Being an Early Reading Champion: our approach to teaching *phonics*



Intent:

At Four Acres Academy we recognise that to develop our learners as authors-readers starts with our pupils' early language development, progressing onto the spoken and written word. This is given a high priority throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read and write. It helps children hear, identify and use different sounds. Knowing the sounds of individual letters and how those sound when they're combined helps children decode words as they learn to blend them to read. Understanding phonics also helps children know which letters to use when they are encoding; using the written spelling patterns (graphemes) when writing words.

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way – starting with simple sounds and progressing through to the most complex – it is the most effective method of teaching young children to read (being particularly helpful for children aged 4-7). To ensure our pupils develop a strong phonic awareness and master effective blending and decoding skills, we have chosen to use a synthetic phonics programme called Read, Write, Inc. produced by Ruth Miskin. Read Write Inc. ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

At Four Acres Academy we aim to develop confident and independent readers by inspiring a love of literature and an enjoyment of reading for pleasure. Reading for pleasure has a dramatic impact on educational outcomes, wellbeing and social mobility, and is also a huge pleasure in itself.

We strongly believe that by teaching our pupils to read, we are teaching them to learn; *"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." – Dr. Seuss*

We value reading as a crucial life skill. One of our utmost goals is that by the time our children leave Four Acres, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our author-readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as author-readers for both pleasure and purpose. Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have an Early Reading Champion who drives the phonics programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the Read Write Inc programme.

The aims of being an Early Reading Champion (Leader) are to:

- instil a love of reading in pupils and families
- promote a consistent and systematic approach to the teaching of synthetic phonics
- build ongoing staff expertise in early reading

- commit that every pupil learns to read (regardless of background, needs or abilities)

Implementation:

Foundations for phonics in Nursery/Preschool

We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children. These include:

- sharing high-quality stories and poems
- learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
- activities that develop focused listening and attention
- developing high-quality spoken language
- oral blending and segmenting skills

We ensure pre-school children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily phonics lesson in reception and year 1/2

- We teach phonics and reading for 40 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term. We use Ruth Miskin's 'Making a Strong Start in Reception' progression to ensure this is planned and delivered with rigour and pace. This document explicitly maps out the expectation of the Aut 1 term in Reception and how this is built upon during the rest of the year. This document can be found as an appendix to this policy.
- We follow the Read Write Inc expectations of progress:
  - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using all of the Set 1 sounds (single letter sounds and some digraphs), including words with adjacent consonants (CCVC/CVCC) with fluency and accuracy. Children will read and begin to spell words using some of the Set 2 sounds. (A wider range of digraphs)
  - Children in Year 1 review Set 2 sounds from Reception and secure all Set 2 sounds for reading and spelling. They are then taught to read and spell words using Set 3 sounds with fluency and accuracy, including additional uncommon digraphs that are statutory but do not appear in the Read Write Inc Set 1, 2 and 3 sounds lists. (e.g ie, au, ear, ue)
  - The full EYFS and Key Stage 1 phonics progression documents can be found on our website and as an appendix to this policy.
- we model ways that a reader uses the sound-symbol relationship to decode unfamiliar words by reading and thinking aloud, with pupils practicing applying this in their own reading
- pupils have a decodable reading practice book matched to their phonic knowledge

Keep-up activities ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has keep-up tutoring, taught by a fully trained adult.

- Keep-up sessions are matched to the pupils needs with the same terminology, resources mantras as the lessons but with more repetition in smaller targeted steps
- Keep up sessions may be 1:1 or in a small group
- If a child is being tutored, they will have an individual progress record to record the impact and progress being made in these sessions.
- Any child in Year 2 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check, continues to have the daily phonics and reading sessions until they complete the Read Write Inc programme. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Read Write Inc half termly reading assessment grids to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and these children also receive daily tutoring sessions. Assessment for these children is completed more regularly to ensure the content matches their need.
- If any child in Year 3 or 4 has not completed the Read, Write Inc programme, they continue to join the daily phonics and reading sessions pitched at the level they need. They will also receive one to one tutoring sessions targeting their specific gaps in phonic knowledge as well as comprehension work with wider texts for exposure.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions

All children that are working through the Read Write Inc programme have a 45-minute session everyday. The first part of this session follows the phonics session structure and then the session moves into reading with a corresponding colour book. We use the Read Write Inc blueprint lesson plans to ensure consistency across the school. Children are assessed every six weeks and grouped into phonics and early reading groups based on this assessment, meaning they are grouped by stage and not age.

