

# SHIREMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PHONICS POLICY



## Subject Statement

At Shiremoor Primary, we believe it is essential for future success that children learn to:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences

At Shiremoor Primary School, we strive to teach children to read effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme which includes teaching synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary, decoding and encoding words as well as spelling and accurate letter formation.

Using the RWI\* Scheme we aim to teach children from Early Years until secure to:

- apply their phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all 40+ phonemes
- read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) that they have been taught
- read common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound
- read words containing taught GPCs and –s, –es, –ing, –ed, –er and –est endings
- read words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs
- read words with contractions and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s)
- read books aloud, accurately, that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- reread these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading
- read most words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending, when they have been frequently encountered
- spell words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught by segmenting the sounds in words
- spell common exception words
- add prefixes and suffixes to previously taught words
- spell effortlessly so that all their focus when writing can be directed towards composition

At Shiremoor Primary School, these skills are embedded within daily RWI lessons in Reception and in KS1. By focussing on the teaching of skilled word reading in the Early Years and KS1, using a synthetic phonics scheme, children learn to pronounce unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and speedily recognise familiar printed words. We want all children to enjoy and experience early success in learning to read. We are committed to developing children's love of reading and to help them to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know.

These principles and features characterise our approach to the teaching of reading using RWI:

- Teachers teach RWI using a detailed, proven step-by-step teaching scheme; where children are first taught simple GPCs, to accurately blend taught sounds, to decode simple words containing taught graphemes and then to read specifically designed books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words.
- Pupils are taught within small homogenous groups within their year group, which reflect their performance in RWI phonics assessments. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and ability to read 'tricky words'; so they experience early reading success and gain confidence that they are readers.
- RWI teachers have all of the RWI resources needed to teach RWI and they follow detailed lesson plans to maintain consistency of the teaching of reading across every RWI lesson, irrespective of the RWI reading teacher.
- All teachers and teaching assistants across school had two days of intensive training. Staff attend regular in-house CPD sessions, where they have the opportunity to learn about pedagogical changes, new RWI resources and to observe and practice specific parts of the teaching process.
- Regular assessment ensures that pupils are taught in homogeneous groups which match their phonic knowledge and reading level. Pupils making speedy progress move groups quickly. Those pupils making steady progress continue at an appropriate pace matched to their reading level. Those pupils making slower progress are usually taught in smaller groups and generally receive additional small group or one-to-one intervention.

## **Outcomes for children**

### **Assessing and tracking progress**

We assess all pupils from Reception to Year 2 using RWI Assessment materials and we use this data to assign them to their correct RWI Group and to identify if they need to have any additional support. This provides a good indication of their progress relative to their starting points. We track the phonic progress that pupils make from Reception to Year 2 and, at the end of Year 1; we evaluate pupils' acquisition of GPCs and decoding skills using the Phonics Screening Check (PSC). This ensures that we are able to maintain high standards in the teaching of the early stages reading in EYFS (using the Reading statements in the EYFS Profile), in Year 1 (using the PSC materials) and in Year 2 (using the statutory KS1 Reading assessment materials). Pupils in KS2 who are still acquiring word reading skills, continue to be part of the RWI program, and are taught in small guided reading groups or individuals as required.

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 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. We use Read Write Inc. Fresh Start resources for children in Y5 and Y6 who need to continue on the phonics programme.

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.

By the end of Key Stage 1, our aim is for all 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, 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.

### **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, the pupils 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 RWI leader, records the results from the Assessments 1, 2 and 3, which take place approximately 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. The teacher selects pupils to answer and ensures all children are engaged.

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 regular 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.

### **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. 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.

### **Parents, carers and homework**

We invite Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 parents/carers to initial meetings at the start of every academic year and we hold workshops, during the year, to show how parents can help their children read at home, depending on which stage of the RWI program they are on. We also hold a Phonics Screening Check meeting for Year 1 parents, during the spring term, to help parents understand the PSC and suggest ways to best support their child at home. We encourage parents to help their child learn to read and inform parents of their child's progress and attainment regularly and in the annual end of year report.

