



Reading and Phonics Policy

‘Teaching children to become confident and competent readers and writers is surely the most important thing that primary school teachers do, it quite literally challenges lives’ (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, 2020)

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1. Scope

- 1.1 As a school, we aim to equip children with the skills and foster the attitudes required for them to become life-long readers. This policy will outline our aims for the teaching of reading and the strategies we will implement to achieve these aims.
- 1.2 Our approach to the teaching of reading is informed by research, as outlined throughout this policy.
- 1.3 The implementation of this policy will also be supported by other policies e.g. Teaching & Learning policy and Behaviour for Learning policy.

2. Rationale

- 2.1 We recognise the importance of teaching children to become confident and competent readers and the impact this can have on their life chances, as outlined by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE, 2020).
- 2.2 Our curriculum and timetable, rightly, prioritises the teaching of reading.
- 2.3 As a school, we concur with OfSTED's ambition and we are '*determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities*' (OfSTED, 2019). This links with the mission of United Learning to bring out 'the best in everyone'.
- 2.4 We are aware of the importance of phonics and the teaching of early reading in general. This policy outlines our strategy to provide all children with the high-quality early reading instruction.
- 2.5 In addition to our obligations for the teaching of reading, we believe we are also charged with a moral responsibility to encourage children to enjoy reading and to read for pleasure.

This is in response to the wealth of research which outlines the benefits of reading pleasure (e.g. Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Sullivan and Brown, 2013; Cremin et al., 2014). The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development has identified reading for pleasure to be the single biggest indicator of a child's future success (a bigger influence than their family's socio-economic status), further confirming its importance (OECD, 2002).
- 2.6 Children are read aloud to everyday. This is protected time within our timetable and is sacrosanct.
- 2.7 Additionally, we also recognise the importance of ensuring our reading materials reflect children's realities and broaden their horizons in order to prepare them for life in British society. We strive to continue to develop representation of all walks of life in the books we provide for children.
- 2.8 This is particularly pertinent in response to research from the CLPE, which highlighted that only 4% of children's books published in the UK in 2018 featured a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) character, co

3. Reading in EYFS:

- 3.1 Under the *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage* (Department for Education, 2017), we have responsibility to provide children within our Nursery and Reception classes with an educational programme that includes activities and experiences related to communication and language and literacy (and specifically, reading), among other areas.

Specifically, the framework states that we must provide opportunities for children 'to experience a rich language environment' (DfE, 2017, p. 8) and for 'children to link sounds and letters and to begin

to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest' (Ibid, p. 8).

The Early Learning Goal for reading states that 'children should read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read' (Ibid, p. 11)

Additionally, we recognise the value and importance of reading to support across other areas of learning including children's personal, social and emotional development, understanding the world and others.

- 3.2 Throughout Early Years, we recognise and concur with OfSTED's framework for school inspection which highlights the importance of developing children's 'communication and language through singing songs, nursery rhymes and playing games' and 'love of reading through reading aloud and telling stories and rhymes' (OfSTED, 2019, p. 80). As aforementioned, children are read aloud to every single day.

Reading is a central part of our wider curriculum. Each year group has core texts for every half term, which are explored as a class in detail. There are also linked texts which children may explore to provide further breadth to our curriculum and the reading materials they are exposed too.

- 3.3 In our **Nursery**, we aim to develop children's appreciation and understanding of books and reading through; daily story times, opportunities to talk about books, providing books throughout our continuous provision, developing a bank of familiar stories and rhymes which children begin to be able to join in with and other strategies.

Throughout their time in Nursery, we aim to support the development of children's phonological awareness. Please see the Phonics section of this policy for further details.

In the Summer Term, we begin to teach children through our Read Write Inc (RWI) programme of systematic synthetic phonics. This is alongside the rich reading environment described previously. For children who demonstrate knowledge of letter sounds before the Summer Term, we may begin RWI sessions within small groups earlier within the year, as appropriate. Please see the detailed phonics section of this policy for further details on our approach to teaching phonics.

Children are provided with the opportunity to take a book home, of their own choosing, via regular trips to our school library.

- 3.4 In **Reception**, we continue to provide a rich reading environment through our continuous provision and interactions with children, including; daily story times, opportunities to talk about books, providing books throughout our continuous provision, biweekly Reception and KS1 reading assemblies, developing a bank of familiar stories and rhymes which children begin to be able to join in with and other strategies.

