

Kirkby Avenue Primary School

RWI Phonics Policy September 2025



Review Date: September 2026

Intent

At Kirkby Avenue Primary School, we are passionate about ensuring all children become confident and enthusiastic readers and writers. We believe that phonics provides the foundations of learning to make the development into fluent reading and writing easier. Through daily, systematic and consistent high quality Read Write Inc. phonics teaching, children learn to segment words to support their spelling ability and blend sounds to read words. To allow our children to develop a strong phonic awareness and effective blending and decoding skills, we use a synthetic phonics programme called Read, Write, Inc.

Read Write Inc. is a method of learning centred around letter sounds and phonics, blending sounds together to read and spell words and applying these skills across the curriculum. Using Read Write Inc. the children learn to read fluently so that they can put all their energy into comprehending what they read.

We strongly believe that teaching children to read and write independently is one of the core purposes of a primary school enabling them to access a broad and exciting curriculum and ensuring they flourish as learners throughout their time at our school. These fundamental skills not only hold the keys to the rest of the curriculum but also have a huge impact on children's self-esteem and future life chances.

Implementation

We begin, in Nursery, by teaching 2 or 3 set one sounds per week and 2 or three listening skills lessons. Children can start blending sounds into words as soon as they know a small group of letters well. Once the children have been taught the first 5 sounds (m, a, s, d, t), they are then taught assisted blending using the sounds that they know. During lessons children are taught to hear sounds and blend them together in sequence to make a word. We start with blending oral sounds.

In Reception, we continue to teach set one sounds and then progress to reading the letters and blending them together to read the word. In Read Write Inc. phonics the individual sounds are called 'speed sounds' - because we want children to read them effortlessly. Set 1 sounds are the single letter sounds and set 1 special friend sounds. They are taught in the following order;

m, a, s, d, t, i, n, p, g, o, c, k, u, b, f, e, l, h, sh, r, j, v, y, w, th, z, ch, qu, x, ng, nk.

There are 12 Set 2 'speed sounds' that are made up of two or three letters which represent just one sound, e.g. ay as in play, ee as in tree and igh as in high. These are 'special friend' sounds. When children are taught Set 2 sounds they will learn:

- a simple picture prompt linked to the sound
- a short phrase to say e.g. may I play
- the letters that represent a sound (special friends) e.g. ay

Each sound has a list of green words linked to it, so that the children have the opportunity to sound out and blend words containing the new sound they have been taught, for example, s-p-r-ay = spray. Green words are decodable words that children can use their 'Fred Talk' to sound out and blend. They feature the sound that the children have been learning that day. In a phonics lesson, children cover up to 5 or 6 new green words to support their reading of a new sound. When learning Set 3 speed sounds the children will be taught alternative sounds/graphemes, e.g. ee as in tree and ea as in tea.

The tables below show each sound, the associated phrase and example green words for set 1 special friend sounds, set 2 and 3 sounds and additional sounds that are taught.

Set 1 'Special Friend' Sounds

Sound	Phrase	Green words
sh		Ship, shop,
th		Thing, thin,
ch		Chip, chop, champ,
qu		Queen, quack, quest
ng	Thing on a string	Thing, string, ring, king
nk	I think I stink	Stink, think, link, sink

Set 2 Sounds Sound

Sound	Phrase	Green words
ay	May I play?	Day, say, play, tray, today
ee	What can you see?	See, feel, need, sleep, three
igh	Fly high	Night, fight, flight, high
ow	Blow the snow	Show, blow, flow, snow
oo	Poo at the zoo	Zoom, moon, food, cool
oo	Look at a book	Look, book, good, hood
ar	Start the car	Star, bar, car, start, cart
or	Shut the door	Sort, short, worn, horse
air	That's not fair	Fair, hair, chair, stair
ir	Whirl and twirl	Whirl, twirl, shirt, skirt
ou	Shout it out	Mouth, found, shout, loud
oy	Toy for a boy	Toy, boy, employ, joy

