



Struthers Primary

Phonics and Reading Policy

Rationale

Literacy forms the foundation of all learning, enabling access to the broader curriculum and enhancing opportunities in all areas of life. Proficiency in literacy supports lifelong learning and employability and is integral to the development of the four capacities outlined in Curriculum for Excellence.

The Literacy and English framework foster the development of critical and creative thinking, alongside competence in listening, talking, reading, and writing. It also promotes the acquisition of essential personal, interpersonal, and collaborative skills required for success in education, life, and the world of work.

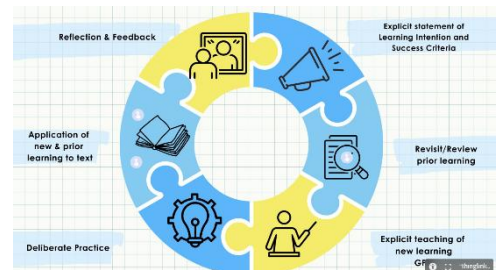
At Struthers Primary School our **aims** in teaching Phonics and Reading are:

- To embed a consistent, whole-school approach to the teaching of reading and phonics.
- To use evidence-based strategies to develop decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills.
- To ensure all learners make sustained progress in their reading abilities.
- To foster confidence and independence in reading across all stages.
- To promote a lifelong love of reading through exposure to high-quality, engaging texts.

Whole School Expectations

Literacy is taught every day and where possible it is taught in the morning session to ensure a settled, focussed ethos. Each lesson should follow the teaching and learning cycle:

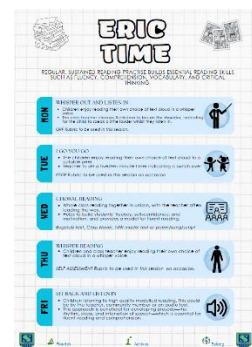
- Explicit statement of learning intention and success criteria
- Review/revisit prior learning
- Explicit modelling of new learning
- Deliberate practice experience
- Application of new learning
- Reflection and feedback



Phonics instruction is taught four times per week in Primary 1–3, and a minimum of three times per week in Primary 5–7. Reading is taught and enjoyed daily across all stages, from Primary 1 to Primary 7, ensuring consistent development of key reading skills, fluency and fostering a positive reading culture.

ERIC (Everyone Reading in Class) time should be protected as a daily, 15–20-minute session immediately after lunch, dedicated to developing reading fluency and fostering a love of reading.

This quiet, focused time allows children to read aloud regularly, helping to build essential skills such as fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking. For learners in Primary 5–7, where reading aloud may not occur daily, ERIC time provides valuable opportunities for teachers to assess reading using reading rubrics and





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skills frameworks. Regular, sustained reading practice during ERIC time supports confident, capable readers and should be prioritised as a core part of the literacy curriculum.

[The ERIC time poster should be displayed within each classroom.](#)

Primary 1 – 7 Reading Overview

In Primary 1 – 3, pupils will be taught and will read two or more de-codable texts each week which align with their current taught phoneme(s), ideally these should be issued on a Monday and a Wednesday. Tangible books will remain in school, however digital copies of these books will be allocated through Bug Club for home learning.

In Primary 3 by Term 3, pupils will have been taught the most common phoneme-grapheme correspondences. At this stage, they will transition from decodable texts to engaging with short class novels from the novel study overview. For any pupils who still have gaps in their phonics knowledge, the Catch-Up Readers Diagnostic Assessment will be used to identify specific areas for recap. Based on the results, appropriate decodable texts and programmes will be provided to help reduce these gaps and support individual progress alongside the whole class novel.

Pupils should have the opportunity to read aloud every day, practising taught skills. This can be done in a variety of ways - reading with the class teacher, independent reading or reading buddies/tables.

In school, each book will be read over a two-day period:

Session One: Before/During Reading – will focus on making links to prior knowledge, simple understanding and blending to read words.

Session Two: During/After Reading – will focus on re-reading a familiar text while stopping and checking for understanding, improving fluency, improving comprehension skills, and blending to read words.

To support early comprehension and encourage children to think and talk about texts, questions should include a mix of literal, inferential, and evaluative prompts such as:

- What happened in the story? Can you tell me in your own words?
- Who are the characters, and what do we know about them?
- Where did the story take place?
- How do you think the characters felt? Why?
- What was your favourite part of the story? Why did you like it?
- What do you think might happen next if the story continued?
- Did anything surprise you in the story?
- What message or lesson do you think the story is trying to tell us?
- Can you think of a different way the story could have ended?
- Does this story remind you of anything you've read or seen before?

