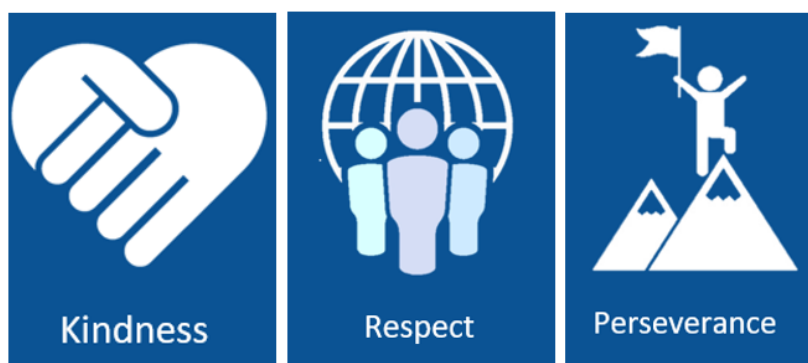


Ditchling (St. Margaret's) CE Primary and Nursery School

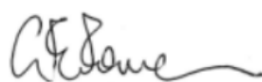
Phonics



'Living life in all its fullness' John 10:10

Version	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date Approved	Next Review Date
2	Ditchling developed Policy	Head/FGB	Feb 2025	Feb 2026

Signed: Chair of Governors



Signed: _Headteacher



Intent

At Ditchling, we strive to teach children to read effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme (RWI) which includes teaching synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary, grapheme-phoneme correspondence as well as decoding and encoding words and accurate letter formation. Children will be able to apply their understanding of graphemes and phonemes to decode a range of words which in turn will allow them to read books that are closely matched to their phonic knowledge. When writing, children will be able to make phonetically plausible attempts to spell unfamiliar words, enabling them to write with an appropriate level of independence for their age. They will also be able to use their phonic knowledge to correctly apply a range of spelling rules to words.

Using the RWI Scheme, to teach children to decode and then read, we aim to teach children from Early Years up to Year 2 to:

- Apply their phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words.
- Respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all common 40+ phonemes.
- Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words that contain the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) that they have been taught.
- Read red words, noting unusual correspondences between spelling and sound.
- Read words containing taught GPCs and –s, –es, –ing, –ed, –er and –est endings.
- Read words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs.
- Read words with contractions and understand that the apostrophe represents the omitted letter(s).
- Accurately read aloud books, that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words.
- Reread books to build up their fluency, accuracy and expression and hence develop confidence and enjoyment of reading.
- Read most high-frequency regular words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending; only needing to sound out unfamiliar words.
- Spell words containing each of the 40+ phonemes by segmenting the sounds in words.
- Spell common exception words correctly.
- Add prefixes and suffixes to previously taught words.
- Spell effortlessly, and with confidence, so that all their focus when writing can be directed towards composition.
- Make phonetically plausible attempts to spell words correctly.
- select the correct GPC for words that contain sounds that have more than one GPC – e.g. ay, ai, a-e etc.
- form each letter correctly, using RWI letter formation rhymes.

Implementation

At Ditchling, we teach reading during daily RWI lessons. By focussing on the teaching of reading in the Early Years and KS1, using a synthetic phonics scheme, children learn to read unfamiliar printed words by blending (decoding) and speedily recognise familiar printed words by sight. We want all children to enjoy and experience early success in learning to read. We are committed to developing children's love of reading and to help them to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. We understand that learning to read and write, alongside proficient language development, is the key to allowing children access to the academic curriculum. Furthermore, fluency of reading is also a key indicator for future success in further education, higher education and employment.

These principles and features characterise our approach to the teaching of reading using RWI:

- Teachers teach RWI using a detailed, proven step-by-step teaching scheme; where children are first taught simple GPCs, to accurately blend taught sounds, to decode simple words containing taught graphemes and then to read specifically designed books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words.
- Pupils are taught within homogenous groups, across year groups, which reflect their performance in RWI phonics assessments. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and ability to read red words; so they experience early reading success and gain confidence that they are readers.
- RWI teachers have all the RWI resources needed to teach RWI, and they follow detailed lesson plans. This ensures the consistency of the teaching of reading, in every RWI lesson, irrespective of the RWI reading teacher.
- Teachers regularly engage in-house CPD sessions, where they learn about pedagogical changes, new RWI resources and to observe and practice specific parts of the teaching process.
- Regular assessment ensures that pupils are taught in homogeneous groups which match their phonic knowledge and reading level. Pupils making speedy progress move groups quickly. Those pupils making steady progress continue at an appropriate pace matched to their reading level. Those pupils making slower progress are usually taught in smaller groups and generally receive additional small group or one-to-one intervention.

We assess all pupils from Reception to Year 2 using RWI Assessment materials. We use this data to assign them to their correct RWI Group and to identify if they need to have any additional support. This provides a good indication of their progress relative to their starting points. We track the phonic progress that pupils make from Reception to Year 2 and, at the end of Year 1 we evaluate pupils' acquisition of GPCs and decoding skills using the Phonics Screening Check (PSC). This ensures that we can maintain high standards in the teaching of the early stages of reading in EYFS (using the Early Learning Goals), in Year 1 (using the PSC materials) and in Year 2 (using the statutory KS1 Reading assessment materials). Pupils in KS2 that are still acquiring word reading skills, continue to be part of the RWI program where appropriate.

Impact

The impact of high-quality synthetic phonics teaching, coupled with vigorous assessment procedures ensures that attainment of Ditchling pupils is well above national expectations.

