PHONICS CURRICULUM

Every child reading

Twinkl Phonics • Rhino Readers • Reception to Year 2 and targeted catch-up

Our intent

At Great Leighs, phonics is the prime approach used to teach children to decode unfamiliar words. We use Twinkl Phonics, a Department for Education validated systematic synthetic phonics programme, and teach its cumulative sequence with consistency and fidelity. Our aim is for pupils to become accurate, increasingly automatic and enthusiastic readers who understand what they read.

Our chosen programme

Twinkl Phonics provides the core progression, terminology, lesson structure, assessment and intervention resources. Rhino Readers are used as the school's fully decodable reading books and are matched to the grapheme-phoneme correspondences and common exception words pupils have been taught.

Curriculum principles

- Daily, direct and interactive teaching follows a clearly defined sequence.
- New knowledge builds cumulatively on secure grapheme-phoneme correspondences and oral blending.
- Pupils practise blending for reading and segmenting for spelling every day.
- Books and practice materials remain closely matched to secure phonics knowledge.
- Assessment identifies pupils at risk of falling behind and triggers prompt, targeted catch-up.
- All adults use agreed terminology, pure pronunciation and consistent prompts.
- Rich stories, vocabulary and comprehension are taught alongside – but never replace – decoding.

The core knowledge and skills

Knowledge

Letters or groups of letters represent sounds; a phoneme can be represented by one or more graphemes; the same phoneme may have alternative spellings; and some graphemes represent more than one phoneme.

Skills

Pupils recognise taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences, blend phonemes to read, segment spoken words to spell, manipulate phonemes and build automatic recognition through successful rereading.

Relationship to English and Reading

This document sits alongside the Great Leighs English and Reading curriculum documents. It sets out the school's approach to early word reading; the wider reading curriculum develops fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and a love of reading.

PROGRESSION

The Twinkl Phonics pathway

A cumulative Reception–Year 2 sequence, followed by targeted catch-up where needed

Programme sequence

Year / level	Indicative timing	Essential knowledge and teaching focus	End point
Reception – Level 2	Autumn	Initial grapheme-phoneme correspondences; oral blending and segmenting; reading and spelling simple CVC words; first common exception words.	Blend and segment words using taught Level 2 correspondences and read simple captions.
Reception – Level 3	Spring	A wider range of consonant and vowel digraphs and trigraphs; two-syllable words; further common exception words.	Recognise taught Level 2–3 correspondences and apply them to words, captions and simple sentences.
Reception – Level 4	Summer	Adjacent consonants; accurate blending and segmenting of longer words; increasing fluency and sentence reading.	Apply Levels 2–4 knowledge to unfamiliar words and read matched books with growing accuracy and phrasing.
Year 1 – Level 5	Across Year 1	Alternative graphemes and pronunciations; increasingly complex words; common exception words; fluency for the Year 1 curriculum.	Select and apply alternative correspondences, read unfamiliar real and pseudo-words, and develop automaticity in matched texts.
Year 2 – Level 6	Across Year 2	Spelling rules and conventions, prefixes and suffixes, longer words, fluent application and transition beyond overt blending.	Apply the alphabetic code and taught spelling conventions independently, reading age-appropriate texts with sufficient fluency for comprehension.
Targeted catch-up	As required	The earliest identified gap in phonemic awareness, correspondence knowledge, blending or fluency, taught through aligned intervention.	Catch up rapidly through precise teaching while continuing to participate in the wider reading curriculum.

Note: timing is indicative. Teachers use the programme's assessment points and consolidation opportunities without changing the taught order or lowering the intended end points.

The progression thread

- Hear and manipulate phonemes orally.
- Recognise grapheme-phoneme correspondences rapidly.
- Blend through the whole word to decode.
- Segment spoken words and select graphemes for spelling.
- Read matched text repeatedly until decoding becomes increasingly automatic.
- Apply secure phonics independently in wider reading and writing.

IMPLEMENTATION

Consistent daily teaching

Revisit and review • Teach • Practise • Apply

The daily lesson

1. Revisit and review

Recall previously taught correspondences, words and oral blending so that knowledge remains accessible.

2. Teach

Introduce or clarify the new correspondence, skill or common exception word with precise modelling and pure pronunciation.

3. Practise

Read and spell carefully selected words and sentences, with every pupil responding frequently.

4. Apply

Use the taught knowledge in connected text, dictation or purposeful reading and writing.

