

# Dilton Marsh Church of England Primary School

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy

### **Monitoring of this policy:**

This policy has been developed by a working group made up of:

- Head teacher: Jill Hibbs
- Phonics and Early Reading leader: Caroline Tout

### **Schedule for review of this policy:**

This policy was written:	September 2023
This policy was written by:	Caroline Tout
The implementation of this policy will be monitored by:	Caroline Tout
The Governing Body will receive a report on the implementation of this policy, generated by the monitoring group:	Annually
Next review date:	September 2024

This document has been written using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Policy Template 2022.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Marking and Feedback Guidance (Acorn Education Trust)
- SEN Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Handwriting Policy
- Homework Policy



# **Dilton Marsh Church of England Primary School Phonics and Early Reading Policy**

## **1. The context of our school**

At Dilton Marsh C of E Primary School we believe that high quality education provides the foundations for understanding the world around us. Through our phonics and early reading curriculum at Dilton Marsh we aim to give our pupils the life-skills that will enable them to read the world around them.

Our school vision is together, we strive to provide a safe, nurturing and challenging environment within our Christian ethos of kindness and respect.

We share a passion for life-long learning and strive for the best for ourselves, others and the World.

Children are encouraged to become independent, curious and resilient learners with the ability to learn from their mistakes and accept challenges.

“For Nothing is Impossible with God.”

**Luke 1 : 37**

Through our school vision, we strive to have children who ‘have a passion for life-long learning’ and ‘curiosity’ to question the world around them. We want our children to challenge their thinking and know that possibilities are endless.

Reading in our school is about developing children’s imagination and curiosity to enable them to make sense of the world in which they live in. The staff at Dilton Marsh C of E Primary School ensure that all children are exposed to high quality teaching and learning experiences, which allow children to flourish. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

## 2. Intent

### 2.1 Phonics

At Dilton Marsh C of E Primary School, 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 Dilton Marsh C of E Primary School, 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.

### 2.2 Comprehension

At Dilton Marsh C of E Primary School, 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 monitors and supports our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

## 3. Implementation

### 3.1 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.
  - All children in Year 2 have daily phonics lessons for the first two terms to consolidate the learning from Year 1. Additional support is then provided for

those children who did not pass the Year 1 phonics screening test or are not secure in their phonic knowledge.

### **3.2 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 and above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check or reached the required level of fluency to get off the programme. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.
- These short, sharp lessons last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.
- We monitor the impact of keep-up sessions using our own intervention tracking system to ensure that the sessions are having an impact. We regularly use the Little Wandle assessments to move any child on and review impact.

### **3.3 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 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 and above, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

### **3.4 Home reading**

- A 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. This comes from our own devised book list 'Dilton 50' or our school library. These are sharing books we do not expect the children to read but encourage parents to read these to the child and share the book together.
  - 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. These resources are on our main website and are also sent home for parents.

### 3.5 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.

### 3.6 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 Leader 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.

### 3.7 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 Dilton Marsh C of E Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner which has been carefully curated to display high quality books.

- Every classroom displays their 'Dilton 50' books to entice children to read a wide range of books suitable for their year group. These have been carefully curated and staff talk to the children about them regularly.
- In Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Reception onwards have a home reading contact book. 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 and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- A reading reward system is implemented and shared with children and parents to encourage a strong love for regular reading.
- 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).
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. Each child has a weekly timetabled library session where they are able to select a book of their interest.

## 4. Impact

### 4.1 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.
- **Fluency assessments** measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:
  - in Year 1, when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
  - with children following the Rapid Catch-up programme in Years 2 to 6, when they are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
  - to assess when children are ready to exit their programme. For Year 1 children, this is when they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute. At these

levels, children should have sufficient fluency to tackle any book at age-related expectations. After exiting their programme, children do not need to read any more fully decodable books.

- **A placement assessment** is used:
  - with any child new to the school in Reception and Year 1 to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.
- The **Rapid Catch-up assessment** is used:
  - with any child new to the school in Year 2 and above to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.

#### 4.2 Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

#### 4.3 Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 are assessed using the end of Year 1 assessments and the fluency assessments if they have not yet left the programme.
- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
  - the Rapid Catch-up initial assessment to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate teaching
  - the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching
- The Rapid Catch-up fluency assessments when children are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books for age 7+.
- The fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They also assess when children are ready to exit the Rapid Catch-up programme, which is when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute.
- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment. Any children in need of 'keep-up' may also result in teachers completing half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments.
- In Key Stage 2, we use formative NFER tests, the Salford Reading Test and the Vernon Spelling Age Test to assess and track spelling, reading and comprehension in Key Stage 2.