

Phonics Policy

Reviewed November 2026

Intent

As a school, we teach synthetic phonics as the initial, and most important, approach to the teaching of early reading. Our pupils learn to read and write effectively using the Read Write Inc (RWI) Phonics Programme. This is a government approved systematic programme for the teaching of phonics, reading, spelling and writing. We want all pupils to begin their journey to read with confidence, develop a love of reading and apply their skills competently to writing.
We aim to ensure that all 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
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- Learn letter formation and handwriting skills.

Implementation

The RWI approach is taught considering the 5 Ps:

Praise – Children learn quickly in a positive climate.
Pace – A good pace is the key to each session to ensure all children are engaged and on task.
Purpose – Every part of the lesson has a specific purpose.
Passion – This is a very prescriptive programme. It is the energy, enthusiasm and passion that teachers put into the lesson that bring the teaching and learning to life!
Participation – A strong feature of RWI lessons is partner work and the partners 'teaching' each other.

We group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is 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.

Children begin their journey in Nursery by focusing on rhyme, syllables and repetition. Read Write Inc is fully implemented in Reception. Children learn the alphabetic code with the support of picture cards and memorable

mnemonics. As children progress in their phonics learning, they begin to identify letter-sound correspondences and continually revisit prior learning to ensure they experience success and gain further confidence as readers.

In the same way, children are matched to books that contain only the current sound focus and those that they have already met, allowing them to internalize sounds in long-term memory. Children re-visit texts with their teacher, where discussion and re-reading are used to support both understanding and fluency.

Each day, pupils apply their new and prior knowledge in writing, only writing at the level of their spelling knowledge to ensure continued success. This also allows children the chance to practice and master key grammar, such as capital letters and full stops.

Children in Key Stage 1 continue to be taught phonics in homogeneous groups, depending on their stage not age. They have a daily RWI lesson. This lesson starts with a 10 minute speed sounds lesson which teaches oral blending, new speed sounds and revision of previous speed sounds, oral blending, decoding words, reading common exception words, decoding 'alien' (pseudo) words, and spelling. Children then read and comprehend a book which is carefully matched to their phonics knowledge.

Our aspiration is for children to complete the phonics programme by the end of Spring term in Year 2 to ensure they can further master their reading skills through use of the 'Read, Write Inc.' comprehension modules. However, we recognise that all children progress at their own pace and aim for each child to have completed the programme by the end of Year 2.

At the end of Year 1, children take part in the 'Phonics Screener Check', which assesses their ability to decode familiar and unfamiliar words. Children are tested on forty decodable words (both real and nonsense words) to ensure they are making sufficient progress. If children do not pass the check at the end of Year 1, they are given the opportunity to take this again in Year 2.

'Read, Write Inc.' Intervention

Children receive same day intervention where required within EYFS and KS1. However, where children have not met expectations at the end of Year 2, they will join an appropriate Key Stage 1 group. Children who are at risk of falling behind also receive daily phonics precision teaching and or fast track tutoring.

For children with SEND, this will likely be 'Read, Write Inc.' phonics-based intervention, whereby children will follow the programme as in EYFS and KS1, with a focus on gaps in their learning. For children who are identified as 'borderline', that is to say that they are close to reaching end of KS1 expectations, they may be eligible for 'BRP' ('Boosting Reading @ Primary') intervention in year 3.

In UKS2, children who are identified as struggling readers will be introduced to the 'Fresh Start' programme, which is a 'Read, Write Inc.' intervention. This is a systematic synthetic phonics programme that aims to give children the tools to read accurately and fluently.

Assessing and Monitoring

Pupil progress is continuously tracked throughout daily phonics lessons, with pupils receiving same day catch-up intervention if the teacher has identified that further practice is needed. Children are assessed at least half termly using the entry level or assessment 1, 2 or 3 by the Phonics Lead and groups are rearranged accordingly. Those who are at risk of falling behind the programme's pace and expectations are identified early and additional 1:1 Fast Track Tutoring is put in place to ensure that these children keep up and don't have to catch up. The effectiveness of these sessions and the impact on progress is regularly evaluated by the Phonics Leader. Children who are progressing through the programme quicker than their peers are moved into a different group.

Parental Involvement

Early in the Autumn term, parents are welcomed into school to learn more about their children's education. In these meetings, parents will be introduced to the 'Read, Write Inc.' programme, as well as being given ideas on how they can support their children at home. In addition to this, parents of Year 1 children are invited to a talk about the 'Phonics Screener Check', which involves looking at previous test materials so they know what their children can expect.