



Tenbury CE Primary Academy's policy on phonics and the teaching of reading and writing

At Tenbury CE Primary Academy our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the *Read Write Inc. Phonics* programme and Literacy and the 'Talk For Writing' process.

The Read Write Inc. Phonics programme

The programme is for:

- pupils in Reception to Year 2 who are learning to read and write
- any pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly

We teach pupils to:

- decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- read red '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
- develop neat, joined, cursive 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 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 Reception, we follow the 'Starting Strong' document with an emphasis on 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 also have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – 'tricky red words'.

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

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.

Reading Schemes

In Key Stage One we use a combination of reading schemes. We use Oxford Reading Tree, Songbirds and Rigby Star for reading for pleasure and also for guided reading in Y2. We use Read Write Inc. decodable books, closely matched to the phonics the children are learning in class and these are also sent home. All books include a variety of fiction and non-fiction books to develop children's reading range. All reading books are appropriately banded to support progress in reading. Once children finish the reading scheme, we encourage them to become 'free readers' and to choose their own books. They also have access to high quality 'real books' in our class libraries.

Achievement in our school

Assessing and tracking progress

We assess all pupils from Reception up to Year 3 using the Sound and Word Entry Assessment and use this data to assign them to the appropriate level of *Read Write Inc. Phonics*, along with *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 a 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 Key Stage 1, 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.

Our aim is for the majority of our pupils to complete the phonics programme by the end of Year 1. We aim for all children to be accurate and speedy readers by the time they enter Key Stage 2.

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 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.

Narrowing the gap – and the pupil premium

The programme as a whole has been very effective for our pupils in narrowing performance gaps between different groups, both within our school and nationally.

Impact across the curriculum

Our teachers 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 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.

The homogeneous groupings allow the teachers to focus on all pupils for the whole lesson. This means that 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.* programme has 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 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 homogeneous 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. 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 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 and all pupils know their teacher’s expectations for each activity. We mark short activities with the pupils during the lesson, either as self-assessment or peer assessment. Extended pieces of writing are marked by the teacher afterwards with a comment explaining what they have done well and a close the gap comment to take pupils’ learning forward. If an extended piece of writing continues over more than one lesson, the short date is written in the margin each day, so that it is clear what has been achieved over a period of time.

Homework

Pupils who follow the RWI programme will all take home a copy of a decodable book that is matched to their phonic ability. The book will include sounds that the pupils have already been taught. In addition to this, pupils also take home books from coloured book banded boxes, so that they can re-tell new stories out loud and recall details and vocabulary.

Each week pupils will also take home a list of spellings to learn, which relate directly to the sounds and spelling patterns they have been learning about that week. Pupils will be tested on these every Friday.

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 – MT/YT, TTYP. Pupils do not raise their hands to answer questions.
2. Close grouping for reading 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. Pupils read books at home that closely match their word reading, as well as familiar stories and texts beyond their word reading.
6. Teaching is monitored thoroughly (see Leadership and Management).

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, they work closely with the English Subject Leads to monitor the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for staff who need it (teachers and teaching assistants).

The role of the English Subject Lead in Reading is critical. They drive the teaching of *Read Write Inc.* Phonics, ensuring it is taught with fidelity so that all the pupils complete the programme as quickly as possible.

Their roles include:

- 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 demonstration, coaching, monitoring)
- ensuring that our teaching of reading is of the highest quality and that all our pupils make progress.

The reading team is made up of a team of RWI trained teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) who each teach a group of pupils at the same reading level. Our TAs generally teach smaller groups. Teachers alert the English Subject Lead to any pupil whose progress is faster or slower than the rest of their group.

The Talk For Writing Programme

Talk for Writing is a teaching framework that raises standards and accelerates progress. It is designed to stimulate and challenge children's thinking and create lifelong readers and writers.

The core purpose of the programme is to ensure that children, as the 2014 National Curriculum aims state;

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- acquire a wide vocabulary
- develop the habit of reading widely and often for both pleasure and information
- use grammar correctly
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

Talk for Writing is powerful because it is based on the principles of how children learn. It enables children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally, before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version. Children move from **imitation** to **innovation** to **independent application** and this is adapted by our teachers to suit the needs of all learners at any stage.

