



# **Early Reading and Phonics Policy 2025**

## **Intent**

### **‘We learn to read in Key Stage One so we can read to learn in Key Stage Two’ Janet Thompson, Phonics leadership network, May 2021**

At Southglade Primary School we highly value reading as a golden thread which weaves through all areas of the curriculum. It is our intention that all our children will become successful readers by the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1), thus enabling them to have full access to our broad and inspiring Key Stage 2 (KS2) Curriculum. We believe this can be achieved by providing a structured and rigorous phonics programme, which begins in Nursery and continues through to Year 1, then develops into spelling provision in Year 2, continuing into KS2.

The phonics programme which we use is:

#### **‘Little Wandle: Revised Letters and Sounds.’**

This whole class phonics programme follows our ethos of ‘Keep up, not catch up’ and includes daily phonics sessions and three times weekly reading sessions. Children are taught decoding, prosody and comprehension in a structured and developed sequence of reading lessons linked to a decodable text, which has been selected based on half termly assessments of phonological understanding. This ensures children read fluently and with understanding, allowing them to become expert decoders. Children take home a decodable reading book which matches their assessed level (Big Cat: Little Wandle in EYFS and Year 1 and 2, 7+ phonetically decodable Big Cat Books in KS2), plus a reading for pleasure book is also sent home each week to support enjoyment of reading.

Any child at risk of falling behind with their phonics understanding and reading provision will be identified quickly and intervention provided. Keep up and catch up sessions will be delivered to ensure children quickly close the gaps in their understanding. Assessments will be used half-termly to identify gaps in children’s understanding to be addressed within these sessions and in whole class lessons.

Children in Year 2 and KS2, who have not passed the phonics screening check, will complete Little Wandle: Rapid Catch Up before moving on to other supportive strategies from Year 4 onwards. Provision may include NHS SALT, completing a dyslexia screening, daily Nessler or Toe-by-Toe sessions, precision teaching. Children who still need to read decodable texts to support with fluency, which may be due to a range of factors, will use 7+ Little Wandle Big Cat decodable texts to support with reading.

Teachers model the application of phonics in reading and writing throughout the curriculum and children are able to apply these skill in all their lessons. We have a strong focus on language and vocabulary development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Leaders monitor the provision of reading through learning walks, observations in English, Curriculum and Phonics sessions; the learning environment and regular book looks; hearing individual children read, pupil voice, outcomes of PSC, half termly assessments, NFER termly reading assessments, reading data, decodable reading levels

## **Implementation**

Planning for every year group is provided by 'Little Wandle: revised Letters and Sounds', and is used to teach phoneme and grapheme knowledge. The programme teaches children all 44 graphemes and how to use them to blend to read and segment to write efficiently.

## **Nursery**

Children work on 'Foundations for Phonics' provided by 'Little Wandle: Letters and Sounds Revised' focussing on initial language acquisition, stories, rhymes and understanding in preparation for 'Little Wandle: Letters and Sounds Revised' Phase 2 teaching in Reception. We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the EYFS 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 and vocabulary.

## **Reception**

We follow the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' expectations of progress. We teach phonics daily from the first week in the Autumn term, with lots of opportunities provided for children to practise their skills during Continuous Provision and through Focus Activities. Children read with the teacher in small groups three times a week, developing decoding, prosody and comprehension skills. They take home their reading book at the end of the week and are encouraged to read at least three times a week at home too.

## **Year 1**

Children begin 'Little Wandle: Letters and Sounds Revised' in Year 1 as soon as they return to school after the Summer holidays. The first three weeks recap Phase 3 and Phase 4 in preparation for teaching Phase 5. They allow staff to identify if there are any gaps in children's understanding to begin keep up and catch up sessions within three weeks of October half term. 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.

Half-termly summative phonics assessments are used to inform the support given to children during additional 1:1 keep up or catch up sessions and group reading sessions. Daily assessment for learning is used to identify children within a session who need immediate support to ensure they do not fall behind.

Phonics is taught in a very structured way, using a sequence of Review and Revisit/Teach and Practise/Practise and Apply. Consistent teaching prompts, resources and terminology are used in all phonics sessions to ensure continuity.