These types of questions help young learners practise summarising, making connections, predicting, and reflecting — all vital for building comprehension and critical thinking skills.

In Primary 4 – 7, pupils have exposure to a wide range of high-quality texts through the Struthers Reading Spine. Teachers should explicitly teach fluency, skills for reading and comprehension techniques throughout each teaching week, exploring at least one novel study each term. A key focus is the direct teaching of six core novel study comprehension strategies/skills: activating prior knowledge (metacognition), exploring the meaning of words and phrases (metalinguistics), creating sensory visualisations, drawing inferences, identifying main ideas, and summarising the text. Children are supported in understanding the vital

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connection between fluency and comprehension, and they regularly engage in collaborative learning with peers and the teacher. Please see below for a more detailed understanding of each key strategy:

Skill 1: Prior Knowledge *this may only need to be focussed on briefly, prior to starting a new novel.

What do the pupils already know about this topic/novel/genre? Use a KWL or Making Thinking Visible strategies to gain an insight into their existing knowledge and where they want to take their learning.

Skill 2: Fluency and Metalinguistics

Without the identification of words and the understanding of their meaning, comprehension cannot be successful. Modelling of vocabulary and exposure to different words is needed in order for pupils to understand it and develop a representation in memory. Teachers will use their protected Teacher Reading Time to expose pupils to sophisticated vocabulary in addition to modelling how to read fluently and with expression.

Skill 3: Visualisation

Visualisers support the pupil's understanding of events, characters and setting within a text. They have been proven to improve comprehension skills and recall of a text. This can be in the form of a mind map, an illustration or comic strip.

Skill 4: Inference

Inference skills are important when seeking to improve comprehension skills. Inference skills should be worked on as a focus during the novel focus days either through set written comprehension questions or through discussion after reading.

Skill 5: Main Idea

The main idea of the text is the central thought, message or point being expressed by author. This should be explored regularly throughout the novel study.

Skill 6: Summarising

Pupils should be able to use the main idea(s) that they have identified and summarise this in detail using key words and phrases.

For any pupils who still have gaps in their phonics knowledge, the Catch-Up Readers Diagnostic Assessment will be used to identify specific areas for recap. Based on the results, appropriate decodable texts and programmes will be provided to help reduce these gaps and support individual progress alongside the whole class novel.

Primary 1 – 7 Phonics Overview

In Primary 1 to 3, phonics is taught four times per week, with each session lasting approximately 30 minutes. These sessions should be carefully planned and delivered to ensure consistency, progression, and engagement. The following expectations apply:

- Deliver a structured, evidence-based phonics programme that entails explicit teaching of phonics, spelling rules, dictation, and the teaching of common (tricky) words.
- Provide explicit modelling using magnetic boards and letters to demonstrate the five-step word-building process: Say, Make, Blend/Read, Write, and Check.
- Use decodable texts and phoneme stories to introduce and reinforce phonemes within meaningful contexts.

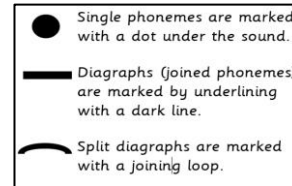
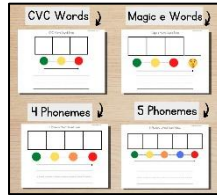
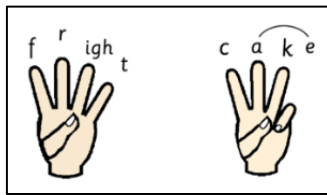
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- Support the development of confident, independent readers and writers through the teaching of phoneme–grapheme correspondences, blending, and segmenting. Incorporate strategies such as **phoneme fingers**, **Elkonin boxes** and **diacritical marking** (see images below).



- Ensure a multi-sensory approach to appeal to different learning styles and keep phonics and spelling engaging and enjoyable.
- Allow time for consolidation and revision, enabling children to revisit phonemes and word-building strategies as needed to match their individual pace of learning and ensure secure understanding.

