

Bilsthorpe Flying High Academy

Phonics & Early Reading Policy

September 2025-2026



Date of Review	Changes made by	Summary of changes made	Date implemented
October 2025	Sophie Matheson		October 2025

Vision



At Bilthorpe Flying High Academy our curriculum is structured to prepare our children to be compassionate citizens of our world, valuing the local context and community.

We define curriculum as the totality of a child's experience, including not only what but also how each child learns. Our broad and balanced curriculum has been developed to inspire our children through enquiry whilst addressing the identified barriers to learning. It seeks to deliver the skills, cultural knowledge and understanding for our children to achieve every day of their lives. It encompasses our school values of aspiration, confidence, creativity, enjoyment, perseverance, pride and responsibility.

BFHA staff support the development of our curriculum vision which is based on the context and needs of our local community. We communicate our vision through the acronym, 'WAVE'.

Wider World – to bring the outside world in, in order to give our children to overcome culturally rich, memorable experiences which expand their knowledge of the wider society.

Aspirational – to create ambitions for themselves and our community.

Vocabulary – to expose children to high quality texts and to improve speech and vocabulary.

Enjoyment – to develop a love of learning, give meaning and value to learning, and preparing our children for their next step in education.

Aims

At Bilthorpe Flying High Academy, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *No Nonsense Phonics supported by Flying High Partnership*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery and follow the NNPS 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 Bilthorpe Flying High Academy, 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.

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 for both pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading 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 programme.

No Nonsense Phonics

The No Nonsense Phonics Skills programme provides a comprehensive step-by-step method for teaching reading, handwriting and spelling. Author Debbie Hepplewhite guides the teacher, and consequently the children, through a series of carefully designed phonics routines to master the complex English Alphabetic Code.

Each book is rich in content, providing phonics instruction and exercises with cumulative code, words and meaningful texts. The children will develop their language comprehension and build up their knowledge of new vocabulary and spelling word banks. High-frequency words, tricky words and additional letter/s-sound correspondences are all drip-fed into the teaching and learning sequence. Mini stories throughout the books bring all the different strands of the programme together.

No Nonsense Phonics Skills

- Provides systematic and rigorous phonics teaching and practice with a rich vocabulary
- Teaches handwriting linked to the English Alphabetic Code and the Alphabet
- Applies and extends phonics to reading and writing cumulative text, developing language comprehension and evoking imagination
- Involves and engages the learner fully and routinely in formative assessment

Throughout Early years and Key stage One phonics is taught in a systematic way following the No Nonsense Phonics validated programme. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting in Reception with the aim that all children will be readers by age seven. The dedicated phonics programme works alongside the decodable books which allow pupils to apply and practise their phonic knowledge.

There are nine phases that children will experience throughout the programme.

In Foundation 1, children experience a daily phonics session five times a week that involves sharing of high-quality texts that develop their understanding and experience of language. Through specific teaching, the children look at environmental sounds and rhyming words. In the summer term, the children begin their NNPS 'Teaching Reading Seeds' programme that prepares them for the start of Book 1 on entry into F2.

In Foundation 2, children experience a taught daily phonics session five times a week as well as being immersed in phonics throughout other subjects. We teach two new phonemes (letter sounds) per week and have a focus on reading the sound one day and practising the grapheme (written letter) the next day. Alongside this, we incorporate high frequency words (tricky words) in which we learn to read and recognise them.

In Key Stage One, the children have a taught daily phonics lesson five days a week. These sessions are in small groups and follow the No Nonsense Phonics Skills program of learning. The No Nonsense Phonics Skills program provides daily progression and ensures children are able to build on prior learning each week. The children are introduced to a number of new graphemes alongside high frequency and common exception words (tricky words) that they are encouraged to both read and write in a variety of different ways.

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 consistent interventions are supported by our early reading folders.
- Daily afternoon phonics sessions are planned to give our children the opportunity to revisit taught sounds.

