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INTRODUCTION

At Hawthorn Tree we feel that phonics is of upmost importance in building the foundations for children becoming successful readers and writers as they move through the school and beyond.

“Teach a child to read and talk and keep that child reading and talking and it will change everything. And I mean everything.” *Jeanette Winterson*

The processes by which children comprehend spoken language are the same as those by which they comprehend the words on the page; the difference being that the first relies upon hearing the words and the second upon seeing the words in written form. In order to comprehend written texts children must first learn to recognise, that is decode, the words on the page.

At Hawthorn Tree School we understand that high-quality phonic work is not a ‘strategy’ so much as a body of knowledge, skills and understanding that has to be learned in order to allow progression in learning. Reading is the key that unlocks the whole curriculum so the ability to efficiently decode is essential.

1. AIMS OF POLICY

The aims of this policy are to outline:

- The principles of high-quality phonic work at Hawthorn Tree Primary School.
- The format of the ReadWrite Inc program and how it is used throughout the school to teach phonics.
- The assessment systems in place to ensure children make rapid progress in their phonics acquisition
- How phonics is embedded and linked into the wider curriculum
- The roles and responsibilities of the phonics coordinator in ensuring the phonics program is delivered to the highest standard throughout the school, enabling the children to become the best readers and writers they can be.

2. THE PRINCIPLES OF PHONICS AT HAWTHORN TREE SCHOOL

The Rose Report makes it clear that ‘high-quality phonic work’ should be taught systematically and discretely as the prime approach used in the teaching of early reading.

Beginner readers should be taught:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences or GPC’s (sounds made by letters e.g. ‘ay’ is the long a sound) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through a word to read it

- to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

High-quality phonic work will be most effective when:

- It is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness.
- It is multi sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning.
- It is time-limited, such that the great majority of children should be confident readers by the end of Key Stage 1.
- It is systematic, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme with fidelity, reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress
- It is taught discretely and daily or twice daily at a brisk pace.
- There are opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum and in such activities as shared and guided reading.
- Children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored.

At Hawthorn Tree School we teach the children to read and write using the Read Write Inc. phonics program which includes systematic daily teaching of synthetic phonics. Children at Hawthorn Tree secure automatic decoding skills and progress from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' for purpose and pleasure. The Read Write Inc phonics teaching we do not only teaches children to read and spell words, but also develops vocabulary, the skills of comprehension, and the ability to rehearse, hold and write a sentence, which is applied in all independent writing. Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics program 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, as well as compose their own texts using accurate spelling choices.

3. TEACHING AND LEARNING

3.1 The *Read Write Inc.* Phonic program is for:

- pupils in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 who are learning to read and write
- any pupils in Key Stage 2 who need to catch up rapidly.

We teach pupils to:

- decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- read '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
- acquire good 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. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the 'tricky 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. Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We give them opportunities to hold and write given sentences containing known graphemes during phonics, and we make sure they write every day. In addition to this, they complete English lessons four-five times per week to apply phonics skills in their own writing with increasing independence.

3.2 Effective teaching and learning through RWI is based on the 5 Ps:

Praise – Children learn quickly in a positive climate.

Pace – Good pace is essential to the lesson.

Purpose – Every part of the lesson has a specific purpose.

Passion – This is a very prescriptive programme. It is the energy, enthusiasm and passion that teachers put into the lesson that bring the teaching and learning to life!

Participation - A strong feature of R.W.I. lessons is partner work and the partners 'teaching' each other (based on research which states that we learn 70% of what we talk about with our partner and 90% of what we teach).

3.3 Foundation Stage

In EYFS pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. We teach as a whole class for the first half term to teach the first sounds. Children are assessed at half term to group according to ability. Children then progress at a level and pace suited to their needs and 1:1 intervention is put in for those requiring additional support. As children move onto reading books, we stream between the two EYFS classes to ensure children are accessing learning at the appropriate level to ensure maximum progress for all. From September 2021, the decision was made to change the delivery times to two, half hour slots a day, rather than a whole hour in one session. This was in response to staff and children stating sessions were too long for the age and attention span of children in EYFS, combined with research by Shapiro and Solity suggesting that we should teach children crucial skills, including phonics, in short, frequent sessions, offering distributed teaching and spaced learning. The children can recall teaching from the morning session during the afternoon and further apply skills and phonic knowledge taught earlier in the day. It has been an unmitigated success with positive feedback from both staff and children, and data clearly shows accelerated progress compared to previous years.

Pupils also have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – ‘tricky red words’. In addition to the daily discrete phonics sessions there are also constant and enhanced activities and displays within the environment for children to access during both child and adult-initiated sessions.

3.4 Key Stage One

Homogenous Read Write Inc groups are organised across year 1 and 2 to ensure all children are accessing phonics and reading activities appropriate for their current phonic knowledge. Children are reassessed and regrouped as necessary every 8 weeks. Intervention is put in place for lower ability children and those falling behind within their groups. Children have RWI phonics lessons daily, and then have the opportunity to apply their knowledge in English lessons and through cross-curricular writing, allowing children to take part in extended writing and class teachers to keep track of the learning of all children in their class.