In Primary 4 to 7, phonics and morphology should be explicitly taught at least three times per week, following a structured rotation between the introduction of new phoneme–grapheme patterns and focused teaching of morphological knowledge. This approach ensures pupils continue to develop both decoding and encoding skills, deepening their understanding of how language works and supporting confident, accurate reading and spelling. The following expectations apply:

- Consolidate prior phonics knowledge by revisiting and building on phoneme families and their various grapheme representations.
- Continue to model and apply diacritical marking consistently to reinforce understanding of how phonemes and letters work together to form accurate spellings. Phoneme fingers should be modelled where appropriate.
- Support the development of independent spelling strategies through regular teacher modelling and guided practice, empowering pupils to confidently approach unfamiliar or complex words.
- Explicitly teach relevant spelling rules in a clear and structured way, helping children apply these rules to improve accuracy in both spelling and reading.
- Teach morphology explicitly, including the structure and meaning of root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Help pupils understand how words are formed, how meanings change with affixes, and how this knowledge enhances vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling accuracy.
- Ensure all phonics and spelling learning is engaging, interactive, and varied, using a blend of collaborative group work, independent practice, and meaningful, real-life contexts to deepen understanding and maintain motivation.

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The following is an example of a week of literacy at Struthers. While the order of subjects may vary, all these areas should be covered each week.

<p>Monday</p> <p>Phonics and Reading Lesson</p>	<p><u>Review and Revisit:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up activity focusing on prior learning. <p><u>Explicit Teaching:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly introduce the new phoneme, focusing on both its oral and visual representation. Share LI and SC with the whole class. • Read a decodable text as a whole class, encouraging children to identify and discuss words containing the new phoneme. • Build a class spelling word list, using green, amber, and red whiteboard pens to differentiate levels of challenge. Include both new and prior learning. • Engage in contextualised discussions around new and unfamiliar vocabulary to support comprehension and deepen understanding. • Use pupil-generated dictation sentences, modelling and uplevelling them on the board to demonstrate high-quality sentence construction. <p><u>Deliberate practice experience:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead a whole-class diacritical marking session, in P1-3 this may be followed by timed paired practice using magnetic boards or Elkonin boxes to reinforce word-building strategies. <p><u>Application of new learning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher to plan an activity that directly allows children to apply encoding and decoding practice of their new phoneme and words, such as dictation or contextualised sentence building with appropriate word lists. <p><u>Reflection and feedback:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher will assess learning to gain an understanding of each child's progress and identify areas for further development. • A fun plenary or exit ticket activity may be used to reinforce learning, such as sorting real and nonsense words containing the new phoneme. This provides an engaging way to consolidate understanding and inform next steps in teaching. <p>While Primary 1–3 may spend an entire block on a phonics-focused lesson, Primary 4–7 should progress to an explicit reading skills lesson after teaching phonics for 20/30 minutes. This lesson should focus on the six core skills/strategies.</p> <p><u>Directed Reading in P1-3:</u> Whilst children are on their deliberate practice or application of new learning, the teacher will call groups down for reading. Reading can be with the class teacher, in pairs, whole class or group/tables.</p> <p>Book 1 Session One: Before/During Reading – will focus on making links to prior knowledge, simple understanding and blending to read words.</p>
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Tuesday

Reading
Comprehension

Review and Revisit:

- Flashcards, phoneme stories, word sorts etc can be used at the beginning of the lesson to reinforce prior learning of all taught Phonemes.

Explicit Teaching:

- Share LI and SC with the whole class.
- Using a decodable text, section from novel study or phoneme story, the teacher will lead the class in choral reading. Strategic pauses may be used to model reading techniques and pose comprehension or phoneme-based questions to support understanding.

Deliberate practice experience:

- Class teacher will share a key section of the text and model how to answer specific types of questions. The children will then have a go on their own or in pairs.

Application of new learning:

- P4-7 will begin reading the next chapter(s) of their novel study as a whole class, in groups/pairs or independent.
- Differentiated comprehension questions will be provided to ensure accessibility and appropriate challenge for all learners.
- The teacher may also work with targeted groups or individual pupils to hear reading aloud and provide tailored support for developing fluency, decoding, and comprehension skills.

Reflection and feedback:

- The teacher may gather all of the children as a whole class or in groups to discuss their understanding from today's learning. This could include a roll and respond, or an AiFL strategy.

Directed Reading in P1-3:

Whilst children are on their deliberate practice or application of new learning, the teacher will call groups down for reading. Reading can be with the class teacher, in pairs, whole class or group/tables.

Book 1 Session Two: During/After Reading – will focus on re-reading a familiar text while stopping and checking for understanding, improving fluency, improving comprehension skills, and blending to read words.



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Wednesday
Grammar

Review and Revisit:

- Flashcards, phoneme stories, word sorts etc can be used at the beginning of the lesson to reinforce prior learning all taught Phonemes.
- Grammar techniques can also be revised here through grammar flashcards, sorting activities (e.g., sorting words into parts of speech), mini whiteboard challenges (e.g., write a sentence using a capital letter and full stop).

