

# **St James Haydock**



## **Phonics Policy**

## **School Policy on the Teaching of Phonics**

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme.

### **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
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words

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 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 support their increasingly fluent decoding skills.

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.

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.

Once children complete the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, they are taught in their year group whole class reading lesson, integrating reading, writing, thinking, and spoken language in all activities, to ensure the daily development of children's comprehension and wider literacy skills.

Pupils are encouraged to take their own meaning from texts, become independent and critical thinkers. Comprehension activities are designed to help children to infer, summarise, question, clarify, predict and argue a point of view.

Pupils are taught to articulate their thoughts and ideas out loud and to communicate what they know and understand.

Teachers also read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils. Pupils are encouraged 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 online Read Write Inc Assessment Tool. We use this data to track progress, identify sound gaps and to assign them to groups based on their level of phonic development. The results give a clear indication of how well pupils are making progress relative to their starting points. This data is monitored and actions to support pupils requiring further intervention are planned for and carried out.

In addition, we use a standardised reading tests (NFER and Salford Reading) so that we can ensure that the gains our pupils are making are age appropriate. We have high expectations of our pupils' progress. We attribute this to the programme and to the expectations it builds in.

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 in their reading development through adaptive teaching methods and intervention and 1.1. tutoring, where appropriate.

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 in order to narrow the gaps 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 encountered in all curriculum subjects and key stage. These skills they will continue to use and develop in secondary school.

### **Narrowing the gap and the pupil premium**

The programme as a whole has been very effective for our pupils in narrowing performance gaps between different groups, both within our school and nationally.

The programme has also been effective in terms of the standards of reading and writing at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

We know from our tracking that our pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium have made progress in line with that of our other pupils or are catching up quickly.

### **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. At St James, we view reading 'as the beating heart' of the curriculum and ensure that its development is prioritised across all subject areas.

### **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.

Half termly assessments ensures that all pupils are grouped and re-grouped according to their progress. Pupils who are not making progress are tutored 1:1 in order to address the sound gaps that they have and thus their fluency.

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. Pupils

learn to participate fully and they respond effectively to the silent signals and lesson routines that are established in the phonics lessons.

### **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 daily one-to-one tutoring, in addition to their group session in the morning. This tutoring helps us to meet their individual needs. Once these pupils have learnt to read, they will receive additional support when learning to spell.

### **Feedback and marking**

We emphasise constructive feedback. For example, we praise pupils for how hard they work together to ensure that their learning is successful. We have clear systems for marking pupils' work. Pupils know their teacher's expectations for each activity. We mark short activities with the pupils in the lesson. We discuss the outcomes with the group and individuals so that the marking is genuinely used to take forward pupils' learning.

### **Home Study**

We support pupils to select appropriate books to take home, depending on what support they might receive at home. Pupils take home books that they have already read in the Read Write Inc. Phonics lesson alongside Read Write Inc 'Book Bag' books that are carefully matched to their phonetic ability. This means that they are confident to read at home, even if their parents cannot read with them. 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.

### **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.

Weekly coaching sessions led by the expert coach that week ensure that all teachers of phonics are confident in their delivery of every aspect of the phonics lesson. Regular phonics learning walks are carried out to ensure that all groups are receiving quality first teaching.

1. The Read Write Inc. 'cycle of instruction' is embedded across the curriculum – MTYT, TTYP. Pupils do not raise their hands to answer questions.
2. Close grouping in Phonics is maintained – pupils are moved on quickly.
3. The purpose of each activity is clear to both teachers and pupils.
4. Planning and marking is thorough.
5. In Phonics, pupils read books at home that closely match their word reading ability.
6. Teaching is monitored thoroughly (see Leadership and Management).

### **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. 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.

### **Attendance**

The programmes are intensive and cumulative, so poor attendance severely disrupts the progress of any pupils who are absent, for however short a time. This is monitored carefully by the Attendance and Early Reading Leader. They will work with the parents of the pupils who have poor attendance and low reading ability.

1. All staff use the Management signals consistently in and out of lessons.
2. Partner work is modelled and practised until pupils work willingly and supportively with pupils who are not their friends.
3. Praise is fundamental in helping pupils make progress and behave courteously.
4. Staff are consistently kind, considerate to each other and to pupils – no shouting, shushing, and nagging.
5. Pupils attend every day, unless poorly.

## **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 works closely with the reading leader 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, ensuring that all pupils follow the programme and that teaching is consistent across all groups.

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, i.e. 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 teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) 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. The headteacher, all the teachers and teaching assistants are trained to teach reading. All staff have attended two-day Phonics training and regular refresher training is planned into the CPD cycles to ensure that all staff are kept up to date with the most recent changes in the programme. As part of the subscription offer, we are also supported by a designated consultant who works closely with school over the course of the academic year, through a series of

Development Days and Remote Progress Meetings. In Weekly coaching sessions, staff analyse teaching and behaviour steps that set the agenda for the next week's observation and feedback schedule.

### **Parents and carers**

There are regular workshops offered in school to give practical ideas to parents so that they feel confident in helping their children to read at home. We ensure that pupils whose parents do not attend 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.

We use the resources on the parent page on the Ruth Miskin Training website: <http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/>

1. The reading leader spends every Read Write Inc. lesson coaching and observing reading teachers - and keeps records.
2. The headteacher observes lessons with the reading leader. They discuss pupil progress and the teacher tracker every week.
3. The reading leader meets with the reading team every week in which all staff take part in a practical coaching session to further enhance the delivery of the scheme.
4. The reading leader organises regular workshops with parents to discuss practical ways in which they can support their children as they are introduced to new sounds and the corresponding letters, as they prepare for the Phonics Check in Year 1 and as they develop their comprehension skills.