



HIGHFIELD FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Phonics Policy

Date of Policy approval _____

Date of Policy review _____

‘Our mission is to teach every child to read and write. And to keep them reading. No exceptions’.

- **Ruth Miskin 2022**

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme. They progress onto Read Write Inc. Spelling once they can read with accuracy and speed.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

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 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
- 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. 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 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. **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 Read Write Inc. Phonics using the **Entry Assessment**. We use this data to assign them to either Read Write Inc. Phonics groups. 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, including those eligible for the pupil premium.

For those on the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, we record their starting date and entry point on the tracker to monitor the rate at which they are making progress. We can also easily identify those who joined the programme later. Furthermore, **we track the children's recall of GPCs in isolation**, so that gaps are picked up quickly and thus informs subsequent teaching and learning. In addition, we use a **standardised reading test, NTS assessments**, so that we can ensure that the gains our pupils are making are age-appropriate. This all compliments the **RWI reading comprehensions** that the children complete for their phonics groups once they get to Blue group and above.

At the end of year 1, all pupils are expected to complete the phonics programme. For those that do not complete the programme they have the chance to complete it by the end of year 2. **Tracking against the performance of the phonic screening** is done so **every half term** and further informs teaching and learning and any necessary interventions. Past Phonic screen papers are used to complete this.

We aim for all children to be accurate and speedy readers by the time they enter Key Stage 2. We have high expectations of our pupils' progress. 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. For example, we identify those who are at risk of falling behind their peers immediately – whatever their age.

Highly trained staff tutor them for 15 minutes every day, using the Read Write Inc. One-to-one tutoring programme. If a child arrives in Key Stage 2 reading below their chronological age or with English as an additional language 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 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. For those children who are reading grey books and above, they participate in the **RWI comprehension sessions**. This ensures that they get the comprehension diet they deserve whilst maintaining fidelity to the RWI programme.

Impact across the curriculum

Our teachers are enthusiastic about using the Read Write Inc. programme because they can see how well pupils learn from it and the progress they make, not just in English, but across the curriculum. Therefore all subject leaders at all levels are invested in the successful implementation of the Read Write inc programme. Subject leaders make links with phonic books and the wider curriculum they have charge of in order to provide the children, whatever year group they are in, with the reading material that supports all the children as necessary. The RWI comprehension and fresh start materials that are used further support the wider curriculum delivery.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

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. We also use this approach very effectively in other subjects.

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 Reading leader and Phonics manager** assess the children across the whole school **every six weeks** using assessments 1,2, and 3. The results from the assessments inform re-grouping as necessary and gaps in GPC to be identified immediately. All information is passed on to staff that directly work with groups of children in their phonics groups. For those children that are progressing quicker, this will be reflected in how they move through the groupings. Those children who continue to struggle have **specific interventions** at other times of the day that help them to keep up with peers.

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. 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.

We strongly feel that every second or every minute of the day is an opportunity for children to consolidate their phonics. In FS and to some extent in KS1 there is a high usage of '**pinny time**', to provide additional opportunities to recall GPCS.

Additional support for lower-attaining pupils learning to read

Pupils in the 'lowest' attaining group (our spotlight children) 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 daily one-to-one tutoring for 10 to 20 minutes, in addition to their group session in the morning. This tutoring helps us to meet their individual needs. Furthermore, we use the **RWI virtual classrooms** throughout the day to add further, specific and targeted opportunities for these children. Once these pupils have learnt to read they will receive additional support when learning to spell.

Homework

We support pupils to select appropriate books to take home, depending on what support they might receive at home. Pupils who receive little help take home books that **they have already read in the Read Write Inc. Phonics lesson.** This means that they are confident to read at home, even if their parents cannot read with them. Pupils also take home stories and non-fiction that they cannot yet read for themselves but that have been read to them. Our **school library** attached to each year group allows us to facilitate this. Stories and new vocabulary are explained and discussed so all pupils have access to the books they read. Pupils also take home familiar picture books so that they can re-tell the story out loud and recall details and vocabulary.

Our children have access to RWI videos that are created by the Phonics manager in order to provide further opportunities to recap and consolidate learning that has taken place in schools. This comes in the form of children receiving '**QR codes**' which directly links an electronic device at home with the specific pathway designated for the homogenous group.

Quality of teaching and pupils' progress

The headteacher and reading leader monitor pupils' progress together until every child can read. **No child is left behind to struggle.** We record lesson observations and any subsequent coaching alongside the 'teacher tracker' so that we can see if there is a correlation between the quality of the teaching and the progress pupils make.

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 behaviour 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. 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 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. Potential bullying is explored and discussed so pupils know how this can develop and how to deal with it if it does. 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.**

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/he works closely with the reading leader/ Literacy and phonics manager to monitor the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for staff (teachers and teaching assistants). The role of the reading leader and phonics manager is critical. Alongside the headteacher, they drive the teaching of Read Write Inc. Phonics, ensuring that all pupils follow the programme and complete it by year 2 as best as possible.

The reading leader's and phonics manager'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, i.e. at the same reading level - providing further training (through masterclasses, coaching/ observation and face-to-face feedback).

Teachers alert the reading leader and phonics 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 (TAs) who each teach a group of pupils at the same reading level. **Our TAs and teachers generally teach small groups of four to eight.**

The English leader: - ensuring that our teaching of literacy is of the highest quality and that all our pupils make progress - providing further training (through masterclasses, coaching/ observation and face-to- face feedback) - organising extra support for slower progress children.

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 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. Our use of the **online teaching pathways** provide an immediate and easy to use CPD platform for all staff to use, either those that are new to teaching, new to RWI or those that are more established but wish to have recap in delivery of phonics.

Appendix

Expectations of progress

Our goal is for children to:

1. Work out unfamiliar words quickly – including new vocabulary and names.
2. Read familiar words speedily – that is, words they have been taught.
3. Read texts - including the words they have been taught – fluently.

Please note: these are the expectations for the *lowest 20% of children*. Other children should be *well* in advance of this.

All children should achieve these expectations, if they have followed the programme from Reception.

	YR children can:	Y1 children can:	Y2 children can:
End of Autumn 1	Read single-letter Set 1 sounds	Read Purple Storybooks; read some Set 2 sounds	Read Blue Storybooks
End of Autumn term	Read all Set 1 sounds; blend sounds into words orally	Read Pink Storybooks; read all Set 2 sounds	Read Blue Storybooks with increasing fluency and comprehension
End of Spring 1	Blend sounds to read words; read short Ditty stories	Read Orange Storybooks; read some Set 3 sounds	Read Grey Storybooks
End of Spring term	Read Red Storybooks	Read Yellow Storybooks	Read Grey Storybooks with fluency and comprehension
End of Summer 1	Read Green Storybooks; read some Set 2 sounds	Read Yellow Storybooks; read all of Set 3 sounds	Access RWI Comprehension and Spelling programmes
End of Summer term	Read Green or Purple Storybooks	Read Blue Storybooks	Access RWI Comprehension and Spelling programmes