We deliver teaching systematic synthetic phonics through our Read Write Inc programme. Please see the detailed phonics section of this policy for further details.

In the Summer Term, children in reception begin guided reading sessions in small groups. This provides further opportunities for them to develop their decoding skills and their ability to comprehend what they have read, as well as another opportunity for an adult to hear them read.

Children are provided with a book which closely matches the phonics they are taught in school to take home. These books are sequenced carefully and include cumulative progression in phonics knowledge. This provides further opportunities for children to practise the skills of reading with their parent/carer. They are also provided with the opportunity to take a book home, of their own choosing, via regular trips to our school library.

4. Reading in KS1:

4.1 As children enter KS1, they continue with our RWI phonics programme. By the end of the Autumn Term of Year 2, the majority of our children have successfully completed RWI programme. We recognise that not all children will be ready to come off RWI by this time. Children in Year 2 are able to access the RWI groups in Year 2, at any point in the year, as appropriate. This ensure the teaching of phonics meets the needs of all pupils.

4.2 Children in **Year 1** are provided with a book which closely matches the phonics they are taught in school to take home. These books are sequenced carefully and include cumulative progression in phonics knowledge and growing complexity. This provides further opportunities for children to practise the skills of reading with their parent/carer. They are also provided with the opportunity to take a book home, of their own choosing, via regular trips to our school library.

Year 1 children have daily Guided Reading sessions, using Read Write Inc (RWI) texts. These groups are streamed across the year group, based on children's ability to decode. These sessions use the RWI approach, with children reading with their partners. There is a focus on comprehension and discussion around books.

4.3 Children in **Year 2** begin our Accelerated Reader programme. Children are assessed and assigned a band based on their ability to decode and comprehend texts. They complete quizzes based on the books they have read. This allows class teachers to monitor their progress for both ability to decode and to comprehend texts. Children take these books home. This provides further opportunities for children to practise the skills of reading with their parent/carer. They are also provided with the opportunity to take a book home, of their own choosing, via regular trips to our school library.

Year 2 children have daily Guided Reading sessions, using the Big Cat Books. These groups are streamed across the class, based on children's reading ability. Each group will read with the class teacher once a week and carousel through other activities on the other days, including comprehension and pre-read tasks.

4.4 We recognise that children learn at different rates and some children have Special Educational Needs which may cause difficulties when learning to read. As aforementioned, Year 2 children are able to access the RWI provision in Year 1 as needed. We also provide further support through targeted interventions, increased support from school staff and home/school support to ensure accelerated progress for these children. This is supported by class teachers and the school's Inclusion Manager.

4.5 We provide additional opportunities for children in KS1 to develop a love of reading through our reading vending machine, biweekly Reception and KS1 reading assemblies, our relationship with

the local library, poetry events, story bags which children take home, primary and secondary reading buddies and other initiatives. Children are read aloud to everyday. This is protected time within our timetable and is sacrosanct.

5. Reading in KS2:

- 5.1 For children in KS2 reading instruction is delivered via Whole Class Reading. The Monday and Friday of each week focus on the half term's core text for each year group. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday's lessons focus on smaller texts or extracts around a linked theme. These allow us to develop the breadth of text types children study and are exposed to.
- 5.2 In KS2, the teaching of reading focuses on the VIPERS skills detailed below. These skills are based on the content domains outlined in the *KS2 English reading test framework* (Standards and Testing Agency, 2015). These reading skills are taught explicitly.

Vocabulary

Infer

Predict

Explain

Retrieve

Summarise

The VIPERS format is adapted from the Literacy Shed information, available here www.literacyshedblog.com/vipers.html

- 5.3 We provide additional opportunities for children in KS2 to develop a love of reading through our reading vending machine, biweekly KS2 reading assemblies, our relationship with the local library, poetry events, story bags which children take home with hot chocolate, primary and secondary reading buddies, a reading club and other initiatives. Children are read aloud to everyday. This is protected time within our timetable and is sacrosanct.
- 5.4 We recognise that children learn at different rates and some children have Special Educational Needs which may cause difficulties when learning to read. We provide further support through targeted interventions, increased support from school staff and home/school support to ensure accelerated progress for these children. This is supported by class teachers and the school's Inclusion Manager.

