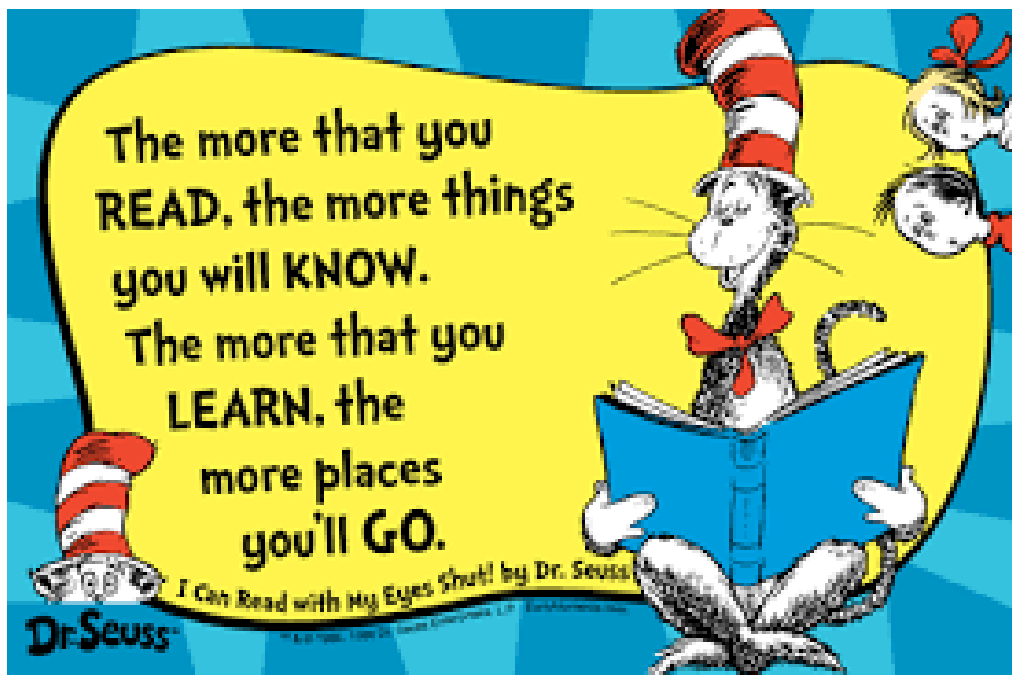


Ballifield Primary's
Early Reading and Phonics



Context

The context of Early Reading and Phonics at Ballifield Primary School is that of a large urban primary school, serving children in the age range 3-11 years. Our pupils come from a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences. We recognise that our pupils will be at very different starting points in relation to their reading journey prior to starting school. We appreciate that some children may have already developed a love for books, having shared a wealth of books at home. Some will have developed recognition of sounds, words and be familiar with the repetitive language used, for example in traditional tales, whilst others will have limited experience and limited exposure to books and stories. We also recognise that none will have experienced systematic synthetic phonics, so the routines, teaching and learning behaviours will be new for all.

OUR INTENT FOR THE TEACHING OF EARLY READING AND PHONICS AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Purpose

The purpose of the teaching of Early Reading and Phonics at Ballifield Primary School is that every pupil learns to read quickly through a **systematic synthetic phonics** approach, to ensure that all pupils have the strong foundations to become fluent and confident readers. We want all our children, especially disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being to continue their reading journey, enjoying the texts they chose and be able to use their reading skills to support their learning and development across every area of the curriculum. This enables every child to read a wide variety of books that capture their interest and develop their love of reading.

Aim

The aim of Early Reading and Phonics at Ballifield Primary School is that all our children will:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read
- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words

We want all our children to build strong foundations in their reading journey, enjoying the texts they choose to read and be able to use their reading skills to support their development across every area of the curriculum. This enables every child to read a wide variety of books that capture their interest and develop their love of learning.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TEACHING OF EARLY READING AND PHONICS AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

The School Curriculum Requirements

As a maintained school in England, Ballifield Primary School is legally required to follow the statutory National Curriculum which sets out in a programme of study, on the basis of key

stages, subject content for the subject of English and within this, reading specifically, that should be taught to all pupils.

Time allocation for Early Reading and Phonics

Early Reading and Phonics at Ballifield Primary School is taught **daily – Monday to Friday in the mornings** to EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Additional time is also given to pupils identified as needing extra help to 'keep up'.

How Early Reading and Phonics is taught?

- We group pupils according to their progress in reading – STAGE not age.
- A speed sound lesson is taught daily with the introduction of 3 new sounds a week followed by two days reviewing these sounds altogether.
- Reading is taught everyday through a levelled phonics book for the ability of each group of children.
- Day 1 involves sharing and reading the speed sounds, story green words, red words and speedy green words. Using the skills of 'Special Friends', 'Fred Talk' and say the word. The pupils then practice each of these with their partner. The teacher then reads the story introduction and asks the children a question to discuss, pupils share their responses and then partner read the book.
- Day 2 involves recapping the story green words, red words and speedy green words to ensure the pupils are able to read with increased precision and recognition, before reading the text for a second time. On the second read the pupils should be more fluent, reading story words, red words and speedy green words by sight or using 'Fred in your head.'
- Day 3 involves reading the story for a third time. The pupils should be more familiar with the text and demonstrate fluency, spending less time decoding and reading at a pace where they can comprehend what they have read. After reading the text the pupils discuss and answer verbally comprehension questions, these require the pupils to 'Have a think' and use 'fastest finger'. Questions involve retrieval, vocabulary and inference.
- On day 4 the pupils are introduced to a new book and begin again with introducing the text, as in Day 1.

