



Earl Sterndale CofE Primary School

## Reading and Phonics Policy

Created on	Review Period	Date of review	Changes Made	Approved by FGB on
September 2023	1 year	January 2026	Significant rewrite	Jan 26

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At Earl Sterndale C of E Primary School, we believe that reading is a fundamental life skill and the key to unlocking the wider curriculum. Through our whole-school approach, we aim to ensure every child becomes a confident, competent reader who not only understands what they read but develops a lifelong love of books. We know that confident readers can access a broad range of experiences, enjoy diverse genres, and use reading to acquire knowledge, stay informed and achieve success.

From the very start of their educational journey, children are encouraged to explore books positively. Across the school, we provide access to high-quality, age-appropriate

literature in a variety of environments, enabling children to make personal choices and develop their own interests. Our curriculum promotes reading for both pleasure and knowledge, highlighting its essential role in everyday life.

We use a range of strategies to help children read with fluency and understanding. Reading is taught through daily phonics sessions, small-group interventions where needed, reading practice sessions and English lessons. Opportunities to read are embedded across the curriculum to reinforce its importance and relevance.

Our love of reading is celebrated through events such as World Book Day, where children share favourite books, dress as beloved characters, and take part in a book swap. We also foster friendships and a shared reading culture through initiatives like Buddy Reading, pairing older and younger pupils to enjoy books together.

## Aims

We aim for our pupils to:

- Foster an interest in and a love of books, encouraging children to become attentive listeners, as well as independent and reflective readers;
- Develop reading strategies and skills, accuracy, fluency, understanding and emotional and empathic responses to texts;
- Develop the ability to recognise, understand and use a variety of texts, both fiction and non-fiction;
- Develop children's experiences through a variety of text including the use of libraries, IT and other available media;
- Follow a structured route through Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and access effective transition to secondary school.

## Strategies for the teaching of reading

As well as teaching reading in English lessons and across the curriculum, it is taught through the implementation of a systematic synthetic phonics teaching programmes (SSP).

Reading is aligned with our Phonics scheme – Monster Phonics (Little Wandle from February 2025). This initiative promotes a strong and systematic emphasis on the teaching of synthetic phonics to aid the teaching and learning of reading. We aim to enable the children to:

- Discriminate between the separate sounds in words;
- Learn grapheme-phoneme correspondence that enables children to read many words early on;

- Learn the letters and letter combinations most commonly used to spell sounds;
- Progress to cumulatively covering all the regular grapheme-phoneme correspondences in English;
- Read words by identifying, sounding and blending;
- Be introduced to Common Exception Words ('Tricky Words') gradually and learn to read them noting the part of the word that makes it an exception word;
- Recognise on sight vocabulary identified as Tricky words and High Frequency words. All children will be taught phonic skills through our scheme. This will take place through daily, dedicated phonics lessons;
- Meet the standard in the Y1 Phonics Screening Check and all the National Curriculum expectations for word reading through decoding by the end of KS1.

The SPP programme is continued into Class 2 where it is used to support children who are working below age-related expectations.

### Class 1

Parents are urged to share books with their children and hear them at home. They are encouraged to use the reading prompts in 'Reading Information for Parents' (on our website [here](#)) to ask questions about the book to check comprehension, and share feedback with school staff.

EYFS pupils bring home grapheme books each week; 'Tricky' words are also often sent home for all children to practice.

Phonics / Reading information events are hosted to advise parents on the reading strategies used in school and how best to support their child during the year. Information is also shared through newsletters and regular updates.

### In the Foundation Stage

In the Foundation Stage, early reading and phonic knowledge is introduced from the very first day. We use our Phonics scheme as a basis for teaching daily sessions, usually twice a day. We also embed micro-learning into frequent routines, games, songs and rhymes giving children multiple opportunities for learning.

Pupils participate in three reading practice sessions when they are able to decode. Prior to that, the sessions will be focused on developing this essential skill.

Children are quickly identified as falling behind; Catch-up/keep-up sessions will then be delivered.

## In Key Stage 1

In Year 1 and 2 the children continue reading using our Phonics scheme. We have a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, and children are supported to read books aligned with their Phonics development.

All pupils participate in Reading Practice sessions three times a week, to develop key skills:

- Decoding (the process of translating written or printed text into spoken language)
- Prosody (the rhythmic and melodic aspects of speech; reading with good expression and intonation, including pitch, tone, volume and emphasis)
- Comprehension (the ability to understand and make meaning from what has been read)

Once they have practised these skills with staff, they then bring the book home at the end of the week to 'show off' and share what they have learned.

Some children will also be heard read on a more frequent or even daily basis as required.

Alongside decoding, children also have frequent opportunities to practise and expand their ability to read and spell whole words. They are taught 'tricky words' or 'common exception words', which are those that do not follow typical patterns e.g. the/would, and instead need to be remembered as complete units.

All pupils select books from our Link Library, which they are welcome to change as often as desired. Parents are encouraged to share these books at home. The purpose of these texts is to develop a love of reading, rather than specific reading skills. Therefore, the books will often be outside the scope of your child's reading ability; parents/carers will be able to read them TO their child instead. Discussing events and vocabulary will further support your child's development.

A love of books is promoted across the curriculum, and specifically by daily story time (which is split for Years 1/2 and EYFS to ensure age-appropriateness) and a text-led writing curriculum.

