



READING AND PHONICS POLICY

Nursery to Year 2

Every reader. Every day. Every opportunity.

“To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark.”

Victor Hugo

HEAR IT • READ IT • LOVE IT

Policy owner	English Subject Leader / Phonics Lead
Responsible leader	Headteacher: Hayley Farthing
Approved by	Governing Body
Approval date	September 2026
Review date	September 2027, or sooner if national guidance changes

1 Purpose, vision and principles

A shared commitment to fluent reading, rich language and a lifelong love of books.

Our vision

At Broomhill Infant School, we want every child to become a confident, fluent reader who understands what they read and chooses to read for pleasure and information. Nature, Nurture and Knowledge are at the heart of our approach. Children learn through practical, meaningful experiences, supported by rich reading opportunities in direct teaching, continuous provision and outdoor learning.

Our reading promise

Every child will encounter ambitious, inclusive and enjoyable texts, receive expert phonics teaching and have regular opportunities to talk, wonder, reread and share books with others.

Aims for our pupils

- leave Key Stage 1 as confident, increasingly fluent readers with secure understanding;
- read widely and often for pleasure and to find out information;
- develop strong phonological knowledge and apply it independently when reading and writing;
- acquire a broad vocabulary and strong oracy skills;
- encounter viewpoints, cultures and experiences that deepen understanding of themselves, others and the world; and
- see themselves as readers and build habits that support lifelong learning.

Reading across the school

Adults read aloud every day, modelling pace, fluency, expression and intonation. High-quality books are visible and accessible throughout classrooms and continuous provision. Reading areas are calm, inviting and well resourced, but reading also happens everywhere in our school - indoors, outdoors, in play and across the curriculum.

Texts are selected carefully to develop vocabulary, social and emotional literacy, cultural understanding and a sense of belonging. Adults bring stories to life through role play, props, puppets, performance and purposeful book talk.

2 The Broomhill reading culture

Children become readers through belonging, enjoyment, talk and daily shared experience.

Reading for pleasure

Reading for pleasure is a central part of school life. Children choose books independently and with peers, recommend favourites, revisit familiar stories and hear adults talk enthusiastically about their own reading. Choice is supported without limiting ambition: adults help children discover texts that connect with their interests while opening doors to new knowledge and ideas.

Books as windows and mirrors

Children need books that reflect their own lives and identities, as well as books that introduce unfamiliar people, places, experiences and possibilities.

High-quality texts and talk

Stories, poems and non-fiction are explored through prediction, questioning, retelling, drama, illustration, comparison and discussion. Adults explicitly teach and revisit important vocabulary so that children can understand, use and enjoy increasingly rich language.

Continuous provision and outdoor learning

Carefully resourced provision gives children authentic reasons to read: signs, labels, maps, recipes, instructions, menus, messages, information books and story prompts. Staff notice children's interests and extend them through well-chosen texts. Outdoor learning provides further opportunities to follow clues, investigate nature, use environmental print and connect reading with first-hand experience.

Daily read-aloud entitlement

- Every class enjoys a daily story, poem, rhyme or information text read aloud by an adult.
- Adults model fluent, expressive reading and make enjoyment visible.
- Children have time to respond, ask questions, revisit favourite parts and make connections.
- Texts build progressively broad knowledge, vocabulary and literary experience.

3 Teaching phonics

A systematic, responsive pathway from listening and sound awareness to fluent word reading.

Our systematic synthetic phonics programme

Broomhill uses Bug Club Phonics as its systematic synthetic phonics programme from Reception to Year 2. Staff are trained to deliver the programme consistently. Structured units teach grapheme-phoneme correspondences in a carefully sequenced order so that children can blend for reading, segment for spelling and become familiar with an increasing number of words.

Stage	Core provision	What adults prioritise
Nursery	Daily stories, songs, rhymes, listening and attention games; short Phase 2 teaching for children who are developmentally ready.	Phonological awareness, language-rich interaction, sound discrimination and key vocabulary.
Reception	Daily discrete Bug Club Phonics teaching, decodable reading and regular practice at school and home.	Accurate GPC recall, oral blending, segmenting, blending for reading and early fluency.
Year 1	Daily sequenced teaching, reading practice and preparation for the statutory phonics screening check.	Automatic recall, increasingly fluent blending, spelling application and rapid response to gaps.
Year 2	Daily sequenced teaching, reading practice. Preparation for the statutory phonics screening recheck.	Securing earlier learning, closing gaps and moving confidently from decoding towards fluency.

