



**Barnfields Primary School
Phonics Policy**

Date Approved: September 2026	Print Name: Sue Francis
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Introduction

Phonics involves learning to read and spell by breaking words down into their individual spoken sounds (phonemes). This is one of the most vital skills children need on their journey to becoming confident readers. At Barnfields, we prioritise high-quality phonics teaching and use rigorous assessment and tracking to ensure that every child—regardless of background, starting point, or any additional needs—receives the support they need to become a successful reader.

Intent

Phonics (Reading and Spelling)

At Barnfields, we believe that every child can become a fluent reader and writer. To achieve this, we teach early reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, a validated systematic synthetic phonics programme.

From the very start of Reception, we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, ensuring that children build securely on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code. Through carefully sequenced teaching, children develop the skills needed to decode and encode words with increasing accuracy and confidence. As they move through the school, pupils are supported to master phonics so that they can read and spell fluently, enabling them to confidently tackle unfamiliar words.

At Barnfields, we consistently model the application of phonics and the alphabetic code through shared reading and writing, both within discrete phonics lessons and across the wider curriculum. We place a strong emphasis on language development, recognising that speaking and listening skills are fundamental to success in reading, writing, and learning in all subjects.

Comprehension

At Barnfields, we value reading as an essential life skill. By the time children leave our school, they read confidently and with understanding, and they develop a genuine enjoyment of reading for pleasure. Our pupils are equipped with strategies to make sense of unfamiliar vocabulary and texts, allowing them to read for both meaning and purpose. We encourage all children to see themselves as confident, enthusiastic readers.

Because we believe that teaching every child to read is of paramount importance, we have a dedicated Phonics Leader (Mrs Karen Walker) who leads and drives the early reading programme across the school. The Phonics Leader is highly skilled in the teaching of phonics and early reading and provides ongoing monitoring, coaching, and support to staff. This ensures that phonics teaching is delivered consistently and with fidelity to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme.

Implementation

Daily Phonics Lessons in Reception and Year 1

At Barnfields, phonics is taught daily in both Reception and Year 1. Children make a strong start in Reception, with phonics teaching beginning in Week 2 of the Autumn term. Lessons initially start at 10 minutes, alongside additional daily oral blending activities, and quickly build to full-length lessons.



From the Spring term in Reception onwards, children are grouped to ensure teaching is closely matched to their stage of phonic development. Weekly review sessions take place every Friday to consolidate learning and develop fluency.

We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress:

- Reception: Children are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and Phase 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4), with increasing fluency and accuracy.
- Year 1: Children revisit Phase 3 and Phase 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily Keep-Up: Ensuring Every Child Learns to Read

Any child in Reception or Year 1 who requires additional practice receives Daily Keep-Up support, delivered by a fully trained adult. Keep-Up lessons follow the same *Little Wandle* progression and use the same routines, resources, and consistent language as whole-class teaching. Sessions are delivered in smaller steps with additional repetition to ensure children secure their learning and keep up with their peers.

Daily Phonics and Spelling in Year 2

At the start of Year 2, children are assessed to ensure they have completed the *Little Wandle Year 1* progression. Any gaps are addressed through daily phonics lessons until the programme is securely completed. Summative assessments are used to confirm progress and inform next steps.

Where appropriate, a five-week Phase 5 review is taught before children move on to **Bridge to Spelling**, followed by **Spelling Shed**. Children with more significant gaps in their phonic knowledge continue to receive daily phonics teaching through the Rapid Catch-Up programme.

Rapid Catch-Up (Years 2–6)

Daily phonics lessons are timetabled for any child in Year 2 and above who is not working at age-related expectations for reading or who has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children require urgent support to close gaps and prevent them from widening further.

Rapid Catch-Up sessions are short, focused lessons lasting 15–20 minutes and are designed to enable children to make accelerated progress. Children who are new to Barnfields, new to the country, or new to English are assessed promptly using the Rapid Catch-Up assessments to identify their starting points.

Summative assessments are carried out every four weeks to monitor progress and inform teaching. Assessment outcomes are recorded on the *Little Wandle* assessment tracker.

Teaching Reading: Reading Practice Sessions

(Three times per week in Reception and Year 1)

Reading practice sessions are taught three times a week and:

- are delivered by a fully trained adult
- use books that are closely matched to children's secure phonic knowledge
- are monitored by the class teacher, who works regularly with each group

Each session has a clear focus to avoid overloading children's working memory and develops three key reading skills:

- **Decoding:** applying phonic knowledge to read words
- **Prosody:** reading with fluency, expression, and understanding
- **Comprehension:** using structured talk to support understanding of the text



In Reception, reading practice sessions begin in Week 4 of phonics teaching. Children initially read wordless books while they secure GPC recognition and oral blending through teacher-led modelling. Once children are able to blend independently, they move on to fully decodable books matched to their secure phonic knowledge. Children read each book three times to build phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and positive reading behaviours.

- In Year 2, children complete the core programme decodable books. To exit the programme, children must pass the final fluency assessment, reading at approximately 60 words per minute with at least 90% accuracy.
- Reading within Rapid Catch-Up mirrors the core programme. Children read from the 7+ fully decodable books, which follow the same progression but are age-appropriate for older readers.