Teaching and Learning

Pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly (for example m = Maisie mountain, mountain). This is especially useful for vulnerable pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – common exception words.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding.

Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils with the aim that they are soon able to read these texts for themselves.

Planning

- All of the teachers follow the planning scripts provided by the Ruth Miskin Read _____ Inc scheme.
- Teachers prepare and organise their resources daily, before the next lesson of Read _____ Inc.
- Teachers make minor adaptations depending on their AfL for each lesson.
- The RWI Leader supports teachers to use the sound gaps analysis to identify what sounds to teach and focus on before moving onto new sounds.

Early Reading and Phonics Resources

- Text level resources, home reading books and additional sound charts, magnetic letters etc. are stored centrally in the intervention room.
- Teachers have their own Read _____ Inc box containing all the resources they need to fulfil the requirements of each session.
- Resources are audited yearly and replacement cards, books and phonics charts are ordered and purchased from the Early Reading and Phonics budget.
- Subscription to the Ruth Miskin portal provides electronic resources, which give pupils opportunities to watch in phonics virtual classroom videos at home and at school. Staff training pathways are accessed through the portal along with phonics documents and updates to the programme.

Parental and Visitor Engagement

Ballifield Primary School understands the importance of continued professional development and the progress of pupil attainment. The school works with The English Hub at St Wilfred's on a joint project, which aims to develop strong foundations for all pupils as early readers. We also work with our Early Reading and Phonics consultant for two development days per academic year.

Parental engagement is paramount for the success of reading for pleasure and for each child's reading journey, developing into a confident fluent reader. Meetings take place with parents throughout the year. In autumn one, EYFS explain and model RWI to our new parents. In Year 1 and 2 during 'Our come and read' sessions staff reintroduce RWI and model the different strategies. In Spring 2, Year 1 meet with parents and discuss the Phonics Screening. All staff work in partnership with parents to support reading and share each child's reading progress during the termly parent evenings. We also invite Year 1 parents in to explain the Phonics Screening Check, how it works and the purpose of this national assessment.

Inclusion

We understand that the most effective inclusion strategy begins with high-quality inclusive early reading and phonics teaching, which benefits all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Provision is adapted to the needs of all pupils, for example the use of 'Fast Track Tutoring' to close the gaps and give pupils opportunities for 1:1 specific bespoke tutoring. Teachers are aware that pupils who have barriers to learning to read can still enjoy and engage in story time, share books, discuss stories and share their thoughts and opinions. All pupils are

encouraged to progress to their full potential and a variety of teaching methods are employed to ensure that this is possible. Pupils who are very able in Early Reading and Phonics, develop strong foundations and work through the programme at pace whilst being given opportunities to demonstrate and develop their reading skills across the curriculum.

Early Reading and Phonics and SMSC

At Ballifield, we believe that Early Reading and Phonics plays a role in the personal development of children, developing problem solving and resilience, alongside team work, communication and respect. Our reading approach champions the use of talk partners, reading partners and partner practice, developing the skill of working successfully with a peer.

Early Reading and Phonics and British Values

At Ballifield, we promote the fundamental British values of:

1. **Democracy**
2. The **rule of law**
3. **Individual liberty**
4. Mutual **respect**
5. **Tolerance** of those with different faiths and beliefs

We believe that Early Reading and Phonics can make a key educational contribution to children's explorations of British Values by using spoken language to organise thoughts and by being tolerant of others when working collaboratively.

THE IMPACT OF THE TEACHING OF EARLY READING AND PHONICS AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

The impact of our Early Reading and Phonics curriculum will be that every child sees themselves as a **reader**, developing a love of reading for learning and for pleasure. We want our pupils to see reading as a positive experience, one that is integral to learning through all curriculum subjects and not a chore, or something to be worried about.

Assessment, reporting and monitoring

Pupils are formally assessed every half term, using the 'Ruth Miskin' assessments. When required, staff can request for children to be assessed sooner, should they feel that a child may need to move group. These assessments identify sound gaps and show the progress of pupil's fluency and skills of decoding-using 'Special Friends', 'Fred Talk' and 'Read the word.' These assessments are then used to group pupils, track their progress, form a comprehensive sound gaps analysis to address or reteach and highlights the pupils for 'Fast Track Tutoring' sessions.

Role of the Subject Leader

The Subject Leader is responsible for overseeing teaching and learning in Early Reading and Phonics at Ballifield. This role includes:

- Writing the action plan for subject development.
- Monitoring the implementation of Early Reading and Phonics
- Coaching staff weekly
- Running weekly practise sessions
- Book scrutiny to look at outcomes
- Assessing pupils every half term (or at other intervals)
- Deployment of staff to groups
- Pupil voice to ascertain whether pupils have developed the level of fluency required to comprehend the text. Gather evidence that pupils see reading as a joy, developing the positive reading culture and love of books.
- Liaising with staff about the implementation of Early Reading and Phonics within their classes/ groups.
- Order and maintain resources.
- Evaluate effectiveness of Early Reading and Phonics and its IMPACT on PSC scores in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Keep up to date with new initiatives and curriculum development.
- Attend development day meetings and English Hub meetings
- Review the Early Reading and Phonics curriculum annually and make any necessary adjustments.

Policy date: January 2026

Policy review date: January 2027