Responsive grouping and additional support

Children are grouped responsively within year groups according to current learning needs. Staff use assessment to identify children who are at risk of falling behind and provide timely pre-teaching, precision teaching, additional reading practice and interventions that follow the guidance and sequence of the SSP programme.

Home access

Children have individual Bug Club accounts. Teachers regularly allocate phonetically decodable books and interactive activities that match taught content so children can practise successfully at home.

4 Teaching reading

Decoding, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension are taught together through meaningful texts.

Whole-class reading in EYFS

In Nursery and Reception, children listen to high-quality texts every day and explore carefully chosen focus texts. Adults identify key vocabulary and ideas in advance, ask questions that reveal and extend understanding, and provide opportunities to practise segmenting and blending where appropriate. VIPERS skills inform questioning without narrowing the richness of story talk and response.

Whole-class reading in Key Stage 1

Children take part in daily whole-class reading. Across each term, teachers plan a balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry and connect texts meaningfully with curriculum themes, celebrations and children's interests. Teaching draws on VIPERS and National Curriculum expectations to develop vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval and sequencing.

Individual reading

Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 read individually with an adult each week. Those who are not on track, or are at risk of falling behind, receive additional practice. Children reread books to improve accuracy, pace, expression and confidence. Adults ask purposeful questions and listen carefully to assess both decoding and understanding.

Reading strand	What children learn	Typical practice
Word reading	Apply phonics accurately and recognise an increasing number of words automatically.	Decodable books, blending practice, rereading and precise feedback.
Fluency	Read with accuracy, appropriate pace, phrasing and expression.	Adult modelling, echo reading, repeated reading and performance.
Vocabulary	Understand and use words encountered in texts and across the curriculum.	Explicit explanation, images, actions, examples and repeated use.
Comprehension	Retrieve, infer, predict, explain, sequence and make connections.	Book talk, VIPERS-informed questions, drama, response and discussion.

5 Inclusion and responsive support

Every child is entitled to ambitious reading experiences and the support needed to participate.

High expectations with appropriate adjustment

Adults maintain high expectations while adapting access, pace, grouping, resources and response modes. Support is based on careful assessment of the whole child and is reviewed regularly. Children are never denied rich texts because independent decoding is still developing.

Universal inclusive practice

- use visual support, Widgeit symbols, Makaton, objects of reference and accessible communication approaches where needed;
- pre-teach and revisit essential vocabulary through real objects, images, actions and meaningful contexts;
- reduce background distraction, allow processing time and use clear, concise instructions;
- match decodable texts closely to taught phonics while continuing to share ambitious literature aloud;
- use enlarged print, adapted resources, sensory regulation and specialist advice where appropriate; and
- value home languages and encourage families to share stories, songs and books in the languages they know best.

Children who need additional practice

Assessment information is used to plan prompt keep-up and catch-up support. This may include additional adult reading, precision teaching, focused phonological-awareness work, repeated reading, pre-teaching and individual or small-group intervention. Support complements the school's phonics sequence and is monitored for impact.

Wellbeing, identity and belonging

Book choices reflect a range of cultures, families, identities, abilities and experiences. Adults create safe opportunities to explore feelings and viewpoints through literature, respecting children's contributions and ensuring that reading remains a source of connection, confidence and pleasure.

6 Partnership with parents and carers

Home and school work together to make reading frequent, positive and achievable.

- Families joining Broomhill receive Bug Club login details and guidance about the school's approach to phonics and reading.
- Children receive a reading record so that decodable books, library books and favourite books from home can all be celebrated.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to reread matched books, share other books aloud and talk about stories, words and ideas.
- Families are invited into school to see adults sharing books and to read with their child during Welcome Wednesday sessions.
- Teachers keep families informed about progress and helpful next steps through meetings, Class Dojo and informal conversation.
- Where a child needs additional support, staff work with families to agree manageable, positive practice at home.

The most important home message

Reading together should feel warm and encouraging. Adults can read aloud beyond the child's independent level, talk about pictures and ideas, revisit favourites and celebrate effort as well as accuracy.

