Phonics, Reading and Writing Policy

Our vision

At our school, we believe that reading is fundamental to pupils' educational success, personal development and future opportunities. We are committed to ensuring that every pupil becomes a confident, fluent and enthusiastic reader who can read accurately, understand what they read and develop a lifelong love of books.

We recognise that reading is not simply a subject in its own right: it is the foundation upon which pupils access the wider curriculum. Our approach therefore places systematic, high-quality phonics teaching at the heart of early reading, alongside the development of vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, reading stamina and a genuine enjoyment of literature.

We use the **Read Write Inc. Phonics (RWI)** programme as our systematic, synthetic phonics programme. We follow the reading elements of the programme with fidelity, while adapting the wider English curriculum to ensure that writing, grammar, composition and transcription are taught in a way that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of our pupils.

Our overarching aim is that **every child learns to read accurately, fluently and with understanding as quickly as possible, and develops a lifelong love of reading.**

1. Read Write Inc. Phonics

Read Write Inc. Phonics is our systematic synthetic phonics programme. It provides a structured and cumulative approach to teaching children the alphabetic code and the skills required to decode and encode words.

The programme is used primarily with:

- pupils in Reception to Year 2 who are developing their early reading skills;
- pupils in Years 2 and 3 who require additional phonics teaching to secure their reading skills;
- pupils in Key Stage 2 who have gaps in their phonics knowledge and require further targeted support.

Where appropriate, pupils in Key Stage 2 who require additional phonics intervention may access **Read Write Inc. Fresh Start**.

We aim to ensure that pupils complete the phonics programme as quickly as their learning allows. However, we recognise that pupils progress at different rates and that some children will require additional teaching and intervention beyond the expected timeframe.

2. What we teach

Through systematic phonics teaching, pupils are taught to:

- recognise and recall grapheme-phoneme correspondences accurately;
- apply their phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words;
- blend sounds accurately and automatically;
- segment words into their constituent sounds for spelling;
- read common exception and 'tricky' words that cannot be decoded using their current phonics knowledge;
- develop increasing accuracy and fluency when reading;
- read aloud with appropriate pace, phrasing and expression;
- develop comprehension through discussion and questioning;
- develop a broad and rich vocabulary;
- develop confidence and independence as readers and writers.

Phonics teaching is cumulative. New learning builds systematically on previously taught knowledge, enabling pupils to develop increasingly secure and automatic decoding skills.

3. Our approach to Read Write Inc.

We follow the **reading elements of Read Write Inc. with fidelity**, including:

- Speed Sounds teaching;
- phonics practice and application;
- word reading and blending;
- Red Words;
- RWI storybooks and associated reading practice;
- partner work and oral rehearsal;
- repeated reading to develop fluency;
- discussion and comprehension of the texts pupils read.

We have made the strategic decision not to use the **Read Write Inc. Get Writing** component as part of our English curriculum.

This decision was made following professional consideration of the needs of our pupils, our wider curriculum and the advice available to us through our local English

and literacy support. We felt that aspects of the Get Writing materials did not always align sufficiently with the writing curriculum, progression and expectations within our school. We therefore use the RWI reading provision alongside a separate, carefully sequenced writing curriculum.

This allows us to maintain the strengths and consistency of the RWI approach to phonics and reading while ensuring that writing is taught explicitly and progressively through our English curriculum.

Our RWI sessions are approximately 40 minutes and place a strong emphasis on:

- accuracy;
- phonics knowledge;
- decoding;
- blending;
- reading fluency;
- vocabulary;
- comprehension;
- spelling;
- oral rehearsal; and
- the development of confident, independent readers.

4. Partner work and active participation

Effective participation is an important feature of our phonics and reading lessons.

Pupils are taught to work collaboratively with a partner to rehearse sounds, words and sentences, explain their thinking and consolidate new learning. Partner work provides valuable opportunities for pupils to practise and repeat what they have been taught while enabling teachers to assess understanding and identify misconceptions.

Teachers listen carefully to pupils during lessons and identify difficulties such as:

- inaccurate articulation;
- insecure phoneme-grapheme knowledge;
- difficulty blending;
- difficulty segmenting;
- insecure recognition of Red Words;
- lack of fluency; or
- difficulties understanding the text.

