WOODMANSEY CE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Building Strong Foundations · Unlocking Potential · Inspiring a Generation

Early Reading & Phonics Policy

Written by: J. Williams

Approved by: Governing Body

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Next Review: September 2029

1. Relationship Between Charter, Policy and Planning

At Woodmansey CE Primary School, early reading gives practical expression to our vision of "Building Strong Foundations, Unlocking Potential, Inspiring a Generation". Learning to read quickly and successfully opens the wider curriculum, builds confidence and enables every pupil to participate more fully in the life of the school.

This policy sits beneath the Woodmansey Curriculum Statement and Reading Charter. It should be read alongside the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme overview, weekly plans, assessment materials, Reading practice guidance, Daily Keep-up, Rapid Catch-up and SEND guidance. The programme progression is the long-term sequence; official weekly plans provide the unit-level detail; daily lesson preparation enacts those plans. School-created resources must never alter or compete with that sequence.

2. Subject Overview

Woodmansey teaches early reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, the school's adopted systematic synthetic phonics programme from 2026. The programme is taught with fidelity in Reception and Year 1 and remains the route into reading for any older pupil who has not yet secured the alphabetic code.

Early reading combines accurate decoding, repeated practice, growing fluency, language comprehension and a love of books. Phonics is not taught as isolated sounds or worksheets: pupils learn grapheme-phoneme correspondences, blend to read, segment to spell and apply this knowledge in fully matched books and purposeful writing.

3. Intent

Our intent is that every pupil becomes an accurate, confident and increasingly fluent reader as quickly as possible, regardless of starting point, background or additional need. We are determined that pupils who find reading difficult receive immediate, expert support and remain connected to the ambitious curriculum experienced by their peers.

- teach the Little Wandle progression in the published order and at the intended pace
- secure automatic recognition of taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences and accurate blending
- develop spelling through oral segmenting and accurate selection of known graphemes
- match every decodable book to the pupil's secure phonic knowledge
- develop fluency, prosody and comprehension through the Little Wandle three-reads model
- identify pupils at risk of falling behind and provide Daily Keep-up without delay
- use Rapid Catch-up or the SEND pathway for older pupils or pupils with complex needs when placement evidence indicates this

- build language comprehension and Reading for Pleasure alongside, not instead of, decoding.

4. Implementation

i. Programme Structure and Progression

Reception and Year 1 follow the current Little Wandle programme overview, weekly content and lesson routines. Phase 2 begins from the start of Reception and learning progresses cumulatively through the programme. Teachers do not reorder GPCs, add unrelated mnemonics, combine SSP programmes or slow the whole-class sequence because some pupils need additional practice.

In Year 2 and beyond, pupils who are not reading at age-related expectations are assessed and placed into the appropriate Little Wandle provision. They continue to access age-appropriate comprehension, stories, vocabulary and curriculum learning while their word-reading gaps are addressed urgently.

ii. Daily Phonics Teaching

Daily lessons use the official teaching sequence, language, routines, cards, friezes and resources. Teaching is brisk, interactive and inclusive, with all pupils expected to participate. Staff pronounce phonemes precisely, model blending and segmenting explicitly and check learning throughout the lesson.

- review and revisit previously taught content
- teach and practise the new GPC or focus
- apply learning through word and sentence reading
- apply phonics to spelling and writing through oral segmenting and dictation
- use assessment for learning to notice pupils who need immediate extra practice.

iii. Reading Practice: Three Reads

Little Wandle reading practice begins in Reception when pupils are ready to blend, normally from around week 4. Pupils read three times each week in a quiet teaching space with an adult trained in the programme. The same carefully matched book is used to develop decoding, prosody and comprehension. Pre-read practice secures the GPCs, words, tricky words and vocabulary pupils will meet.

After successful practice in school, the decodable book is taken home to celebrate fluent reading. A separate sharing book is chosen for family enjoyment. Families are helped to understand that the two books have different purposes.

iv. Assessment, Daily Keep-up and Catch-up

Teachers use in-lesson assessment every day and the official half-termly assessment cycle to identify gaps, analyse progress and match books. Daily Keep-up is timetabled for pupils in Reception and Year 1 who need more practice; it is additional

to, not a replacement for, the whole-class lesson. Pupils receiving Daily Keep-up are reassessed at the programme's recommended intervals.

