

Ladywood Primary School



Policy for Phonics and Early Reading

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Policy for Phonics and Early Reading

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. phonics programme. This is our chosen Systematic, Synthetic Phonics Programme (SSP) which we use in the teaching of reading and spelling. We ensure fidelity to the programme throughout school and aim for all children to become fluent readers with a love of literature.

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
- Struggling readers in Years 5 and 6 who follow Read Write Inc. Fresh Start

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 through discussion and partner work
- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- Acquire a good pencil grip, handwriting and letter formation

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 value the importance of talk, stories and the critical links between these, especially the role stories play in developing young children's vocabulary and language. Understanding vocabulary is vital for comprehension and therefore also for wider learning and progress. We acknowledge that children need good language comprehension and good word reading to become fluent readers.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

We group pupils homogeneously in RWInc. lessons, 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.

In FS2 and Year 1, we emphasise the alphabetic code. Pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help children to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences.

Children 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, children experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding. Children read in school and then take home decodable books that are matched to their phonic ability.

Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils.

Children write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the grapheme phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and common exception words taught so far. We encourage children to compose sentences aloud until they are confident to write independently and we make sure pupils 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. The meanings of new words are always discussed and explored. Children are asked to read their own work to check that it makes sense.

Assessment and Progress

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, challenge and comprehension level.

We assess all pupils, using RWInc. Phonics Entry Assessment. We use this data to assign children to a RWInc. phonics group matched to their ability. 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 children effectively.

For children on the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, we record starting date and entry point on the tracker to monitor the rate of progress. Assessments are carried

out every 5 weeks and children are organised into their appropriate challenge group. These groups target pupils according to their reading ability. Reading sounds and words with increasing fluency and speed is a key element of each target group.

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 (SEN) for however long it takes until they can read.

We identify children who are at risk of falling behind their peers immediately - whatever their age. Highly trained staff tutor children, using the RWInc. one-to-one tutoring programme. If a child arrives in Key Stage 2 reading below their chronological age they are taught Read Write Inc. Phonics until they too catch up with their peers.

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 children's comprehension skills, preparing pupils well for transition to Key Stage 2.

Their good decoding skills mean that children have a sound strategy for decoding unfamiliar words when they come across them at whatever stage or in any subject, even into secondary school.

Data is used effectively to ensure gaps are closing between all groups - in particular those eligible for the Pupil Premium (RWInc. assessment and tracking and phonics screening check).

Slower progress pupils and those with specific special educational needs, are taught in small homogeneous teaching groups and receive Read Write Inc. one-to-one tutoring. The programmes' '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 homogeneous groups in the Phonic lessons help us to focus the teaching and ensure pupils learn to read quickly.

Regular assessments allow us to intervene swiftly. 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 on an afternoon, so that they keep up.

Children 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. We practise signals and routines until they become second nature to both teachers and children. The Management signals used to ensure a smooth routine are: Team Stop signal, Turn to you partner (TTYP), My Turn, Your Turn (MTYT), Magnet Eyes, 1, 2, 3 signal and the Silent Handwriting signal.

The RWInc. 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. 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 and pupils in the 'lowest' attaining group have the widest variety of needs. In order to give these pupils the same carefully targeted teaching as all the other groups, some of these pupils have daily one-to-one tutoring in addition to their group session in the morning. This tutoring helps us to meet their individual needs.

Pupils take home decodable books that they have already read in the Read Write Inc. Phonics lesson. This means that children are confident to read at home and feel successful in their reading, as they have decodable books which are matched to their phonic ability.

Pupils also take home stories and non-fiction that they cannot yet read for themselves but that may already have been read to them in class story sessions - books from the school library or class book corner. These books are for children to share at home with their parents. Stories and new vocabulary are explained and discussed so all pupils have access to the books they read.

The Headteacher and Reading Leader monitor pupils' progress together until every child can read. No child is left behind to struggle.

All staff use the Management signals consistently in and out of lessons. Partner work is modelled and practised until pupils work willingly and supportively with pupils who are not their friends. Praise is fundamental in helping pupils make progress and behave courteously.

Shared Vision:

The school's shared vision is that every pupil learns to read quickly and continues to read - widely and often. The Headteacher and SLT work with all the staff to ensure that this happens. In particular, she works closely with the Reading Leader and Literacy leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for staff (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. The reading leader's roles include:

- 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 homogeneous - at the same reading level
- providing further training (through masterclasses, coaching/ observation and face-to-face feedback).

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 who each teach a group of pupils at the same reading level.

The Literacy leader's roles include, ensuring that our teaching of English is of the highest quality and that all our pupils make progress.

A key element of Read Write Inc. is a consistent whole-school practice, underpinned by appropriate professional development. The Headteacher, all the teachers and teaching assistants are trained to teach reading. All staff have attended Phonics training and the trainer has returned to support us on subsequent development days. We hold at least two Development Days every year to ensure we are aware of up-to-date practice.

We invite parents/carers to an initial meeting and we provide information regularly. This is to show parents how they can help their children read at home and to ensure the same approaches are being used. We use the resources on the parent page on the Ruth Miskin Training website: <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/>.

Policy Updated by S. McQuillan (Assistant Head): September 2025

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