- This ensures;
    - All sessions are taught by a fully trained adult in small groups
    - children are working with and reading phonics sounds that are securely matched to their current need
    - regular assessment which allows us to progress children or identify any support required quickly
    - we use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge, using the Read Write Inc half termly reading assessments and colour matching grids
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
    - Accuracy (in decoding)
    - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
    - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.
- These sessions begin when pupils can blend GPCs into word;
    - Children who are not yet decoding and blending have additional blending practice, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.
    - In Reception, children begin reading Red Ditty books. Prior to this, Foundation children continue to work as a base and practise daily reading of decodable 'green words' through Word Time sessions with adults within their team. Children don't begin reading Red Ditty books until they have learnt all of the Set 1 sounds and can blend fluently during Word Time sessions.

- In Year 2 and beyond, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

Parents and carers are able to access a variety of activities held throughout the year to ensure they have the tools to support their child at home.

- A decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family (these are our core storybooks). Taken home after being read several times in school to ensure children can celebrate their reading at home.
    - Children will also be given a 'Book-bag' book that closely matches the phonics learning from their week. These books are designed to be shared and read with an adult and may require some support from the adult to read together.
    - We share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online (using the Ruth Miskin website), through stay and read sessions as well as information sessions and invitations to join a phonics lesson.
    - Parents and carers will regularly be guided on how they can support their child with these books, with parents recording this reading in their child's reading record.
    - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. This is a chance for adults at home to model and promote a real 'love of reading' to their children.
- In Reception, before children begin taking books home, parents support reading with activities that mirror the sounds taught in school as well as a 'Reading for pleasure' book for parents to share. This is explained to parents at their initial 'Welcome to Reception' meeting in September and practice is logged in children's reading records. They are directed to the school website for all supporting resources and any families that cannot access the resources, are provided with paper resources.

Additional reading support for the slowest 20% or those below age related expectations

Children in reception and Year 1 and 2 who are identified as not meeting key milestone expectations also read their decodable reading book to an adult in early bird or after school sessions. This good practice continues into key stage two with a shift in reading focus.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Reception, Year 1 and the Autumn term of Year 2 has a 'milestone' of expectations showing the progress of a child who is on track throughout the Read Write Inc.programme. This provides detailed content, showing the exact sounds that should be taught and mastered each half term. This allows teachers to quickly identify, after the half termly reading assessment, who is off track and who needs rapid support to keep up.

- Teachers use lesson templates for each stage of the programme to ensure a consistent approach and structure is being delivered for each lesson, across all year groups.
- To ensure consistency and quality phonics teaching across the whole stream, weekly practise sessions are held by the Early Reading Champion to provide focused and supportive training for all phonics teachers across the school. The content of these practise sessions is decided by the Early Reading Champion in response to regular coaching/monitoring learning walks throughout all groups.
- Teachers, the Early Reading Champion nd SLT regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data provided by the half termly reading assessments to identify children who need additional support and have gaps in learning.

Instilling a love of reading

- We read to children every day.
- We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at Four Acres Academy and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In nursery/reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their choosing time and the books are continually refreshed.
- Children from reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.

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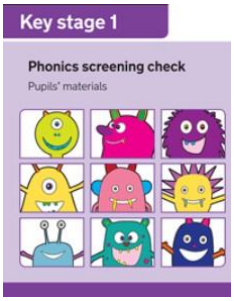
Impact:

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support.

- Assessment for learning is used:
  - daily within class to identify children needing keeping-up support
  - weekly throughout teaching, to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- Summative assessment is used:
  - every six weeks or at the end of each set if earlier, to assess progress and identify gaps in learning that may need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the keep-up tutoring support that may be required.
  - by SLT and scrutinised through the school's own half termly assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Statutory assessment



Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. It is administered during the summer term by a familiar adult. The check involves pupils reading 40 words- 20 real words and 20 pseudo words. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2. These results are reported to parents.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

Children in Year 2 to 4 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly reading assessment records.

Monitoring and Review

The monitoring of this policy will be the responsibility of the Early Reading Champion in conjunction with the Leadership Team. This policy will be subject to a formal review every three years or sooner if significant changes occur.

Procedures for policy monitoring and dissemination

People responsible:

- Matthew Cave (Headteacher)
- Bryony Crocker (English Lead)
- Emma Holland (Early Reading Champion)

Signed……

Date:……

Chair of Governors ……