## **Year 2**

Children who have not passed the Phonics Screening Test in Year 1 are given extra support in Year 2 using the Rapid Catch up planning for phase 3 and 5 to try and quickly close the gaps in their learning.

Bridge to Spelling Little Wandle is used in Year 2 to systematically teach spelling patterns and fluency.

### **Keep-up sessions ensure every child learns to read**

Any child who needs additional practice has daily keep-up support, a planned session from the programme, taught by a fully trained adult. This might be individual or in a small group session. Keep-up sessions 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.

### **Rapid Catch-up programme KS2**

If any child in Year 3 still requires phonics support having not passed the phonics screening recheck in Year 2, they are taught the 'rapid catch up' programme from a trained adult. These short, sharp lessons last 10-20 minutes and take place daily. It follows the programme structure, with planning and resources provided and includes 3x weekly reading sessions following the same structure as in Reception and Year One.

### **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.
- to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

**The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised placement assessment** 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 sit the Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2. All children are baselined as soon as they enter Year One by completing a phonics screening check. Children then take practice phonics screening tests throughout the year; scores are monitored and children who need further support receive interventions.

### **We are building a skilled team who can teach phonics well:**

By accessing external training and providing inhouse CPD and team teaching, we ensure that all staff delivering phonics are trained and confident to deliver it accurately and consistently to all children. All staff understand the need for an agreed structure and way of teaching phonics, which provides continuity throughout the school. They are familiar with specific phonics terminology for 'Little Wandle: revised Letters and Sounds'.

### **Decodable Reading Books**

Decodable reading books in EYFS and Year 1 match our phonics programme (and where required for pupils in Year 2, those accessing the Rapid Catch up programme in Year 3 then any child who still requires a decodable text from Year 4-6). Children are taught specific phonemes / graphemes and have access to decodable reading books that reinforce the phonics sounds that have been explicitly taught. Half-termly assessments are used to identify which reading books match children's phonological understanding. No child is given a book including graphemes they have not seen. Children are expected to read the book with 90% accuracy/fluency initially to ensure they are accessing the correct reading book. These books are sent home weekly and changed weekly based on the phonics set.

Children read their decodable reading book three times weekly in school (before sending this home) focusing on:

Lesson 1 – Decoding (90% accuracy)

Lesson 2 – Prosody (95% accuracy)

Lesson 3 – Comprehension

**'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.'**  
**(OECD 2002)**

Children throughout school also take home a reading for pleasure book. This book is designed to encourage children to foster a real love of reading and to expose them to a range of different books and text types including fiction, non-fiction, poetry and rhyming texts.

**Reception** – One decodable text established through assessments and weekly reading sessions, one love of reading book.

**Year 1** – One decodable text established through assessments and weekly reading sessions, one love of reading book.

**Year 2 (who have not passed the phonics screening check and attend Year 1 phonics sessions)** - One decodable text established through assessments and weekly reading sessions, one love of reading book.

**Year 2 and KS2** – We aim for children to be on green book banded books starting in Year 2 and progress through the book bands throughout their time at Southglade.

**Further support for specific children in KS2** - Across school any child who is reading at a decodable level, including SEN pupils and those with dyslexia, where appropriate, will be given a decodable 7+ book and love of reading book.

We encourage parents to hear their child read at home regularly to develop fluency. Our expectation is that children read at home 3 times per week. Reading diaries are used by parents and staff to log when a child reads. The teacher and TA monitor these in order to ensure children are reading at home and also to gain information about other books that children may have accessed to at home.

### **Reading Comprehension and Responding to Texts:**

Starting in EYFS, and continuing throughout school, children are explicitly taught to comprehend and respond to texts.

We teach the following key reading skills, outlined in the National Curriculum and EYFS:

- Using background knowledge to understand text
- Predicting
- Understanding vocabulary and developing strategies for this including recognising what they don't understand
- Asking questions and “wondering” about the text
- Visualising
- Developing inference
- Summarising

**We use a range of teaching strategies across school to ensure that we meet the needs of all our pupils as follows:**

### **Teaching reading: 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 using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of 'Application of phonics to reading'
- 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 Reception these sessions start in Autumn 2. Children who are not yet decoding have additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books. These pupils use wordless books so they can get used to the structure of a reading session.