## In Key Stage 2

All pupils in Class 2 are assessed for reading fluency and comprehension. Based on these assessments, each child is provided with a reading book that matches their current stage of development. Pupils who demonstrate secure fluency and understanding are designated as Free Readers and may independently select texts from the school library to take home.

Every pupil is issued a Reading Diary, which must be brought to school daily. Families are encouraged to support regular home reading (ideally daily). Pupils are also encouraged to record independent reading in their diaries. Children are rewarded for regular and sustained reading.

Staff read one-to-one with pupils regularly. Priority is given to targeted groups, including priority readers and pupils with SEND, who read daily with an adult in school.

Whole-Class Reading sessions take place twice weekly, using language-rich and topic-relevant texts.

- **Session 1: Fluency** – Activities include games such as *Fill in the Gap*, *Parrot*, and *Match My Speed* to develop pace and expression.
- **Session 2: Comprehension** – Focus areas include Explanation, Retrieval, Summary, Inference, Vocabulary, Sequencing, and Discussion. These strategies ensure pupils can read fluently and understand texts deeply.

The group will read a text well matched to their reading ability, discuss it, talk over any unknown language encountered and answer questions which are aimed at improving depth of comprehension.

Pupils complete Reading Eggs/Eggspress lessons twice weekly. These interactive sessions provide targeted questioning and are particularly beneficial for reluctant readers and pupils with SEND.

Class 2 participates in *Drop Everything And Read* (DEAR) weekly and visits the school library regularly to promote a love of reading. Each day concludes with a shared reading of a high-quality class text, chosen to engage and inspire pupils.

## Assessment and Record Keeping

Progress with Phonics and whole word recognition is assessed each half-term using our Phonics Scheme. This then informs the identification of pupils requiring additional support.

Reading Comprehension is assessed via NFER (or SATS) assessments at the end of each term (Autumn, Spring, Summer), starting with Year 1 in the Spring term.

In Class 2 Reading Fluency is assessed each half-term via a 'words per minute' reading assessment.

At each end-of-term, information about pupils attainment and progress is discussed with the Headteacher. Targeted interventions and/or adaptations are planned to support progress for all our pupils.

Year 1 children are assessed against the Government's standardised Phonics Assessment in the Summer term.

Year 2 children are assessed using the Government's optional standardised Reading Test in the Summer term.

Data from all assessments is used to:

- Action any targeted support required;
- Inform grouping of children where necessary;
- Identify adaptations required;
- Identify the most able to ensure provision of extension / enrichment work.

## SEND and Equal Opportunities

Children with SEND are encouraged to take full part in reading sessions, differentiated where necessary to meet their individual needs. Those children who, as a result of tests or normal classroom activities are identified as needing extra support will be monitored closely by the class teacher and the head teacher and / or SENCO

Specific interventions will be put in place to support these children e.g. Precision Teach, Action Words etc.

In Key Stage 2 other intensive intervention programmes may be used if the need arises.

If necessary, extra resources, aimed at removing barriers to learning, will be obtained if eg reading pens and headphones.

Where required, external advice will be sought. We have strong working relationships with our Educational Psychologist Team and the Inclusion Support and Advisory Service.

Our policy is monitored to ensure that all pupils have equality of access to a range of reading opportunities and experiences so that all pupils achieve to the best of their potential regardless of gender race or culture.

The school will put in place positive steps to support those children who have limited access to reading at home through lack of parental education.

### The Role of Support Staff

Teaching Assistants are expected to take an active role in supporting children with their reading as directed by the class teacher. This can include working with groups of children during lessons, leading reading practice groups or hearing individual children read.

The school encourages people who have some time to come into school to hear readers. The class teacher will then select children who would benefit from the extra reading to an adult. The class teacher is responsible for ensuring that the volunteer has the support needed to help them carry out the role effectively.

### Reading Mornings ('Buddy Reading')

Occasionally we hold Reading Mornings, where we all spend some time reading and fostering a love of books. Children from across the school are given the opportunity to read with another child from a different year group once a week. The children share books with each other and spend time asking questions and assessing what they have read. This opportunity not only helps the children develop fluency and understanding of the text, but also allows them to build on their interpersonal and social skills. The older children are trained to ask questions which help to increase comprehension especially through inference and deduction. Our love of reading is also reflected in the World Book Day celebrations we have every year in which children are encouraged to dress as their favourite fictional characters and share their favourite books.

### Performing / Reciting

The National Curriculum (2014) states that there should be increased opportunities for children to read aloud to a variety of audiences. These could be through English lessons, Guided Reading or performances to a range of audiences including the whole school and family and friends. At our school we host events at various times during the year;

Harvest, Christmas, Easter services, and end of year performance for Class 2 and weekly pupil-led assemblies for the older children.

### Link Library

Each classroom has its own selection of books, and the Library area houses our main stock. The children are encouraged to use the library to choose books appropriate for their ability and interests, and change them as frequently as desired. Pupils record the title of the book they have chosen, and then record its' return. Class 2 pupils are selected as Library Monitors, ensuring books are returned to the correct areas. Books are organised into Key Stage 1 and 2 suitability, as well as non-fiction topics. The area is often used during reading practise sessions, special reading events and as a quiet work space.

### Booster Club

Every year from January to mid-May we run a Booster Club twice weekly for the children in Key Stage 2. This is a chance to focus on key skills for our older children.

### Online Reading Platforms

At our school the children have access to a range of online reading platforms including Reading Eggs.