

Black Horse Hill Infant School



PHONICS AND READING POLICY

13th October 2025

Approved by Committee

26th November 2025

Approved by Full Governing Body

C Brierley

Signed

(Chair)

J Morris

Signed

(Headteacher)

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1. Vision, Aims and Values

Learning for Life



School Vision

Together, our schools will: -

Nurture and empower our children to become creative, compassionate and confident citizens, in a diverse and ever-changing world.

School Aims

Our school community will: -

- Have high expectations for all
- Inspire a passion for learning
- Provide an enjoyable, ambitious, coherent curriculum
- Develop positive relationships through collaboration
- Create a safe and happy environment

School Values

All our children, staff and parents will share the same core principles of: -

- Respect
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Excellence
- Resilience
- Friendship
- Courtesy

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance including, but not limited to the following:

- DfE (2014) National Curriculum for England: English programmes of study
- DfE (2021) Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

3. Intent for Phonics and Reading

“There is more treasure in books than in all the pirates’ loot on Treasure Island.”

Walt Disney

“A child who reads will be an adult who thinks.”

Sacha Salmina

Great importance is placed on promoting and instilling in children a deep love of literature. At Black Horse Hill Infant School we firmly believe that reading is vital in enabling children to learn and we aim for all children not only to become fluent readers but to develop as life-long learners with a passion for reading for the rest of their lives. We believe that all our children can be confident, independent readers and our intent is that we have provided them with the best possible foundations for their continued learning at our Junior School and beyond.

We teach reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery 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, we aim for most of our children to be able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. This happens within phonic lessons, reading and writing sessions and throughout the school day. We have a strong focus on language development and quality back and forth adult/child interactions, which begins in EYFS because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

At Black Horse Hill we cover the EYFS and National Curriculum in our English curriculum.

4. Implementation of Phonics and Reading

Reading for pleasure

Children who are good at reading do more of it: they learn more, about all sorts of things and their expanded vocabulary gained from reading increases their ease of access to more reading. This is why we prioritise reading across the school and promote reading for pleasure and enjoyment wherever possible. One of the ways that we develop this love of reading is by reading daily (storytimes) to our children and in EYFS classrooms this happens more frequently. Our storytime texts have been planned for each year group and they include high quality narratives, non-fiction texts and poetry/rhymes.

In each class there is an attractive reading area for the children to access and enjoy books. Each teacher carefully selects the texts that are placed in the reading areas. We have agreed that our book areas should:

- Have outward facing shelves so books can be chosen easily.
- Not contain too many books.
- Contain books that the children have heard in storytimes.
- Be refreshed half-termly.
- Be clearly labelled and organised into fiction and non-fiction.
- Represent the diverse communities in modern Britain.

See also the section on Home Reading for ways we promote reading for pleasure at home.

Foundations for phonics in Foundation 1

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.
- Attention to high-quality language.

These activities happen daily in class and small group sessions and throughout continuous provision.

We ensure Foundation 1 children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Children in Foundation 1 choose reading books from the school library to share at home with their adults. These books help to promote a love of reading and also help to develop children's vocabulary. Wordless books are sent home initially and are also used in class to encourage

children to become storytellers. We see huge value in this as it teaches and reinforces how to hold a book; how a book is read; that we read from left to right and how to turn pages. The children also benefit from exploring existing language or using new vocabulary they have learnt.

Daily phonics lessons in Foundation 2 and Year 1

For each year group we follow the planning and progression documents from the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds scheme. The progression document is attached (Appendix 1).

We teach phonics for 20-25 minutes every day. During phonics lessons children will:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills.
- Recognise and read common exception words/tricky words and identify which part of the word is tricky.
- Understand what they read.
- Read aloud with accuracy, fluency and expression.
- Learn to spell by segmenting the sounds in words (using robot arms).
- Work on letter formation to develop their handwriting (practise makes permanent).

Children make a strong start in Foundation 2: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.

