

Prioritising reading:

- Reading is a high priority at Windmill Hill Academy.
- Leaders and governors recognise that reading is a key skill that gives our pupils access to the wider curriculum and to life-long learning.
- Pupils develop and apply their reading skills across a broad range of subject areas.
- A significant proportion of the curriculum budget is spent on high quality texts.
- A rigorous systematic, synthetic phonics programme is delivered daily across the EYFS and KS1, selecting the most efficient approaches.
- Pupils in Year Two and above have daily timetabled whole class guided reading sessions.
- Teachers deliver phonics in an engaging and motivating way that captures pupils' interest and attention.

Love of reading

- Staff read to their pupils on a daily basis exposing them to a rich literary diet, covering an extensive range of authors, genres and periods.
- Class reading corners are stocked with high quality books for the pupils to access and enjoy.
- Every opportunity is taken to encourage pupils to reflect on and talk about their favourite authors and the books they have written. They are encouraged to recommend books to their peers.
- Early reading is encouraged by providing pupils with non-worded reading books in the first instance.
- Children have the daily opportunity to spend time quietly reading independently or 1:1 with a member of staff.
- The school library is regularly restocked. Children are consulted on the selection of books, both fiction and non-fiction. Pupils have free access to the school library.
- There is a good range of non-fiction books available to support the units of study pupils cover across the wider curriculum.
- Individual children are presented with reading awards to celebrate their achievements.
- Staff receive training and support to ensure they are highly skilled in delivering engaging story times.
- World Book Day is a key event in the school calendar and used as an opportunity for pupils, staff and parents to celebrate literature and share their favourite books.
- The school actively supports parents and carers with promoting reading at home by providing regular parent / teacher meetings, reading information workshops and information on the website and ClassDojo.

Programme and Process

- Pupils follow a rigorous and sequential phonics programme that introduces them to new letters and sounds step by step. This ensures that they accumulate sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to read with fluency, accuracy and understanding by the end of KS1.
- Engaging phonic books are closely matched to pupils' increasing knowledge of phonics and 'tricky' words. As children re-read the stories, their fluency increases.
- The school's approach to early reading and phonics is designed to ensure that children experience a good degree of success in their reading from the very start.
- Pupils' progress is regularly monitored through teacher assessments, termly data reviews and through the use of formal testing.
- As pupils become more expert readers, they are introduced to the key skills of clarifying, questioning, explaining, retrieval, summarising and predicting.
- Phonics is the foremost strategy for decoding in early reading.
- The school's approaches to early reading and phonics show fidelity to the programme followed.

Books match sounds

- Accurate assessment ensures that pupils are given books that match the sounds that they have been taught and are currently learning. As a result, they have the necessary phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words.
- Staff in the EYFS and KS1 are responsible for changing and / or checking pupil's reading books. Pupils in the EYFS and KS1 have their books changed when they have demonstrated reading for fluency. (Books should be read at least three times.)

- A significant investment in phonetically decodable books ensures breadth, avoiding the need for pupils to progress to harder books when they are not fully ready.
- Once pupils are assessed as coming off the phonics programme, teachers and support staff regularly update their reading books to ensure they are still able to fluently read their home reader for practice of reading skills taught within daily lessons.
- Guided reading books are selected carefully to challenge the reading of different groups of pupils in school.

Phonics from the start

- We teach early reading through the validated systematic, synthetic phonics programme 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' which we have just purchased and implemented.
- Right from the start of Reception, children will have a daily phonics lesson which follows the progression for Little Wandle Letters and Sounds and this continues in Year One to ensure children become fluent readers.
- 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 become fluent readers. Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress. Four new phonemes and their corresponding graphemes are taught (GPCs) each week and they are then used in the final lesson of the week to review the week's learning. Children will also learn tricky words during these sessions.
- In the Autumn and Spring term, Reception learn phase 2 and phase 3 GPCs and then will spend the final term learning phase 4. Year 1 begin the Autumn term with 3 weeks of revision of phases 2, 3 and 4 before learning phase 5, which will be completed by the end of the year. Year 2 children will begin the year by revisiting phase 5 and other previously taught phases to ensure all children are completely confident with applying these GPCs in both their reading and also their writing. (please see the overview here for what this progression looks like).
- Half termly assessments take place through Reception and Year 1 to help inform future teaching and help identify children who have gaps in their phonic knowledge and need additional practice. Daily assessment of learning also takes place within the classroom so staff can quickly identify any children who are in danger of falling behind and provide the appropriate daily 'Keep Up' intervention.

Making accelerated Progress

- Daily, ongoing teacher assessments quickly identify pupils who start to fall behind the pace of the school's phonics programme. There is a strong focus on early identification, intervention and support to enable pupils to keep up with the pace of the programme.
- Teachers and support staff are highly skill in delivering effective support for the weakest readers using a range of proven strategies such as small group and one to one support.
- Pupils who need further opportunity to practise reading because they do not read at home, are given priority to read to an adult in school.
- Pupils who did not achieve their phonics check receive interventions (daily reader/extra phonics support) and/or work in a group which is teacher driven.
- Leaders ensure that the progress of the weakest readers is carefully monitored.
- Staff attend regular meetings with leaders to discuss and review the progress made by the weakest readers. Plans are adapted accordingly.
- Where progress becomes a concern, parents are invited to a meeting with the teacher and advice is given as to how they can further support their child at home.

Early reading experts

- All teaching and support staff are trained in the school's approaches to early reading and phonics.
- Staff receive regular training updates and guidance on their delivery in the classroom to ensure that standards remain high.
- The school regularly uses external specialist support to further develop and refine the provision for early reading and phonics.

- In addition to an English Lead, we also have a Phonics Leade.
- Leaders routinely monitor guided reading and phonics sessions and talk to pupils to ensure agreed approaches and consistency are applied across the school.