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

In Reception, whilst children are learning the Set 1 speed sounds at school, children will have the opportunity of practising the speed sounds that they have learned at school with their parents/carers with a Set 1 sounds booklet. We send home a My First Words booklet so children and parents can practise early blending of Set 1 words at home, which match sounds they have learnt. When children know all their Set 1 single sounds and can blend independently, Sound blending books, RWI ditties and Book bag Storybooks will be sent home so that children can read these books to their parents. We have a 3-day plan to read storybooks so children will read their book several times before the book is changed. This is because each read through of the book focusses on specific skills; decoding, reading with expression, accuracy and fluency as well as reading for comprehension. We also send home a list of Speedy Green words that need to be known by sight.

### **Home learning due to Covid 19**

Any children who are forced to learn from home during the Covid19 pandemic, be it because of personal isolation or any form of lockdown, will receive a catered plan of home learning.

Each remote Phonics lesson will be planned and well-sequenced to the curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally and matched to children's individual phonetic ability.

Each Phonics lesson will be of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and will ideally include daily contact with teachers through pre-recorded lessons or live lessons (full lockdown). These lessons will be tailored to children's abilities and levels in small groups or one to one for children working in our lowest abilities.

At Shiremoor, we know what effective teaching practice looks like in a classroom setting, while these same practices will often be more difficult to maintain when teaching remotely we will endeavour to provide pupils with a consistent approach and teaching techniques to learn new sounds, decode and read words speedily and develop comprehension skills.

To support this, we will use Google Classroom, Twitter and Tapestry to communicate and deliver learning. Tasks will be deployed that revisit prior learning and consolidate new knowledge, supported by using Word Time green word booklets, speedy green word and tricky red word lists, Set 1, 2 and 3 green sound books, blending games, spellings and letter formation in workbooks which all children will have access to and reading book packs matched to children's phonic ability. All parents will have access to Oxford Owl eBooks and parent video clips to support and understand how children learn phonics.

Read Write Inc. video links or teacher's own pre-recorded lessons will be sent to parents for Speed sound lessons and Word time lessons every day, as a guide through a sequence of learning. Children will be able to participate at home and

record spellings and sentences in exercise books provided. These can be photographed and uploaded to children's Tapestry and/or Google classroom accounts for teacher feedback each day.

Further online links and resources will be delivered directly as communication with pupils allows for assessing any gaps, which require scaffolding and additional needs.

In principle, the fundamentals of teaching a remote lesson are the same as teaching a classroom lesson – Each Phonics lesson will include:

- Learning a new sound
- Revisiting prior learning of sounds
- Teach modelling of decoding and reading words and exploring vocabulary
- Pupil practice of reading words and sentences, spelling words and building sentences.

In order to gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, phonics will be delivered using suitable tasks with a clear expectation on how regularly teachers will check work. Parents should record children's progress in reading diaries or as a comment/video clip on Tapestry/Google classroom, recording sounds known, and confidence in decoding and reading words in their phonic books.

To further maintain this expectation, teachers may also include photo examples of children's work, a weekly video to showcase the children's work, which will be shared via Twitter and/or the Google Classroom once a week.

Communication between pupils and teachers through the above methods will be as regular as possible and enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding.

## APPENDIX

### **Organisation and teaching in EYFS and KS1**

#### **Nursery**

Initially, during the autumn term children develop a love of language and enjoy listening to stories and rhymes, taking part in small group Phase 1 Letters and Sounds activities. EYFS staff use 'Fred Talk' and Fred Games daily (saying words using pure sounds) with the children, with the expectation that the children will begin to encode the words. During the spring term, Nursery teachers use phonic flashcards to teach the RWI picture card names and then progress to teaching the Set 1 Speed sounds with the aim that, by the end of the summer term, most Set 1 sounds will have been taught. During this process children hear the sound, see pictures of objects that start with that sounds, hear a phrase to assist the children to help remember the sound, see the grapheme, and then write the grapheme. Children review previously taught speed sounds on a daily basis and continue to have regular opportunities for Fred talk.