Reading Books

At every stage of reading, children's reading books are matched to their ability. At the early stages of reading, all of our children read **decodable reading books**. These books are closely matched to the phonemes/graphemes that children have been taught and systematically reviewed through a half termly letters and sounds assessment. These decodable reading books are used to build our children's fluency and confidence by providing the opportunity to apply this knowledge in practice and to ensure that children have a sense of reading independence.

Our early readers take two books home with them.

1. A **new decodable book** that the children can read at an **instructional level**. The book has the GPCs and common exception words they know. Children can read it with at least 90%-word accuracy.
2. A **decodable book that the children have had for a week**, that the children can read at an **independent level**. The book has the GPCs and common exception words they know. Children can read it with at least 95%-word accuracy.

Once our children are reading fluently, PM benchmarking is used to ensure books beyond our decodable books meet the needs of the children.

Comprehension

At Bilsthorpe Flying High Academy, we recognise the importance of reading and it is therefore timetabled to be taught everyday.

At the early stages of reading, our children follow the structure of the NNPS programme as an approach. There is a clear structure to the teaching of reading in particular the development of fluency, expression and comprehension, and there is consistency in how it is being delivered to the children

Beyond early reading, our approach is based on the *Fischer Family Trust Reading Comprehension Framework* and is centered around the key skills of Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Summarising/Sequencing. We use the FFT progression documents to ensure coverage throughout the year and to ensure that there is clear progression across the year groups, within each of the 8 strands (see FFT progression document for further information). These lessons focus on developing children's vocabulary and understanding of a particular skill associated with reading. This may be achieved by exploring smaller sections of a text and using book journal approaches or practicing specific question types. Activities are planned to enable pupils to develop skills to support them at all stages of their development for example, matching activities, true or false or sequencing of events.

Below is a flight path of how we teach reading at BFHA.



Bilthorpe Flying High Academy
Whole School Early Reading Overview

	Nursery	Foundation FS2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Phonics Lesson	Daily lesson	Daily NNPS lesson.	Daily NNPS lesson.	Daily NNPS lessons until completed then SPaG	Spelling rules taught using Spelling Shed. Phonics (see below)			
Phonics Year Group Expectations	Phase 1 daily speaking and listening activities	NNPS Books 1-4	NNPS Book 3-8	NNPS Book 6 SPaG	Phonics interventions for targeted children, based on phonic assessments Targeted interventions for spotlight children (lowest 20%)			
Reading Expectations	Retell stories	Retell stories Achieved ELG PSC – first 20 words.	Read fluently at Book 6. Pass the PSC	Reading fluently and comprehending. PSC passed if unsuccessful in Y1	Reading fluently and comprehending. —————→			
Book Expectations	Lilac Books	Decodable Books	Decodable Books	Decodable Books	Book Banded Books – Benchmarking used for assessment Decodable books continue for those children who need them			
Reading Lesson	Listening to stories and learning nursery rhymes.	Whole class reading	Whole class reading (30-45 mins) KS1 (x3 weekly) KS2 (x4/5 weekly) - KKPD discreetly taught. - Range of comprehension question types explored based on FFT skills. - Range of texts used (Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry). - Daily story time used for children to hear stories from the teacher – high quality texts chosen to link with curriculum where possible.					
Quality Texts	Texts linked to enquiry on MTP Story time books – teachers use high quality texts to read a book for pleasure with the class							
Home Books	Lilac Books/ Picture Books to be sent home.	Fully decodable books (95% fluency) to be sent home weekly. Books to be changed every two weeks. Teacher/TA to choose books linked to existing phonic knowledge.			Children take home a book banded book appropriate to their level of ability-reviewed termly. Decodable books to be sent home for children still accessing Phonics lessons/ interventions.			
Assessment	Children identified with speech and	In the last week of June PSC to be completed with	PSC assessments Termly reading assessment	PSC assessments (for those not passed in Y1)	Termly Assessment in all year groups (NTS) PSC for any new children starting and demonstrate need. Reading SAT end of KS2.			

Additional reading support for vulnerable children

- Children in Foundation, Year 1 and 2 who are receiving additional phonics Keep-up sessions, read their reading practice book to an adult daily and receive daily intervention.

