



Phonics Policy

December 2020

Coverage in this policy:

Overview

Rationale and Aims

Teaching and Learning

Assessment

Planning and Resources

Organisation

Inclusion, Welfare and Equal Opportunities

Positive Relationships

Policy Development

Overview

At North Stainley CofE Primary School, we believe Phonics should be taught in a systematic, discrete, interactive, practical and engaging way; ultimately, phonics is taught so that it is accessible to all. Phonics is a key skill that supports the development of early reading skills. At North Stainley, we combine quality phonic instruction through the Ruth Miskin Read Write Inc. phonics scheme, alongside exposure to a range of texts and the promotion of reading for pleasure to provide our pupils with the skills they need to have a successful start to their lives as readers.

Aspects of the 2014 National Curriculum for English that are applicable to the early stages of the teaching of reading, aim to ensure that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences

Rationale and Aims

At North Stainley CofE, we strive to teach children to read effectively and fluently using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme (RWI) which includes teaching synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary, decoding and encoding words as well as spelling and accurate letter formation.

Using the RWI Scheme, to teach children to decode and then read, we aim to teach children from Early Years up to Year 2 to:

- Apply their phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- Respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all common 40+ phonemes
- Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words that contain the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) that they have been taught
- Read common exception words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound
- Read words containing taught GPCs and -s, -es, -ing, -ed, -er and -est endings
- Read words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs
- Read words with contractions and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s)
- Accurately read aloud books, that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- Reread books to build up their fluency, accuracy and expression and hence develop confidence and enjoyment of reading
- Read most high-frequency regular words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending; only needing to sound out unfamiliar words
- Spell words containing each of the 40+ phonemes by segmenting the sounds in words
- Spell common exception words correctly
- Add prefixes and suffixes to previously taught words
- Spell effortlessly, and with confidence, so that all their focus when writing can be directed towards composition
- Make phonetically plausible attempts to spell words correctly

- Select the correct GPC for words that contain sounds that have more than one GPC – e.g. ay, ai, a-e etc.
- Form each letter correctly, using RWI letter formation rhymes to encourage correct entry and exit points, orientation and letter size.

Furthermore at North Stainley, these skills are embedded within daily RWI lessons. By focussing on the teaching of reading in the Early Years and KS1, using a synthetic phonics scheme, children learn to read unfamiliar printed words by blending (decoding) and speedily recognise familiar printed words by sight. We want all children to enjoy and experience early success in learning to read. We are committed to developing children's love of reading and to help them to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know.

These principles and features characterise our approach to the teaching of reading using RWI:

- Teachers teach RWI using a detailed, proven step-by-step teaching scheme; where children are first taught simple GPCs, to accurately blend taught sounds, to decode simple words containing taught graphemes and then to read specifically designed books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words.
- Pupils are taught within small homogenous groups, across year groups, which reflect their performance in RWI phonics assessments. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and ability to read 'tricky words'; so they experience early reading success and gain confidence that they are readers.
- RWI teachers have all the RWI resources needed to teach RWI and they follow detailed lesson plans. This ensures the consistency of the teaching of reading, in every RWI lesson, irrespective of the RWI reading teacher.
- Teachers attend regular in-house CPD sessions, where they have the opportunity to learn about pedagogical changes, new RWI resources and to observe and practice specific parts of the teaching process.
- Regular assessment ensures that pupils are taught in homogeneous groups which match their phonic knowledge and reading level. Pupils making speedy progress move groups quickly. Those pupils making steady progress continue at an appropriate pace matched to their reading level. Those pupils making slower progress are usually taught in smaller groups and generally receive additional small group or one-to-one intervention.

We assess all pupils from Reception to Year 2 who are taking part in Read Write Inc. Phonics using RWI Assessment materials. Children in Year Two doing Read Write Inc. Spellings are assessed weekly through spelling tests and in class monitoring. We use this data to assign them to the most appropriate RWI Group and to identify if they need to have any additional support, which is delivered via intervention. This provides a good indication of their progress relative to their starting points. We track the phonic progress that pupils make from Reception to Year 2 and, at the end of Year 1; we evaluate pupils' acquisition of GPCs and decoding skills using the Phonics Screening Check (PSC). This ensures that we are able to maintain high standards in the teaching of the early stages reading in EYFS (using the Reading statements in the EYFS Profile), in Year 1 (using the PSC materials) and in Year 2 (using the statutory KS1 Reading assessment materials). Pupils in KS2 that are still acquiring word reading skills, continue to be part of the RWI program via intervention.