Teachers respond promptly to these difficulties through modelling, additional practice, intervention and, where appropriate, changes to groupings.

All pupils are expected to participate actively. Questioning and response routines are carefully established so that pupils have frequent opportunities to rehearse and demonstrate their learning.

5. Grouping pupils

Pupils receiving RWI teaching are grouped according to their current phonics and reading knowledge rather than their writing attainment.

This enables teaching to be closely matched to pupils' current reading needs and ensures that pupils receive appropriate levels of challenge and support.

Groups are reviewed regularly and pupils are moved between groups when assessment indicates that this is appropriate. Our aim is to ensure that no pupil remains in a group that does not accurately reflect their current level of reading development.

We recognise that reading and writing develop at different rates. In particular, a pupil's writing attainment may be affected by handwriting, transcription and fine motor development and may not always reflect their reading ability.

6. Reception and the early teaching of phonics

In Reception, we establish the foundations of reading through systematic teaching of the alphabetic code.

Pupils learn phonemes and the graphemes that represent them, supported by consistent routines and appropriate mnemonic strategies. This learning is practised and consolidated regularly.

Pupils are taught to:

- recognise and articulate phonemes accurately;
- blend sounds to read words;
- segment words for spelling;
- recognise and read taught Red Words;
- apply their phonics knowledge when reading and writing.

We recognise the importance of oral language development alongside phonics. Adults model rich vocabulary, sentence structures and language, and pupils are given frequent opportunities to listen, speak, rehearse and discuss.

7. Decodable reading books

Pupils read books that are closely matched to the phonics knowledge they have been taught.

This ensures that pupils can apply their developing phonics skills successfully and experience genuine success as readers. Decodable books provide opportunities for pupils to practise decoding, develop fluency and build confidence.

Repeated reading is encouraged because it supports accuracy, automaticity, fluency and expression.

We recognise that pupils also need access to a wide range of texts that are beyond their independent decoding ability. Alongside decodable books, adults read stories, poetry and non-fiction aloud to pupils. These shared texts provide opportunities to develop:

- vocabulary;
- background knowledge;
- comprehension;
- imagination;
- listening skills;
- discussion skills; and
- a love of literature.

8. Reading for pleasure

We are committed to developing pupils who read widely, frequently and for pleasure.

Teachers share high-quality stories, poetry and non-fiction with pupils and actively promote discussion about books and authors. Pupils are exposed to a broad range of genres, authors, cultures, perspectives and experiences.

We recognise that reading for pleasure and reading proficiency are mutually supportive. Pupils need both the technical skills to read independently and positive experiences of books and literature.

We therefore ensure that reading for pleasure is promoted alongside systematic phonics teaching and the development of comprehension.

9. Writing

Although RWI provides the foundation for pupils' early spelling and transcription through phonics, our writing curriculum is taught separately through our English curriculum.

Pupils are taught to:

- apply their phonics knowledge when spelling;
- develop accurate letter formation and handwriting;
- compose sentences orally before writing;
- develop vocabulary and sentence structure;
- understand and apply grammatical concepts;
- write for a range of purposes and audiences;
- develop increasing independence and stamina in writing;
- edit and improve their work appropriately;
- develop the knowledge and skills required by the National Curriculum.

We recognise the strong relationship between reading and writing. The language pupils encounter through high-quality books, stories, poetry and non-fiction provides a rich foundation for vocabulary and composition.

Pupils are encouraged to use vocabulary and sentence structures encountered through reading in their own writing, while teachers explicitly teach the knowledge and skills required to become successful writers.

Pupils write regularly and receive appropriate feedback that enables them to improve.

10. Assessment and tracking

Assessment is integral to our teaching.

Teachers continually assess pupils' phonics knowledge, decoding, blending, word reading, fluency and comprehension during lessons. This ongoing assessment informs teaching and enables staff to identify misconceptions and provide timely support.

Formal RWI assessments are completed at appropriate intervals in accordance with the programme and school assessment procedures.

Assessment information is used to:

- determine pupils' current phonics and reading knowledge;
- inform groupings;

- identify pupils who are making accelerated or slower progress;
- identify gaps in learning;
- provide targeted intervention;
- monitor the impact of additional support;
- ensure pupils are taught at an appropriate level of challenge; and
- inform communication with parents and carers.