Children in Foundation 2 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 Phase 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. This may be in small groups or on an individual basis. This is mainly taught by a teaching assistant and may occasionally be run by the class teacher. 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.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions four times a week

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions four times a week. Each reading session:
 - is taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of children.
 - uses books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge (Little Collins or Bug Club).

- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
 - Decoding and blending
 - Fluency
 - Prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
 - Comprehension: teaching children to understand the text

Some children will receive additional daily reads with a teacher or teaching assistant to develop fluency. The additional reads will take place at the beginning of the day or during assembly times.

In Year 2, once the children have completed the Letters and Sounds phonics programme, they continue to be taught reading in small guided reading groups, matched by ability. The focus of this is to continue to develop comprehension, whilst continuing to work on fluency with more challenging texts. Within these sessions, children are taught to read aloud with expression and appropriate intonation; articulate their thoughts and ideas; identify and explain the sequence of events in texts; communicate their understanding of key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts such as characters, events, titles and information; further develop their understanding and use of inference; make predictions on the basis of what's been read so far; and make comparisons and links within and between texts. Children in Year 2 are encouraged to read every night and will take home a book that is closely matched to their level of accuracy, fluency and comprehension. Parents are encouraged to still hear their child read aloud for the majority of the time, although we acknowledge that children in Year 2 are starting to develop the skill and desire to read quietly to themselves. Whilst children may wish to do so, it is important that parents are supporting their child's comprehension of the text and giving them the opportunity to discuss what they have read.

Spelling in Year 2 is taught using The Literacy Companies, Pathways to Spell, programme.

Home reading

Our approach to reading and phonics is shared with parents/carers at our Curriculum evenings which take place in the first part of the autumn term. Reading and Phonic workshops are also organised for our F2 parents/carers.

Children take home 2 reading books each week; a decodable reading book and a book that they choose to read for pleasure. Every child has a home/school reading communication book which is written in by the member of staff reading with the group that week. Parents/carers are asked to write in the book when the child reads at home.

On a Thursday (after their 4th read), children will take home their guided reading book to showcase their skills at home.

To promote reading at home each half-term we have a “Reading Raffle” prize. Every time a child reads at home they receive a raffle ticket which is placed in the reading raffle box. At the end of each half-term we have a prize draw and children can choose a brand new book to take home.

Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and enjoy with their children.

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to quickly identify any child that may need additional support.

- Assessment for learning is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing keep-up support. Teachers identify any children who require a keep-up session and they take part in these the same day when possible.
- Summative assessment is used:
 - every six weeks 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. Any gaps will be re-assessed after a further 3 weeks.

Statutory assessment

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

Equality and diversity

All children have equal access to the phonics and reading provision at Black Horse Hill Infant School.

Over the past few years, we have invested a significant amount of funding in our school and class libraries. We know how important quality, inclusive and representative literature is in developing children’s understanding of the diverse world in which they live. Through stories young children can be exposed to challenging themes which will provoke thought, deliberation and empathy.

Moral, Spiritual and Cultural:

Moral – children will be given the opportunity to debate, considering right and wrong regarding the actions of story characters.

Spiritual – children respond to literature by considering how they would feel if they were the character in the story.

Social – taking on different roles in paired or group activities.

Cultural – share texts from around the world and from different cultures.

5. Impact

The phonics and reading co-ordinator will be responsible for overseeing the planning, resourcing and monitoring of the school's phonics and reading programmes. The subject leader will have release time to monitor and review phonics and reading provision half-termly. Observing lessons and guided reading groups, hearing children read and speaking to pupils are ways in which standards are monitored. Over the course of the year, the English subject leader/ headteacher and deputy headteacher will work with individual children from all year groups as part of monitoring and moderating standards. In addition, we have visits from English Hub consultants to review our provision and provide feedback.

We will also use assessment and standards data (End of F2, Phonic Screening and End of KS1) to measure the success of our reading and phonics provision.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it complies with the latest legislation, guidance and best practice.

T Murphy
October 2025

