

Ayresome Primary School

Early Reading Handbook

2026-2027



Date of next review:	Summer 2027
Leaders Responsible:	Hollie Rafferty

Context of Ayresome

Ayresome Primary school is a large school, with 716 pupils on roll (June 2026). The school serves an area of very high deprivation and immigration with mobility of approximately 50% across the academic year. We have a wide range of pupils speaking English as an additional language (82% as of June 2026), serving a wide community of over 45 languages. Our approach to phonics and early reading is one that is accessible to all learners and of high standard, regardless of background.

Aims of Ayresome's Early Reading Offer

Supports staff by:

- Creating an inspiring teaching and learning environment, that develops core phonics skill knowledge, enabling children to reach their potential in reading
- Building confidence in delivering an exciting and enriching curriculum which inspires pupils and builds on core reading skills
- Providing bespoke coaching in early reading delivery
- Encouraging reading role models

Supports pupils to:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Acquire a wider vocabulary
- Appreciate a rich and varied range of literature
- Build speaking and listening skills
- Use their imagination and learn to be excited about reading

Roles and responsibilities

SLT will:

Support and work alongside the early reading leader in monitoring, observing and developing an outstanding reading curriculum that focuses on developing areas of the School Development Plan.

Early Reading leader will:

Take responsibility for developing early reading throughout the school within the school's development plan; monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning and the use of resources. Teachers and support staff can expect support from the early reading lead in the delivery of the subject. It is the responsibility of the reading leader to develop staff confidence and competence in teaching early reading, as well as driving the subject in the direction of the school's and academies visions for education. The subject lead will oversee the learning of all pupils in the school that are receiving phonics and provide regular assessments to measure progress. They will organise interventions required for the children who need it and ensure teachers are supported in providing children with books that are matched to their correct phonic level. The subject lead will ensure the fidelity to the school's chosen SSP programme 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' school wide.

Teachers will:

Deliver high quality phonics following Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, to develop children's phonic skills related to reading and writing. Classrooms will reflect the LWLSR scheme in the resources used to support pupils' learning. Teachers will continually assess children's progress during lessons and ensure material being delivered is meeting pupils' needs. Teachers will model and foster a love of books, stories and reading through multi-sensory teaching and following the Ayresome reading spine.

Support staff will:

Effectively support the delivery of phonics, whether supporting in a whole class phonics session, delivering a reading practice session within the 'reading team' or delivering a keep-up/ catch-up intervention. Support staff will effectively teach the development of fluency when reading with children, focusing on increasing accuracy and speed. In addition, supporting children to understand the texts they read in applicable sessions. Support staff will effectively model and foster a love of books, stories and reading at age-appropriate levels.

Intent

At Ayresome Primary School we believe that every child will be literate by the time they leave us. All children have the right to high quality teaching and learning opportunities that help them develop essential literacy skills which are functional, providing them with the opportunity to reach their potential whilst at school and after they leave. Therefore, we place early reading at the core of learning, and this is reflected through the timetabling and time spent on reading activities.

Phonics (Reading and Spelling)

At Ayresome, we believe that our children can become fluent readers and writers. Therefore we teach through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised (LWLSR)*, which is a systematic synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the LWLSR 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, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At Ayresome, 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 Ayresome, 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 to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers both for pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have an Early Reading Leader who drives the Little Wandle 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 LWLSR programme.

Implementation

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

Our children's journey, for love of reading, begins in our 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 ensure 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 the 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. This means 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. In addition, 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, taught by a fully trained adult. 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. These sessions are short, snappy and effective. We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 who is not fully fluent at reading or who has not passed the phonics screening check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Little Wandle assessments to identify the gaps in their phonics knowledge or fluency speed and teach these using high quality resources – at pace. The bottom 20% of the cohorts are read with daily.

If any child in Year 3 to 5 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading and or writing, their reading lessons are tailored to address specific reading/writing gaps. These lessons have a GPC focus in addition to providing opportunities to embed these sounds in words they read. This means our children receive phonics support daily.

