

# Gretton Primary Academy

## Phonics Policy

Approved by the Governors:

Date; April 2019

Review every 3 years

Our pupils learn to read 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 3 and above who are not reading at age related expectations.

Through the implementation of Read Write inc we teach pupils to:

- decode letter-sound correspondences quickly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- read 'tricky' words on sight
- understand what they read
- read aloud with fluency and expression
- write confidently, with a strong focus on sentence structure and grammar
- spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- acquire correctly formed 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 problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

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.

**In Foundation stage** we emphasise the alphabetic code (the relationship between sounds in speech and letters which are code for the sound). 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 learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings - 'tricky words'. A range of phonic resources are used in Foundation Stage, in addition to RWI, to introduce the sounds as imaginatively as possible. (EG Alphablocks, Jolly Phonics)

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the 'tricky 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 texts for themselves.

Embedding phonic knowledge 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, that is, they use their knowledge of the alphabetic code and the tricky words they have learnt. They can soon spell more complex words confidently and accurately. 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.

## **Assessing and tracking progress**

We assess all pupils accessing the *Read Write Inc.* scheme every 8 weeks to monitor the rate at which the pupils are making progress. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points. We also use this data to assign the pupils to a differentiated *Read Write Inc.* phonic group.

By the end of Key Stage 1, the vast majority of 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 across the curriculum.

Pupils who are making slower progress continue to access *Read write inc* daily until they reach at least their chronological age in reading. We support pupils who have identified special educational needs for however long it takes until they can read. We also identify those who are at risk of falling behind their peers and trained staff give them extra phonic practice or use alternative methods (such as the principals of Reading Recovery) until they catch up with their peers.

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 eight weeks, 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.

## **Quality of teaching and pupils' progress**

The *Read Write Inc.* programme has detailed lesson plans. These give the teachers and support assistants 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.

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. These groupings also allow the teachers and support assistants to focus on all pupils for the whole lesson which means that all the pupils are engaged. There are behaviour strategies used specifically in all phonic lessons which ensures consistency of approach across all groups. We use silent signals for gaining their attention, for setting up partner routines, and for managing the way pupils move around the classrooms. Everyone uses the same signals. The teachers are encouraged to use these strategies in other lessons, too, so that the approach to behaviour is consistent throughout the day. We believe that the partner work and the homogeneous groupings help the pupils learn to work together. Effective partner work has the benefit of helping pupils to work closely with others.

Support assistants are responsible for planning for their R.W.I groups, with the support of the R.W.I manager as required. They are given preparation time to plan their RWI sessions.

## **Phonic screening check**

We have high expectations of our pupils' achievement. In the June 2018 phonic screening check, 90% of our pupils reached the threshold. This is significantly higher than the National average of 82%. We teach children to read "non-words" from Foundation stage in preparation for the Year 1 phonic check. Pupils who do not reach the expected standard continue to have daily phonics lessons

and are tracked very carefully throughout year 2 and then retested. We aim for 100% of our pupils pass by the end of year 2.

## **Monitoring**

The Principal and Phonics Manager monitor pupils' progress together until every child can read. No child is left behind to struggle. Phonics teaching is also monitored closely by the Principal and Phonics manager. They observe phonic lessons to ensure the quality of the teaching is high across all groups and staff have the opportunity to observe other lessons. The Principal and Phonic Manager do demonstration lessons and give advice to staff on how to improve their phonic teaching.

## **Phonic Manager**

The role of the Phonic Manager is critical in driving the teaching of *Read Write Inc. Phonics*, ensuring it is taught rigorously so that all the pupils complete the programme as quickly and effectively as possible.

The Phonic Manager'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.

Teachers and Support Assistants alert the Phonic Manager 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 (LSAs) 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. All staff have attended training to teach reading and the Phonic manager and the trainer has had subsequent development opportunities which has been cascaded to other staff.

## **Parents and carers**

We invite parents/carers to an initial meeting when children first start school to show how they can help their children read at home. We would like them to help their children, as we recognise the valuable part that parents play in the acquisition of early reading skills. To encourage this work we send sound cards and phonic activities home with the children.

We ensure that pupils whose parents do not engage in home reading activities 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.

Jeanette Hill

Policy to be reviewed April 2022