

School Policy on the Teaching of Phonics, Reading & Writing



At Herringthorpe Infant School we aspire for all of our pupils to learn to read and write effectively and quickly. Our school has invested in the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme as the school's validated programme for teaching early reading and systematic, synthetic phonics. The programme we use is progressive from Foundation 1 to Year 2. Our school is committed to a whole school approach for 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.

In the Foundation Stage 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.

Teaching Early Writing 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. 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 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, 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. In addition, we use a standardised reading test from the NTS Assessments so that we can ensure that the gains our pupils are making are age-appropriate.

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. By the end of Key Stage 1, we aim for our pupils to read aloud age-appropriate texts accurately and with sufficient speed for comprehension. This means that we can focus on developing their 4 comprehension, preparing them well for transition to Key Stage 2.

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. Staff teaching Read Write Inc. Phonics record the results from the Assessments 1 and 2, which take place every eight weeks. This data allow 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.

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.

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 for 10 to 20 minutes, 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.

Marking and Feedback

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. Extended pieces are marked afterwards. We discuss the outcomes with the group and individuals so that the marking is genuinely used to take forward pupils' learning.

See Guidance for marking writing in Read Write Inc. Phonics lessons

<http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/resources/guidance-for-marking-writing-in-read-write-inc-phonicslessons/>

Progression after completion of the RWI Programme

This section outlines the provision for children who have completed the RWI. Phonics Programme. It is aimed at children that are confidently reading and understanding Grey Books (the final colour book of the programme).

Once children are at this level, they will then move onto our school's Reading Comprehension Programme. This has been developed with reference to the RWI principles outlined in RWI. Comprehension.

Children at this level will have access to a 1-hour daily programme which focuses on further developing both their reading and writing skills.

Reading

Heringthorpe Infant School understands that the ability to read fluently allows children to understand what they read. Children can only read at the speed that they can decode therefore our school is dedicated to continuing to practise what they have been taught in RWI phonics after they have completed the programme. The more our children practise the faster their decoding skills will be.

We teach children to:

- Teach familiar words at a glance
- Decode unfamiliar words that they have not decoded before
- Develop stamina in reading by reading lively, well written stories
- Think about what they are reading-ask themselves questions, make connection and predict what's coming next.

We believe that developing stamina in reading develops motivation. This in turn means that children start to enjoy reading more and are willing to read more. Alongside the comprehension programme; teachers continue to read aloud to children every day to enhance their enjoyment of literature.

Writing

At Herringthorpe Infant School we aim for our pupils to have secure transcription skills. This includes secure letter formation, spelling and good use of punctuation.

Alongside this we aim to develop good compositional skills – ensuring that children have something to say and can develop their ideas into clear sentences.

We teach children to:

- Spell words correctly
- Use punctuation correctly
- Use a range of vocabulary
- Develop and organise their ideas into sentences

The majority of writing skills are taught in a discrete 1-hour session; where the writing is linked to the text that the children have been studying. The transcription tasks; teach each of the skills one at a time and the composition task towards the end of each unit of work; enables children to bring the skills together and apply what they have learnt.

Further opportunities for application of skills in writing are provided throughout cross-curricular links. Additional writing sessions may also be planned throughout the term linking to the school's topic for that term.

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. 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 Head Teacher 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.

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. The reading leader acts as the attendance manager and works alongside the attendance manager to address any concerns around pupil attendance. Procedures are then followed in line with the school's attendance policy.

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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher, the reading leader drives the teaching of Read Write Inc. Phonics, ensuring that all pupils follow the programme with fidelity.

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).

She can give this support every day because she does not teach a group herself. 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 (TAs) who each teach a group of pupils at the same reading level. Our groups are no bigger than 12 pupils.

Professional development

A key element of Read Write Inc. is consistent whole-school practice, underpinned by appropriate professional development. The Head Teacher, 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.

In weekly masterclasses staff analyse teaching and behaviour steps that set the agenda for the next week's observation and feedback schedule.

Parents and carers

We invite parents/carers to an initial meeting and we hold workshops regularly 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 organise repeat meetings for those who do not or cannot attend. 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/>

Reading for Pleasure

Reading for pleasure helps children to develop their fluency, vocabulary and literacy understanding outside of a learning environment. That's why it's essential to encourage it from a young age. Reading for pleasure has been defined by the National Literacy Trust as **"reading that we do of our own free will, anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading."**

Our school values the importance of creating social reading environments for our pupils, which allows them to freely choose quality texts. Throughout the school (both in and out of classrooms), a range of inviting reading spaces are available to entice children into the world of books. Our reading areas are developed using the principles in Ruth Miskin's training. Consistency in approach is evident throughout school. (Please refer to Appendix 1 for the guidance followed by school).