Priors Hall – a learning community

Phonics Policy

2026 - 2027

'Ready for Learning, Ready for Life'

Curiosity **Kindness** **Resilienc** **Respect**

Reviewed: June 2026

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Introduction

At Priors Hall – a learning community, we have a clear, consistent, whole school approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading, delivered through the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' scheme.

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' is a DFE fully validated approach. It supports children's awareness of aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme. Adoption of this scheme ensures that we provide a fully systematic and sequential approach to developing the skills needed for early reading. 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' ensures that our teaching supports children in developing their understanding of using the alphabetic code for reading and spelling, ranging from simple to complex words. This consistent delivery of the knowledge and skills needed for early reading is facilitated for our learners as their early reading skills develop. It encourages independent reading and spelling, through repetition and consolidation. Using this approach, spelling becomes automatic as children learn to segment words to spell and blend words to read.

Children's interactions with adults, across the curriculum, are rich in ambitious language and rhyme. This language rich environment for children ensures that they are immersed in literature and spoken word that broadens their vocabulary and understanding of reading, talking and writing. Spoken word and rhyme throughout all learning opportunities, when combined with daily, discrete and sequential teaching of phonics, ensures that our children develop confidence and can apply these skills to their own purposeful reading and writing in a range of contexts.

We understand that high quality teaching of phonics, combined with consistent exposure to engaging stories and print, is the key to developing independent readers who demonstrate a 'love of reading'. We strive for every Priors Hall child to be 'a reader', with an understanding of the opportunities that reading provides, and a love of stories and print.

Aims

- Children enjoy reading and present with curiosity and engagement around the meaning of print.
- Children represent high quality systematic phonic knowledge and use this as their prime approach to decode print. They apply their phonic knowledge and skills as their first approach to reading and spelling, even if a word is not completely phonetically decodable.
- Children develop phonological awareness and have discrete phonics teaching from the second week in Reception.
- Children experience an engaging, multi-sensory approach to phonics teaching.
- Children become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One
- Children can read a breadth of high frequency words that do not conform to grapheme/phoneme correspondence rules.
- Children practise application by reading texts that are entirely decodable for them, so that they experience success and can rely on phonemic strategies.
- Children have the opportunity for developmentally appropriate phonic knowledge application across all areas of their curriculum.
- Children choose to read independently at school and at home, through choice and engagement.

Intent

Phonics

We begin our teaching of phonics in Nursery and follow 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' progression. This ensures that our children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school. Our approach ensures that we aim for all of our children to be equipped to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Priors Hall, 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 Priors Hall**,** we value reading as a crucial life skill. Our aim is that by the time children leave to attend secondary school, all children read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary and we encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose. Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader, as well as a phonics lead, who drive the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching 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

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

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

We have an experienced teacher and team of staff in Nursery who are trained in 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' progression, to ensure that Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children consolidate the current week's learning. Children make a strong start in Reception and teaching begins in Week 2 of the autumn term. The 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' progression document ensures that:

- 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 Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily Keep-up lessons – Every Child as a Reader

Any child who needs additional practise has daily 'keep-up support', taught by a fully trained member of staff. '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.

We timetable phonics lessons for any child in Year 2, 3 and 4 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. We use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Keep-up resources at pace.

If any child in Year 5 or 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading, they will have a tailored approach to support their development in reading, exploring and understanding their barriers and challenges to fluency. This may be a combination of 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised', and 'Action Words', that offer a different approach to secure knowledge when reading.

Teaching reading: reading practise sessions twice times a week

We teach children to read through phonics supplemented by reading practise sessions twice a week. These:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups between 6-8 children
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' assessments
- are monitored by the class teacher

Each reading practise session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practise sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression & comprehension: teaching children to understand the text

In Reception these sessions start in Autumn 2. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practise in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books. In Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

The decodable reading practise book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. We use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' parent 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 children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load. 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 that teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson. The Reading Leader and SLT 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)

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.
We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully, as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the

children at Priors Hall and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

Every child has access to books that encourage a love for reading, through shared reading areas that are celebrated throughout the school or in their classrooms.

In Nursery and Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.

- Children from Reception 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 children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- Each class are encouraged to engage with the local library throughout the year.
- 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 Reading for Pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, national events etc).
- Reading challenges and incentives are ran throughout the year, to greater raise the status of reading for pleasure.

Impact

Assessment

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

Assessment for Learning is used:

- daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
- weekly in the review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.

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.
- by SLT and scrutinised through the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Statutory assessment:

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

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

Children in Year 2 to 4 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment, as well as through the half-termly 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' summative assessments.

Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is everybody's business. Priors Hall – a Learning Community has an unwavering commitment to safeguarding to ensure that: all our children and young people are safe and feel safe; that children, parents/carers and staff are able to talk about any safeguarding concerns and feel assured that they will be listened to; and that all staff and volunteers are aware of and implement safeguarding procedures and guidance, including what to do if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm. In essence, we instil a culture of vigilance.

All concerns should be given to our school Designated Safeguarding Leads: **Jenny Forshaw (DSL) Jacqueline White (Assistant Headteacher and DDSL), Tess McQuade (Headteacher and DDSL), Justin Pye (Assistant Head and DSO), Charlotte Brazier (Assistant Head and DSO), Alex Crawford (Nursery Lead Teacher and DSO), Lucy Nisbet (SENDCo and DSO) and Calla Haycock-Hall (Pastoral Lead and DSO).**

- In any case where an adult is concerned that a child is, or may be, at risk of significant harm they must report this immediately to the DSL or to a

member of the Safeguarding Team who will make a referral directly to Northamptonshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on **0300 126 7000**.

- If a child or other person is at immediate risk of harm, the first response should always be to call the police on **999.** This policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of Priors Hall – a Learning Community.
- If a concern is in relation to a member of staff at Priors Hall (who is not the Headteacher), please contact Tess McQuade on **01536 216090** to report this concern.
- If a concern is in relation to the Headteacher, please contact the Chair of Governors (Matt Miller) via email on SBoak@IFTL.co.uk or IFTL Safeguarding Lead (Kim Kemp) via email on KKemp@iftl.co.uk