

# Watford Field School Infant and Nursery

## Policy on Phonics and the Teaching of Reading and Writing

September 2013

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

We teach pupils to:

- decode letter-sounds quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- read 'tricky' 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 according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing will develop at a slower pace than their progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

In Reception the pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple picture cues help them to grasp these quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – 'tricky words'.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the 'tricky 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.

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. Pupils are provided with different opportunities for writing across all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge, that is, they use their knowledge of the alphabetic code and the tricky words they have learnt. They can soon spell more complex words confidently and accurately. 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.

## **Achievement in our school**

### **Assessing and tracking progress**

We assess all pupils from Reception to Year 2 on the *Read Write Inc.* Sound and Word Entry Assessment and we use these data to assign them to either *Read Write Inc.* Phonics or *Read Write Inc.* spelling and comprehension 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.

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.

By the end of Year 2, the majority of our pupils are able to read aloud age-appropriate texts accurately and with sufficient speed. 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.

We aim for all children to be accurate and speedy readers by the time they enter Key Stage 2. Additional support is given to those children making slower than expected progress.

### **Phonic screening check**

The Impact of RWI has been shown through our Year 1 phonic screening results. In June 2012, 55% of our pupils reached the threshold, and in June 2013, 78%. We attribute this to the programme and to the expectations it builds in.

### **Impact across the curriculum**

Our teachers and teaching assistants 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.

## **Quality of teaching in our school**

The programme's '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.

Assessment is a critical element of our programme. The teachers assess:

- pupils' phonic knowledge
- the speed at which pupils are able to read the text
- their understanding of the stories they read.

We record the results from the Sound and Word Assessments, which take place every eight weeks, on the Assessment Tracker. This process allows us to interpret the data 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.

One of the strengths of the *Read Write Inc.* programme is that it has detailed lesson plans. These give practical day-to-day guidance, so that the lessons are matched carefully to the needs of their particular group. Every activity in every lesson is prepared thoroughly and has a very clear purpose. The teacher explains this at the beginning so that the pupils understand, during the activity, what they are learning and why.

Simple teaching strategies and a lively pace ensure that all the pupils participate fully— there is no chance for them to lose concentration and miss key elements. In addition, because all the pupils are grouped across the school in terms of their reading ability, they are reading at an appropriate decoding level every day. The focused groups help us to focus the teaching and ensure pupils make very good progress.

### **Additional support for lower-attaining pupils**

Pupils in the 'lowest' attaining group have the widest variety of needs. Some of these pupils have daily one-to-one tutoring for 10 to 15 minutes, in addition to their group session in the morning. This tutoring helps us to meet their individual needs.

### **Feedback and marking**

We emphasise constructive feedback. For example, we praise pupils for what they do well; such as displaying the behaviour they all need for their learning to be successful. Teaching partners are praised for their effective teaching.

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.

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

The Head teacher and RWI managers monitor pupils' progress. We record lesson observations and any subsequent coaching, so that we can see if there is a correlation between the quality of the teaching and the progress pupils make.

## **Leadership and management in our school**

### **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 RWI managers to monitor the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for staff who need it (teachers and teaching assistants).

The role of the RWI manager is critical. Alongside the Head Teacher, the RWI manager drives the teaching of *Read Write Inc.* Phonics, ensuring it is taught with fidelity.

The RWI managers roles include:

- Ensuring all pupils are making good progress and organising one-to-one tutoring for the pupils who need extra support.
- keeping the groups at the same reading level
- providing further training (through demonstration, coaching, monitoring)
- ensuring that our teaching of reading is of the highest quality and that all our pupils make progress.

Teachers alert the RWI manager of 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. All staff have attended two-day training and the trainer has returned to support us on subsequent development days. We generally hold at least one development day every year to ensure we are aware of up-to-date practice.

### **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 parents to help their child at home.

For further information about the *Read Write Inc.* phonics programme please refer to the following website: <http://www.ruthmiskintraining.com/phonics/index.html>.

If you should have any questions or queries regarding the teaching of Reading or Writing, please don't hesitate to come into school and speak to Mrs Applegarth or Mrs Selby.

<b>Summary</b>
----------------

1. Data is used effectively to ensure gaps are closing between all groups.
2. Children making slower progress are taught in small teaching groups and receive *Read Write Inc.* one-to-one tutoring.
3. 78% of pupils achieve 32/40 on the phonics screening check and 93% achieve 25/40.
4. The *Read Write Inc.* 'cycle of instruction' is embedded across the curriculum – MT/YT, TTYP. Pupils do not raise their hands to answer questions.
5. Close grouping for reading is maintained – pupils are moved on quickly.
6. The purpose of each activity is clear to both teachers and pupils.
7. Planning and marking is thorough.
8. Teaching is monitored thoroughly (see Leadership and Management).
9. All staff use the Management signals consistently in and out of lessons.
10. Partner work is modelled and practised until pupils work willingly and supportively with pupils who are not their friends.
11. Praise is fundamental in helping pupils make progress and behave courteously.