Home Reading

Once children have completed the three reads of a decodable reading practice book in school, the book is taken home to share success with families. This ensures children can read the text confidently and independently at home. Each child has a reading record in which parents and carers are encouraged to comment and sign to confirm that they have read with their child. Reading records are checked and stamped when books are returned to school.

In addition to decodable books, children also take home a library book of their choice. These books are intended to be shared and read aloud by adults, supporting children's enjoyment of reading and exposure to a rich range of vocabulary and language. We actively share research with parents and carers on the importance and impact of reading quality texts aloud to children through workshops, meetings, and written communication.

We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* parent resources to engage families and support home learning. These resources provide clear guidance on phonics, how children learn to blend, the benefits of sharing books, and how parents can best support early reading. Information is shared both online and through parent workshops.

Ensuring Consistency and Pace of Progress

All teachers at Barnfields are trained in the teaching of reading, ensuring consistent expectations of progress across the school. Staff use the same language, routines, and resources so that teaching is coherent and children's cognitive load is reduced.

Weekly content grids clearly map new learning across each day, week, and term for the duration of the programme. Lesson templates, prompt cards, and 'How to' videos support a consistent approach and structure for every phonics lesson.

The Phonics Leader regularly monitors and observes phonics teaching to ensure fidelity to the programme. Class teachers use summative assessment data to identify children who require additional support or who have gaps in their learning.

The Phonics Leader also delivers regular practice sessions and professional development opportunities, attended by all staff teaching phonics, to provide ongoing training, support, and quality assurance.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

All children at Barnfields are given equal opportunities to access high-quality phonics teaching. Lessons are inclusive by design, and adaptations are made to ensure all pupils can participate and make progress. *Little*



Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised provides specialised planning and adapted assessment materials to support children with additional needs.

Where children make slower progress despite adapted, high-quality teaching—as evidenced through the phonics assessment tracker—the SENDCo is consulted. In these cases, *Little Wandle SEND* planning may be implemented. This follows the same progression as the core programme but is delivered at a slower pace with additional repetition and support.

The impact of any SEND-specific provision is carefully monitored through ongoing assessment and review. In some cases, and in consultation with the SENDCo, it may be appropriate for a child to access an alternative reading programme, such as EPAT, where this is deemed to best meet their individual needs.

Ensuring Reading for Pleasure

“Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child’s future success.” (OECD, 2002)

“The will influences the skill, and the skill influences the will.” (OECD, 2010)

At Barnfields, we place a high value on Reading for Pleasure (RfP) and actively work to develop a strong reading culture across the school.

Adults read aloud to children every day. Books are carefully chosen to ensure children experience a rich and diverse range of high-quality texts, including those that reflect the children of Barnfields and our local community, as well as texts that open windows into different cultures, lives, and experiences.

Every classroom has an inviting and well-resourced book area designed to promote a love of reading. Books are thoughtfully curated, refreshed regularly, and actively promoted through book talk to encourage children to explore a wide range of authors and genres. In Reception, children have daily access to the reading corner during free-flow provision, with books continually updated to maintain interest and engagement.

We appoint ‘Reading Champions’ each year to promote a love of reading throughout the school. They act as reading role models throughout the school and regularly come to younger year groups to read to them. They also organise reading events throughout the school year to raise the profile of reading throughout the school.

Children choose from a range of carefully selected library books to take home and share with an adult. We keep records of children’s book choices to help us understand their preferences and develop their reading identities. As children progress through the school, staff take time to engage in meaningful conversations about reading, enabling us to recommend authors, series, and genres that broaden and deepen pupils’ interests. The school library is available for class use during protected times. Children across the school regularly participate in Reading for Pleasure events, including author visits and national reading initiatives, further strengthening our whole-school reading culture.

Impact

Assessment is used to monitor progress, inform and adapt teaching, and identify any child who requires additional support as early as possible.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment for Learning is embedded within daily practice and is used to ensure teaching is responsive and targeted. AfL takes place:

- **Daily within lessons** to identify children who require *Daily Keep-Up* support and to pinpoint specific GPCs, words, or spelling patterns that need additional teaching.
- **Ongoing during lessons** to adapt planning, group children effectively, and ensure all pupils make progress.



- **Weekly**, during the Friday review lesson, to identify and address gaps promptly and to secure fluency in GPCs, word reading, and spelling.

Summative Assessment

Summative phonics assessments are carried out every six weeks in Reception and Year 1. Assessment outcomes are uploaded to the online *Little Wandle* assessment tracker and are used to:

- generate visual reports, including pupil heatmaps, progress trends, book levels, and summary analyses for individual pupils, classes, and year groups
- inform grouping for phonics and reading practice sessions and adapt teaching to address identified gaps
- identify children scoring below 80%, who then receive immediate *Daily Keep-Up* support to ensure they keep up with their peers

Children receiving Daily Keep-Up support are reassessed every three weeks until they achieve a score of at least 80%.

A placement assessment is completed for any child who is new to the school in Reception or Year 1. This allows staff to quickly identify gaps in phonic knowledge and plan appropriate, targeted support.

Statutory Assessment

Children in Year 1 complete the statutory Phonics Screening Check in June. Any child who does not meet the expected standard will re-sit the check in Year 2.

Outcomes from the Phonics Screening Check are analysed to inform teaching, intervention, and ongoing support. Results are reported to parents and the local authority in line with statutory requirements.