#### **Reception**

During the first few weeks of Reception, a Baseline RWI assessment is completed to enable the Reading Leader to determine the phonic knowledge of each child. As a result of this assessment, classes are split into small homogenous groups. This grouping allows for those children that know many sounds to focus on learning the technique of assisted blending and then to quickly progress to independent blending. Children that know some sounds are taught unknown sounds then also progress onto assisted blending. Children that know none or very few sounds, learn the Set 1 sounds from the beginning, in very small groups, with a focus on repetition and Fred talk. Reception pupils learn sounds and the corresponding grapheme, or groups of letters which represent each phoneme. The children move on to learn Set 2 sounds and words. Simple mnemonics help children to quickly grasp this phoneme-grapheme relationship. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Reception RWI lessons occur daily in a morning session, which extends in length as the children move onto the storybooks. One to one support lessons occur in the afternoon for the lowest 20% of readers. Teachers will hear children read their book bag book and work with the lowest 20% of readers.

#### **Year 1**

In Year 1 pupils work within homogenous groups, which reflect their performance in RWI phonic assessments. In Year 1 children learn Set 3 sounds and words. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and 'tricky words'; so they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Pupils are re-assessed every six to eight weeks and the RWI groups are reorganised accordingly. Year 1 RWI lessons occur daily in an hour's morning lesson. Year 1, also do a short afternoon speed sounds lesson to consolidate gaps in



sounds in readiness for the Phonics Screening check. One to one support lessons occur in the afternoon with a teaching assistant for the lowest 20% of readers. The reading leader and teachers will also hear children read their book bag book and focus on the lowest 20% of readers.

### **Year 2**

In Year 2 pupils work within homogenous groups, which reflect their performance in RWI phonic assessments. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and 'tricky words'; so they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Pupils are re-assessed every six to eight weeks and the RWI groups are reorganised accordingly. Children who need further support receive one to one lessons with a teaching assistant. The reading leader and teachers will hear children read their book bag book or chapter book and focus on the lowest 20%.

Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible. Children who have completed the RWI scheme are taught comprehension skills using RWI Comprehension modules. They choose a chapter book to read at their own interest and comprehension level from a range within a book band.

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.

### **Quality of teaching and pupils' progress**

The Head teacher, Deputy Head, English Lead and RWI Leader monitor pupils' progress together until every child can read. 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.

- The Read Write Inc. 'cycle of instruction' is embedded across the curriculum – MTYT, TTYP.
- Close grouping in Phonics is maintained – pupils are moved on quickly.
- The purpose of each activity is clear to both teachers and pupils.
- Planning and marking is thorough.
- In Phonics, pupils read books at home that closely match their word reading ability.
- Teaching is monitored thoroughly

### **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.

### **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. School takes all steps possible to remove any barriers to attendance and to take action with parents.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The RWI 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)
- providing RWI teachers with their own RWI resources
- storing RWI storybooks and book bag books for home reading centrally
- overseeing the assessment of all Reception and KS1 pupils and designates to the correct groups
- providing RWI teachers and class teachers with the next steps that their group and class requires
- "drops in" on RWI groups to give advice and to informally check that pupils are in the correct groups through learning walks, scrutiny of work and hearing children read
- where necessary models lessons and coaches RWI teachers
- attending up-date meetings and reports back to the RWI teachers
- covering for staff absence
- speaking with the head teacher regarding groupings, teaching spaces and other relevant matters
- tutoring children one to one and trains TAs to do the same
- organises regular workshops for parents
- Ensures class teachers inform parents about a child's reading ability in regular updates.

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 TAs generally teach small groups of six to ten.

### **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 returned to support us on a subsequent development days. The RWI leader holds masterclasses for specific staff and needs from feedback.

- All staff are trained and the school books regular development days
- The RWI leader coaches and observes reading teachers - and keeps records.
- The Head teacher/Deputy Head/English Lead observes lessons with the RWI leader. They discuss pupil progress and the Read Write Inc. Tracker.

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