Teaching and Learning

Daily Read Write Inc. lessons take place start immediately after Reception teachers have completed their Baseline Assessment. Children have a short phonics input session; they are taught two new Set 1 sounds per week and they also review previously taught sounds every day. Pupils practice Fred talk, to develop decoding skills, and they learn to write the corresponding graphemes for the sounds they have been taught. Children also write simple CVC words, using their GPC knowledge to assist them.

Children are organised into RWI Groups based on their phonics knowledge, and where there are smaller classes/cohorts, the children are placed in an ability group best fit to them whereby activities are differentiated and personalised to ensures the correct level of support, challenge and progression in the teaching of reading in Reception. Five RWI lessons are taught every week and each lesson lasts for approximately 20-30 minutes.

Daily KS1 RWI lessons commence at the start of the academic year; children are grouped by their phonic knowledge as well as their reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension. Five RWI lessons are taught every week and each lesson lasts for approximately 30-40 minutes.

Both the Reception and KS1 RWI lessons start with a 10-minute phonics input session, where new sounds are taught, or previously taught sounds are reviewed. Pupils learn how to apply their grapheme/phoneme knowledge to read real simple words – initially sounding out these words and then progressing onto speedy reading of words – and also alien (pseudo) words. They also learn how to read irregular words and multisyllabic words.

Following on from this, in KS1, during the main part of the lesson, pupils are taught to read the regular and irregular words that are found in the RWI storybook that they are reading that fits alongside their 'Get Writing' books whereby they apply their skills. They then apply their knowledge to read RWI storybooks (reading book) at their phonic level. From the Spring term, we introduce the teaching of 'alien' words; where pupils apply their phonic knowledge to read alien /pseudo words. This is in preparation for the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check (PSC).

Assessment

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. We strive to make our assessment purposeful, allowing us to match the correct level of work to the needs of the pupils, thus benefiting the pupils and ensuring progress. It is the class teacher's responsibility to keep track of the progress made by all children in their class, regardless of their phonic ability. Each individual child has their own phonics tracker, which is updated termly.

Assessment for Learning (AfL): We continually assess our pupils and recording their progress. Information for assessment is gathered in various ways: by talking to children, asking questions, observing their work, setting specific tasks. Teachers use this assessment information to plan further work and set new targets.

Assessment of Learning (AoL): The attainment and progress of children in phonics is assessed regularly across the year, both discretely at the start of each term and through Reading and Writing assessments. At the end of Year 1, children participate in the Phonics Screening Check (PSC) which assesses their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and their skills in blending. This information is then submitted to the LA.

Those children who do not succeed in the Phonics Screening Check are highlighted for further intervention and targeted support before completing the Screening Check again at the end of Year 2. For children who do not succeed a second time, provision is made for them to receive intervention and targeted support in Key Stage 2. Children need to be taught the alphabetic code – the relationship between sounds and letters in English – and the screening check is designed to assess how much of it they know. The non-words (*alien/pseudo*) in the check are useful for identifying children who may know the alphabetic code (or at least parts of it) but are struggling with the skills of blending sounds together to make whole words.

There may also be children who are finding it difficult to learn to read whose problems are not related to blending or knowing the alphabetic code. The screening check still acts as an important diagnostic tool in the first instance. The check is intended as a test of phonic decoding – not as a wider test of reading – to assess whether children have learnt key knowledge and skills by the end of Year 1. Comprehension is a separate dimension and is tested at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

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

Planning and Resources

Planning is minimised as we follow the RWI planning scheme, which is based on the RWI Handbooks and plans. This ensures consistency and fidelity across the program, as well as freeing up time for teachers to source additional resources etc. to make the lesson come alive to the class.

