



Phonics and Early Reading Policy

Policy Review and Approval

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A copy of this policy and other related policies can be obtained from the School Office.

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The context of our school

Gildredge House was established in 2013 as a Free School and provides for a range of age groups from Reception to Year 13. The Primary phase is two form entry with most students being from a White British background. The proportion of students with SEND is in line with national average and the proportion of disadvantaged students is below the national average. The percentage of students with English as an Additional Language is 22%.

Intent

Following The Reading Framework, 2023 (DfE, 2023), at Gildredge House, we recognise that reading is fundamental to a student accessing the wider curriculum. We believe that all our students can become fluent readers, with a developed passion and love for reading and ensure that reading has a high profile in all areas of the curriculum. This is why we use **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**. Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised is a DfE validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) Programme. The programme follows a systematic, synthetic approach to teaching phonics that begins in Reception and continues through to Year 2 (with additional intervention for students in Year 2 and above, where necessary). It promotes clear, high expectations on the development of reading, through the teaching of recognising and reading tricky words from sight, decoding words to read, as well as teaching/learning spelling rules. Additionally, the programme has clear GPC (grapheme-phoneme correspondence) progression to support the teaching and learning of reading.

At Gildredge House, we recognise the importance of transferring knowledge into long-term memory. The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised structure embeds learning through repetition/use of key mantra's which allow students to consistently apply their learnt phonetic knowledge, supporting the transference from short-term to long-term memory. Therefore, in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 phonics is taught daily, with Year 2 moving into spelling for those who have secured the phonetic code.

Integrated into the programme is the use of high-quality reading books that are published by Harper Collins (Big Cat Books). The books not only provide access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books but match each grapheme the students are learning. This offers an opportunity for the students to read decodable books, tricky words, apply their phonetic knowledge in context and get exposure to new vocabulary. The texts are used in group reading sessions and have high-quality, well-structured planning to support the development of decoding, prosody, and comprehension.

Embedded within the programme are 6-weekly assessments which support teachers to identify any students who require extra support and how best to support those students. The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments, alongside assessment within the daily lesson(s) identify students in Reception and Year 1 who need either individual or group keep-up sessions to support students who might be at risk of falling behind the programme. The Year 2, Phase 5 Review Assessment identifies students who need to follow the Rapid Catch-up programme or who are ready to move onto Little Wandle Spelling and Little Wandle Fluency.

All staff at Gildredge House receive intensive training and receive further annual refresher training to ensure the delivery of high quality phonics and reading sessions and productive use of assessment and keep-up sessions.

Early Reading Vision Statement

'We aspire for every child to become enthusiastic and motivated readers.'

Using the Little Wandle programme, we teach students to:

- Read fluently, with expression, and read with meaning by having good comprehension.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information. The aim is to foster a life-long love of reading.
- Teach students the spelling rules associated with phonics which allows them to write accurately and coherently, adapting their language. This will then in turn allow them to read and write in a range of contexts, for different purposes, and audiences.

Implementation

At Gildredge House, we provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all students, that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy' to include:

- Sharing high-quality stories and poems.
- Learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes.
- Activities that develop focused listening and attending, including oral blending.
- Attention to high-quality language and vocabulary (word aware).

Foundations for Phonics in Reception and Year 1

Students in Reception and Year 1 receive a daily phonics lesson for 20-30 minutes. Students in Reception begin their phonics sessions once they complete their transition sessions to Gildredge House. They are taught to read and spell words by using taught Phase 2 and 3 GPCs and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.

Students in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 3 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 student 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 student secures their learning.
- We timetable phonics lessons/sessions for any student in Year 2 or Year 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. 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, until they are ready to move onto the Little Wandle Spelling and Little Wandle Fluency programme(s).
- If any student in Years 4-6 has gaps in their phonetic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan small group and/or individual support sessions/lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These sessions last around 10 minutes and take place as required to bridge attainment gaps throughout the week.

Planning

Each phonics lesson in EYFS and KS1 include the following sections:

- Revisit and Review (overlearn the previous graphemes, words, tricky words.)
- Teach and Practise (Introduce a new grapheme using catchphrase. Practise reading words.)
- Practise and Apply (Read sentences and practise spelling with new grapheme.)
- Assess (Teacher to assess throughout lesson for assessment for learning. Some students may need catch-up support or individual 1:1 support throughout the day if not on track.)

The 'Weekly Content Grid(s)' 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.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions two/three times a week

We teach students in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2, to read by them participating in Reading Practice Sessions/Fluency Sessions two/three times a week. These:

- Are taught by a fully trained adult(s) to small groups of approximately six students.
- Use books matched to the students 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 student's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- Decoding.
- Prosody: teaching students to read with understanding and expression.
- Comprehension: teaching students to understand the text.

In Reception, these sessions start in Week 4. Students 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 student who still needs to practise reading with decodable books.

Home Learning

Each student in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 (where appropriate) receives a decodable reading practice book containing as many of the tricky words and sounds of the week for students to practise at home.

Reception:

- Students decodable reading practice books are changed weekly.
- Students also take home a Reading for Pleasure book from their class library.
- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Home Learning Sheets shared termly to engage families and share information about phonic learning.
- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised resources are sent home weekly to engage families and share information about phonic learning.
- Parent meetings are held for parents of students in Reception which outline how we teach phonics and how they can support their child when reading and writing at home.

