

Whitchurch C of E Primary School	Effective Date:	March 2022
Policy and Procedure Statement		
 Teaching Phonics	Revision Date:	March 2023
Head Teacher		Mrs Kate Steven
Chair of Governors		Mrs Jo Fisher

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

This programme is for:

- Pupils in Year R to Year 2 who are learning to read and write
- Any pupils who need to catch up in Years 3 and 4.

In Read Write Inc phonics pupils:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read
- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Spell quickly and easily 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 rather than their writing. This 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 Year R 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 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 – common exception words.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so 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.

Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils; they are soon able to read these themselves.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We encourage them to compose each sentence aloud until they are confident to write independently. We make sure they write every day.

Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge. The quality of the vocabulary they use in their writing reflects the language they have heard in the books the teacher has read to them; they have also discussed what the words mean.

Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible. The sooner they complete it, the sooner they will be able to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level.

Outcomes for children – assessing and tracking progress

We assess all [pupils following the Read Write Inc Phonics using the Entry assessment. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points.

90% of our pupils complete the phonics programme by the end of Year 1. The rest of the pupils complete the programme by the end of Year 2.

We have high expectations of our pupils' progress. In June 2019 (last standard screening) 95% pupils reached the threshold.

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. Highly trained staff tutor them for 15 minutes every day, using the Read Write Inc One-to-One tutoring programme.

By the end of key stage 1, our pupils are able to read aloud age-appropriate texts accurately and with sufficient speed for comprehension. 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.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

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.

In Read Write Inc Phonics, because the pupils are grouped across the school in terms of their reading ability, they are reading at an appropriate decoding level every day. The homogenous groups in the Phonics lessons help us to focus the teaching and ensure pupils learn to read quickly.

Staff teaching Read Write Inc Phonics record the results from the assessments 1, 2 and 3, which take place every eight weeks. This data allow 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.

All 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 programmes have detailed lesson plans. These give the teachers practical day to day guidance, but we work hard to build on these plans so that the lessons are matched carefully to the needs of their particular group. Every activity is prepared thoroughly and has a clear purpose. The teacher explains this at the beginning so that the pupils understand, during the activity, what they are learning and why.

Additional Support for lower-attaining pupils learning to read

Pupils in the 'lowest' attaining group have the widest variety of needs. This is therefore the least homogenous group. In order to give these pupils the same carefully targeted teaching as all the other groups, some of their pupils have daily one to one tutoring for ten to twenty minutes, in addition to their group session in the morning. This tutoring helps us to meet their individual needs. Once these pupils have learnt to read they will receive additional support when learning to spell.

Feedback and marking

We emphasise constructive feedback. For example, we praise pupils for how hard they work together to ensure that their learning is successful. We have clear systems for marking pupils' work. Pupils know their teacher's expectations for each activity. We mark short activities with the pupils in the lesson.

Homework

When children start school and are learning single letter sounds, they take home storybooks for parents to read to them. Once they have started on the Red Ditty books they take home books that they have already read in school two or three times. They are likely to take home additional books which they are capable of reading but have not worked on in school. Reading them again build confidence. Children take home a library book which is changed weekly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Pupils have very positive attitudes to the programme. Their good behaviour and the virtual absence of low-level disruption in lessons contribute to the progress they make. We support this behaviours by using silent signals for gaining their attention, for setting up partner routines, and for managing the way pupils move around the classroom. Everyone uses the same signals.

We believe that the partner work and the homogenous groupings organise to teach Read Write Inc Phonics help the pupils learn to work together. Effective partner work has the benefit of helping pupils to work closely with others.

Pupils are taught the manners and behaviour that are necessary to work with adults and other pupils. Adults are expected to demonstrate positive attitudes and good manners, and to act as role models for pupils.

Praise for hard work and good behaviour is fundamental to pupils' progress. The values of courtesy, consideration and kindness are at the heart of every lesson.

Attendance

The programmes are intensive and cumulative, so poor attendance severely disrupts the progress of any pupils who are absent, for however short a time. Children who are absent for lessons are flagged up to the Family Link Worker who arranges a meeting with the parents.

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

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, she works closely with the reading lead to monitor the quality of teaching to provide coaching for staff.

The role of the reading leader is critical. Alongside the headteacher, the reading leader drives the teaching of Read Write Inc Phonics, ensuring that all pupils complete the programme by the end of Year 2 Term 1.

The reading leader's role includes:

- Ensuring that our teaching of reading is of the highest quality and that all our pupils make progress
- 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 homogenous, i.e. at the same level
- Providing further training