

# Christ Church CofE Primary – Phonics and Early Reading Overview

## Rationale

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” – Matthew 5:16



At Christ Church, we believe that every child is uniquely created in the image of God and deserves a curriculum that enables them to flourish academically, socially, morally, and spiritually. Through our SHINE values – to be Successful, Happy, Included, Nurtured, and Enriched – we seek to educate the whole child, helping them to discover their gifts and use them to make a positive difference in the world.

Phonics and Early Reading is essential to this vision. It equips children with the essential skills to decode and read fluently, opening the door to curiosity, imagination, and a lifelong love of learning. Through secure phonics knowledge, children build confidence and independence, enabling them to access stories, information, and ideas that broaden their understanding of the world. Mastery of phonics also develops resilience and determination, as children persevere in applying their skills across contexts. By becoming fluent and accurate readers, children are prepared to engage deeply with texts, laying the foundations for comprehension, critical thinking, and responsible citizenship.

## **The Christ Church CofE Offer**

Phonics at Christ Church is taught through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme, which is ambitious, coherent, and evidence-led. It meets and exceeds the expectations of the National Curriculum while remaining firmly rooted in our Christian ethos and SHINE values.

The most fundamental goal of the National Curriculum for English is for children to learn to read, communicate, and engage with the world around them confidently and effectively. Our ambition is that pupils will do so meaningfully and with purpose through the high-quality structure and strong ambition of the Little Wandle programme, which provides a clear, systematic approach to phonics.

We believe that phonics enables children to unlock the written word, opening the door to stories, knowledge, and opportunities that help them understand their place in God's world and the responsibilities they hold towards others. By mastering phonics, children gain the skills to read fluently and independently, building confidence, resilience, and a lifelong love of reading.

Our phonics curriculum promotes cultural capital by ensuring every child, regardless of starting point, can access literature, information, and learning across the curriculum. This foundation equips children with the tools to explore diverse voices, engage critically with ideas, and participate fully in society as knowledgeable, reflective, and responsible learners.

## **Curriculum Design**

Our phonics curriculum is deliberately sequenced to ensure that children build cumulative knowledge and reading expertise over time. From EYFS through Key Stage 2, children revisit and deepen their learning in meaningful ways, developing secure understanding of reading processes and the ability to make connections across texts, authors, and themes.

At Christ Church, we use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme to deliver high-quality phonics teaching. This includes all of Little Wandle's programmes:

- **The Foundations programme** for Nursery and Reception,
- **The SEND programme** for children who require a graduated approach
- **The Rapid Catch-up programme** for children in Year 2 or above who are not yet reading at age-related expectations and require urgent, targeted support.

**Foundations for Phonics** contributes to the provision for *Communication and Language and Literacy* (DfE, 2022), sitting alongside a stimulating language-rich environment. It ensures that children are well-prepared to begin grapheme-phoneme correspondence and blending at the start of Reception. This provision includes a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences. A key feature is developing children's awareness of sound through focused listening, oral blending, and attention activities.

The programme is broken into three clear areas:

- **Foundations for a Love of Reading** within our English lessons,
- **Foundations for Phonics,**
- **Foundations for Language.**

For each of these areas, staff are provided with detailed guidance, planning, and resources to ensure consistency and fidelity of implementation.

In the Early Years, children begin to explore stories, poems, and information texts through play, storytelling, role-play, and first-hand experiences. This lays the foundation for future reading development. As they progress through school, children learn to apply their phonics knowledge

systematically to reading and writing, enabling them to become fluent and independent readers.

As a result, all children are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar words and develop fluency. Teachers also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both within phonics lessons and across the wider curriculum.

Alongside Little Wandle, we place a strong emphasis on language development, recognising that speaking and listening are crucial foundations for reading and writing in all subjects. This integration ensures that phonics is not taught in isolation, but as a vital part of the broader development of communication, literacy, and a lifelong love of reading.

### **Structure and Planning**

Phonics at Christ Church is taught through carefully sequenced daily sessions that build upon prior learning and prepare children for future reading and writing success. Each lesson revisits previous knowledge, introduces new content, and provides structured opportunities for practice and application. This ensures that learning is embedded securely in long-term memory and that all children make strong, consistent progress.

