Policy for Phonics

St Mary’s CE School, Kirkby Lonsdale

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**The Phonics Curriculum**

**“A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them.”**

*National Curriculum for English 2014*

**Introduction**

At St.Mary’s School we strive to ensure that all children become successful, fluent readers by the end of key stage one and believe this is achievable through a combination of strong, high quality, discrete phonics teaching combined with a whole language approach that promotes a ‘Reading for Pleasure’ culture.

Here at St.Mary’s we believe that first we ‘learn to read’ and then we ‘read to learn’.

This policy is aimed at reinforcing a consistent, high quality approach to the teaching of phonics across the foundation stage, key stage one and on into key stage two for children who still need this further support.

**Aims and Objectives**

• To provide consistent, high quality phonics teaching that ensures all children have a strong foundation upon which to tackle the complex processes of reading and writing.

• To ensure that the teaching of synthetic phonics is systematic and progressive throughout the foundation stage, key stage one and key stage two for those children needing interventions to support phonetic knowledge and understanding.

• To ensure that children have sound phonetic knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can decode words confidently and engage with higher order reading and writing skills.

**Aims:**

• To teach children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme to aid reading, writing and spelling development.

• To encourage the use segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a sound foundation for reading, writing and spelling.

• To ensure the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.

• To ensure children use phonic awareness across the curriculum.

• To ensure that children know the 44 phonemes within the English language.

• To ensure that children recognise the graphemes within words and associate them with the appropriate phoneme when reading.

• To ensure children are taught strategies to identify and decode ‘tricky words’ within the English language.

**Teaching and Learning Style** Our children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop and extend their phonics skills in and across Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1. It will also be continued into Key Stage 2, where necessary to support those children who do not yet have the phonic knowledge and skills they need.

Our approach to phonics is:

**Systematic**

**Discrete**

**Interactive**

**Practical**

**Engaging**

**Planning**

The school follows the systematic approach laid out by the Read Write Inc… programme.

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.

**Lessons**

Discrete phonics lessons take place daily across Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 when needed.

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

• 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.

**Groupings**

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 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. 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 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.

Read Write Inc. Spelling is for:

• Pupils in Year 2 to Year 6 who can read with accuracy (they recognise the alternative graphemes for sounds).

**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 or Read Write Inc. Spelling. 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 and phonics screening assessments throughout the year.

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 10 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 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.

For those on the Read Write Inc. Spelling programme, pupil progress is assessed through six practice tests and an end of year test. These tests inform planning and any additional support needed. A tracker is used to collate individual pupil progress.

Data is used effectively to ensure gaps are closing between all groups – in particular the lowest 20% in each class (Read Write Inc. assessment and tracking, standardised reading tests, phonics screening check).

**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.

**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.

**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 are matched to the book 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 headteacher 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

**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.

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 headteacher works with all the staff to ensure that this happens. In particular, he works closely with the reading leader. The role of the reading leader is critical. Alongside the headteacher, the reading leader drives the teaching of Read Write Inc. Phonics, ensuring that all pupils follow the Read Write Inc Spell programme by the end of Year 1 / Term 1 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 masterclasses, coaching/ observation and face-toface feedback)

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.

**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/>

The meetings are followed up by information leaflets to reinforce the key messages. Resources are sent home to reinforce phonics teaching in school including sound checklists, words to read, pseudo words to read and Book Bag Books relating to sounds taught in class.

Name of Reading Leader: Katie Jamieson

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