Reading practice with Rhino Readers

- The book is matched to the pupil's secure phonics knowledge, not simply to age or general reading ability.
- Pupils first decode accurately, then reread to develop automaticity, phrasing and expression.
- Adults prompt pupils to use taught correspondences and blend through the word; pictures support meaning rather than word guessing.
- Comprehension and vocabulary discussion follow successful decoding so that meaning remains central.
- Home reading reinforces the same text, language and prompts used in school.

Consistency and fidelity

Core expectations

Staff follow the Twinkl progression and core lesson resources, maintain the order of correspondences, use agreed actions and terminology, pronounce pure sounds, and ensure practice and books contain only the code pupils have learned. Wider activities supplement rather than replace direct teaching.

Access for every pupil

Teachers make participation accessible through seating, pace, enlarged resources, additional rehearsal, reduced distraction, visual support and carefully considered response methods. Adaptation retains the same phonics goal and does not substitute guessing strategies for decoding.

ASSESSMENT

Keeping every pupil on track

Responsive teaching • scheduled checks • rapid catch-up

Assessment has a clear purpose

Assessment identifies precisely what a pupil knows and the next correspondence or skill that requires teaching. It informs grouping, practice, book matching and catch-up; it is not used to move pupils through the sequence before knowledge is secure.

During every lesson

Adults notice correspondence recall, oral blending, word reading, segmenting, spelling and participation, and respond immediately.

Scheduled Twinkl assessments

Teachers check cumulative correspondence knowledge, blending and application at the programme's assessment points and after consolidation.

Reading evidence

Matched-book reading shows whether pupils can transfer secure knowledge to connected text with increasing accuracy and automaticity.

Statutory check

Year 1 pupils complete the Phonics Screening Check in June. Pupils who do not meet the expected standard receive continued support and retake the check in Year 2.

Rapid catch-up

- Begin with the earliest insecure prerequisite rather than reteaching indiscriminately.
- Provide short, frequent, aligned sessions in addition to – not instead of – the pupil's main phonics and reading entitlement.
- Use the same correspondence language, pronunciation, routines and resources as the core programme.
- Review impact frequently and adjust content or intensity when progress is not rapid enough.
- Continue beyond Year 2, including in KS2, for any pupil who has not secured the alphabetic code and accurate decoding.

Leadership assurance

Leaders check

Consistency of daily teaching; staff subject knowledge and training; fidelity to sequence and terminology; match between pupils' secure code and Rhino Readers; speed and precision of catch-up; application in reading and writing; and outcomes for vulnerable groups.

Evidence of impact

Pupils increasingly recall correspondences automatically, blend unfamiliar real and pseudo-words accurately, segment for spelling, read matched books fluently and understand what they read. Gaps are identified early and diminish through effective teaching.

END POINTS

What pupils should know and be able to do

Clear destinations for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

Reception — end point

Know the taught Level 2–4 correspondences and common exception words. Blend and segment words containing the taught code, including words with adjacent consonants. Read simple sentences and Rhino Readers matched to their knowledge with growing accuracy, automaticity and understanding.

Year 1 — end point

Know and apply the Level 5 alternatives and common exception words taught. Decode unfamiliar real and pseudo-words, make an appropriate choice where a grapheme has alternative pronunciations, and read matched texts increasingly fluently. Apply phonics when spelling and be prepared through normal teaching for the statutory screening check.

Year 2 — end point

Know and apply the Level 6 spelling patterns, rules and conventions taught. Decode and spell increasingly complex words, use morphology and the alphabetic code to resolve unfamiliar words, and read age-appropriate texts with sufficient fluency to focus on meaning.

Pupils needing further support — end point

Retain access to ambitious, age-appropriate language and comprehension while receiving precise phonics catch-up. Progress from the earliest identified gap towards accurate decoding and increasing automaticity, with intervention reviewed regularly.

Partnership with parents and carers

- Share the current taught code and agreed pronunciation so home practice reinforces school learning.
- Send home a Rhino Reader matched to secure knowledge and encourage successful rereading.
- Explain blending, segmenting, common exception words and the Year 1 screening check clearly and without unnecessary pressure.
- Encourage daily reading aloud by an adult so pupils also encounter rich vocabulary and texts beyond their independent decoding level.
- Invite families to speak to school early if reading practice is becoming difficult or distressing.

Website documents

This curriculum overview should be published alongside A Guide to Phonics for Parents and Carers, the English Curriculum Overview and the detailed Reading Curriculum. Together they explain what is taught, how it progresses and how families can help.

Curriculum basis

Great Leighs uses Twinkl Phonics as its validated systematic synthetic phonics programme and Rhino Readers as its matched decodable reading scheme. The school follows the programme's current handbook, core resources, assessments and guidance, alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum for English.