In Nursery, we provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences that meet the curriculum expectations for *Communication and Language* and *Literacy*. These include:

- sharing high-quality stories and poems
- learning a wide range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
- activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
- explicit attention to high-quality language

This foundation ensures that children are well-prepared to begin learning grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

In Reception and Year 1, phonics is taught daily for 30 minutes. In Reception, lessons begin with 10-minute sessions supported by daily oral blending games, building quickly to full-length lessons. Each Friday, children review the week's learning to consolidate and secure their progress.

Children make a strong start in Reception, with phonics teaching beginning in Week 2 of the Autumn Term. Progression follows the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations:

- In Reception, children are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4), developing fluency and accuracy.
- In Year 1, children review Phase 3 and 4 content and progress to reading and spelling words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

This structured and systematic approach supports children's fluency and confidence in decoding, while also preparing them for comprehension and wider reading success.

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning at home. To ensure consistency, families can access resources and guidance on correct sound pronunciation here:

**[For parents | Letters and Sounds \(littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk\)](https://littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk)**

Enrichment experiences such as story times, library visits, book celebrations, and opportunities to share reading with families further bring phonics and early reading to life, fostering a love of language and literature both in and beyond the classroom.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

At Christ Church, phonics is inclusive and accessible to all. Daily phonics sessions and whole-class teaching are adapted to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those in our Focus Provision. Strategies such as visual supports, scaffolded activities, structured questioning, and multi-sensory approaches enable every child to participate fully and make progress.

Children with English as an additional language are supported through language scaffolds and explicit vocabulary teaching, ensuring they can access the phonics curriculum and develop the skills and fluency needed to succeed. High expectations are maintained for all children, with appropriate levels of support and challenge provided to ensure success and enjoyment in phonics.

## **Curriculum Impact**

Through our phonics curriculum, children gain the knowledge, skills, and understanding that prepare them for life beyond Christ Church. They develop a strong foundation in decoding and segmenting words, which equips them with the ability to read and spell with confidence. Over time, children become more fluent, reflective, and independent readers and writers who can engage confidently with a wide range of texts.

Assessment is ongoing and purposeful. Daily formative assessment takes place in every lesson to identify any children who need immediate "keep-up" support. Weekly review lessons are used to assess gaps in GPC (Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence), word reading, and spelling, ensuring these are addressed immediately. This ensures clear progression across year groups, while pupil voice allows children to reflect on their learning journey and articulate the sounds and knowledge they have secured.

Ultimately, the impact of our phonics curriculum is seen in the way children leave Christ Church: as confident, enthusiastic, and resilient readers and

spellers who understand the power of literacy in shaping their lives and who are equipped to make a positive difference in the world.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Role of Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual children will be met.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- Proper provision is in place for children with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

### **The Role of all other staff**

Staff are responsible for delivering a high-quality, broad, and balanced curriculum that meets or exceeds National Curriculum expectations. They will:

- Implement the curriculum in line with this policy, ensuring all children make excellent progress.
- Be responsive to children's needs, making learning personal and relevant.
- Promote strong moral values and encourage children to make a positive impact locally and globally.
- Uphold the highest standards, recognising that our children deserve the very best.

### **The Role of Families**

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting the curriculum by:

- Encouraging a positive attitude towards learning at home and in school.
- Engaging with the school's curriculum through parents' evenings and communications.
- Supporting home learning and reading to reinforce classroom learning.
- Communicating with the school about any factors affecting their child's ability to access the curriculum.
- Promoting curiosity, resilience, and high aspirations in their child's learning journey.

### **The Role of Governors**

Governors support and monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum by:

- Championing an ambitious, inclusive, and enriching curriculum for all children.
- Monitoring the impact of the curriculum on pupil progress and outcomes through reports, data, and school visits.
- Supporting staff development focused on curriculum design, delivery, and subject leadership.
- Ensuring the curriculum is broad, balanced, and aligned with statutory requirements.
- Holding leaders to account for the coherence, quality, and impact of the curriculum across all phases and subjects.