

	Offley Endowed Primary School Policy	Policy No: Issue: Date: October 2025	
Policy Title:	Early Reading and Phonics	Users:	Staff, Governors

The context of our school

We believe that each pupil has individual and unique needs. However, some pupils require more support than others to achieve their full potential. This school aims to provide all pupils with strategies for dealing with their needs in a supportive environment, and to give them meaningful access to the curriculum. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

We believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. We teach reading through *Jolly Phonics*, which is a systematic synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the *Jolly Phonics* scheme 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, in phonics lessons 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 life skill and teach children to read confidently for meaning and to regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary.

We have a Reading Lead who drives the phonics and early reading programme. They monitor and support staff to ensure consistency and fidelity to the *Jolly Phonics* programme. However, the programme has been tailored to our setting (see Appendix).

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.
 - A daily 15-minute phonics session

Chair of Governors	Mr P. Edwards - Headteacher
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- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception. If appropriate, more able pupils join Reception for phonics lessons.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- In 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 30-minute lessons as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- We follow the Jolly Phonics programme:
 - 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. 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 a range of Keep-up sessions for any child in Year 2 who is not fully fluent at reading or did not meet the threshold for the Phonics screening check. We use the Jolly Phonics assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources – at pace.
- Children in Years 3 to 6 are assessed and their needs met as appropriate

Teaching reading:

- We teach children to read by hearing individual readers and through group reading practice sessions (see appendix for details).
- The group sessions focus on reading comprehension (understanding the text). They are taught to small groups of 4-6 children. They use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge. The class teacher rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
- In Reception group sessions start in the summer term.
- Children in Year 1 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 using decodable books for any pupils with gaps in their phonic knowledge.

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily when possible



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Home reading

- The decodable **reading practice book** is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
- **Sharing books** also go home for parents to share and read to children. We use the Jolly Phonics resources to 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 Nursery, Reception and Year 1 has the same expectations of progress. We 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.

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 using **core texts** and chosen books in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 alongside other poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts. We choose these books carefully to ensure that children experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the lives of children at Offley School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has a book area that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to encourage the children to read a wide range of books.
- In Nursery, Reception and Year 1, children have access to the reading area every day in their learning activity/ play and learn time. The books are regularly changed according to children's interests and the topic focus.
- Children from Nursery onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults in school also record comments to ensure communication between home and school.
- The school library is also available for classes to use.

Impact

Assessment

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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, the Literacy subject leader and the Reading Lead through the *Jolly Phonics assessment tracker*, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support can be put into place.
- The Jolly Phonic assessment resource is used:
 - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate extra teaching.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 undertake the statutory Phonics screening check each June. Any child not meeting the threshold undertakes the check again in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
 - Teachers' ongoing formative assessment
 - the *Jolly Phonic* assessment, when appropriate

See also Appendix outlining the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 programme regarding 'sharing books', individual reading, group reading, class reading and assessment.



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Appendix

We believe that pupils learn to read more effectively when they are heard individually by an adult in school, alongside reading regularly to parents and carers at home.

Due to our small class sizes, we are able to hear all pupils in Reception and Year 1 read individually on a regular basis. This takes place alongside group reading, sharing books and class reading. See *below*.

Sharing books		
Nursery	Reception	Year 1
Books chosen weekly and shared with an adult at home.	Books chosen weekly and shared with an adult at home.	
Books shared with adult at school (until ready for wordless picture books.)		

Individual reading to an adult		
Nursery	Reception	Year 1
1 x per week - wordless picture books (when pupils are ready).	3 x per week. Daily for LA whenever possible.	At least once a week. Daily for LA whenever possible.

Group reading		
Nursery	Reception	Year 1
-	Once a week from Summer term (when ready). This replaces one of the individual reading sessions.	Once a week (reading comprehension focus).

Class reading		
Nursery	Reception	Year 1
At least twice a day: one core text read as well as a book chosen by the daily 'special helper' pupil or a topic related book.		Twice a day: one core text read as well as an additional book chosen by a pupil/ adult.

Assessment		
Nursery	Reception	Year 1
Formative assessment. Segmenting and blending assessed from Summer term. More able pupils are assessed alongside Reception.	Jolly Phonic summative assessments every 6 weeks.	