Planning details the focus of each part of the RWI lesson and explains the purpose of the activity to both the teacher and the pupil. Planning also explains the resources needed for each day in a 5-day teaching cycle. Every RWI teacher has their own box of RWI resources these include: *simple and complex speed sounds charts, small and large phonics flash cards, green and red word flash cards and Fred the Frog. Set 1, 2 and 3 teaching sequence resources. RWI storybooks (with Story Green words and Speedy Green words), ditties and linked texts and props are all stored within Class One.*

Organisation

Teachers ensure that the lessons are taught at a good pace to ensure that all children are engaged and involved in the lesson. Children are praised for their contribution to lessons, reading and effort so that a very positive and respectful teaching environment is maintained. Every part of the lesson is explicitly referred to so that the teachers, and the children, know the purpose of the task. Use of effective partner work, turn-taking and children taking on the 'teacher role', means that children have an active role in all parts of the lesson. 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. Teachers demonstrate their enthusiasm and passion in the program and this has a very positive impact on the teaching and learning environment.

Inclusion, Welfare and Equal Opportunities

At North Stainley CofE Primary school, we are committed to providing a teaching environment which ensures all children are provided with the same learning opportunities regardless of social class, gender, culture, race and disability or learning difficulties. The school works to ensure the active participation and progress of all children in their learning.

All children will be given equal opportunities to achieve their best possible standard, whatever their current attainment and irrespective of gender, ethnic, social or cultural background, home language or any other aspect that could affect their participation or the progress of which they are capable.

All pupils are entitled to access RWI resources and teachings at a level appropriate to their needs arising from race, gender, ability or disability. A range of inclusion strategies, as listed on the school's inclusion policy, are embedded in practice and teachers are aware of the special educational needs of the children in their RWI group, as well as those who have English as an additional language.

The 2014 National Curriculum states that:

'Pupils who grasp concepts rapidly should be challenged through being offered rich and sophisticated problems before any acceleration through new content. Those who are not sufficiently fluent with earlier material should consolidate their understanding, including through additional practice, before moving on.'

Pupils making accelerated progress will move groups to ensure that an appropriate level of challenge is provided. Where this is not possible due to small cohorts/classes, these pupils will be given differentiated work at their level and additional intervention to ensure they continue to progress. Pupils that need additional support to consolidate their phonic knowledge and its application are taught in smaller groups as standard being a small school. If appropriate, further intervention will be provided to support their phonic development.

Specific arrangements for the provision of children with SEND will be communicated to parents and carers during SEND reviews.

Positive Relationships

Whilst children are learning the Set 1 speed sounds, they will have the opportunity to practise what they have learned at school with their parents/carers at home. This is set through various avenues; handwriting sheets to practise recognition and formation (whilst allowing parents to know what sounds have been discreetly taught in order to support their child at home), phonics books are sent home for reading as well as RWI ditties and Storybooks when children can blend independently.

We also send home a list of irregular words (red words/ Year One Common Exception words) that need to be known by sight and cannot be decoded using common graphemes.

We invite Reception parents/carers to the New Starters meetings where RWI is touched upon. Letters are sent home at each new stage also to keep parents informed and to show them how they can support their children to read at home. We also send home a Phonics Screening Check pack for Year 1 parents to help parents understand

the PSC and suggest ways to best support their child at home, as well as having information sheets and games to play.

We focus on a 3 read strategy;

	Focus	Explanation
Read One	Decoding the book	Children use their phonic knowledge to decode the words on the page. Focus is solely on this rather than comprehension and understanding.
Read Two	Reading for speed/fluency	This is another opportunity for the children to apply the phonic knowledge but slightly quicker. You should recognise some of the words the second time round. Adults model prosody (intonation, expression, pausing and freezing) when they read.
Read Three	Comprehension	This time, the children read the book again, by now, they are quite familiar with the words. We ask the children what they think about what is happening as they read: Do they understand what they are reading?

This is because each read through of the book focusses on specific skills; decoding, reading with expression, accuracy and fluency as well as reading for comprehension. Parents are offered information and support with this.

We have also, as a school, created a reading scheme document to outline how reading works across the EYFS, KS1 and KS2 in North Stainley CofE and how phonics feeds into this etc. A planned meeting is scheduled to inform the parents of the new reading scheme in Spring 2021.

Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- 1. Review** – a member of the leadership team, pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- 2. Staff consultation** – school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
- 3. Pupil consultation** – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE and PSHE lessons via a pupil survey
- 4. Ratification** – the policy was shared with and reviewed by governors from the Child & Community Committee and approved by the full Governing Body.

Date: December 2020

Review Date: December 2021

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Chair of Governors