We also use wider reading assessments, including standardised reading assessments where appropriate, together with the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check and end-of-key-stage assessments, to build a comprehensive picture of pupils' reading development.

Assessment information is analysed carefully to identify patterns and potential gaps between groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

11. Supporting pupils who need additional help

We have high expectations for every pupil and do not accept that a pupil's difficulties with reading should become a barrier to their wider learning.

Pupils who are making slower progress are identified quickly and receive additional support that is matched to their specific needs.

This may include:

- additional daily phonics practice;
- small-group intervention;
- one-to-one tutoring;
- additional opportunities to practise reading;
- targeted support for specific phonics gaps;
- additional fluency practice; or
- other appropriate reading interventions.

Pupils with SEND receive provision appropriate to their individual needs. The length and nature of phonics intervention are determined by assessment rather than age or year group.

Pupils who join the school in Key Stage 2 or later with reading difficulties are assessed promptly. Where phonics knowledge is insecure, appropriate RWI provision or another evidence-informed intervention is provided until the pupil has secured the necessary knowledge and skills.

12. The lowest-attaining readers

We recognise that pupils in the lowest-attaining reading groups may have a wide range of needs.

These pupils are closely monitored and receive carefully targeted teaching. Where appropriate, additional one-to-one or small-group tutoring is provided alongside their main phonics lesson.

Intervention is carefully planned around identified gaps rather than simply providing additional exposure to the same teaching.

The progress of these pupils is reviewed regularly by the class teacher, reading leader and, where appropriate, the SENCO.

13. Phonics Screening Check

The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check provides an additional opportunity to assess pupils' application of their phonics knowledge.

We prepare pupils appropriately through high-quality phonics teaching rather than through excessive test practice.

Where pupils do not meet the expected standard in Year 1, they receive continued targeted phonics teaching and additional support in Year 2. Their progress is monitored carefully and they are reassessed at the end of Year 2.

14. Homework and reading at home

We recognise the important role that reading at home can play in developing fluency, confidence and a positive attitude towards reading.

Pupils take home books that are appropriate to their current reading development. Where appropriate, familiar or previously read texts are sent home to encourage repeated reading and fluency.

Pupils are also encouraged to share books at home that are beyond their independent reading level. These may be read aloud by an adult or shared together.

We encourage parents and carers to:

- listen to their child read regularly;
- discuss the text and its vocabulary;
- ask questions about what has been read;
- read aloud to their child;

- model fluent and expressive reading; and
- encourage their child to develop a love of books.

We recognise that home circumstances vary. Responsibility for teaching children to read rests with the school, and pupils who have fewer opportunities to read at home are identified and supported appropriately in school.

15. Attendance

Phonics teaching is cumulative and systematic. Regular attendance is therefore particularly important because missed learning can create gaps that affect subsequent progress.

We monitor attendance carefully and identify pupils whose attendance may be affecting their phonics and reading development.

Where necessary, additional teaching and intervention are provided to support pupils to recover missed learning.

16. Quality of teaching

High-quality teaching is central to our approach.

Teachers and teaching assistants delivering RWI receive appropriate training and support to ensure that the programme is delivered consistently and effectively.

Lessons are characterised by:

- clear modelling;
- precise teacher explanations;
- active pupil participation;
- frequent opportunities for practice;
- partner rehearsal;
- regular assessment;
- immediate correction of errors;
- a brisk but appropriate pace;
- high expectations;
- positive relationships; and
- a strong focus on accuracy and fluency.

Teachers use the RWI lesson structure and resources appropriately while adapting delivery to respond to the needs of their particular group.

The purpose of each activity is clear and pupils understand what they are learning and why.

17. Feedback and correction

We believe that immediate and precise feedback is particularly important in early reading.

Errors in phoneme articulation, blending, decoding and word reading are addressed promptly so that misconceptions do not become embedded.

Feedback is specific, encouraging and focused on helping pupils improve.

We recognise and celebrate effort, accuracy, resilience, effective partner work and positive learning behaviours.

18. Behaviour and relationships

We expect pupils to participate positively and respectfully in phonics and reading lessons.