Explicit Teaching:

- Share LI and SC with the whole class.
- A short, appropriate model text or sentence will be used to introduce the new grammar concept (e.g., capital letters for names, using connectives, identifying adjectives).
- The teacher will model identifying or using the grammar techniques through think-aloud strategies and discussion, with opportunities for pupils to spot examples in context.

Deliberate practice experience:

- Children may go back to their tables to take part in a short activity/mini challenge allowing them to have fun and work together to apply this new technique.

Application of new learning:

- Children will complete differentiated grammar tasks that allow them to apply the new concept in context.
- The teacher may work with small groups or individuals to provide additional support or challenge, depending on learner need.

Reflection and feedback:

- An AiFL strategy such as traffic lights, exit slips, or peer sharing can be used to gauge understanding and inform next steps.

Directed Reading in P1-3:

Whilst children are on their deliberate practice or application of new learning, the teacher will call groups down for reading. Reading can be with the class teacher, in pairs, whole class or group/tables.

Book 2 Session One: Before/During Reading – will focus on making links to prior knowledge, simple understanding and blending to read words.



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Thursday
Writing

Review and Revisit:

- Begin the lesson with a fun, engaging writing starter prompt linked to the learning focus. This should capture children's interest and excitement in the genre or style of writing they will explore, while allowing them to apply prior learning.
- Teachers should tailor prompts and contexts to reflect learners' interests and, where possible, integrate IDL topics to make the writing relevant and meaningful.

Explicit Teaching:

- Share LI and SC with the whole class.
- Present a short, genre-appropriate model text (e.g., narrative opening, description, instruction sentence).
- Guide children to spot and discuss examples of the success criteria within the model text, considering questions such as: "What has the author included that meets our SC?"

Deliberate practice experience:

- Children participate in differentiated guided activities designed to meet a range of abilities and reinforce specific learning goals.
- Activities may include:
 - Picture-based conversation prompts to develop descriptive language.
 - Story dice to inspire creative ideas.
 - Shared reading of picture books to reinforce narrative structure.

Application of new learning:

- Children write their own story or text guided by the LI and SC.
- The teacher may work with small groups or individuals, providing targeted support or additional challenge as needed.
- Writing tasks should continue to be personalised, drawing on Childrens interests and prior experiences to foster motivation and creativity.

Reflection and feedback:

- Teachers should follow the Struthers Writing Policy for guidance on reflection and feedback.

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Friday
Handwriting

Review and Revisit:

- Flashcards, phoneme stories, word sorts etc can be used at the beginning of the lesson to reinforce prior learning all taught Phonemes.

Explicit Teaching:

- Share LI and SC with the whole class.
- Model the letter(s) or formation at the board, following the PenPals Scope and Sequence, highlighting correct posture, pencil grip, and starting point.
- Use clear, slow demonstration to allow children to observe the movement patterns and directionality.

Deliberate practice experience:

- Learners practise the new formation using whiteboards, air-writing, or with the pencil reversed on the palm, allowing them to focus on movement without pressure of paper.
- Encourage repeated visualisation and muscle memory, emphasising correct formation, spacing, and consistency.

Application of new learning:

- Implement a "I do, we do, you do" approach:

I do – Teacher models the formation clearly on the board.

We do – Class mirrors the movement together, with teacher guidance.

You do – Children practise independently in their jotters.

- The teacher circulates to observe, correct gently, and praise accurate letter formation, providing immediate, constructive feedback.
- Emphasise accuracy, neatness, and correct posture, gradually reducing scaffolding as learners gain confidence.

Reflection and feedback:

- During handwriting sessions and independent work, incorrect pencil grip and letter formation should be identified and corrected immediately. Consistent feedback on posture, spacing, and line use is also essential to support progress.
- Regular monitoring through jotter checks and marking ensures skill development is tracked.
- In Primary 6 and 7, children may receive a Pen Licence certificate upon mastering handwriting skills, recognising personal achievement. They are then encouraged to write in pen if they feel comfortable and demonstrate sustained legibility and presentation.

Directed Reading in P1-3:

At some point throughout this day, the teacher will call groups down for reading. Reading can be with the class teacher, in pairs, whole class or group/tables.

Book 2 Session Two: During/After Reading – will focus on re-reading a familiar text while stopping and checking for understanding, improving fluency, improving comprehension skills, and blending to read words.

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