



A COMPLETE PHONICS RESOURCE
TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

Phonics and reading policy

The context of our school

Witham Oaks Academy is a junior school. We inherit our Year 3 children (the starting year) from primary schools, some of which follow different phonics schemes. We offer all year 3 children who start with us a Little Wandle phonics assessment, as well as using their phonics screening check data, to ensure they are equipped to learn with us. Those children who require more support, will be placed into our Rapid Catch-up interventions. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Witham Oaks Academy, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic synthetic phonics programme. The progression of the programme 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. For any child who is not at age-related expectations for reading, we use the Little Wandle Rapid Catch-up programme. We recognise that these children need urgent targeted support so that they can access the curriculum and enjoy reading as soon as possible.

At Witham Oaks Academy, 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 children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

At Witham Oaks Academy, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools they need to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.



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Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled in the teaching of phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

Implementation

Teaching phonics: Rapid Catch-up

- We timetable phonics lessons twice daily for any child who is not reading at age-related expectations. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen.
- These short, sharp lessons last up to 20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.
- We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments to quickly identify the needs of children who are new to our school, new to the country or new to English.
- We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in children's phonic knowledge and teach these using the Rapid Catch-up resources – at pace.
- We assess children every four weeks using the Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching.

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 children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly planning 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 checklists and templates to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and have gaps in learning.

Ensuring Reading for Pleasure (RfP)

'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 highly value RfP and work hard as a school to grow our RfP pedagogy.



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- We read aloud to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including those that reflect the children at Witham Oaks Academy 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.
- Children choose from our range of carefully chosen books to take home and share with an adult. We keep a record of the children's choices, so we get to know them as readers.
- As children progress through school, we take time to get to know them as readers and ensure that we engage in meaningful conversations about the books that they have read. By doing this we can recommend authors and genres of books to expand their interests.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of RfP events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events, etc.).

Impact

Assessment: Rapid Catch-up

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- **Assessment for Learning (AfL)** is used:
 - daily within class to identify children who require Rapid Catch-up, as well as words and GPCs that need additional teaching
 - to plan repeated practice throughout the day to ensure all children secure learning
 - weekly in the Wednesday review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- An **Initial Rapid Catch-up assessment** is used:
 - with any child new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and to plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.
- **Summative assessments** are used:
 - to generate visual reports for individual children



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- by teachers, Reading Leaders and SLT who drill down and look at the data at GPC, word, tricky word and sentence level
- by SLT to scrutinise and plan how to narrow the attainment gaps between different groups of children and to put in place any additional support for teachers.

We assess:

- every four weeks to assess progress and to identify gaps in learning that need to be reviewed or retaught
- to establish if learning is secure before new content is taught
- to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Rapid Catch-up support that they need.