A COMPLETE PHONICS RESOURCE
TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

Phonics and early reading policy

The context of our school

Paces is a school for children and young people with neurological motor disorders. Our pupils face a variety of challenges and yet no ceiling is put on their potential to learn. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of their disabilities or their background. We fully accept that the reading journey our pupils embark on will be different to their peers in mainstream classes. Our pupils will progress through the programme at a pace that suits them via a graduated, small steps teaching approach.

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised has been chosen by Paces because of its comprehensive SEND programme and its commitment to reducing cognitive load for pupils. We believe that the values of Little Wandle and the way it has been structured, compliment the philosophy and methodology of Conductive Education.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Paces, we are committed to giving all our pupils the opportunity to become readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised,* which is a systematic and synthetic phonics (ssp) programme. We start teaching phonics in our Early Years class and continue this teaching throughout the age groups, following the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression. This ensures pupils build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, developing their phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

As a result, all our pupils are taught the skills to tackle unfamiliar words as they read. At Paces, we also 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 pupils because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

At Paces, we have a significant number of pupils who are non-verbal. For these pupils, we believe developing knowledge of phonics has the additional benefit of facilitating communication, for example, when using an alphabet board to give cues about a word they want to say. Grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC) also aids the use of writing software which utilises predictive text.

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Comprehension

At Paces, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time pupils leave us, they will have progressed with their reading for meaning and enjoy reading for pleasure. We aim to equip our readers with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our pupils to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every pupil to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is skilled at teaching phonics and reading within a SEND setting, and they monitor and support our staff teams, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

Implementation

Foundations for phonics in the Early Years and beyond

- We provide a balance of pupil-led and adult-led experiences for all pupils within the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. 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
    - attention to high-quality language.
- We ensure pupils have the opportunity to be well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending, when and if it is appropriate for them.

Daily phonics lessons beyond the Early Years

- We teach phonics, using the SEND graduated, small steps approach, for a set time every day in each class. When pupils begin the programme, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson. It is acknowledged that the time spent on teaching phonics will vary from class to class, dependent on the needs of the pupils. The structure and delivery of the teaching however, remains consistent. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help pupils become more confident readers.
- The *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress is as follows:
    - 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.
- As stated previously, pupils at Paces are unlikely to adhere to these expectations, instead following the SEND graduated, small steps approach which offers a cycle of repetition and ensures pupils are not moved on too quickly. The Reading and Literacy

Leaders have designed a Paces Reading Road Map (appendix 1) which offers further guidance regarding how the Little Wandle progression model could be experienced for our pupils, who are either following our Pathway 1 or Pathway 2 curriculum.

- We will continue to timetable daily phonics lessons for pupils as they move through the school, as appropriate.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

- We teach pupils who are following the Little Wandle programme, to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:
    - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups, pairs or individuals.
    - use books matched to a pupil'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'.
    - are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with pupils on a regular basis.
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the pupils' working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
    - decoding
    - prosody: teaching pupils to read with understanding and expression
    - comprehension: teaching pupils to understand the text.
- For pupils who are not yet decoding, they will have daily additional blending practice.

Teaching phonics to Paces pupils following the Pathway 2 curriculum

At Paces, our curriculum is separated into 2 pathways which reflect the different approaches required for our pupils who have a diverse range of learning needs. More information about the Pathways model can be found on our website: Paces Pathways. Teaching phonics is of the utmost importance to us and we are fully committed to embracing the belief that all pupils should receive high quality teaching in this subject throughout their schooling. However, it is accepted that for some pupils at Paces, particularly those following our Pathway 2 curriculum, there may come a time when continuing with a SSP programme will look different, or may no longer be deemed appropriate. The Paces Reading Roadmap highlights that for Pathway 2 pupils, certain aspects of the Foundation programme (foundations for a love of reading and love of language) could be continued throughout their journey at Paces, given the beneficial impact this will have on all other areas of learning, particularly their communication. The approach and resources used to continue teaching these aspects would be adapted as the pupils move through the school, to ensure they reflect the age of the class.

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For each pupil on Pathway 2, the continuation or ceasing of any aspect of phonics teaching, will be a decision made on an individual basis. This would come at the end of a carefully considered process and would be based on the judgement of the professional team who know and understand a pupil's needs, learning style and their best next steps.

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. Families will also be given access to the online audio book version where this is deemed to be more helpful.
    - Reading for pleasure books 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 and the Everybody read! resources.
    - We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* parents' resources to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach pupils to read so that we lower pupils' cognitive load. All staff at Paces have had additional training on the SEND programme.
- 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.
- The Reading Leader and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to 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 make every effort to read to pupils every day. We choose these books carefully as we want pupils to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the pupils at Paces and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book area that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice pupils to read a wide range of books.
- In the Early Years, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Pupils from Early Years 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 pupils progress through the school, where appropriate, they are encouraged to contribute their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- Class visits to the local library are encouraged.
- The school library area is made available for classes to use throughout the week. Pupils 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).
- We use the Everybody read! resources to grow our teachers' knowledge of current books, the most recent research and to grow our own Reading for Pleasure practice.

Impact

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any pupils needing additional support as soon as they need it. The SEND assessment package will be used for all our pupils.

- **Assessment for learning** is used:
  - daily within class to monitor progress
  - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps and address accordingly

- **Summative assessment** for is used:
  - every term to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any pupils needing additional support
  - with the adapted SEND assessment tools and resources
  - by SLT and scrutinised through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

- **Fluency assessments** measure pupils' accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:
    - when pupils are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books
    - to assess when pupils are ready to exit their programme. This is when they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. After exiting their programme, children do not need to ready any more fully decodable books.

- A **placement assessment** is used:
    - with any pupil new to the school who joins a class beyond the Early Years to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate teaching.

Statutory assessment

- Where appropriate, pupils in Year 1 will have the opportunity to sit the Phonics screening check.