Teachers plan units of work following the key phases of the Talk for Writing process:

- **Baseline assessment and planning – ‘cold’ task**
- **The imitation phase**
- **The innovation phase**
- **Independent application and invention – ‘hot’ task**
- **Final assessment – building on progression**

Baseline assessment and planning

Teaching is focused by initial assessment. Generally, teachers use what is known as a ‘cold’ task or ‘have a go’ task. The aim of this is to see what the children can do independently at the start of a unit, drawing on their prior learning. Assessment of their writing helps the teacher work out what to teach the whole class, different groups and adapt the model text and plan.

The Imitation Phase

Teaching begins with a creative ‘hook’ which engages pupils. The model text is then introduced to the children and is pitched above their level, with all language features built in, which they will need when they are writing. It is learned using a ‘text map’ with actions to strengthen memory and help children remember the text. Once the

children can 'talk like the text', the model and other examples are read for vocabulary and comprehension, before being analysed for different text features (boxing up), as well as writing techniques or toolkits. Short burst writing is used to practise key focusses such as description, persuasion or scientific explanation.

The Innovation Phase

Once the children are familiar with the model text, then the teacher leads them into creating their own versions. With younger students this is based on changing the basic map and retelling new versions. Older students use boxed-up planners. Shared and guided writing is then used over several days so that students are writing text bit by bit. Feedback is given in lessons, so that students are taught how to improve their writing, making it more accurate, until they can increasingly edit in pairs or on their own.

Independent application and invention – 'hot task'

Eventually, students move on to the third phase, which is when they apply independently what has been taught and practised. The final piece is used as the 'hot' task which clearly shows progress across the unit.

In the early years, children will be playing at making up stories daily, acting stories out and, at least once a week, be led by the class teacher through making up class stories for future sharing.

Spelling

Spellings are taught using the Read Write Inc Spelling programme. This teaches all of the spelling requirements of the National Curriculum. The requirements are divided into year groups, then subdivided into units of work. Each unit covers approximately one week of work, made up of five daily sessions of 15-20 minutes a day. Online resources based on animated alien characters from 'Spelling Planet' also introduce the spelling focus for the week and help to engage the children's interest.

Homework

All pupils take home a book at a suitable level for their ability, are expected to read regularly at home and enter comments into their reading diaries. These are collected in weekly for teachers to monitor. Each week, pupils will also take home a list of spellings to learn, which relate directly to the spelling patterns they have been learning about that week through the RWI Spelling programme. Pupils will be tested on these every Friday. Through our Power Project activities, children will also have tasks which are specifically literacy based.

Assessment, Feedback and Marking

Assessment is integral to children's learning. Partner discussions help teachers assess what and how the children are learning throughout the lesson. The specific focus for both reading and writing is set out at the beginning of each unit, along with the key purpose and evaluation criteria for the children's main writing composition. These are used by the children to self or peer assess using the 'Talk for Writing

Toolkits'. The teacher then uses a green pen to highlight specific elements the children have done well, and a pink pen to highlight any areas for improvement. Children are then given time within the lesson to respond to this feedback. Children are also given writing targets linked to the national curriculum objectives which are used across the curriculum. These are updated when the children have achieved them. Reading in KS2 is assessed using the Accelerated Reader tests. These are administered at the end of each term.

Additional support for lower-attaining pupils

From the results of the Accelerated Reader reading tests, alongside teacher assessment, we identify those children who are falling behind the expected levels in reading. They are then given 1 to 1 support using books aligned with the Accelerated Reader programme (twice a week). If children in Years 5 and 6 fall significantly below the expected levels for their age group, they will be put onto the Read Write Inc Fresh Start programme. This programme is made up of different modules which contain fiction and non-fiction texts and a range of activities which develop students reading, writing, spelling and comprehension skills.

Literacy across the school

Professional development

A key element of our English teaching is consistent whole-school practice, underpinned by appropriate professional development. All of our teachers and teaching assistants, who are leading phonics groups, are trained to teach RWI phonics. Some staff have attended two-day training and the trainer has returned to support us on subsequent development days. Experienced staff then hold in-house training for newer staff members.

Behaviour and safety in our school

Pupils have very positive attitudes to the programmes. 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 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.

Tracking Progress

The progress of all children in KS1 and KS2 are tracked using Insight, our school tracking system. This is discussed every 6 weeks during pupil progress meetings. As a result of these meetings, we then decide which children will receive specific interventions.

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