



We Care. We Aspire. We Belong.

Milverton Community Primary and Pre-School

Phonics and Early Reading Policy 2026-2027

Date: October 2026

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Intent

At Milverton Community Primary and Pre-School, we believe that every child can learn to read independently. We recognise that reading is the key that unlocks access to the wider curriculum and enables children to participate fully in society, both now and in the future. We are committed to ensuring that all children become accurate, fluent and confident readers through the consistent teaching of systematic synthetic phonics. We teach phonics with fidelity to Pearson Bug Club Phonics, a Department for Education validated systematic synthetic phonics programme.

We recognise that strong foundations in communication and language are essential for future reading success. From the earliest years, children are immersed in a language-rich environment where they develop vocabulary, listening skills, speaking confidence and a love of stories, poems and rhymes. Through high-quality interactions, sustained shared thinking and explicit vocabulary teaching, children develop the language comprehension skills that underpin independent reading.

At Milverton, we model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics, reading and writing across the curriculum and throughout the school day. We ensure that children develop both word reading and language comprehension, recognising that both are essential for successful reading. Our ambition is that every child develops the knowledge, skills and motivation required to become an independent reader who can access the full curriculum and read for purpose and pleasure.

Communication and Language in Pre-School

In Pre-School, we recognise that strong communication and language skills provide the foundation for future reading success. Children learn language through warm, responsive interactions with adults and through daily opportunities to talk, listen, sing, play and explore. Staff place a strong emphasis on developing children's vocabulary, attention, listening skills and confidence in speaking. Children participate in a wide range of carefully planned experiences that develop phonological awareness, including activities focusing on environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body percussion, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds, oral blending and oral segmenting. These experiences help children develop an awareness of sounds in spoken language and prepare them for formal phonics teaching.

Language-rich environments indoors and outdoors encourage meaningful conversations and sustained shared thinking. High-quality stories, nursery rhymes, poetry and non-fiction texts are shared daily to broaden children's vocabulary, strengthen comprehension and foster a lifelong love of books and reading. These early experiences establish the foundations upon which systematic synthetic phonics teaching is built.

Daily Systematic Synthetic Phonics Teaching

Phonics lessons follow a clear revisit, teach, practise and apply structure, providing children with regular opportunities to secure and apply new learning. All children in Reception and Year 1 receive daily systematic synthetic phonics teaching through Pearson Bug Club Phonics. Pupils who require additional support continue to receive phonics teaching beyond Year 1 until they become secure readers. The programme is delivered with fidelity to ensure that all children experience a consistent approach to learning the alphabetic code. Staff use consistent language and instructional techniques so that children can focus fully on learning rather than adapting to differing approaches. Teaching is carefully sequenced to build cumulatively on previous learning, enabling children to develop secure decoding, blending and segmenting skills over time.

Phonics is taught as the prime approach to early word reading and spelling. Children are encouraged to apply their developing phonics knowledge across the curriculum and within their independent reading and writing.

Reading Practice

Alongside daily phonics teaching, children participate in structured reading practice using fully decodable books that are closely matched to their secure phonic knowledge. This provides opportunities for children to apply and consolidate their learning through repeated reading of the same text.

Reading practice may take place through one-to-one, paired or group sessions. Books are reread across the week to develop automaticity, confidence and fluency. Adults model accurate reading and expression while providing opportunities for children to discuss and respond to texts.

Home Reading

Home reading plays an important role in supporting children's reading development. Children take home books that are carefully matched to the phonic knowledge they have already secured in school. These books provide opportunities for children to practise and consolidate taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences successfully and independently. Through access to Pearson Bug Club's online reading platform and regular communication with families, we encourage reading beyond the classroom and support parents in developing confidence when helping their child read. The school values the important partnership between home and school and works closely with families to promote positive reading habits and reading for pleasure.

Supporting Every Child to Become a Reader

At Milverton Community Primary and Pre-School, we are committed to ensuring that every child becomes an independent reader. Support continues for as long as necessary to ensure pupils develop the accuracy, automaticity and comprehension required to access the wider curriculum successfully.

Assessment information is used continuously to identify any child who may be at risk of falling behind. Prompt action is taken to address gaps before they become barriers to progress. Children who require additional support receive immediate keep-up sessions delivered by trained adults. These sessions are closely aligned to classroom teaching and use the same routines, resources and language as the main lesson. The purpose of keep-up support is to secure learning quickly so that children remain aligned with their peers and continue to access the phonics curriculum independently.

Particular attention is given to the lowest attaining 20% of readers, including disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs. Their progress is monitored closely through assessment, reading practice and pupil progress discussions. These pupils receive additional opportunities to read with an adult, carefully targeted intervention and regular review to ensure that barriers to reading are identified and addressed swiftly.

Reading for Pleasure

Developing a love of reading is central to our reading curriculum. We recognise that positive reading habits and regular engagement with high-quality texts contribute significantly to academic achievement and lifelong learning.