Children hear, share and discuss a range of high-quality texts including fiction, poetry and non-fiction. We have a book-based curriculum with carefully chosen key and supporting texts, covering a range of genres, styles and themes. The level of challenge increases across year groups, through the complexity of texts being read. Key vocabulary links to each book and topic.

Reading in Year 2 – Year 6 is built in to our English sessions, a minimum of 20 minutes daily reading (additional to spellings) which supports with differentiated comprehension skills and explores a range of fluency techniques through guided, shared and individual reading as well as a range of activities.

However, comprehension is not only taught in these specific sessions but is at the heart of topic and cross-curricular teaching. At Southglade we recognise that good reading

comprehension relies heavily on knowledge. Our English planning structure in Years 2 – 6 and our broad and enriched curriculum is structured to aid reading comprehension skills by ensuring that children gain knowledge of the world in which they live and can make links to their reading and learning. We look for any opportunity for reading to be the focus of our learning and ensure a range of quality texts are used to support this.

### **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 consistent language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.

The weekly content grid maps out 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.

## **Impact**

### **EYFS and KS1**

By the end of Year 2 we expect our children to be skilled at word reading to ensure: speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding); including decoding most new words outside their spoken vocabulary and making a good approximation to the word's pronunciation; the speedy recognition of familiar printed words, using reading books at an age appropriate interest level, accurately and at a reasonable speaking pace; books at an age appropriate interest level read at a speed that is sufficient for children to focus on understanding what they read rather than on decoding individual words; most words are read effortlessly and children are able to work out how to pronounce unfamiliar written words with increasing automaticity.

### **Key Stage 2**

Decoding fluently and accurately by the end of Year 2 means that no further direct teaching of word reading skills (with the exception of vocabulary development) should be needed for the majority of children in KS2.

For children with special or additional needs who are working well below Age Related levels we provide bespoke phonics support and specific interventions. These may be delivered by a teacher, TA or SNA according to need, and are planned after consultation with the SEND/phonics lead.

Other strategies will have been used in conjunction with phonics to ensure children are being offered the best provision they can be to close gaps

### **By the end of LKS2 we expect our children to:**

Have decoding skills that are secure and hence vocabulary is developing;  
Be independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and frequently;  
Be developing their understanding and enjoyment of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction, and learning to read silently;  
Be developing their knowledge and skills in reading non-fiction about a wide range of subjects;  
Be able to justify their views independently about what they have read.

### **By the end of Year 6 we expect our children to:**

Read sufficiently fluently and effortlessly, with understanding at an age appropriate interest level in readiness for secondary school;

