



Approach for Teaching Phonics/Early Reading at Laurus Trust Primaries

The Laurus Vision is for everyone regardless of background or circumstance to be inspired, to thrive in all environments, to recognise what it takes to succeed, to set aspirational goals and work hard to achieve them.

How do we teach Phonics?

The effective teaching of Phonics and early reading is a priority in all Laurus Primaries. 'Letters and Sounds' is the scheme we use to ensure a systematic approach. Discrete, daily sessions are planned carefully to engage pupils and motivate them to succeed. Activities such as 'phonics aerobics' and interactive games from resources such as 'Phonics Play'.

Initially a whole class approach is adopted in Reception to help pupils settle in, learn routines and work as a team. It also enables teaching staff to undertake baseline assessments that are used formatively to plan teaching and summatively to evaluate its impact and identify next steps.

Phonics groups are based on each pupil's grasp of letter sounds, letter recognition and ability to blend sounds into words. Groups are fluid and change to reflect regular assessment so that pupils can advance through the phases at a pace that ensures they are progressing well.

To aid transition, Reception and Year One staff determine phonics' groups for the beginning of Year 1 collaboratively.

Regular dialogue between staff results in a cohesive approach that is led and managed by our Phonics and English Leaders at a strategic level.

We are passionate about the need for phonics to be rooted in our English teaching and applied across the wider curriculum. Rigorous monitoring by Senior Leaders and governors ensure standards are maintained and swift action is taken where there are any concerns.

Quality First Teaching follows a sequence of learning to ensure a consistent approach to daily phonics teaching:

- Revisit and Review recently learned phoneme-grapheme correspondences, blending and segmenting skills.
- Teach new phoneme-grapheme correspondences, skills of blending and segmenting.
- Practise new phoneme-grapheme correspondences, skills of blending and segmenting.
- Apply new knowledge and skills while reading and writing.

This sequence allows for skills to be taught, practised and embedded whilst keeping a brisk pace.

How can parents/carers help?

On entry to the school, parents and carers are invited to attend a workshop about systematic synthetic phonics and its importance in developing early reading skills. This enables a strong home-school partnership and empowers parents to support their child when decoding texts i.e. by identifying initial letter sounds and applying their understanding of how to segment and blend using decodable books.

Frequent opportunities to apply these skills provide the crucial stepping stones needed to become confident, fluent readers. We actively promote the idea of 'reading miles' with parents and carers. 'Little and often' is our mantra when supporting them in establishing the habits of lifelong readers in our pupils. Reading lists are provided and updated to signpost quality texts to pupils and their families.

Further opportunities to foster a love of reading are afforded by individual, guided and whole class reading sessions from Reception to Year 6. Consistency in approach across the school secures the best possible impact as our focus shifts from decoding to reading for meaning.

Opportunities for pupils to develop the four interdependent strands of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing are actively sought and creatively delivered.

How does reading progress?

As pupils move from the Early Years to Year 6, they develop both their reading ability and their independence. The way we track and monitor what they are reading therefore also changes (please see summary below).

Early Years / Reception

- 1 Independent colour banded Reading Book
- 1 Library Book
- Later in the year: 1 Guided Reading colour banded book.
- Signed Guided Reading slip, sharing learning focus, stuck into Reading Record book once a week.

Key Stage 1

- 1 Independent colour banded book
- 1 Guided Reading colour banded book
- 1 Library Book
- Signed Guided Reading slip, sharing learning focus, stuck into Reading Record book once a week.

Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3 and 4)

Year 3

- 1 BROWN book, or one of our existing books (variety of colour bandings from different publishers*)
- 1 Library Book
- Signed Guided Reading slip stuck into Reading Record once a week.
- Children input titles of books they have read to document READING MILES – these can include books read out of school

Year 4

- 1 GREY book or one of our existing books (variety of colour bandings from different publishers*)
- 1 Library Book
- Guided Reading slip stuck in
- Children input titles of books they have read to document READING MILES – these can include books read out of school.

Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 5 and 6)

- No reading record
- 1 Library Book
- Guided Reading Book occasionally sent home as preparatory read

We have used our experience of being involved with the 'Every Child a Reader' programme to inform decisions about the range of reading books we provide so that there are quality high interest texts for every age and level of ability.

*Different publishers 'colour band' Key Stage 2 books with different colours. Following advice from our school book supplier, we have chosen to colour band any newly purchased books with a year group level colour band (Year 3=brown, Year 4=grey).

If you have any questions about what and when your child should be reading and how you can support their progress, please speak in the first instance to their Class Teacher.

Remember! Little and often really will make a difference to your child's progress in reading.