



Otterbourne Church of England Primary School  
Trust, Respect and Determination

## **Phonics and Early Reading Teaching and Learning Approach**

Reading is fundamental to education. Proficiency in reading, writing and spoken language is vital for pupils' success. Through these, they develop communication skills for education and for working with others: in school, in training and at work. Pupils who find it difficult to learn to read are likely to struggle across the curriculum, since English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching. This is why the government is committed to continuing to raise standards of literacy for all. (DfE Reading Framework 2023)

At Otterbourne Church of England Primary School, we strive to foster a love for reading for all children from the very beginning. The first thing that the children (and visitors to the school) see when entering the building is a bright, spacious library, with well stocked shelves and a variety of books to suit all tastes. From the beginning of Year R, the children visit the library on a weekly basis to explore the books and take some home, using their own library card.

Throughout their time with us, children are actively encouraged to read: often, regularly and with increasingly more challenging texts – at home and at school. Independent (quiet) reading for pleasure, paired reading, adult-led reading with individual children, in small groups or with whole classes are all planned in at school. The children have a range of reading materials available to them including books, magazines, websites and posters. Our priority is get children confident, get them engaged and then get them excited about reading.

The start of the reading journey is the teaching of phonics and giving children the experience of early reading. Getting to know the format of a book: the cover, title, contents, main pages and supporting images, and simply how to turn the pages are part of that, and the word reading starts with phonics.

From the very start of Year R, the children and parents are introduced to our school SSP (Systematic, Synthetic Phonics) programme, Bug Club. Bug Club follows a consistent approach for each taught sound. The children explore the sound through: a clear introduction, a visual search of the sound in words, reading the sound in different words, spelling words that contain the sound, writing and a follow-up activity, usually a dictation.

The children work through the phases of Bug Club in Year R and Year One. Daily phonics teaching is the key to success when it comes to supporting our children to read. In Year R and Year One, phonics is prioritised in the timetable. In addition, the sounds and tricky words learnt in Bug Club lessons are consolidated through well-developed enhanced and continuous provision opportunities, and adults identify when there is an incidental learning opportunity through the children's play-based learning.

There is a clear progression with phonics which we follow in line with the Bug Club planning.



Phases covered in Year R

Phase	Unit	Focus	Not fully decodable words (irregular words)
2	1	s, a, t, p	
	2	i, n, m, d	
	3	g, o, c, k	to
	4	ck, e, u, r	the, no, go
	5	h, b, f, ff l, ll, ss	l, into, her
3	6	j, v, w, x	me, be
	7	y, z, zz, qu	he, my, by, she
	8	ch, sh, th, ng	they
	9	ai, ee, igh, oa oo (long), oo (short)	we, are
	10	ar, or, ur, ow, oi	you
	11	ear, air, ure, er	all, was, give, live
4	12	Adjacent consonants (cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc)	said, have, like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what

Phases covered in Year One

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Irregular/high-frequency words</i>
5	13	wh, ph,	oh, their, people
	14	ay, a-e, eigh/ey/ei (long a)	Mr, Mrs, Ms
	15	ea, e-e, ie/ey/y (long e)	looked, called, asked
	16	ie, i-e, y, i (long i)	water, where
	17	ow, o-e, o/oe (long o)	who, again
	18	ew, ue, u-e (long o), u/oul, (short oo)	thought, through
	19	aw, au, al	work, laughed, because
	20	ir, er, ear	Thursday, Saturday, thirteen, thirty
	21	ou, oy	different, any, many
	22	ere/eer, are/ear	eyes, friends
	23	c, k, ck, ch	two, once
	24	c(e)/c(i)/c(y), sc/st(l) se	great, clothes
	25	g(e)/g(i)/g(y), dge	it's, I'm, I'll, I've
	26	le, mb, kn/gn, wr	don't, can't, didn't
27	tch, sh, ea, zh, (w)a, o	first, second, third	
6	28	suffix morphemes ing, ed	clearing, gleaming, rained, mailed
	29	plural morphemes s, es	men, mice, feet, teeth, sheep
	30	prefix morphemes re, un prefix+root+suffix	vowel, consonant, prefix, suffix, syllable

Early identification is key in recognising when a child needs support to keep up with their phonics learning. Regular assessments in class ensure children are on track with their phonics and extra support is put in place straightaway to avoid a child falling behind. In Year R and Year One, this is carried out through small group or 1:1 revision of the sounds the child is not secure on, as well as pinpointed revision in whole class lessons.

At the end of Year One, children will sit through a phonics screen, which is a statutory test to assess their knowledge and understanding of phonics. This test consists of a list of 40 words that the child reads aloud. Half the words are 'real' words and the other half are made up 'pseudo-words' which are demarcated by a cartoon alien. Children who don't meet the benchmark (pass rate) are supported

through a small group intervention called Rapid Phonics which links with Bug Club. This helps the children to learn any missing sounds or consolidate knowledge through a multi-sensory approach with repetition.

### **Early Reading at School**

From the beginning of Year R, children are given a Bug Club non-word book which is shared in class either in small groups or 1:1 as appropriate. This is to build on the children's listening and attention skills from pre-school learning in Phase 1 phonics.

As they develop a greater understanding of phonic awareness and become more confident in blending sounds together to make words and sentences, children are supported with a Bug Club reading book that is matched to their level of understanding. These books are explored in class four times a week, in small groups in our Guided Reading sessions. The sessions focus on decoding, fluency and comprehension.

### **Reading at Home**

Reading is a life skill and in order for children to meet their full potential, opportunities for reading need to be identified at home as well as at school. Regular, short reading sessions will always be more effective than long, infrequent sessions as the children build their skills. In Year R and Year One, reading at home is the main homework given. Children are provided with a Bug Club book each week which they will already be familiar with from their Guided Reading sessions. Children also have access to a wide range of Bug Club books online matched to the sounds the children are confident with. As well as this, children bring home two library books a week to ensure different genres and texts are being enjoyed.

In Year R, children are provided with personal journals and in Year One, children have a Reading and Homework Log Book. In these, comments about reading can be shared, and rewards are given for children following these expectations. Children are expected to read at home at least five times each week, either independently or with an adult.