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, word cards and weekly practice sessions ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Reading Leader regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Ensuring 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)

Developing a love of reading

In order for our children to become frequent readers, developing a love of reading is fundamental. Each classroom has an area dedicated to reading for pleasure; this is separate to decodable/banded books. This is set up to include bestsellers, classics, up-and-coming authors and diverse themes, ensuring our children are exposed to a range of quality literature and varied vocabulary, regardless of their ability. We are constantly developing and evolving our reading areas to ensure books are up to date and relevant.

A reading culture is further promoted and celebrated throughout school in various ways:

- ♥ Use of high-quality texts across the wider curriculum
- ♥ Consideration given to text choice to inspire all children
- ♥ Daily reading aloud sessions for pleasure
- ♥ Daily opportunities for every child to read in class
- ♥ Themed days and events e.g. World Book Day, Book Fair
- ♥ Teachers modelling a love of reading (talking about books, enthusing about books)
- ♥ Breadth of texts throughout the enquiry
- ♥ Core spine of books
- ♥ Vocabulary shared through story time
- ♥ Library opportunities in school
- ♥ Visits to the local library
- ♥ Use of Pickatale – a free app that houses a huge range of texts that children can access from home.

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

Stories, songs and rhymes

Our children will have the opportunities to learn the following stories and rhymes. We believe that these high quality texts will support the children’s language acquisition & development whilst promoting a strong love of learning. The children will know them well enough to use them in their play and be able to sing/retell using the appropriate story language.

Stories	Rhymes and Songs
The Colour Monster, The Gruffalo, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, We’re Going on a Bear Hunt, Would you Rather?, Brown Bear, Peepo, Dear Zoo, Oi Frog, All are Welcome	Humpty Dumpty Baa Baa Black Sheep Incy Wincy Spider Twinkle Twinkle Little Star 1,2,3,4,5 Once I caught a fish alive

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 needing Keep-up support
 - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these 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, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
 - Progress maps are used, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

Curriculum communication to parents

Communication with our parents about how their children are performing and what they are experiencing in school is a high priority to us and we do this in a number of ways.

☑ Formal reporting to parents twice a year either in the form of a written report or a parent consultation evening where parents make an appointment to meet with their child's teacher and discuss their progress.

☑ School website and year group pages inform parents what has been happening in the curriculum.

☑ Class Dojo inform parents specifically about a class within school on the day to day lessons and learning of this specific group of children. Children's achievements are celebrated on Class Dojo.

- Termly Newsletters are communicated from each year group which share the knowledge the children will be learning over the term and knowledge organisers for our enquiries are shared.

Teachers are of course also available at the start and end of each day for any necessary communications.

Remote Learning

Remote Learning Grids are available on Class Dojo to any child working remotely. This ensures that all children, whether in or out of school are able to access the same learning. We strive for every child to have access to a taught, well planned and sequenced curriculum with ambitious independent learning tasks. To ensure accessibility, paper copies of learning can be provided and devices can be loaned from school.

Home Learning

All home learning is shared by each class teacher on a weekly basis and deeper learning tasks for each subject are shared through our termly newsletter. These will be provided to the children in paper format and are accessible on the school website.

Children with additional needs

The curriculum is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. If we think it necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children, then we do so in consultation with parents.

At our school we teach all children, whatever their ability. Through our teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and scaffolding opportunities to assist with a child's different needs.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Equal opportunities