Rapid Catch-up is used for pupils in Year 2 and above who need urgent support to master the phonic code. The Little Wandle SEND programme is reserved for pupils who need the graduated, smaller-step pathway described by the programme. Placement is evidence-led and reviewed regularly.

v. Language, Vocabulary and Comprehension

Adults teach the meaning of words encountered in lessons and books, speak in well-formed sentences and invite pupils to rehearse language. Daily storytime, rhymes, poems, talk and high-quality non-fiction extend language comprehension beyond what pupils can yet decode independently.

vi. Inclusion and Adaptive Teaching

Adaptation preserves the programme's content and routines while removing barriers to participation. This may include closer seating, reduced distraction, additional rehearsal, more frequent response opportunities, precise visual support, individual Daily Keep-up, supported blending or the official SEND pathway. Streaming is not part of the core programme.

vii. Staff Expertise and Consistency

All adults who teach phonics or reading practice complete the relevant Little Wandle training. The Reading Leader maintains a training and coaching record, leads regular practice, checks pronunciation and routines, analyses assessment and coaches in lessons. New staff are trained before taking responsibility for a group.

viii. Partnership with Families

Families receive clear guidance on pronunciation, blending, tricky words, the difference between decodable and sharing books and how to support fluent rereading without encouraging guessing. The school signposts the official Little Wandle parent resources and provides practical support where home access is limited.

5. Impact

The intended impact is that pupils keep pace with the programme, read fully matched books successfully and move from effortful decoding to accurate, automatic and expressive reading. No pupil should remain unnoticed or wait for support.

- respond quickly and accurately to taught graphemes
- blend unfamiliar words containing taught GPCs without guessing from pictures or context
- read taught tricky words and increasingly recognise familiar words automatically

- read matched books with growing accuracy, fluency, prosody and understanding
- segment spoken words and select plausible taught graphemes when spelling
- enjoy stories, poems and non-fiction and talk about their meaning
- catch up rapidly when assessment identifies gaps.

6. Assessment

Assessment follows the official Little Wandle tools and intervals. It is used to improve teaching, organise additional practice and match books; it is not an end in itself. Teachers continue teaching during assessment weeks and use identified class gaps to plan review.

The Reading Leader analyses class, group and pupil-level information, with particular attention to the lowest-attaining pupils, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils new to English and pupils with interrupted attendance.

- daily assessment for learning and participation checks
- half-termly Little Wandle assessments and tracker analysis
- three-weekly review or reassessment for pupils receiving Daily Keep-up where prescribed
- placement and programme-specific assessment for Rapid Catch-up and SEND
- book matching based only on secure phonic knowledge
- Year 1 Phonics Screening Check preparation through normal high-quality teaching, not a narrowed curriculum.

7. Leadership, Monitoring and Review

The early reading and phonics subject leader supports staff in understanding the curriculum, maintaining consistency and securing strong outcomes for all pupils. Leadership is developmental: monitoring identifies strengths, tests whether the intended curriculum is being learned and leads to precise support, coaching or curriculum refinement.

- observing phonics, Daily Keep-up, Rapid Catch-up and reading practice sessions
- checking fidelity of language, routines, resources, pace and pupil participation
- reviewing assessment accuracy, timetables, group records and book matching
- hearing the lowest-attaining pupils read and evaluating the support they receive
- leading staff practice, coaching and refresher training
- supporting families and reporting progress and priorities to senior leaders and governors.

This policy is reviewed every three years, or sooner when statutory expectations, the adopted programme, school priorities or evaluated pupil need require a change. Any

revision must remain aligned with the relevant charter, long-term planning and unit-plan hierarchy.

8. Subject Specific Pedagogy and Non-Negotiables

The following expectations preserve the distinctive quality of early reading and phonics at Woodmansey. They should be read alongside the relevant charter, long-term plan, unit or medium-term planning and agreed teaching resources.

Scheme Fidelity

The current Little Wandle programme is the authority for sequence, lesson routines, assessment, intervention and matched reading. Former Floppy's Phonics resources, mixed mnemonics, alternative sound cards and non-matched decodable sequences are not used in Little Wandle teaching spaces.

No Guessing

Pupils are taught to decode words through phonics. Adults do not prompt pupils to guess from pictures, initial letters, grammar, context or memorised whole-word shapes. Meaning is discussed after or alongside successful decoding without replacing it.

Books Must Match

Every practice and take-home decodable book must match the pupil's secure GPC knowledge. Books are practised in school before going home. Pupils who do not practise at home receive additional opportunity in school.

Immediate Support

If a pupil is not keeping pace, support begins immediately and follows the programme. The whole class continues through the published progression while gaps are addressed through additional teaching.

Authoritative Sources

Staff use the member portal and current official materials at littlewandle.org.uk for programme content, training and updates. Local adaptations require approval from the Reading Leader and must not compromise fidelity.