



The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock
Schools Federation



Phonics & Early Reading Policy

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At Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers.

To help us achieve this, 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.

Further to this, we 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.

At Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and 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.

Foundations for Phonics in Nursery

We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:

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

We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily Phonics Lessons in Reception and Year 1

We teach phonics for 15-20 minutes. 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 Phases 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.

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. 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.

Teaching Reading: Reading Practice Sessions Each Week A Week

We teach children to read through regular reading practice sessions. 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'; and
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

Regular practice sessions have a clear focus designed to focus on the essential skills of

- decoding;
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression; and
- 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.

Beyond Year 1, we continue to teach reading in small groups for any children who still need support with decoding and developing fluency.

Home Reading

- The decodable reading practice book will be made available on Collins Big Cat eBook Library each week to ensure success is shared with the family.
- Reading books for pleasure also go home for parents to share and read to children. We share the research behind the importance and impact of sharing quality children's books with parents through workshops, leaflets resources.

Additional Reading Support for Vulnerable Children

Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions read their practice book more frequently.

Ensuring Consistency and Pace of Progress

- 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.
- SLT and the English Team Leader 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 Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock 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. Pupils loan quality, age-appropriate texts from book corners and these are changed as and when needed.

In Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.

At Gordonbrock, access to the whole-school library is timetabled for each class every week so pupils have access to good quality texts which they can loan. Children have one book on loan at one time and this book can be changed during this timetabled slot.

Children from Reception 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.

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.

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).

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 for Reception And Year 1 is used termly 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.

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.

Statutory Assessment

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