Reading records

Reading records support two-way communication between home and school. They help adults notice reading frequency, confidence, preferences and emerging needs. They do not replace professional assessment or meaningful conversation with families.

7 Assessment, leadership and monitoring

Assessment is purposeful, proportionate and used to improve teaching and participation.

Assessment principles

- Staff assess phonics regularly in line with Bug Club guidance and respond swiftly to identified gaps.
- Running records and attentive observation help adults judge accuracy, fluency, confidence and readiness for the next phase, set or level.
- Comprehension is assessed through discussion, response to texts, retrieval, inference, prediction, explanation and sequencing.
- Statutory assessment requirements, including the Year 1 phonics screening check, are implemented accurately.
- Leaders review the progress and participation of groups, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and children learning English as an additional language.
- Assessment should inform teaching; unnecessary recording and testing are avoided.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors: approve the policy, monitor implementation and hold leaders to account for reading outcomes and equality of access.

Headteacher and senior leaders: establish reading as a whole-school priority, protect time and resources, provide professional development and evaluate impact.

English Subject Leader / Phonics Lead: supports progression and consistency, models effective practice, reviews assessment and coordinates improvement.

Teachers and practitioners: deliver the agreed phonics programme, plan rich reading experiences, assess responsively and communicate with families.

Learning support staff and other adults: use agreed approaches consistently, provide precise feedback and share useful observations with teachers.

Monitoring and review

Leaders evaluate implementation through lesson visits, book and provision reviews, pupil and family voice, assessment information, reading records, review of text choices and discussion with staff. Monitoring considers the quality of phonics teaching, children's fluency and comprehension, reading for pleasure, inclusion and the impact of additional support.

8 Terminology and useful reference points

A concise companion for staff and families.

Term	Meaning
SSP	Systematic synthetic phonics
GPC	Grapheme-phoneme correspondence
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage - Nursery and Reception
KS1	Key Stage 1 - Year 1 and Year 2
VIPERS	Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Sequencing

See Appendix A for Bug Club glossary

Other useful guidance and resources

- Department for Education: National curriculum in England - English programmes of study
- Department for Education: Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework
- Bug Club / ActiveLearn Primary: www.activelearnprimary.co.uk
- Phonics Play: www.phonicsplay.co.uk
- Spelling Play: www.spellingplay.co.uk
- Phonics glossary: ActiveLearn Primary downloadable resources

Related school documents

Oracy Policy; Writing Policy; English Policy; Early Years Policy; Curriculum Policy; SEND and Inclusion Policy; Equality Policy; Assessment Policy; Online Safety Policy.

Annual implementation questions

Review prompt	RAG / note
Do all children receive consistent, well-sequenced phonics teaching?	
Are decodable books closely matched to taught phonics?	
Do children hear and choose a rich range of texts?	
Is progress in decoding, fluency and comprehension secure?	
Are pupils who need additional support identified and helped quickly?	
Are families confident about how to support reading at home?	

Review record

Key strengths:

Priority for development:

Action / lead / timescale:

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Handout 1: Phonics Glossary



Word	Meaning
blend	to draw together the constituent phonemes of a written word in order to read it
consonant cluster	two or more consonant letters in sequence that represent separate phonemes
decodable books	books that are carefully matched to children's phonic knowledge, which they can read by decoding the words
decode	to convert written words into spoken language
digraph / trigraph	two / three successive letters that represent one phoneme
encode	to identify phonemes in spoken words and then write the corresponding graphemes.
GPC (grapheme-phoneme correspondence)	the relationship between the graphemes and the phonemes they represent
grapheme	a letter or combination of letters that represent a phoneme
morpheme	the smallest unit of sound that changes a word's meaning; it can be represented by one or several letters
phoneme	the smallest unit of meaning in language, consisting of one or more phonemes
pseudo word	a non-real word which uses GPCs and spellings which are likely to occur
schwa	the name of a vowel sound that is found only in unstressed positions; written as /ə/
segment	to break down the sounds of a spoken word into phonemes in order to spell it
split digraph	a digraph where the two letters are not next to each other in a word
vowel digraph	a type of grapheme where two letters, at least one of which is a vowel, represent one phoneme