

School policy on phonics and the teaching of reading and writing

2021-23

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the *Read Write Inc. Phonics* programme.

The *Read Write Inc.* Phonic programme

The programme is for:

- pupils in Year R to Year 2 who are learning to read and write
- any pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly.
- Children in Year 5 and 6 who need further support use targeted interventions to improve fluency or comprehension

We teach pupils to:

- decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- read ‘tricky’ words on sight
- understand what they read
- read aloud with fluency and expression
- spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- acquire good handwriting.

In addition, we teach pupils to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on difficulties, such as pupils’ poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

We group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading. We choose to assess based on reading rather than writing, because it is known that pupils’ progress in writing will lag behind progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

In Reception, the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics is taught from the beginning of the academic year. We emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – ‘tricky words’.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences in their Literacy sessions. We encourage them to compose each sentence aloud, using what they have learned in their phonics

sessions, until they are confident to write independently. Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge, that is, they use their knowledge of the alphabetic code and the tricky words they have learnt in phonics. They can soon spell more complex words confidently and accurately.

Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible, whilst maintaining a high level of accuracy and fluency. The sooner they complete it, the sooner they will be able to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level. It is our expectation that pupils meet the minimum half-termly expectations of progress unless they have a significant SEND. Pupils who are learning to read receive direct teaching of RWI Phonics, followed by a literacy lesson which incorporates reading and writing daily.

Decodable Books

In school, the children read books corresponding to the colour band they are on and pupil's reading is supplemented with books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the 'tricky words'. Pupils read Read Write Inc. Book Bag books at home. These books are usually a level below the books they read in school, ensuring the children are able to read confidently and fluently at home. This means that early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding.

Stories

Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils; they are soon able to read these texts for themselves. Children in Reception are given levelled books and a book for sharing with their grown up at home. Each week/fortnight class teachers choose a quality text which is shared with their class. This forms the basis of their Literacy lesson planning, which elicits the majority of the children's writing.

Expertise

Our staff team have a range of experts in the teaching of phonics/reading who lead Read Write Inc and reading across the school. Our staff have been trained by Read Write Inc Advisors or experts within the staff and deliver sessions with pace and accuracy. Some of our team have supported a local SCITT and other settings.

Achievement in our school

Assessing and tracking progress

We assess all pupils from Year R to Year 2 on the Read Write Inc. Sound and Word assessment and we use these data to assign them to the appropriate group. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their

starting points. We do this for all pupils, whenever they join us, so we can track all of them effectively, including those eligible for the pupil premium.

For those on the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme, we record their starting date and entry point on the tracker to monitor the rate at which they are making progress. We can also easily identify those who joined the programme later.

By the end of Key Stage 1, our pupils are able to read aloud age-appropriate texts accurately and with sufficient speed. This means that we can focus on developing their comprehension, preparing them well for transition to Key Stage 2. Their good decoding skills mean that they have a sound strategy for decoding unfamiliar words when they come across them at whatever stage or in any subject, even into secondary school.

Pupils who are making slower progress usually complete the programme by the end of Year 2. We support pupils who have identified special educational needs for however long it takes until they can read. For example, we identify those who are at risk of falling behind their peers immediately – whatever their age. Highly trained staff tutor them daily, using the *Read Write Inc.* one-to-one tutoring programme. If a child arrives in Key Stage 2 reading below their chronological age or with English as an additional language they are taught *Read Write Inc.* Phonics until they too catch up with their peers.

Narrowing the gap – and the pupil premium

The programme as a whole has been very effective for our pupils in narrowing performance gaps between different groups, both within our school and nationally. The programme has also been effective in terms of the standards of reading and writing at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Extra provision is made for disadvantaged pupils, who are not closing gaps or meeting school expectations.

Progress of the lowest 20% of readers

The ongoing assessment of pupils' phonics is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify any pupil who is falling behind the programme's pace. If they do fall behind, targeted support is given immediately. Readers from Year 3 upwards may still have Read Write Inc sessions to improve their decoding and fluency skill or may move onto other targeted systems such as daily Toe by Toe sessions, on top of their daily English lessons.

Phonic screening check

In all recent data, the cohort data is at or above the national average. Any child who has not completed the RWI programme or did not pass the phonics screening check continues with this the following year, until all sounds are secure and reading is fluent.

Impact across the curriculum

Our teachers are enthusiastic about using the *Read Write Inc.* programme because they can see how well pupils learn from it and the progress they make, not just in English but across the curriculum.

1. Data is used effectively to ensure gaps are closing between all groups – in particular those eligible for the pupil premium (*Read Write Inc.* assessment and tracking, standardised reading tests, phonics screening check).
2. 80-90% of pupils complete Read Write Inc. Phonics by end of Year 2.
3. Slower progress pupils and those with specific SEN are taught in small homogeneous teaching groups and receive Read Write Inc. one-to-one tutoring.

Quality of teaching in our school

The programme's 'cycle of instruction' means that, after direct instruction and guided practice, the pupils teach another pupil. In this way they all rehearse and consolidate what they have been learning. This helps the pupils to make their understanding clear to themselves and helps the teacher deal with any misconceptions. 'Partner teaching' is a key assessment tool. We also use this approach very effectively in other subjects.

