

Phonics Policy Scientia Academy



Claire Whitehouse
Scientia Academy

READ WRITE INC. PHONICS POLICY

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme which is closely matched to the new national curriculum.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

The programme is for:

- Pupils in Nursery to Year 2 who are learning to read and write.

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.
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar.
- Spell quickly and easily by 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 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.

Phonics is taught daily for a minimum of 20 minutes focusing on reviewing, reading, writing and applying.

In Reception 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 is 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 texts for 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.

Outcomes for children

Assessing and tracking progress

We assess all pupils following Read Write Inc. Phonics using the Sound and Word Entry Assessment. We use this data to assign them to a level on the Read Write Inc. Phonics. 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 of them effectively.

The individual assessments get put onto a group summary sheet and we record their starting date and entry point to monitor the rate at which they are making progress.

In addition, we use a standardised reading test (Pira) 3 times a year so that we can ensure that the gains our pupils are making are age-appropriate.

We have high expectations of our pupils' progress. In the June 2017 phonic screening Check, 93% of our pupils reached the threshold.

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.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is monitored thoroughly. The RWI coordinator works with teachers to ensure planning and teaching is taught effectively. This ensures individual teacher needs are met and ensures a high standard of teaching.

All the 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.

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.

The Read Write Inc coordinator monitors pupil's progress. No child is left behind to struggle. Along with the class teacher, the children's results are recorded from the Sound and Word Assessments, which take place every half term from Year 1 and termly for Reception. 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.

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 homogeneous group. In order to give these pupils the same carefully targeted teaching as all the other groups, some of these pupils have one-to-one tutoring, in addition to their group session in the morning. This support helps us to meet their individual needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

We believe that the partner work and the homogeneous groupings organised 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 – especially those who are not their best friends. Quick bonding activities help new partners to get to know one another. Boys and girls, first and second language learners, assertive and reticent pupils, and pupils of different ages learn to get on together.

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, taught through the programme and embedded in other lessons. All the staff use the same positive strategies for behaviour management across the school. Working well together, as part of a team, is at the core of the school's work – for staff and pupils.

Parents and carers

We invite parents/carers to workshops/ coffee mornings to show how they can help their children read at home. We would like them to help their children, but we also recognise that some are not well-placed to do this. If they don't, their children won't suffer; it is our job to teach their children to read. We check that they make good progress in lessons, we give them extra one-to-one support, and we encourage them to read to themselves and to siblings at home.

Professional development

A key element of Read Write Inc. is 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 two-day Phonics training. The RWI coordinator attends regular update meetings and informs staff of any changes.