic books to share their view on progress, enjoyment and attainment. Parent workshops and Phonics demo lessons are held to inform parents how to support their child with Phonics at home and these are always well attended. Lister Infants shares learning through Twitter, Seesaw and the school website which is a great way for our families to access what the children are experiencing in the classroom and to continue that learning at home.

## **Impact**

Phonics is given high priority at Lister Infants and we are proud to continually achieve results in line with national figures for the Year One Phonic Screening Test.

At Lister Infants the purpose of monitoring and evaluation activities is to raise the overall quality of teaching and levels of pupil attainment. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is consistently monitored through book scrutiny, lesson observations, learning walks and pupil voice.

## **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.

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

The coordinator feeds back to the Senior Leadership Team each term by completing a termly report monitoring data for all children including specific key groups. As a result of analysing data, actions are shared with staff and monitored by the co-ordinator. Additionally regular learning walks take place where lessons, books and pupil voice are triangulated to ensure high quality learning is happening and to provide support through coaching. At the end of each academic year, a subject action plan is devised, which is then monitored throughout and reviewed at the end of the following year.

Our staff are experts in the teaching of early reading, which ensures all of our pupils make progress in their reading and writing. We expect all pupils to make progress which we see as knowing more and remembering more of the intended curriculum over time. We ensure all staff receive regular CPD and coaching in order to provide the highest quality of education to our pupils. Staff who have attended CPD training, feedback to colleagues at staff meetings to ensure good practice is implemented by all. To guarantee that progress is made for all children in phonics, the staff at Lister Infants ensure that we follow the teaching sequence of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised and the National Curriculum for Year 2. We are able to embed the knowledge required through the teaching sequence and provide exciting opportunities for all children to be actively participating. We consistently build on the children's prior learning to deepen their understanding and build confidence in their own ability to read and write and to use their skills and knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. As a result, we expect most children to be secure in their knowledge of Phase 3 and working

competently within Phase 4 by the end of Reception. Year 1 will have completed Phase 4 and Phase 5 phonics in order to successfully complete the Statutory Phonics Screening Check and be ready to begin Year 2 spelling upon entry into Year 2. Year 2 will successfully complete the spelling strategies while revisiting earlier phases to reinforce previous learning and to also re-experience 'tricky words' that they have encountered before.