



Ashlands Primary School  
Phonics and Early Reading Policy

January 2024

## Phonics and Early Reading Policy

At Ashlands Primary School phonics and early reading are considered extremely important. It is for that reason that we are committed to improving the teaching and learning of phonics across our school with the implementation of the Read Write Inc phonics programme, written by Ruth Miskin. Staff will receive up to date training and ongoing support to ensure this programme is taught consistently and effectively by all EYFS and KS1 teachers and support staff.

**At Ashlands, we believe learning to read is a fundamental skill that is utilised daily throughout our whole lives. It underpins all we do and therefore it is essential that we support all children, regardless of background, need or ability to successfully achieve this. Reading opens the door of opportunity and we are committed to nurturing and inspiring children to foster a love of reading.**

### Intent

The overarching aim of Phonics at Ashlands is to ensure that all children build a secure foundation of knowledge and understanding. This enables children to feel confident and secure at all stages of their learning journey, helping children to become confident speakers, fluent readers and skilled writers who are motivated to try their best and consequently reach their full potential.

### Implementation

Phonics at Ashlands is taught following the Read Write Inc (RWI) phonics programme. This is a systematic, rigorous phonics programme which is taught daily in Reception and Key Stage 1. The overarching goal of RWI is to help all children learn to read fluently and at speed so that they can focus on developing their skills in comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. RWI also aims to teach children to spell effortlessly so that they can put all their energy into composing what they write.

At Ashlands, we aim for all children to move into KS2 as well-rounded learners who can:

- Decode words and use this skill to read accurately.
- Read red words (common exception words) by sight.
- Demonstrate sound comprehension skills which support children to fully understand what they are reading and what is read to them.
- Spell unfamiliar words using their phonics knowledge to segment sounds.
- Write letters that are formed correctly.

Children begin their phonics learning in nursery with the ultimate goal being the development of their speaking and listening skills. The children are taught in fun,

practical ways which focus on following their own interests. This in turn keeps their learning relevant, engaging and interesting.

As the children show signs they are ready, usually in the summer term, before they start reception Read Write Inc is introduced. At this point, children will begin to learn the initial sounds in preparation for starting reception, giving them the best chance of success as they begin their school journey.

Once children move into reception they begin learning the Set 1 sounds in a daily RWI lesson. Set 1 sounds are the initial sounds. These are referred to as 'Speed Sounds' because the aim is for children to read these quickly and effortlessly. Children are taught to say, read and write each sound. This then forms the very beginning of their life-long love of reading.

All children have daily opportunities to apply their learning independently through an array of reading and writing activities available to them through high quality provision inside and outside of the classroom.

Assessments are carried out at the end of each teaching phase starting once the children have been taught the initial Set 1 sounds. The children are then grouped based on the phonics they have attained. This means that as they move forwards, the children are learning with other children who are working at a similar level and consequently their teaching can be pitched at just the right level- ensuring they are able to make the best possible progress for them.

By the end of reception children are expected to be able to say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and for at least ten digraphs. They should then be able to use this knowledge to read words consistent with their understanding. This supports children to access books with simple sentences inside meaning that children feel like readers and therefore develop the belief that they can read.

As children move into Year 1 and 2 they will be grouped across the key stage so that the phonics teaching they receive continues to be suited to their needs. This means that RWI happens daily, at the same time across KS1, for all children in Year 1 and 2 who still need to access it. As the year progresses, the phonics in year 2 is fluid to ensure the individual needs of the children can be addressed to ensure they have the best chance of success.

Children continue to build upon their learning in EYFS and this is completed through the use of 'special friends' (two/ three/ four phonemes which join together to make a single sound), 'Fred Talk' (segmenting and blending sounds together to read), 'Fred in your head' (blending sounds to read a word), green words (words which they read often that can be blended) and red words (words which cannot be sounded out). These activities are practised and their learning applied alongside a reading book. Partner work is extremely important and the children share the book with a partner as this provides them with opportunities to improve their communication skills whilst embedding the skills they are learning through frequent high-quality opportunities to practise. Using a book to consolidate learning means that children's comprehension skills are consistently being visited and that the teacher of each group is able to hear

the children in their phonics group read often. In addition to this, the children write, compose and edit simple sentence applying the phonics they have learnt. In KS1 Children then have further opportunities to develop the skills they are learning through an additional daily English lesson, which follows the Allison Phillipson approach to English which is followed throughout school.

### **How do we support home reading?**

All children completing a daily RWI lesson will have access to Oxford Owl at home. This means that all children can continue practising their reading skills at home using the text they have been reading in school, which is assigned by their teacher each week. This helps children to learn early on that they can read and are a 'reader' which in turns builds confidence and a huge sense of pride. Re-reading and discussing these books with adults at home supports children's comprehension of each story and their increasingly fluent decoding skills. Accessing the book through Oxford Owl means that children are able to complete a short, fun quiz in line with the books teaching too, further embedding their comprehension skills and providing an opportunity for parents to be involved with their child's learning.