Year 1:

- Students decodable reading practice books are changed accordingly.
- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Home Learning Sheets shared termly to engage families and share information about phonic learning.
- Parent meetings are held for parents of students in Year 1 which outline how we teach phonics and how they can support their child when reading and writing at home.
- Year 1 parents are invited to attend a workshop on the Year 1 Phonics Screening test.

Year 2:

- Where level appropriate, students take home decodable reading practice books which are changed accordingly.

- Students take home appropriately levelled books to support their reading knowledge and ability which are changed accordingly.

Additional reading support for Vulnerable Children

- We use the Little Wandle SEND Programme to support those students identified as needing additional support in school and who are below ARE (age-related expectations). The programme mirrors the main Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Phonics programme but makes reasonable adaptations to support and meet the needs of the learners. The SEND Programme is used within the Sunrise/Sunset room(s).
- Students in Reception and Year 1 recognised as below ARE receive individual or group Keep-up sessions to bridge gaps in learning.
- Students in Year 2 recognised as below ARE receive Rapid-Catch-up sessions to bridge gaps in learning.
- Students in Year 3 who did not pass the Year 2 Phonics Screening Test re-take will be assessed on the Little Wandle Rapid-Catch-up Placement Assessment to identify area(s) for support and intervention.
- Students in Years 4 - 6 recognised as below ARE will access one or more of the following Literacy interventions: Lexia, Fluency into Comprehension, 1:1 Daily Readers or BRP (Boosted Reading Programme). In addition to this, our Whole Class Reading curriculum (developed from FRED's Reading) has a focus on developing fluency, and all students will have a chance to practise developing their reading fluency within these sessions.
- YARC assessments and the Schonell Reading Age assessment are additional assessment tools used for students in Years 4-6 accessing 1:1 intervention to identify the reading need and next steps for the student

Ensuring consistency and pace of progression

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading following the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds SSP Programme, ensuring all staff have the same high expectations for progress. All staff use the same mantra's (language), routines, and resources to teach the students to read effectively and consider 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, grapheme/mnemonic cards, and 'How to' videos ensure all teachers have a consistency approach and structure for each lesson, with online materials always available to bridge gaps/consolidate knowledge.
- The teaching of reading is monitored and observed by the Phonics and Early Reading Leader.

Ensuring Reading for Pleasure

'Reading for Pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success' - (OECD 2002)

We value Reading for Pleasure highly, and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure Pedagogy:

- We encourage our students to engage in a range of different texts by ensuring a range of fiction and non-fiction books are available for reading independently or with peers/staff.
- We engage in Storytime/read to our students daily; carefully selecting the books that are shared with the students to ensure the students have experience and exposure to high-quality text, that also reflect and explore our local community, wider worlds, and different cultures.
- Every Year Group has a reading area that encourages a love and enjoyment for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice students to read a wide range of books. We allocate funding to update these books accordingly.

- We have a range of book displays that promote Reading for Pleasure.
- Teachers share their current Reading books with students, and these are displayed in each classroom.
- Students have access and exposure to a range of different text types, for example, audible stories, self-scan QR code stories, filmed stories/read online, paperback/hardback stories, (Yoto trial in EYFS).
- In Reception, students have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed. Adults model Reading for Pleasure during these free flow sessions.
- Students from Reception through to KS2 have a Home Reading Record. Parent/Carers are promoted to record comments about books they are reading or reading time to share with the adults in school. EYFS and KS1 staff will endeavour to write in these on a regular basis to promote communication between home and school. As the students' progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments in their Home Reading Record books and keep a list of the books/authors they have read.
- Class Libraries, Information Station(s), and our two Primary phase Libraries are used regularly.
- Students across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events to include, but not limited to, Book Fairs, Author Visits and Workshops, National Events, Library Visits.

Impact

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any student needing support as soon as they need it.

Assessment for learning is used in EYFS and KS1:

- Daily within Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Phonic sessions to identify students who need Keep-up support.
- Weekly in Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Phonic review lessons which assess gaps in learning, and secure fluency of GPCs, words, and spellings.

Summative Assessment is used in EYFS and KS1:

- Every 6 weeks to assess student progress and identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed. Further to identify students who need additional support and to plan the appropriate Keep-up support that the students need (Little Wandle Assessment).
- By SLT and scrutinised through Little Wandle Assessment Tracker to narrow the attainment gap between different groups of students and to ensure any additional support can be put in place.

Assessment for learning is used in KS2:

- Daily within Whole Class Reading Curriculum sessions, Literacy sessions and reading sessions.

Summative Assessment is used in KS2:

- At the end of each term (NTS Assessment).
- YARC assessments are an additional assessment tool used for students accessing 1:1 intervention to identify the reading need and next steps for the student. All students in Years 1-6 have the Schonell Reading Test administered to ascertain a decoding reading age. Attainment is measured in relation to the students chronological age, and progress in relation from their starting point.

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Placement Assessment is used in KS1:

- With a new student to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and how to best support their learning.

Statutory Assessment

- Students in Reception complete the Literacy Baseline.
- Students in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any student who does not pass the screening check in Year 1 is required to re-sit the screening check in Year 2, unless formally exempt.
- Students in Years 1 and 2 identified at risk of not passing the Screening Test are offered Early Morning Phonic Sessions to support their phonetic development. The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Mantra(s) are used in these sessions.

References

1. DfE, (2023) *The Reading Framework*, available at: [Reading Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181117/reading-framework-2023.pdf) accessed January 2024.
2. OECD, (2002) *Reading for Change, Performance and Engagement across Countries*, available at [33690986.pdf \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/reading/33690986.pdf) accessed January 2024.