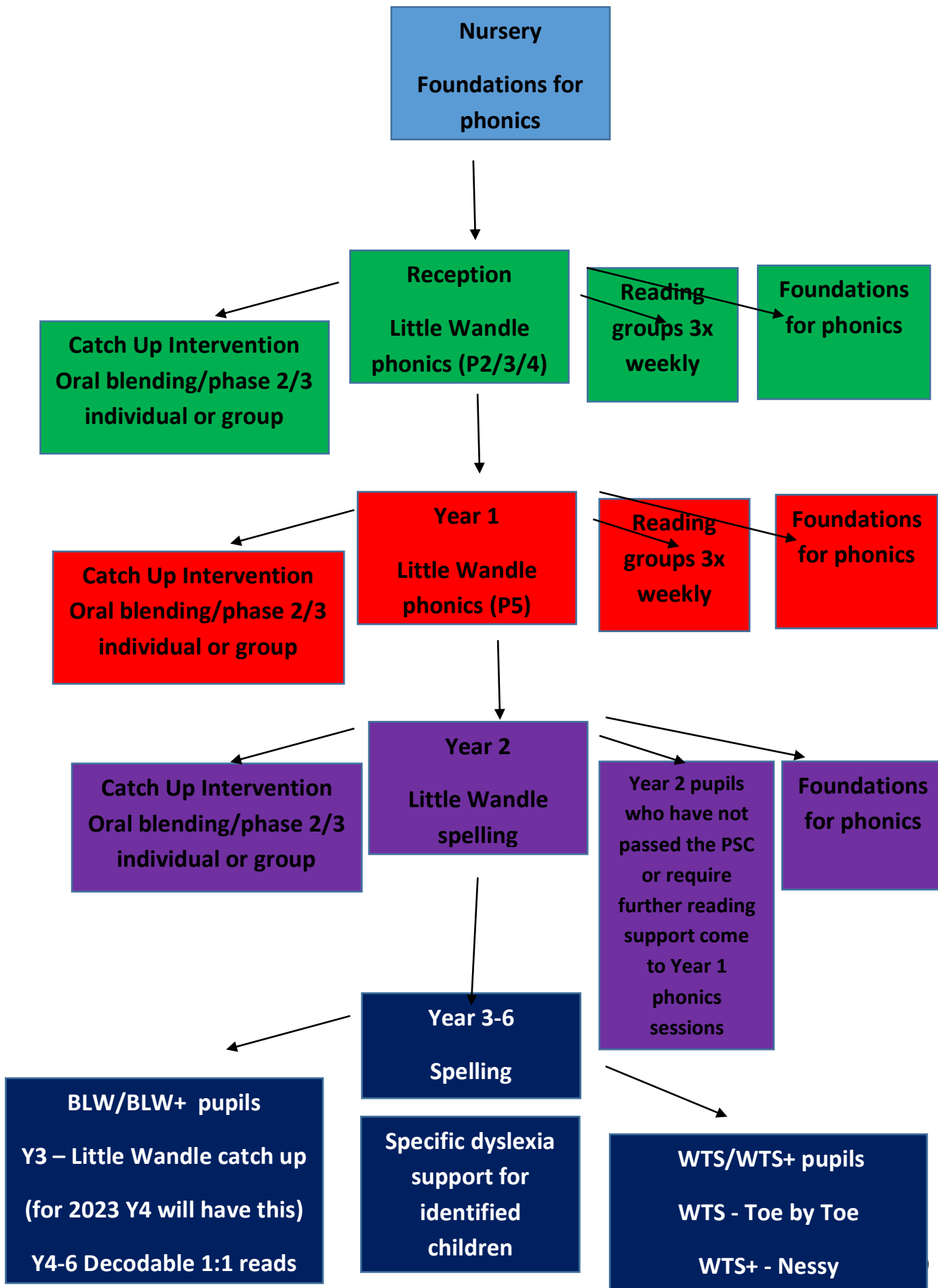
All staff across school will have the knowledge of phonics required to allow texts to be accessible to all children, to have resources and strategies to support all readers.

Spelling accuracy will have improved across school and this will have impacted their writing.

### **In addition we expect our children to:**

Have a love of reading that feeds the imagination;  
Read widely across both fiction and non-fiction, developing knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live;  
Have a developed vocabulary beyond that used in everyday speech;  
Understand nuances in vocabulary choice;  
Understand and use age-appropriate, academic vocabulary.

