Eden Academy Trust

Working together to make a difference!

STRANTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

‘Where only the best is good enough’

P o l i c y S t a t e m e n t

Phonics and Early Reading

September 2023

EDEN Academy Trust

Working together to make a difference!

Person Responsible: Mrs Nicholls
Date for next review: September 2025

Context of our School

Key Characteristics

- Stranton is a larger than average primary school with 362 pupils on role (+50 new starters in the academic year 22-23).
- The Stranton ward is within the top 1% most deprived wards in England (Indices of deprivation) and one of the most significantly deprived areas of Hartlepool. We have a school deprivation factor of 0.565 (National IDACi score 2019).
- 55% (decrease of 2%) of pupils are eligible for FSM (Ever 6) compared with 41% across the LA (LA Analysis Pack 2019*) and 22.5% nationally (DfE July 2022), a significant factor of the school.
- SEND Support in school has been significantly increasing annually for the past three years with a particular rise in the number of children with high needs. The number of pupils with SEND is 26% compared to 14% across the LA (LA Analysis Pack 2019*) and 12.6% nationally (DfE June 2022).
- EHC/Statemented school population is 4% (increase of 1% – 14 pupils) - compared with 0.7% across the LA (LA Analysis Pack 2019*) and 4% nationally (DfE June 2022).
- Pupil from Minority Ethnic Groups (MEG) is low at 15% (increase of 2%) of the school population compared to a national average of 34.5% (DFE July 2022).
- Children enter Early Years at Stranton Primary School **below** age related expectations. With increasing mobility in both nursery and reception, this, alongside a low baseline, continues to be a significant challenge to the school. Our 2-year-old provision 'Little Stars' strives to give our pupils an earlier opportunity to 'catch up'.
- Stranton Primary is a designated National Support School (February 2012) – recently supporting 2 previously RI Schools through deployment to 'Good'. (Dec '22 / March '23)
- Stranton School was designated 'Outstanding' in its most recent OFSTED inspection (June 2012)
- Stranton Early Years Provision was designated 'Outstanding' in our most recent OFSTED (July 2014)
- Stranton Primary School is a full community school – one combined educational establishment with integrated (and self managed) community centre which is used to support local groups. School self-funds or seeks organisations to support us in finding a way to overcome social poverty, educational disadvantage and provide opportunity for all.
- Mobility is a significant factor in the context of the school (see below).

Barriers to Performance

Historically, School has always faced challenges due to high levels of mobility, exceptionally low baseline data (exacerbated by COVID) and ever increasing/high levels of Safeguarding and SEND need. Despite this, we will not allow these barriers to become an excuse for performance or underachievement - **we will always find a way** to meet these needs, address the barriers and ensure all children succeed.

Mobility

School mobility continues to be a **significant** barrier to learning. For example, during the 2022/23 school year, 50 additional pupils have entered school mid-term of which:

- 32% are from outside the Hartlepool area (of which 40% are from overseas)
- 20% were open to social care / Family Support
- 24% have SEND needs on entry
- 46% are EAL
- 54% are disadvantaged
- 24% are working at age related expectations in core subjects

24% of current pupils with SEND were not on roll in EYFS having joined Stranton mid-term, increasingly with complex and often unmet needs. 22 pupils currently access high needs SEN funding. 29% of SEND pupils have more than one area of need.

Internal School data shows that children who have spent more than 2 years in Stranton School always make better than expected progress from their starting points. This demonstrates a continued ability of School to close gaps, eradicate the proven negative effects of mobility and enable children to access a full broad and balanced curriculum.

It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

This links to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- Article 2: All children have rights regardless of their race, ability and religion.
- Article 3: Everyone should do their best and work towards what is the best for each child.
- Article 28: All children have the right to an education

Early Reading and Phonics Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

At Stranton School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised', which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Reception and follow the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' 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 Stranton school, 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.

Comprehension

At Stranton School, 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 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' programme.

Early Reading and Phonics Implementation

Foundations in Nursery

We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:

- sharing high-quality stories and poems
- learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
- activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
- attention to high-quality language.

We strive to ensure all Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily Phonics Lessons in Reception and Year 1

Phonics is taught for 30 minutes every day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.

Children make a strong start in Reception where teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.