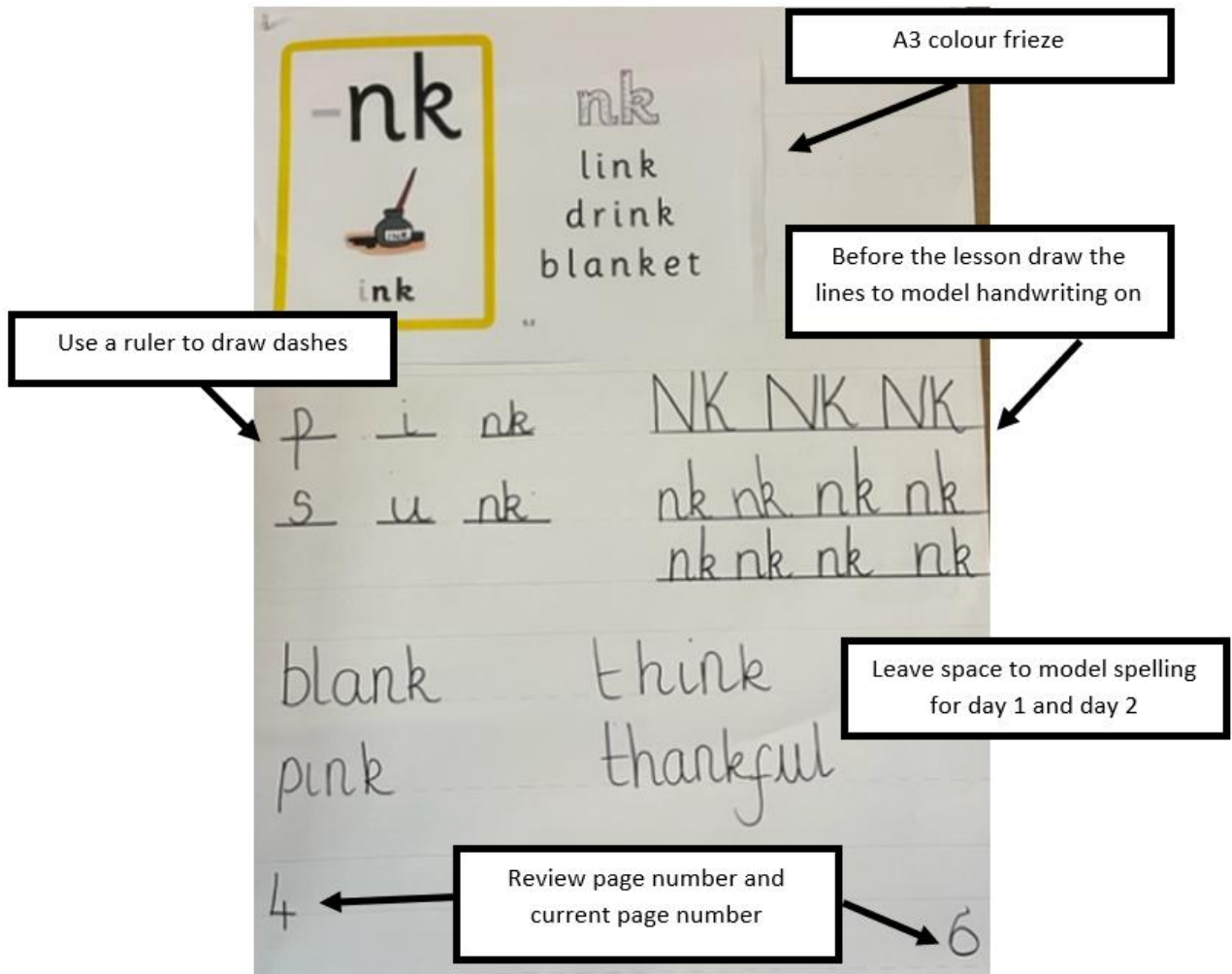
It is important that teachers plan work that offers equal opportunity in respect of gender, race and ability. For example:

- by ensuring that activities are carefully thought out to meet the needs of all children and ensure scaffolds are available to the children who need more support.
- by ensuring that subjects are promoted to both sexes and that the materials used are attractive to all children
- by ensuring that multi-cultural themes are explored so that children are encouraged to develop awareness, interest and tolerance towards people and places beyond their immediate experience.

Appendix

Display expectations

Frieze must be displayed at the front of the classroom. This should include the previous books code, the current books code and the subsequent books code.



Handwriting book expectations

The handwriting book is used during phonics lessons to record spellings and the copy write.