Consistent routines support pupils to:

- listen carefully;
- respond promptly;
- work effectively with partners;
- take turns;
- support one another;
- respect different viewpoints; and
- persevere when learning is challenging.

Staff model calm, respectful and encouraging behaviour at all times.

Positive relationships and a culture of high expectations enable pupils to feel safe to make mistakes, practise new skills and develop confidence.

19. Leadership and management

The Headteacher and Reading Leader have joint responsibility for ensuring that phonics and reading are taught effectively across the school.

The Reading Leader:

- oversees the implementation of RWI;
- monitors the quality and consistency of phonics teaching;
- supports staff through modelling, coaching and professional development;
- monitors pupil progress and identifies pupils requiring additional support;
- reviews and organises RWI groupings;
- supports staff to respond to assessment information;
- monitors the provision for pupils who are making slower progress;
- works closely with the SENCO where pupils have additional needs; and
- contributes to the school's evaluation of reading provision.

The leadership team monitors the impact of phonics and reading through a combination of:

- lesson visits;
- pupil progress information;
- assessment data;
- scrutiny of reading and writing outcomes;
- pupil voice;
- discussion with teachers and teaching assistants; and
- monitoring of intervention.

20. Professional development

All staff involved in teaching phonics receive appropriate training in the Read Write Inc. programme.

Professional development is ongoing and may include:

- refresher training;
- demonstration lessons;
- coaching;
- team teaching;
- observation and feedback;
- moderation; and

- sharing of effective practice.

Staff new to the school are supported to understand the school's approach to phonics, reading and writing and receive appropriate training before teaching RWI independently.

21. Parents and carers

We recognise parents and carers as important partners in developing successful readers.

We communicate clearly with families about how phonics and reading are taught and provide guidance about how they can support reading at home.

Parents and carers are encouraged to read regularly with their children and to share a wide range of books, including books that children may not yet be able to read independently.

We aim to ensure that communication is accessible and supportive and that families understand how they can help their child without feeling that they are responsible for delivering the school's phonics programme.

22. Inclusion and equality

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils have equitable access to high-quality phonics and reading provision.

We recognise that pupils may experience barriers to reading for a range of reasons, including SEND, speech and language difficulties, developmental differences, limited prior experience of books, English as an additional language or interrupted education.

Our approach is therefore responsive to individual need while maintaining high expectations.

Pupils are assessed accurately, taught according to their current knowledge and provided with additional support where required.

We monitor the progress of different groups of pupils to ensure that no group is disadvantaged and that appropriate action is taken where gaps emerge.

23. Impact across the curriculum

Strong reading skills enable pupils to access the full curriculum.

Our phonics and reading provision supports pupils to become increasingly independent when accessing texts in subjects including science, history, geography, religious education and the wider curriculum.

As pupils become fluent readers, the emphasis increasingly moves towards developing:

- comprehension;
- vocabulary;
- inference;
- prediction;
- summarising;
- critical reading;
- reading stamina; and
- reading widely across different subjects and genres.

Teachers across the curriculum recognise their responsibility to support pupils' reading and vocabulary development.

24. Our expectations

We expect that:

1. Every pupil receives high-quality, systematic phonics teaching until they have secured the necessary knowledge and skills.
2. Phonics teaching is delivered consistently and cumulatively.
3. Pupils read books that are appropriately matched to their phonics knowledge.
4. Pupils are given regular opportunities to practise and develop fluency.
5. Assessment is used to identify gaps and inform teaching.
6. Pupils who fall behind are identified quickly and receive appropriate additional support.
7. Pupils with SEND receive provision matched to their individual needs.
8. Reading for pleasure is actively promoted throughout the school.
9. High-quality texts are read aloud regularly by adults.
10. Reading and vocabulary development are supported across the curriculum.

11. Writing is taught explicitly through a sequenced English curriculum and is closely informed by pupils' reading experiences.
12. Parents and carers are supported to contribute positively to their child's reading development.
13. Leaders monitor the quality and impact of phonics and reading provision regularly.
14. All staff share the expectation that every pupil can learn to read and that no pupil should be left behind.

25. Review

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure that it reflects current statutory requirements, evidence-informed practice, the school's curriculum and the needs of our pupils.

Date created: April 2019
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