3.5 Key Stage Two

Where children have not completed the RWI program before entering Key Stage two, they continue with the program at the appropriate level as their English lesson (for the very lowest ability who cannot access the English lesson), or as intervention in afternoons in addition to their English.

3.6 Links with the National Curriculum

At Hawthorn Tree School we ensure phonics is embedded through all aspects of the curriculum, allowing opportunities to use and apply phonics knowledge throughout all subject areas. RWI sound charts are displayed in classrooms and sound mats are available on each table to support in writing in EYFS, key stage one and for key stage two for individuals where necessary.

3.7 Handwriting

Read Write Inc includes phrases to support in learning the correct sequence of movements for forming each letter correctly. The Nelson handwriting program is used to teach handwriting throughout the school, so we have adapted the formation of f and k in line with this, to prevent confusion. As letters are introduced through RWI, children practise forming these, using the handwriting phrases. Nelson handwriting then begins in year 1, and children begin joining when they are ready (see handwriting policy).

3.8 Planning

At Hawthorn Tree Primary School we have set planning formats which are followed by all members of staff, to ensure children follow set routines as outlined in the RWI phonics program. Daily plans are completed by the teacher or TA to ensure the program and routines are followed accurately, whilst the pace and delivery of sounds is adapted to suit

the needs of individual children and groups of children, using ongoing Assessment for Learning.

3.9 Resources

The School has a central area in which Read Write Inc resources are stored, which enables all teachers and teaching assistants to access the resources they require for the stage of their group.

The School has an additional guided reading scheme, which we have linked with the stage of RWI children are working in enabling teachers to accurately and precisely plan their group guided reading in line with the phonics teaching and needs of all children.

The School reading scheme consists of a mixture of published schemes, and these have been sequenced in line with the teaching sequence of Read Write Inc. with checkpoints included to prevent children from going beyond their phonics knowledge in the reading scheme.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Equality Act, 2010, states that the responsible body of a school must not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or young person because of one of the protected characteristics;

- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

There shall be equal access to the curriculum for all children, irrespective of any of the protected characteristics and ability. Children with special needs should be given access to the curriculum at the appropriate level via individual planning and differentiation. Children with special needs should be given access to the curriculum through differentiation of planning and Individual Educational Plans. Where appropriate, children with Individual Educational Plans will be supported with teachers and teaching assistants within or near the classroom environment. Children with English as a Second Language will be assessed and depending on assessments, will be placed into groups in class or access the Read Write Inc Programme with a teacher who specialises in teaching with EAL or phonics teaching. After, they will be taught through the age related objectives from Y1 onwards. When resources are purchased, the interests and needs of all children are taken into account.

5. ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

5.1 Assessment for learning

Children are assessed throughout every lesson. Every time partner work is used the teacher/TA assesses the progress of their children, by how they:

- read the grapheme chart
- read the green and red word lists
- decode the story

- comprehend the story

Each group leader is requested to identify pupils that need extra reinforcement of a particular element that has been covered, and ensure the relevant RWI manager is aware of this, to arrange intervention where possible.

5.2 Summative assessment

Formal assessment is carried out periodically (every 8 weeks) which is overseen by the RWI managers for all pupils in EYFS and year one (as well as any who have not yet completed the program in year 2 and beyond) on the *Read Write Inc.* Sound and Word Entry Assessment and we use these data to assign them to an appropriate RWI group. Progress of children is tracked using the school assessment system, o-track. This allows pupil progress and data trends to be identified over the year.

5.3 The phonics screening check

The phonics screening check takes place in year 1 during June. The Read Write Inc program prepares children to succeed in this assessment, by regularly practising decoding both real and pseudo (nonsense) words using their phonic knowledge. Children are identified if they require additional support in passing this screening check, and if they fail they have additional support in phonics and reading throughout year 2 to ensure they pass their retake.

6. THE ROLE OF THE RWI MANAGERS

The RWI manager role is now split into two, one leader oversees EYFS and KS2 assessments and progress, while the other oversees KS1 assessments and progress. This is helpful as the managers work within the appropriate key stage linked to their responsibility (EYFS and KS1) so they have a better understanding of individuals, groupings and progress. Miss Glew and Miss Bone (the two leaders) regularly meet and discuss progress and ensure consistency, and look at data trends. Their roles include, to:

- test all pupils and designate pupils to the correct groups.
- assign leaders to groups
- observe and 'drop in' on R.W.I. groups to give advice and to informally check that pupils are in the correct groups
- where necessary model lessons
- complete scrutiny of books to ensure good progress and levels of feedback in writing
- attend up-date meetings when they occur and report back to the R.W.I. group leaders
- speak with the headteacher/deputy headteacher regarding groupings, teaching spaces and other pertinent matters
- report to the governors about the quality of the implementation of RWI and the impact on standards.