

St. John the Baptist C of E Primary School



Life in all its fullness

Resilience, Self-Discipline, Wisdom

A creative, inspiring school.

An exciting, quality environment.

Phonics and Spelling Policy

September 2023

Daniel 1:17 'God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.'

INTENT

According to the Department of Education (DfE);

‘A complete systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme is one that provides:

- all that is essential to teach SSP to children in reception and key stage 1 years of mainstream primary schools
- sufficient support for children in reception and key stage 1 to become fluent readers
- a structured route for most children to meet or exceed the expected standard in the year one phonics screening check
- all national curriculum expectations for word reading through decoding by the end of key stage 1.’

(DfE, 2021)

At St John the Baptist Primary School, we aim to provide all children with a complete and robust phonics programme to enable them to read and write effectively and quickly using the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme. Children progress onto *Read Write Inc.* Spelling once they can read with accuracy and speed.

IMPLEMENTATION

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.

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.
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words.
- Acquire good handwriting.

Pupils are taught to use a choral response throughout the programme using ‘My turn- Your turn’ cues. 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. The order of sounds taught and letter formation rhymes can be found on our school website.

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 at home supports increasingly fluent decoding. Children will have a reading book that matches their phonic development as well as one which links to the book banding system used as children progress through school. This book will be similarly matched to a child’s phonic development but will also review previous sounds along with those which children may not yet have been taught. This provides exposure to future sounds as well as stories with broader content. Children’s reading books are changed weekly, on a Monday. It will be expected that children will return their reading books, also on a Monday. Messages will be sent to pupils who do not return their reading books each week. In exceptional circumstances, reading books will be kept in school for children who do not have their books in school or fail to return them repeatedly. This is to ensure that there are enough phonics reading books for each child. These children will access more opportunities to read to an adult in school to avoid falling behind.

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.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We encourage children to compose each sentence aloud until they are confident to write independently. We make sure children 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 will 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.

Once children complete the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme, they are taught in Year 2 and thereafter, using *Read Write Inc.* Spelling. The spelling sessions consist of a focus spelling pattern each week. Children record the dots and dashes, take part in peer tutoring, change the root words, focus on letter formation and the application of words to compose sentences. This routine is almost the same in every year group each week so that children know what to expect and can focus on the spelling of words rather than a task that has been given. Following this system enables the consistent and robust nature of the phonics programme to continue in to spelling throughout school. Children will start each daily spelling lesson with a review of the phonic speed sounds to support retention (Appendix 1).

IMPACT

Assessing and tracking progress

We assess all pupils following Read Write Inc. *Phonics* using the Entry Assessment. We use this data to assign children to one of our *Read Write Inc.* Phonics groups. For children above Year 2, this will apply to children who require phonics support along with *Read Write Inc.* Spelling. This gives us a very good indication of how well children are making progress relative to their starting points. We do this for all pupils, whenever they join us, so we can track all children effectively, including those eligible for the pupil premium.

For pupils 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 each term 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 these pupils for 15 minutes every day, 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.

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 when they come across them at whatever stage or in any subject, even into secondary school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

In *Read Write Inc.* Phonics, because the pupils are grouped in terms of their reading ability, children 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.

Assessments take place every six to eight weeks. They are carried out by the same member of staff to ensure consistency and this data is used for the Reading and Phonics Lead to group children and set targets for the next assessment point. 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.

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. A choral response is expected.

The *Read Write Inc.* programmes have detailed lesson plans which follow the same structure throughout the programme which supports children in being familiar in the structure, regardless of their group or teacher. This ensures children's focus can purely be on the learning rather than what

is coming next. 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.

Once children move on to the spelling programme, the focal point for each daily lesson, each week is consistent throughout, again, enabling children to focus on their learning rather than what each lesson may involve (see below).

Structure of Spelling

Monday	Speed sounds Video and understand the pattern for the week MTYT
Tuesday	Handwriting – formation of spelling
Wednesday	Speed Sounds Dots and Dashes Word Changes
Thursday	Choose the right word Dictation
Friday	Application of spelling Speed spell Four in a row

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 this group of children 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.

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.

Quality of teaching and pupils' progress

The deputy 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.

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. 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.

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 deputy head teacher works with all the staff to ensure that this happens. In

particular, she works closely with the phonics and reading leader to monitor the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for all staff.

The role of the reading leader is critical. Alongside the deputy head teacher and head teacher, the reading leader drives the teaching of *Read Write Inc.* Phonics, ensuring that all pupils are ready to follow the RWI Spelling programme by the end of Autumn Term 1 in Year 2.

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 coaching/ observation and face-to-face feedback)

They can give this support every day because they do not teach a group themselves every day. Teachers alert the reading leader to any pupil whose progress is faster or slower than the rest of their group.

The phonics team is made up of a team of good teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) who each teach a group of pupils at the same phonic level.

The Phonics leader's roles include:

- ensuring that our teaching of phonics is of the highest quality and that all our pupils make progress
- providing further training (through coaching/ observation and face-to-face feedback)
- organising extra support for slower progress children.

Professional development

A key element of *Read Write Inc.* is consistent whole-school practice, underpinned by appropriate professional development. The deputy head teacher, all the teachers and teaching assistants are trained to teach reading. Staff have all received training and this is refreshed regularly.

Regular feedback and targets enable support and professional development to take place.

Parents and carers

We invite parents/carers to an initial meeting 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.

For those who do not or cannot attend, information from meetings is available on our website. 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.

Date written/reviewed: September 2023

Next review date: September 2025

Appendix 1 - How Phonics and Spelling Looks at our School

Children will begin their phonics journey as soon as they start school in Foundation. They will work through this robust, structured and systematic approach until they complete the RWI phonics programme. The expectation for this is by the end of Year 1 when children have taken their Year 1 Phonics Screening. By the second half of Autumn Term of Year 2 children should be ready to start the Spelling programme which also follows a consistent, structured and robust format. By this point strategies for spelling will be embedded and second nature to the children using the 'Count, Pinch, Write, Check' method.

Year/Stage	Phonic Teaching	Phonic Stage Book	Spelling
Foundation Stage	Set 1 Sounds		
	Set 1 Oral Blending		
	Set 1 Blending	RWI Sound blending books	Spell 3 sound words using Fred Fingers
	Set 1 Special friends	RWI Red Ditty Books	Spell 3 and 4 sound words using Fred Fingers
Year 1	Set 1	RWI Green Books	Spell using Fred Fingers
	Set 2	RWI Purple Books	Spell using Fred Fingers
	Set 2	RWI Pink Books	Spell using Fred Fingers
	Set 3	RWI Orange Books	Spell using Fred Fingers (focus on Set 2 words)
	Blending with Set 3	RWI Yellow Books	Spell using Fred Fingers
	Set 3 Spilt special friends	RWI Blue Books	Spell using Fred Fingers, support correct grapheme choice
	Set 3	RWI Grey Books	Spell using Fred Fingers, support correct grapheme choice
Year 2	Year 2 Spelling Programme		
Year 3	Year 3 Spelling Programme		
Year 4	Year 4 Spelling Programme		
Year 5	Year 5 Spelling Programme		
Year 6	Year 6 Spelling Programme		

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