



# **Malmesbury C of E Primary School**

Company Number 08483768

**“Growing together in wisdom and love; discovering life  
in all its fullness.”**

## **Early Reading and Phonics Policy**

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## The Context of our School

The Wiltshire market town of Malmesbury is England's oldest borough but also home to the Dyson Research Facility which employs thousands of engineers from around the world developing cutting edge technology. Our school is the main primary school in the town. The school's capacity is 420 and it is oversubscribed, with waiting lists in most year groups.

The school serves children from a wide spread of socio-economic backgrounds. 12.4% are eligible for Pupil Premium compared to the Wiltshire average of 14.4% and national average of 22%.

7.4% of children have English as an additional language (national average 19.3%) and there are 19 first languages in the school. These children often arrive part way through their primary education, particularly due to their parents coming to work at Dyson.

Levels of mobility were low during the Covid-19 pandemic, have risen recently but remain relatively low. In 2021-22 they were 4.7%.

15.3% of children are on the SEN register compared to the national average of 15.9% and 3.3% have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) compared to the national average of 3.7%.

Overall attendance last academic year was 92.4% compared to the national average for primary schools of 91.7%. These figures were heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemic but reflect the fact that the school's attendance figures are generally at or above national averages. Very few children arrive late to school and so this does not have an impact on the teaching of phonics.

### Intent

#### Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Malmesbury C of E Primary School, we want to create a long love of reading to be cultivated by all children without any barriers that builds confidence in both reading and writing. We hope to develop fearless readers, writers and spellers who will develop a love of vocabulary through their reading and listening of stories. This is why we teach reading through [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised](#), which is a systematic synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Early Years 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. Consistency will be at the heart of our teaching across every year group.



As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Malmesbury 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.

#### Comprehension

At Malmesbury CE 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 and question new words for meaning. 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 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.

## Implementation

‘A rigorous approach to the teaching of reading develops learners’ confidence and enjoyment in reading. At the early stages of learning to read, reading materials are closely matched to learners’ phonics knowledge.’

(Office for Standards in Education, 2019a, p.10)

We will teach daily phonic sessions across EYFS to Year 2, following a systematic approach by following the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

### 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.

### 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. This can be 1:1 or in small groups, depending on the need of the child.
- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 and by 2023 in Year 3 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.
- By September 2023, if any child in Years 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics ‘catch-up’ lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

The children in these groups are moveable which allows support to be targeted to those who need it. This will be monitored by the class teachers through rigorous termly assessment.

### 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 3, 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. This is a celebration of their learning and a chance for them to share their learning with you.
  - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. These books can be chosen from the library weekly.
  - 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.

Collaboration is key when working with children. We have to have an agreement to ensure your child achieves their full potential without any ceiling. We will provide a variety of reading texts that will encourage and motivate your child to access a range of genres that match their phonic knowledge and interests, whilst extending their reading confidence and ability. To allow us to do this, we have an expectation that was shared during our 'Meet the Teacher' meeting that grown-ups will listen to their child read at home and record this in their reading diary. Our promise is that we will change books weekly and monitor your child's progress to ensure that their reading material is closely matched to their phonic knowledge and fluency rate.

## Additional Reading Support for Vulnerable Children

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

## 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.

## 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 Malmesbury 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 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 the Early Years, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from the Early Years 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. This will also record the reading sessions within 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.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times throughout the week. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (World Book Week etc).

## Impact

### 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.
- **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.

### Baseline assessment

The Reception baseline assessment (RBA) is an assessment of early mathematics and literacy. It is administered within the first six weeks of school in September or within the first six weeks of joining a new school unless it has been completed at a previous school.

### 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 to 6 are assessed through:
  - their teacher's ongoing formative assessment
  - the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* placement assessment
  - the appropriate half-termly assessments.