1  
T  
O  
1  
R  
E  
A  
D  
I  
N  
G

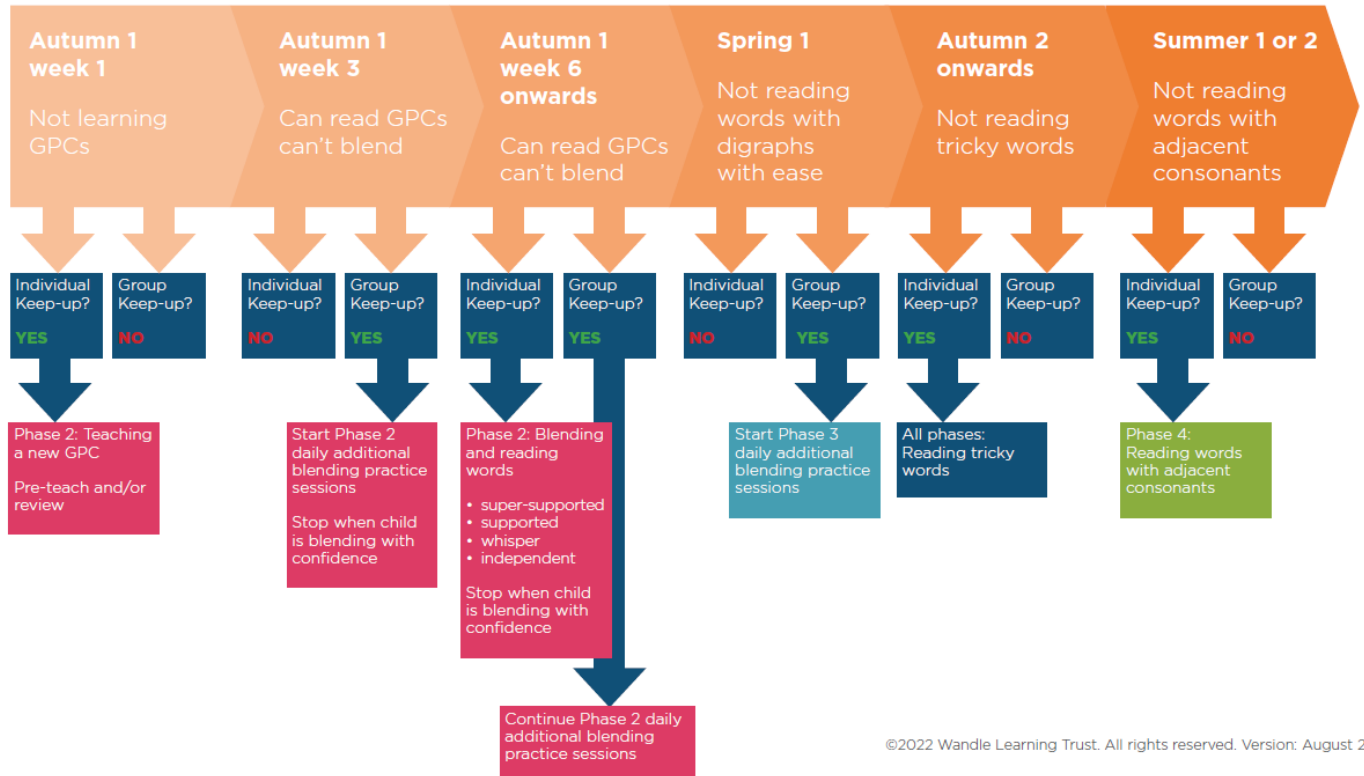


## Reception: Identifying children for group or individual Keep-up support

# Precision

Use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments (every six weeks), as well as assessment within the daily lesson to identify children in Reception who need either individual or group Keep-up sessions. Do not let children fall behind – take action as soon as possible.

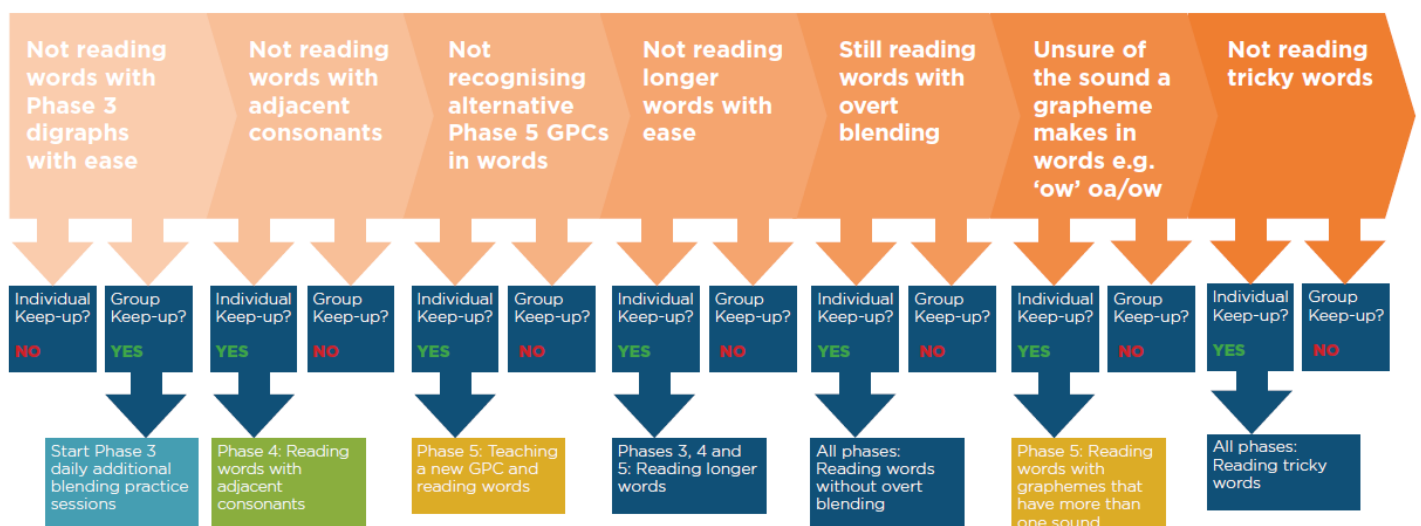
Use the assessment again after three weeks to check that these children have filled their gaps.



