

Phonics and Reading

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Wisbech School's approach to the teaching of phonics. Our pupils often join us at different stages of their educational journey, and many have experienced gaps or disruption in their prior learning. The systematic teaching of phonics ensures that all pupils are supported to develop secure reading and writing skills, enabling them to access the wider curriculum and achieve their potential.

2. Aims

At Wisbech School we aim to:

- Provide consistent, high-quality phonics teaching across the school.
- Ensure pupils develop secure knowledge of grapheme–phoneme correspondences and blending skills.
- Build fluency and accuracy in reading to foster independence and confidence.
- Support pupils' spelling and writing through accurate encoding of sounds.
- Use phonics as a key tool in closing gaps in literacy and ensuring equity of access to learning.

3. Curriculum Approach

- Wisbech School follows Read Write Inc, VIPERS, Fresh Start and the Twinkl scheme
- Phonics is taught daily, either in class groups or targeted intervention groups, depending on pupil need.
- Lessons follow a consistent structure:
 - Revisit/Review prior learning.
 - Teach new sounds or skills.
 - Practise blending and segmenting.
 - Apply knowledge in reading and writing tasks.
- Teaching is multi-sensory, practical, and engaging to meet the needs of pupils with SEMH and additional learning needs.

Intent

This area is concerned with developing pupils' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, **reading** and writing. At Wisbech School, our objectives in teaching literacy are:

- to teach our students to express themselves clearly in both writing and speech;
- to develop their **reading** skills;
- to enable them to use grammatically correct sentences;
- to teach students to **spell** and punctuate accurately in order to communicate effectively in written English.

In order to achieve these objectives, we have developed a strategy to improve phonics, reading and spelling skills.

Implementation

At Wisbech School, we split our two sites, predominantly, as a primary and a secondary site. Once pupils are ready in both emotional maturity and academically ready, they move from the primary site across to the secondary site.

The strategy is made up of two specific areas - based on which site they attend. While pupils attend the primary site, they are provided with 20 minutes each day where they are able to focus solely on phonics, reading and comprehension skills. When pupils have moved across to, or joined the school at the secondary site they will continue to be supported but in a more bespoke and individual way. Pupils in need of intervention will be identified by their GL reading and spelling ages as well as teacher observation, and will then begin an intervention programme.

The implementation of this strategy is outlined below:

- Staff, who have been trained in the teaching of effective phonics strategies, will work with primary children on a daily twenty-minute programme of phonic interventions. These include:
 - The DfE approved teaching scheme (Twinkl phonics programme) will be used, setting out the different phases of learning that children will need to access in order to develop their phonic knowledge
 - The Literacy Shed 'VIPERS' sessions to improve comprehension (see the VIPERS section)
 - The DfE approved Twinkl spelling scheme will be used once a week supporting pupils with spelling patterns, building on phonics knowledge
 - The Ruth Miskin Read, Write Inc programme will be used for our Nurture groups on both sites and depending on pupil need.
 - Fresh Start will be used for older pupils on both sites to reinforce Phonics teaching and fill in gaps to reading ability.
- These phonics interventions will be rolled out to staff annually at teacher inset days as well as being incorporated into the overall staff training calendar so staff can receive refreshers.
- Each staff member responsible for delivering phonics learning will have a comprehensive set of resources with which to deliver the programme
- When children who attend the secondary site are assessed as having difficulties in reading, through reading and spelling assessments and teacher observation, they are placed on the Fresh Start programme to address these difficulties
- When a pupil joins the school, who is a struggling reader, they will be assessed in the same way and placed on the Twinkl phonics programme
- Struggling readers are supported by staff, who have been trained in supporting reading, in lessons using the 'Teaching Reading' support; and then in Key Reading time they will receive further reading guidance as and when needed
- Children's reading skills are tracked on their individual learning ladders which also tracks their phonics knowledge
- Children have access to a 'Book Fund' which also them to choose a book, suitable for their age, and order it enabling them to read for pleasure.

Personal Development intentions are to ensure that all students

- Are provided with a curriculum that offers opportunity to be exposed to a variety of beliefs and principles. Clear ground rules will be set in line with the core values of the school including fundamental British Values.
- Reflect upon their own beliefs and values and respect those of others
- Are supported to consider and regard the equal opportunity for all and show respect and tolerance of differing religions and beliefs of others.
- Have British Values embedded within the curriculum that prepare students for life in modern Britain when they depart from the school.

- Have awareness of career options relating to Computing and will feel confident in identifying and recognizing how the curriculum may lead to these careers.
- Enrich their learning through Personal Development afternoons as well as extra-curricular activities on offer throughout the school waking day curriculum.
- Meeting expectations of the National Curriculum regarding reading.