Set 3 Sounds

Sound	Phrase	Green words
a_e	Make a cake	Make, cake, flake, bake
ea	Cup of tea	Neat, real, clean, please
i_e	Nice smile	Hide, shine, white, nice
o_e	Phone home	Phone, bone, home, spoke
u_e	Huge brute	Tune, rude, June, perfume
aw	Yawn at dawn	Saw, law, raw, straw
are	Share and care	Bare, spare, scare, flare
ur	Nurse with a purse	Burn, turn, hurl, burp, lurk
ow	Brown cow	Howl, down, brown, frown
oi	Spoil the boy	Join, coin, voice, choice
ai	Snail in the rain	Paint, train, rain, pain
e	e: he, she, me, be, we	He, she, we, be, me
oa	Goat in a boat	Coat, throat, boat, float
ew	Chew the stew	Flew, blew, crew, new
er	A better letter	Over, weather, never
ire	Fire, fire!	Spire, conspire, hire, fire
ear	Hear with your ear	Fear, dear, gear, spear
ure	Sure it's pure	Picture, mixture, adventure

Additional sounds

Sound	Phrase	Green words
ue	Come to the rescue!	Rescue, blue, glue, clue
ie	Terrible tie!	Ties, tried, pie, lie
au	Paul the astronaut	Paul, August, author, pause
e_e	Go Steve and Pete!	Even, Steve, Pete, theme
kn	Knock knock, who's there?	Knight, knee, knock, knit, knot
ck	Tick tock clock	Clock, pick, black, snack

All staff have been on the official 2 day Read Write Inc. training to allow consistent and effective teaching of the scheme. We have RWI Development Days with a Read Write Inc. consultant (twice a year) which provides regular training, updates and support to staff. Staff also have continuous professional development via the online portal and in school training and monitoring.

Throughout Early Years and Key Stage One, children are taught in small and focussed groups to target their specific needs for phonics, alongside children of the same ability. These groupings are based on Read Write Inc. assessments that are carried out at the start of each school year and then continue half termly. The Phonics Lead then collates this information and regroups children based on their current skill level allowing progression for most children but repetition and support for those that need more time on a specific set of sounds. This approach allows lessons to be focused and specific to the needs of the children. Lessons are taught by both teachers and LSA's who are supported by the Phonics Lead in their delivery.

As children build up their knowledge of sounds they are able to apply their decoding skills to any unfamiliar word, whether it be real or nonsense. During lessons each day children will practice their decoding skills by sounding out nonsense words. Children are unable to rely on existing knowledge of real words, and instead have to use their letter-sound knowledge. This is an important part of the Phonics Screening Check that the children complete at the end of year 1.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics, the common exception words and ability to

read 'tricky words'; so they experience early reading success and gain confidence that they are readers, as well as consolidating the learning that takes place in school. 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.

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 fast-track 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.

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. 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.

Similarly, we group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because research shows that pupils' progress in writing will lag behind progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

Impact

Through the consistent, systematic and daily teaching of the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, our aim is for children to become fluent, confident readers by the end of Key Stage One. Children are assessed at the end of Year 1 using a Government Statutory Assessment Tool known as the Phonics Screening Check. This screening check confirms whether the child has learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard and will identify sounds needing further support in Year 2. The children are assessed one to one by a familiar adult to them. Those who do not pass the screening will continue their phonics lessons in Year 2 by being streamed into the correct group. This allows for them to consolidate and develop their confidence, within a group aimed at their specific ability, ready to retake the screening at the end of Year 2.

We assess all pupils using the Read Write Inc. Phonics Assessment. We use this data to assign them to groups. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points. 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 from Y1, 'PiRA', so that we can ensure that the gains our pupils are making are age-appropriate. EYFS pupils are assessed against the EYFS curriculum.

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 using the Read Write Inc. fast-track 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 catch up with their peers. This includes phonics lessons and one-to-one tutoring sessions.

By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of 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.

Through the Read Write Inc. programme, children will be equipped with the skills to decode unfamiliar words using strategies that they have been taught in their daily lessons. This way, children can focus on developing their fluency and comprehension as they move through the school. Hopefully, this leads to a love of reading and children taking pleasure in exploring the rich literary world around them with a firm phonic basis to support them.

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Phonics Leads: Jayne Tuczemskyi, Emma Rees, Mel Allen