## Year 1: Identifying children for group or individual Keep-up support

Use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments (every six weeks), as well as assessment within the daily lesson, to identify children in Year 1 who need either individual or group Keep-up sessions. Do not let children fall behind – take action as soon as possible.

Use the assessment again after three weeks to check that these children have filled their gaps.



## What to do with Year 2 from September?

This document gives advice on choosing the right route for children at the start of Year 2, whether this means completing the **Little Wandle main programme**, following **Rapid Catch-up** or moving on to **Little Wandle Spelling** and **Little Wandle Fluency**.

### 1. Have you completed the Year 1 Summer 2 teaching?

#### Yes

Go to question 2 below.

#### No

Go back and teach it. Aim to have completed this by the end of Autumn 1.

#### No, and I have gaps in Spring 1 and 2

Complete the Post-Phonics Screening Check assessment and teach to the gaps. Aim to have filled the gaps and taught Summer 2 by the end of Autumn 1, even it means teaching two lessons a day.

### 2. Are all your children on track with phonics?

#### Yes

- Assess all children using the **Year 2 Phase 5 review** assessment.
- Teach the Phase 5 review for five weeks.
- Repeat the Phase 5 review assessment to see progress and plan any gap filling.
- Continue to **Year 2 Bridge to spelling** and the **Year 2 Spelling** programme.

#### No, but some of them are

##### If you have another adult:

- Teach two separate groups.
- Use the main programme **Year 1 Phase 5 planning** for children who are not on track. Consider teaching two lessons a day to get all children back on track by the end of Autumn 1.
- Use the **Year 2 Phase 5 review** for children who are on track. (See column 1, left.)

##### If you do not have another adult:

- Teach your whole class the main programme **Year 1 Phase 5 planning**.
- Consider using the Year 2 Phase 5 review to challenge children who are on track.

#### No, some are at Phase 4

- Keep these children in class if you are teaching Phase 5. Do not keep them in class if you are teaching the Spelling programme.
- Teach **Rapid Catch-up Phase 4\*** in groups, as needed.
- Assess every four weeks.
- These children should follow the Rapid Catch-up programme to its completion.

#### No, some are at Phase 2 or 3

- Do not keep these children in class if you are teaching Phase 5 or the Spelling programme.
- Teach **Rapid Catch-up Phase 2 or 3\*** in groups as needed.
- Assess every four weeks.
- These children should follow the Rapid Catch-up programme to its completion.

\*Rapid Catch-up is very pacy and you may need to slow down the lessons initially.

### 3. What should I do about teaching reading?

#### Children reading Phase 5 Set 5 books

- Use the Phase 5 Set 5 fluency assessment to identify children who are ready for the **Little Wandle Fluency** programme.
- Children following the **main programme** are ready to start **Little Wandle Fluency 1** books when they can read at 60-70+ words per minute with an accuracy rate of at least 90%.
- Children following **Rapid Catch-up** are ready to start **Little Wandle Fluency 5** books when they can read at 90+ words per minute with an accuracy rate of at least 90%.

#### Children reading Phase 2 to Phase 5 Set 4 books

- Continue to teach reading practice sessions three times a week.
- Use the assessments to match the children's secure phonic knowledge to the right level book. (See Programme content and resources/Reception or Year 1/Assessments.)
- For children reading Phase 5 Set 3 books onwards, use the fluency assessments to assess reading speed and accuracy.