In Year 6, the children that have gaps in their phonic knowledge receive daily short snappy phonics sessions that focuses on closing GPC gaps as well as providing the children with the opportunity to read a book at the correct level.

Teaching reading: reading practice sessions

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions. These are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately five to eight children. We use books that are matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle assessments and book matching grid. These reading practice sessions 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, prosody and comprehension. In reception, these sessions start in Week 4 of the Autumn term. Children who are not yet decoding have additional blending practice in small groups so they can quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

In year 2 and KS2, we continue to teach reading with a focus upon decoding for any children who still need to practice reading with decodable books.

Reading practice: decoding

In the first session of the reading practice sessions, pupils' learning is focused upon decoding and applying phonics knowledge. Children build their fluency in this session by reading GPCs, tricky words and new vocabulary. This session offers children the ability to read independently and to apply their decoding skills.

Reading practice: prosody

In the second session, prosody is the focus. Children still have the opportunity to review words and GPCs and to fluently read. The reading team support children by modelling reading with intonation, expression and emotion. Echo reading and choral reading is used to teach prosody over a double page spread of a book. Children then read with expression on pages they haven't practiced. A focused plan will be in place for each prosody session: either dialogue, interesting language, speech verbs or punctuation.

Reading practice: comprehension

In the final session, again words and sounds are practiced to support children to build their fluency but this session focuses on the children's ability to comprehend a text. The comprehension focus could be: identify and explain key aspects of fiction/non-fiction; events in a text; vocabulary; inference or prediction. Questions are asked to the children with reference to the text.

1:1 reading

At Ayresome, we know the impact reading with a child as regularly as possible can have on their reading journey. During the reading practice sessions, staff use the 'tapping in' technique to listen to each child read. Due to the regularity of the sessions, this means each child in each cohort will be read with at least three times a week.

Home reading and support

The same decodable reading practice books the children have been reading in lessons through the week, are taken home on a Friday to ensure success is shared with the family. These are then returned on the Monday. Reading for pleasure books go home with children for parents to share and read with their children. We use the Little Wandle parents' 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.

We acknowledge the need to support our parents so they can support their children to read; considering this, we organise reading support workshops for parents and live or recorded 'see us teach' sessions. These allow the parents to see through the window to their child's environment of learning and to be inspired to replicate the learning at home.

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 are accessible for all teachers on the LWLSR online portal, to ensure a consistent approach and structure for each lesson. The early reading leader and SLT use the audit and prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Ensuring early reading for pleasure

'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 value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our reading for pleasure pedagogy. We read to the 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 Ayresome Primary School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures. Children are included in the selection of class texts, to begin to build that knowledge of choice and desire to read.

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 and gain experience of a wide range of books. In Nursery and Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their child initiated learning time and the books are continually refreshed. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of Reading for Pleasure events (author visits, themed days, workshops, national events etc.)



Supporting newly arrived children

We are prepared for the high mobility of pupils at Ayresome by intervening with a children's learning in their first week after arrival. A LWLSR placement assessment is used to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge. From this a plan is provided for appropriate extra teaching. This applies to whole school.

Classroom environment

The learning environment pays a key role in the development of children's learning: it's the third teacher in the room. Therefore, our environments reflect our phonics programme. Teachers are sat directly in front of pupils to deliver the phonics sessions on the carpet (to reduce movement and sustain focus) with key children sat at the front. Lesson resources are prepared and ready for the week ready for the teachers to use. Little Wandle resources are used throughout the phonics and reading practice sessions. Walls display

the GPC frieze charts in Reception and the alphabetic code and grow the code posters in Reception and Year 1/2 respectively. Little Wandle letter formations of the alphabet are displayed near the writing station in continuous provision sets ups and children have access to Little Wandle sound mats to support their writing and spelling.



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 who require keep-up support. It's also used weekly in review lessons to assess gaps. These are addressed 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. It's used to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the keep up support they need. Summative assessment is analysed by the early reading leader through the online LWLSR tracker,

to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Children in year 1 sit the phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2. Children in Year 2-6 are assessed through: their teacher's ongoing formative assessments; the Little Wandle placement assessment and the appropriate half-termly assessments.