Children encounter a rich and diverse range of high-quality texts every day through story times, class novels, poetry, non-fiction and curriculum texts. Carefully selected books expose children to different cultures, experiences, authors and viewpoints, broadening both their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Staff actively promote positive reading identities by sharing their own reading experiences, recommending books and engaging children in meaningful book talk. Opportunities for discussion, recommendations and shared reading experiences help children develop personal reading preferences and view themselves as readers. Through these experiences, we foster curiosity, imagination and a lifelong enjoyment of reading.

Developing Reading Fluency

As children become increasingly secure in phonics, teaching focuses on developing reading fluency so that reading becomes accurate, automatic and expressive. Reading fluency is developed through teacher modelling, repeated reading, echo reading, partner reading and regular opportunities to read aloud. By reducing the cognitive effort required for decoding, fluent reading enables children to focus on understanding and responding to texts. Fluency continues to be developed throughout Key Stage 2 through exposure to increasingly complex texts, explicit modelling and opportunities for repeated oral reading.

Staff Training and Quality Assurance

All staff delivering phonics receive ongoing professional development to ensure high-quality and consistent practice. New members of staff receive induction and coaching in the delivery of Pearson Bug Club Phonics.

The Early Reading Lead has strategic responsibility for phonics and early reading and ensures that provision remains aligned with current research, national guidance and the requirements of the school's chosen systematic synthetic phonics programme. The Early Reading Lead monitors provision through lesson visits, assessment analysis, pupil reading and professional dialogue to ensure consistency and high-quality implementation across the school.

Assessment

Assessment forms an integral part of phonics and early reading provision. It is used to identify achievement, inform teaching and ensure that pupils receive appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment takes place daily through:

- observation
- questioning
- reading practice sessions
- phonics lessons
- review tasks

This enables teachers to identify children requiring immediate keep-up support.

Summative Assessment

Children are assessed regularly using Pearson Bug Club Phonics assessment materials and school assessment systems.

Assessment information is used to:

- identify gaps in learning

- inform planning
- evaluate intervention effectiveness
- monitor progress of vulnerable groups
- inform discussions with parents and carers

Assessment outcomes are analysed by the English Leader and senior leaders to ensure that attainment gaps are identified and addressed promptly.

Statutory Assessment

Children in Year 1 complete the national Phonics Screening Check.

Children who do not achieve the expected standard re-sit the screening check in Year 2 and receive additional support in the interim.

Impact

The impact of this policy is evidenced through:

- outcomes in the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check
- reading attainment across the school
- progress of the lowest attaining readers
- pupils demonstrating increasing fluency and comprehension
- positive attitudes towards reading
- high levels of engagement in reading for pleasure

References

- Department for Education. *The Reading Framework*
- Department for Education. *Strong Foundations in the First Years of School*
- Pearson. *Bug Club Phonics Programme Guidance*
- Education Endowment Foundation. *Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1*

Appendix 1

Pearson Bug Club Phonics: Programme progression Reception to Year 1 overviews.

Table 1 Units 1–12 of *Bug Club Phonics Reception (Primary 1)*

Phase	Unit	Focus	Not fully decodable words (irregular words)
2	1	s, a, t, p	
	2	i, n, m, d	
	3	g, o, c, k	to
	4	ck, e, u, r	the, no, go
	5	h, b, f, ff l, ll, ss	I, into, her
3	6	j, v, w, x	me, be
	7	y, z, zz, qu	he, my, by, she
	8	ch, sh, th, ng	they
	9	ai, ee, igh, oa oo (long), oo (short)	we, are
	10	ar, or, ur, ow, oi	you
	11	ear, air, ure, er	all, was, give, live
4	12	Adjacent consonants (cvcc, ccvc, ccvcc, cccvc, cccvcc)	said, have, like, so, do, some, come, were, there, little, one, when, out, what

The following table (Table 2) shows what is covered in each of Units 13–30, the Key Stage 1 (Primary 2 & 3) part of the programme.

Table 2 Units 13–30 of *Bug Club Phonics Key Stage 1 (Primary 2 & 3)*

Phase	Unit	Focus	Irregular/high-frequency words
5	13	wh, ph,	oh, their, people
	14	ay, a-e, eigh/ey/ei (long a)	Mr, Mrs, Ms
	15	ea, e-e, ie/ey/y (long e)	looked, called, asked
	16	ie, i-e, y, i (long i)	water, where
	17	ow, o-e, o/oe (long o)	who, again
	18	ew, ue, u-e (long o), u/oul, (short oo)	thought, through
	19	aw, au, al	work, laughed, because
	20	ir, er, ear	Thursday, Saturday, thirteen, thirty
	21	ou, oy	different, any, many
	22	ere/eer, are/ear	eyes, friends
6	23	c, k, ck, ch	two, once
	24	c(e)/c(i)/c(y), sc/ st(l) se	great, clothes
	25	g(e)/g(i)/g(y), dge	it's, I'm, I'll, I've
	26	le, mb, kn/gn, wr	don't, can't, didn't
	27	tch, sh, ea, zh, (w)a, o	first, second, third
	28	suffix morphemes ing, ed	clearing, gleaming, rained, mailed
	29	plural morphemes s, es	men, mice, feet, teeth, sheep
	30	prefix morphemes re, un prefix+root+suffix	vowel, consonant, prefix, suffix, syllable