As a school, we follow the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' expectations of progress:

- In Reception, children are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
- In Year 1, children review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

How We 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.

We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the keep-up resources – at pace.

If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics 'catch-up' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

Teaching Reading

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week.
The reading practice sessions:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' assessments and book matching grids.
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

In Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home Reading

The decodable reading practice book is available to children to ensure success is shared with the family. Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. We use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' parents' resources to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Additional Reading Support for Vulnerable Children

Children in Reception and Year 1 who are receiving additional phonics keep-up sessions read their reading practice book to an adult daily.

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, prompt cards and how to videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.

The Reading Leader and SLT use the audit and prompt cards to 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)

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

- We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at Stranton School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from Nursery/Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. Children across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of reading for pleasure events

Early Reading and Phonics Impact

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.
- by SLT and scrutinised through the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and 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.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' summative assessments.

Remote Learning

Where a class, key stage or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or there is a local or national lockdown requiring children to remain at home, we will endeavour to continue to provide an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects. This remote education will be of high quality and will align as closely as possible with in-school provision. Core curriculum tasks and a timetable directing the children to the tasks they need to complete each day will be sent home as well as uploaded onto Seesaw. Work expected to be completed by the children will be based on the objectives that are currently being taught in school.

In the first day or two of isolation, staff will:

- Establish whether a child/children have online access. If a child does not have internet access/a device, school will provide this where possible.
- Direct children to the remote learning page on the school website. Pupils will be able to access a range of activities and links that they can complete while the Seesaw Remote Learning is prepared.
- Prepare the remote learning activities and begin to upload onto Seesaw.
- Where necessary print out any resources for children/parents to collect.
- Contact children/parents via Seesaw to explain the timetable and what is expected of them whilst they are isolating.
- Request that photographs are taken of all completed work and uploaded to Seesaw.

During the isolation period staff will:

- Provide high quality remote education that aligns as closely as possible with the in school provision.
- Provide both live teaching and pre-recorded material to teach daily phonic lessons.
- Provide live practice reading sessions three times a week
- Provide live group/individual ‘keep up’ intervention sessions.
- Ensure those children receiving keep up sessions read their reading practice book 1:1, virtually, daily.
- Provide live story and rhyme sessions for children and their families.
- Hold a daily zoom call which all children will be expected to attend. During this, teachers will outline the work set and resolve any issues.
- Provide daily feedback on all work submitted on Seesaw and discuss any misconceptions in learning.

Assessment

- Progress will be continuously monitored on a daily basis.
- Evidence of work uploaded on Seesaw will be directly used.
- Regular, constructive feedback will be given to work uploaded on Seesaw to enhance the children's progression in learning in all curriculum areas.
- Follow up tasks will be given to individual children when needed.
- Work uploaded to Seesaw including parent comments and messages will contribute to each individual child's progress.
- Daily assessment for learning will take place during zoom lessons to inform next steps in learning.

Teachers will monitor pupil engagement through Seesaw from Monday to Friday during the normal school hours. If a pupil does not engage in remote education, school will implement the following 4 step process:

1. Class teacher to contact the family to discuss the lack of engagement in remote education and establish any issues the family may be experiencing that school can help with. This will be logged as 'Step 1' on the school's CPOMS system.
2. Assistant Headteacher/Phase Leader to contact the family to discuss the lack of engagement further - offering additional advice and support. This will be logged at 'Step 2' on the school's CPOMS system.
3. Head of School/Executive Headteacher to contact the family to remind them of our school expectations and their obligation in ensuring the children access remote education. This will be logged at 'Step 3' on the school's CPOMS system.
   Refer to LA attendance officer and attendance procedures initiated as appropriate.

Catch-Up

Following a school closure and once we have identified children who may need to 'catch up', the following actions will be put in place:

- Daily phonic 'keep up' sessions
- Daily 1:1 reading for children accessing 'keep up' intervention work.
- Additional phonic lessons to ensure appropriate progression through the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' scheme of work.
- Additional story and rhyme times.
- Ongoing monitoring and assessment of lowest 20% of learners to continuously identify any gaps in learning

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme. In light of this, policy amendments may be made.

Signed

Neil Nottingham (Headteacher):

Mrs Diana Beddow (Chair of Governors):