Assessment is a critical element of our programme. The teachers assess:

- pupils' phonic knowledge
- the speed at which pupils are able to read the text
- their understanding of the stories they read.

We record the results from the Sound and Word Assessments, which take place every half term, on the Assessment Tracker. This data allows us to intervene in different ways. For instance, we quickly move pupils to another group if they are progressing faster than their peers. Those who continue to struggle have one-to-one tutoring so that they keep up.

The homogeneous groupings allow the teachers to focus on all pupils for the whole lesson. This means that all the pupils are engaged, with a positive impact on their behaviour. They learn to participate fully: we agree with them the rules for working in a group or discussing with a partner. We discourage 'hands up' for answering questions because we believe that all pupils should answer every question. The teacher selects pupils to answer.

The *Read Write Inc.* programme has detailed lesson plans. Staff follow these to deliver the reading activities within Read Write Inc and plan their own Literacy lessons to focus on the writing element. Every activity, in every lesson, is prepared

thoroughly and has a very clear purpose. The teacher explains this at the beginning so that the pupils understand, during the activity, what they are learning and why.

Simple teaching strategies and a lively pace ensure that all the pupils participate fully– there is no chance for them to lose concentration and miss key elements. In addition, because all the pupils are grouped across the school in terms of their reading ability, they are reading at an appropriate decoding level every day. The homogeneous groups help us to focus the teaching and ensure pupils make very good progress.

Reading leaders and the School Leadership Team ensure fidelity to the phonic and reading elements of the scheme through monitoring. By sticking closely to the reading elements of the scheme, children become well versed in the structure helping to reduce cognitive load.

Feedback and marking

We emphasise constructive feedback. For example, we praise pupils for what they do well; such as displaying the behaviour they all need for their learning to be successful. Teaching partners are praised for their effective teaching.

Reading at home

We support pupils to select appropriate books to take home, depending on what support they might receive at home. Pupils take home books that only include the sounds they have been taught and are confident with. This means that they are confident to read at home, and wherever possible, we encourage parents to listen to and read with their child each day. Pupils also take home stories and non-fiction that they cannot yet read for themselves but that are to be read to them by an adult, to encourage a love of reading. Stories and new vocabulary are explained and discussed so all pupils have access to the books they read. Some pupils also take home familiar picture books so that they can re-tell the story out loud and recall details and vocabulary.

Quality of teaching and pupils' progress

The Reading Leader monitor pupils' progress together until every child can read. No child is left behind to struggle. We record lesson observations and any subsequent coaching.

1. The *Read Write Inc.* 'cycle of instruction' is embedded across the curriculum – MTYT, TTYP. Pupils do not raise their hands to answer questions.
2. Close grouping for reading is maintained – pupils are moved on quickly after assessment.
3. The purpose of each activity is clear to both teachers and pupils.
4. Planning and marking is systematic.

5. Pupils read books at home that closely match their word reading, as well as familiar stories and texts beyond their word reading.
6. Teaching is monitored thoroughly (see Leadership and Management).

Attendance

The programme is intensive and cumulative, so poor attendance severely disrupts the progress of any pupils who are absent, for however short a time. The Headteacher monitors attendance carefully and during meetings with parents, RWInc data may be referenced when talking about the impact of regular absences.

Leadership and management in our school

Shared vision

The school's shared vision is that every pupil learns to read quickly and continues to read – widely and often. The headteacher works with all the staff to ensure that this happens. In particular, he works closely with the reading leader to monitor the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for staff who need it (teachers and teaching assistants).

The role of the reading leader is critical. Alongside the headteacher, the reading leader drives the teaching of *Read Write Inc.* Phonics, ensuring it is taught with fidelity to the phonics and reading elements of the scheme, so that all the pupils complete the programme as quickly as possible, whilst maintaining fluency and accuracy.

The reading leader's roles include:

- ensuring pupils in the 'lower progress' group are making good progress and organising one-to-one tutoring for the pupils who need extra support.
- keeping the groups homogeneous, i.e. at the same reading level
- providing further training (through demonstration, coaching, monitoring)
- ensuring that our teaching of reading is of the highest quality and that all our pupils make progress.

They can give this support every day. Teachers alert the reading leader to any pupil whose progress is faster or slower than the rest of their group.

The reading team is made up of a team of good teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) who each teach a group of pupils at the same reading level.

Professional development

A key element of *Read Write Inc.* is consistent whole-school practice, underpinned by appropriate professional development. The headteacher, all the teachers and

teaching assistants are trained to teach reading. We generally hold at least two development days every year to ensure we are aware of up-to-date practice.

Parents and carers

We invite parents/carers to an initial meeting and we hold workshops regularly to show how they can help their children read at home. We would like them to help their children, but we also recognise that some are not well-placed to do this. If they don't, their children won't suffer; it is our job to teach their children to read.

We organise repeat meetings for those who do not or cannot attend. We ensure that pupils whose parents do not attend keep up with their peers. We check that they make good progress in lessons, we give them extra one-to-one lessons, and we encourage them to read to themselves and to siblings at home.

1. All staff are trained on *Read Write Inc.* Phonics and Get Writing!
2. The Senior Leadership Team observes *Read Write Inc.* lessons with the reading leader and discusses the pupil progress and teacher tracker each half term.
3. The reading leader organises workshops with parents.