

## Swanton Morley VC Primary School

# Policy on the teaching of phonics and reading

Our aim is to teach pupils to 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
- 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.

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.<sup>1</sup>

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. 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 following Read Write Inc. Phonics using the Read Write Inc. Assessments. We use this data to assign them to suitable Read Write Inc. Phonics groups. We do this for all pupils, whenever they join us, so we can track all of them effectively. In addition, we use a standardised reading test [Salford] so that we can ensure that the gains our pupils are making are age-appropriate.

We aim for all children to be accurate and speedy readers by the time they enter Key Stage 2 and have high expectations of our pupils' progress. We support pupils who have identified special educational needs for however long it takes until they can read. We identify those who are at risk of falling behind their peers immediately – whatever their age. Highly trained staff tutor identified children 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 supported until they too catch up with their peers. By the end of Key Stage 1, our aim is for our pupils to be able to read aloud age-appropriate texts accurately and with sufficient speed for comprehension. This means that we can focus on developing their comprehension skills, 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**

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.

In Read Write Inc. Phonics, because the pupils are grouped across classes 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. Pupils are assessed every half term and the data used to organise pupils into homogenous groups. 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 will have daily one-to-one, in addition to their group session in the morning. This tutoring helps us to meet their individual needs.

## **Homework/ home reading**

We support pupils to select appropriate books to take home. Pupils 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. 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. We encourage children to read widely and often.

### **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. Assessment data and progress trackers are shared with all staff responsible for teaching the children.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

The programme teaches good learning behaviours.

Good behaviour in lessons is supported by the use of silent signals for gaining pupils attention, for setting up partner routines, and for managing the way pupils move around the classroom. All staff use 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.

Pupils are taught the behaviours that are necessary to work with adults and other pupils. Adults demonstrate positive attitudes and good manners, and act as role models for pupils. Praise for hard work and good behaviour is fundamental to pupils' progress. 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 head teacher works with all the staff to ensure that this happens. In particular, he works closely with the reading leader to monitor the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for staff (teachers and teaching assistants).

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). The reading leader is able to give this support every day because they do not usually

teach a group. Teachers alert the reading leader to any pupil whose progress is faster or slower than the rest of their group.

### **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 and there are regular training refresher sessions.

### **Parents and carers**

We invite parents/carers to meetings and we hold workshops to show how they can help their children read at home. Information to support parents to read with their children is provided on the website. Relevant teaching films are sent home to children following the programme. If you have any questions concerning the programme or your child's reading, please speak to their class teacher.