

2. Sheiling School Statement on Reading and Phonics

Review by EDI AW – March 2021 (Annually)

Ratified by Board: TBC

Full Review date: June 2023

We are a Read Write Inc (RWI) school, following the programme throughout the age range of the school, 6-19, where required. We also use Fresh Start (part of RWI) which is a phonics and comprehension programme designed for older pupils.

Read Write Inc is a systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme which is evidence based and shown to be the best way to teach decoding to ensure early reading skills.

Oxford Owl/ Oxford Reading Tree and RWI books are our main reading programmes. We also use age-appropriate decodable books for our older learners who are still emerging reading.

We follow the five reading pillars, phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. In addition, Professor Snowling's reading research shows that reading requires, phonics and phonological awareness to decode and narrative, active listening and vocabulary to understand.

In Read Write Inc. Phonics students will:

- Learn to decode letter-sound correspondences using their phonic knowledge and skills
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand and comprehend what they read
- Read aloud, where applicable, with fluency and expression
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- Spell by segmenting the sounds in words
- Acquire handwriting

In addition, we utilise one-one precision teaching with teaching staff to support students to explain their learning, using their preferred method of communication, and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on difficulties. Due to the nature of their presentation, with approximately two thirds of pupils at the school having a diagnosis of autism and students having moderate to severe learning difficulties, we utilise and adapt Read Write Inc where needed, for instance, by utilising visual resources to enable assessment of non-verbal students.

In line with our Communication Policy, the school will maintain a Total Communication environment, meaning that students are given every chance to infer and comprehend meaning from the environment and world around them. This involves utilising pictures, symbols, objects, schedules, written words, sign language and verbal speech to support

student understanding. The use of visual symbols, with supporting text is well established in supporting students with learning disabilities and autism to relate picture/concept to word. This is used alongside, not instead of, a phonics-based approach.

The Read Write Inc. programme is followed by all teaching groups with phonics practice on a daily basis. Students learn sounds and the letter or group of letters they need to represent them. The scheme utilises simple mnemonics to help them grasp this. Students have frequent practice, reading higher frequency words with irregular spellings-common exception words.

Reading books are closely matched to the student's increasing knowledge of phonics and common exception words so that they experience success and gain confidence. Students are encouraged to re-read and discuss books, using their preferred method of communication, with staff, supporting increasingly fluency in decoding. Alongside this, teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to students and in supporting them to begin to read a wider range of texts for themselves.

Assessment

We assess all pupils following the Read Write Inc phonics using the Entry Assessment. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points as they progress with the phonics scheme. Students are assessed upon joining the school, so that we can track them effectively.