At Ashlands, we feel that giving children opportunities to read physical books at home is extremely important and therefore children will bring home a weekly RWI Book Bag Book. This is a book, that through our assessment system the children have shown they will be able to read independently. This helps to further improve reading confidence, develop their reading for pleasure and enables them to focus on building the fluency of their reading. They will also take home the RWI core book they have read in their phonics lesson that week. This is a book they have read everyday in school, taking it home enables them to further build their reading fluency. In addition to this, children will bring home a book from the much loved class or school library, which they will choose for themselves. This provides children with the opportunity to follow their own interests and choose books they want to read, further helping to foster and embed a love of reading across school.

### **How do we support the lowest 20% of children?**

By the end of Year 1, the aim is for all children to have learnt their Set 2, Set 3 and Additional Graphemes. However, we know that not all children learn at the same pace. This is the advantage of grouping across Year 1 and 2 in the autumn term as it means that children can be placed where they need to be in order to ensure they have a secure understanding of what they are learning, before they are moved on. Again, further supporting the goal for all children to have secure foundations which will support future learning.

In addition to their small group phonics sessions these children also receive additional phonics sessions in small groups or on a 1:1 basis everyday, where possible. These interventions focus on retaining previous learning, recognising 'red words', building reading fluency and holding a sentence to support independent writing. These sessions help to build the children's confidence and belief in themselves, helping them to become secure, independent readers.

### **How is progress and attainment monitored?**

In KS1 children will be assessed every half term by the RWI leader. The RWI leader will then review this data and then rearrange groups according to the data for the following half term. Like in reception, these groups are fluid and children can move frequently in order to ensure they are in the group which will best support them to achieve. This data, alongside teacher and support staff feedback will also be used to highlight any concerns where children do not appear to be making progress. This means that where possible, additional support can be put in place for these children to help them 'keep up' before they fall behind, therefore eliminating the need for children to 'catch up' on their phonics learning.

Near the end of Year 1, all children complete a 'Phonics Screening Test'. This is a test that children complete one- to- one with the phonics leader. The intention of this test is to check a child's ability to decode words. During the check the children are asked to read 40 words. Half of these words are real and the other half are pseudo-words, referred to in school as 'alien words'. The inclusion of pseudo-words is to check that children are using their decoding skills and not just relying on their memory of words they have read before. There is no time limit for the Phonics Screening, but it does not normally take too long.

The children will have encountered these tests many times over the course of the school year and will be familiar with the structure and expectation by the time they sit the check. If a child does not meet the expected standard they will retake the screening the following year and continue to have phonics support to give them the best chance of passing in Year 2.

### **What happens after Phonics?**

For children in Year 2, and 3 if needed, they will continue to develop their phonics. As they come to the end of the programme and show they are ready they will move on to RWI spelling and have a daily literacy lesson which follows the Alison Phillipson approach to English. These lessons follow the same lesson format as English lessons in KS2, this helps ease the transition from KS1 into KS2 as children are already familiar with the expectations for English and the format that their lessons will often take.

These lessons are linked to the half termly topics which children's learning is focussed around. These lessons use a book or non-fiction text which supports the children's learning journey. These texts are high quality and engaging in order to elicit excitement based around the children's reading and writing. As a result, they are enthusiastic about their lessons and the work they produce. These lessons encompass the children's developing comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, spelling and writing skills, all of which the children need to be able to competently demonstrate, independently, in order to be considered working where they should be for the end of Year 2.

### **Impact**

**The impact of phonics teaching and learning will be evident through the following outcomes:**

- Internal monitoring, including learning walks, lesson observations, pupil conferencing and book scrutiny will ensure teaching and learning is of high quality and consistent across the school.
- Teachers will receive frequent, real time support during their phonics lessons from the 'reading lead' teacher who will spend time each week supporting teachers to deliver their phonics lesson. This will ensure quality teaching and learning is taking place in all classrooms and that advice can be given and modelled in real time.
- Results of the Phonics Screening Test will be in line with the national average each year.
- Children will develop a love of reading, talk enthusiastically about reading and confidently attempt to read unfamiliar words independently.
- Confident writers who enjoy writing for a variety of different purposes.
- Phonics assessments will be carried out half termly by the reading lead and this data will be analysed and used to group children into their phonics group for the following term. These groups are fluid and can change during the course of the term if needed. The reading lead will be able to measure the progress of each child and will investigate concerns when children have not made sufficient progress.
- Where possible, additional support will be given to children who are not making sufficient progress and to those who would benefit from additional phonics intervention.