6. Assessment of Reading:

- 6.1 Throughout the year, teachers routinely employ their formative assessment skills to provide feedback, support/scaffold and challenge as appropriate, to ensure children make good progress in their reading.
- 6.2 Children on the Read Write Inc (RWI) programme are assessed regularly to ensure they are in the phonics and Guided Reading groups which best meet their needs and to provide any additional support, as required.
- 6.3 In Key Stage 1 and 2, children complete the *Progress in Reading Achievement* (PIRA) assessments termly. This summative assessment allows teachers to identify how children are performing in comparison to their peers and national averages. This assessment information can also be used to

inform future planning, identify any gaps in learning or areas of the curriculum which require further attention.

- 6.4 In the Summer Term of Year 1, children complete the *Phonic Screening Check assessment*. If children do not meet the expected standard in Year 1, they will be provided with further support to ensure they make accelerated progress and repeat the check in Year 2.
- 6.5 In the Summer Term of Year 2, children complete the *English reading National Curriculum test* for Key Stage 1 (part of the assessments commonly referred to as SATs). This assessment provides further evidence to support teachers in making a secure judgement for their end of Key Stage Teacher Assessment. Children sit two papers which are designed to assess their knowledge and understanding of the KS1 programmes of study (DfE, 2019a).
- 6.6 In the Summer Term of Year 6, children will complete the *English reading National Curriculum test* for Key Stage 2 (part of the assessments commonly referred to as SATs). This test '*focuses on the comprehension elements of the national curriculum and includes a mixture of text types. The test is designed so that the texts increase in their level of difficulty*' (DfE, 2019b)

7. Phonics

- 7.1 In our Nursery we aim to develop children's phonological awareness (alongside developing a love of reading, developing their ability to understand and respond to books and other aspects of literacy). We recognise the importance of developing children's phonological awareness as a prerequisite for success with formal phonics learning. We use the 7 aspects identified in the Letters and Sounds document from the Department for Education and Skills to structure our approach to developing children's phonological awareness, as detailed below. We continue to develop children's phonological awareness throughout the RWI programme.

Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sound

Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds

Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – body percussion

Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme

Aspect 5: Alliteration

Aspect 6: Voice sounds

Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting

(DfES, 2007, p. 4)

- 7.2 The Department of Education documentation states that 'the evidence shows that systematic teaching of synthetic phonics is the best way to drive up standards in reading'.
- 7.3 At Winston Way, we use the Read Write Inc (RWI) programme to deliver systematic synthetic phonics. This is used, formally and for the majority of children, from the Summer Term of Nursery up to the Autumn Term of Year 2.

For children who demonstrate knowledge of letter sounds before the Summer Term in Nursery, we may begin RWI sessions within small groups earlier within the year, as appropriate. Children who require further RWI sessions after the Autumn Term in Year 2, or those who would benefit from it before then, can access the Year 1 groups.

- 7.4 Children completing the programme have daily RWI sessions with a member of staff.

The structure of the sessions follows that which is outlined in the RWI handbooks, which are available in school.

7.5 Staff can access a range of training for phonics including, but not limited to, formal RWI training, training from the school's Reading and Phonics Leader, online training via the Ruth Miskin School's Portal and observing other practitioners. If a member of staff feels they require more training or support on phonics or early reading they can liaise with their line manager or the Reading and Phonics lead.

7.6 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 (known as 'red words' in RWI)
- 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

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 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 support 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.

8. Equal Opportunities

8.1 As a school, we concur with OfSTED's ambition and we are '*determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities*' (OfSTED, 2019). This links with the mission of United Learning to bring out 'the best in everyone'.

8.2 We recognise that children learn at different rates and some children have Special Educational Needs which may cause difficulties when learning to read. Through our regular formative and summative assessments, we identify any children who are having difficulty with their reading and provide targeted support in a timely fashion to help close the gap and ensure they make accelerated progress.

We provide further support through targeted interventions, increased support from school staff and home/school support to ensure these children do not fall further behind. This is supported by class teachers and the school's Inclusion Manager.

8.3 We also recognise that not all children will have sufficient books within their home to support their reading development and the impact this can have on their academic success. We know this issue is particularly prevalent with disadvantaged families, with research demonstrating that one in eight disadvantaged children do not have a single book in their home (Clark and Teravainen, 2017).

To counteract this, we provide children with books to support their reading skills (RWI linked or Accelerated Reader) and a book they have self-selected from visits to our school library. We also encourage the use of our local library service through librarian visits to school, promoting the Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge and providing library forms to parents throughout the year. We also hope to introduce visits to our local library.

9. References

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**Head
Teacher**

.....Name..... Signature..... Date.....

Governor for ____

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