Personal Development implementations are to ensure that all students

- Will, through the literature content have exposure to a wealth of beliefs, principles and content that promotes personal development. Students will have access to learning about family values, gender, power and manipulation as well as mental health and current affairs.
- The content of current affairs provides opportunity to experience the beliefs and social constructs of communities and cultures within the wider setting of Britain. British values are embedded through the content of the resources referenced.
- Through exposure to a wide breadth of texts students can build and extend their knowledge, respect and tolerance and prepare for life in modern Britain, embracing the world as rounded, respectful members of society. The fictional aspect of these texts allows students to experience these values in contexts they may not have direct exposure to thus providing opportunity to advance their knowledge of these values and circumstances.
- Are able to transfer their skills to a variety of settings and situations. The importance of key skills is emphasized and repeated throughout all Key Stages in line with the National Curriculum. The analysis of texts and ability to extract information is a lifelong skill that learners can apply to all areas of their lives and learning.
- Students can see directly and potentially indirectly how their learning of communication skills will lend themselves to their personal development. Students are provided with many opportunities to practice speaking and listening with presentation skills as a mode for the delivery of these skills.
- Careers are referenced continually. The English Language curriculum provides multiple opportunities to reference and cite overt career pathways relating to the subject however students can apply their skills to all aspects of their whole school experience, in turn lending to further development in lifelong learning opportunities.
- Awareness of the transferrable skills learnt will be taught and the application of these valuable skills to all careers will be emphasised.
- Will be encouraged to access further and wider reading and through the introduction of a key reading session on a daily basis, enrichment is provided. A library within the school is promoted and students are encouraged to access it to develop their reading abilities as well as access content relating to their personal interests.
- Exposure to literacy across the whole school curriculum ensures learner's personal development continues outside the English classroom in line with National Curriculum expectations.

English Leadership

The subject leader/lead teachers will have oversight of curriculum coverage in English and ensure that the curriculum meets national requirements, making sure that colleagues are aware of expectations.

Subject leaders/lead teachers will ensure that teaching quality is strong and promotes the acquisition of key knowledge, building on prior learning as well as leading professional development, providing guidance and support to colleagues. The subject leader will promote championing of English with colleagues and students.

Leaders will monitor the effectiveness of teaching in English which will be supported by senior leaders.

Evaluating and summarising all aspects of the subject to define next steps for improvement will be paramount to its success.

Teaching Reading using sounds and blending

Read It Procedures

When a pupil struggles to read a word, use the following to support the word reading:

Materials: dry erase board & markers (or paper/pencil)
Write word on the dry erase board (or use paper). Do NOT say the word orally or give clues about it. The child is going to develop the strategy of phonological decoding (sound-based reading of unfamiliar words).
"Here's a word. Please try to read it. I'll help you if you need it," If the child hesitates or doesn't read it with a Blend As You Read approach, then use a small plain card to cover the letter-sounds in the word, revealing only the first 2 sounds (usually a consonant and vowel.)
"Blend these 2 sounds together."
"Good. Now keep holding this sound (tap 2nd letter-sound) and add the next sound (uncover next sound)." If the word is longer than 3 sounds, encourage the student and say, "Keep blending the sounds together. Stretch it out until you say all the sounds together to read the word."
Continue revealing one sound at a time as needed until the student is able to put the sounds together, blending them to read the whole word.
"Yes, that word is ____! I like how you put the sounds together as you read."
Define or elaborate the new word briefly. If word is known to student, simply say the word in the context of a sentence to support meaning and use. Any word that is possibly unknown should be defined briefly & used in a sentence.
"Now you get to write the word. Say each sound as you write each sound in the word." If the student forgets to say a sound, remind her and even consider erasing the word and asking them to do it over again.

Read It Giving Feedback

Here are common errors that students make and ways in which you can respond to them:
Student looks like a deer in the headlights and does nothing. "I'll help you read this word." Cover the last sounds in the word, only revealing the 1st sound. "What is this first sound?...The second?...Now put them together." Continue to support the Blend As You Read strategy. Perhaps "singing the vowel" may help.
Student inaccurately identifies a letter-sound. Just correct the error immediately. We challenge the child's phonemic awareness through questioning and elaboration, but letter-sound knowledge is not as discoverable. "That (tap sound) is actually /__/. This (tap correct sound) is /__/."
Student reads sound-sound-sound and then correctly says the word This is good, but her strategy may not work as easily as words progress in difficulty. The Blend As You Read strategy needs to be developed and practiced. For the next word, cover up all but the first 2 sounds and encourage the child to put these 2 sounds together first.
Student forgets to say sounds as he writes them. Stop him or erase his word or challenge him to a game to help him remember, or be willing, to say each sound as he writes it. Younger children can be encouraged, but if they are straining with handwriting, the teacher can say each sound for the child, instead.
Student reads word but then incorrectly identifies a sound as she writes it Show what that error would create in the word. "That would make this word, /staaap/. That's not a word, is it? :) Remember you read the word as 'sto--p.' So, what's this sound (tap position in word) in /sto--p/?" Exaggerate and elongate the confused sound.
Student adds a sound. "There's no /__/ in this word." Cover up letters in the word to help his focus on the part of the word that was hard. Perhaps tap with a pencil the space where he added the sound.
Student deletes a sound. Tap the missing sound with a pencil. "Don't forget the /__/. Try again."

Impact

The quality of teaching and learning in English has been praised during learning walks by both external and internal observers. Skills acquired in English are also evident across the curriculum in other areas, as many pupils who join at the school have significantly lower starting points than their chronological age, but through English and phonics teaching, are able to make excellent progress. Pupils take spelling and reading age tests each term which demonstrate their progress also. This is tracked centrally by English leads.

Pupils from Key Stage two are tracked using individual learning ladders which measure progress against the National Curriculum objectives. These learning ladders support what to teach and when, as well as highlighting areas that pupils may have missed out on. By Key Stage 4, are able to gain either a GCSE in English Language, achieve a Level 1 or 2 Functional Skills in English or complete the ASDAN Short Course in English.

Most importantly, students frequently express their enjoyment of the subject and their appreciation of what they have gained from reading for pleasure that they can take out into the world.