Children feel confident in using their phonic knowledge and the strategies that they have been taught to read words. This helps them to access a range of materials and develop a love of reading. By taking home RWI books that are closely matched to their phonic knowledge, children can celebrate reading success with their parents and carers which will give them the confidence and motivation to read regularly. This will have a positive impact on the progress that they make. Children will be able to make phonetically plausible attempts at spelling words and therefore communicate their ideas in writing across a range of subjects and for a range of purposes both in and out of school. Based on their phonic knowledge, children can make good spelling choices and spell many words correctly.

Children read at an age-appropriate level with fluency which enables them to access the broader curriculum; develop a life-long love of reading where they read widely with fluency and comprehension and achieve well at EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessment points.

Subject Statement

Aspects of the 2014 National Curriculum for English that are applicable to the early stages of the teaching of reading, aim to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.

Teaching and Learning

Nursery

Daily Nursery RWI lessons start during the summer term. Children are taught two new Set 1 sounds per week, and they also review previously taught sounds every day. Pupils practice Fred talk, to develop decoding skills. Towards the end of the summer term, there is an increase in the phonics focus during daily sessions, where children are encouraged to hear and write the initial and final sounds in words.

Reception

Reception RWI lessons start immediately after the Reception Baseline Assessment and the initial RWI assessments have been completed. Children are organised into RWI Groups based on their phonic knowledge, ability to orally blend taught phonemes and read simple CVC words. This ensures the correct level of support, challenge and progression in the teaching of reading in Reception. Five RWI lessons are taught every week and each lesson lasts for approximately 30-60 minutes. KSI Daily KSI RWI lessons commence at the start of

the academic year; children are grouped by their phonic knowledge as well as their reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension. Five RWI lessons are taught every week and each lesson lasts for approximately 60 minutes. KS2 Children in KS2 that are still learning to read join KS1 RWI groups and have regular Fast Track Tutoring intervention.

Assessment

The programme's 'cycle of instruction' means that, after direct instruction and guided practice, the pupils teach their partner. In this way, children rehearse and consolidate what they have been learning. This helps the pupils to make their understanding clear to themselves and helps the teacher address any misconceptions. 'Partner Practice' is a key assessment tool. Assessment is a critical element of our programme.

The teachers assess:

- Children's phonic knowledge.
- Their ability to apply their phonic knowledge to read words containing taught sounds with accuracy and pace.
- The speed at which pupils can read their RWI text/words
- Their understanding of the stories they read.
- Their ability to blend, read speedy words, pseudo words or text.

Formative Assessment: Daily formative assessment opportunities are built into every RWI lesson. Choral response group work, partner work, the smaller group size (compared to whole class teaching) allows RWI teachers to evaluate children's phonic knowledge and hence modify the pace and focus of their lessons. Formative assessment opportunities provide teachers with knowledge of which children are making slow, steady or speedy progress and hence they can liaise with the Reading Leader to provide additional support (for children making slower progress) or an immediate assessment (for pupils making speedy progress) to allow such pupils to change group. Each RWI teacher completes a formative assessment sheet to demonstrate the progress of children's reading, writing and spelling in their group and this information is passed on to the class teacher.

Summative Assessment: All pupils are assessed every 6-8 weeks, or more frequently for those making speedier / slower progress, using RWI Assessment materials. The assessment is conducted by the class teachers and the materials assess a pupils' sound to grapheme correspondence, ability to apply phonic knowledge to decode regular, common exception words and alien words. Pupils reading fluency is also evaluated.

Summative assessment is used to update RWI tracking documents, which monitor children's progress over time. This is available on the RWI School Portal.

Assessment information, from both the formative and summative assessments are used to provide updates to parents via Parents' Evening updates or more specific meetings with parents.

Planning and Resources

Individual teacher's planning and resourcing of RWI lessons is minimised as we follow the Ditchling RWI planning scheme, which is based on the RWI Handbooks and plans. This ensures consistency across the program, as well as freeing up time for teachers to focus on outstanding and consistent teaching of RWI.

Planning details the focus of each part of the RWI lesson and explains the purpose of the activity to both the teacher and the pupil. Planning also explains the resources needed for each day in a 1-day, 3-day or 5-day teaching cycle.

Every RWI teacher has their own box of RWI Resources these include Set 1, 2 and 3 Speed Sound lesson plans, teaching sequence resources, small and large (A4) Set 1, 2 and 3 cards, Green and Red word cards, Fred the Frog, alien words and multisyllabic words.

RWI storybooks (with Story Green words and Speedy Green words), are organised and kept in a shared area, which provides RWI teachers with easy access to RWI Storybooks and resources.

Teachers teaching the start of the RWI program, where children are learning to recognise and say simple Set 1 sounds, also use magnetic letters and magnetic whiteboards during their phonics lessons.

Organisation

Adults teaching phonics, follow RWI lesson plans, and lessons are taught at a good pace to ensure that all children are engaged and involved in the lesson. Children are praised for their contribution to lessons, reading and effort so that a very positive and respectful teaching environment is maintained. Every part of the lesson is explicitly referred to so that the teachers and the children, know the purpose of the task. Use of effective partner work, turn taking and children taking on the 'teacher role', means that children have an active role in all parts of the lesson. 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 of sounds, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge. Teachers demonstrate their enthusiasm and passion in the program, and this has a very positive impact on the teaching and learning environment.

Nursery

Initially, during the autumn and spring term children develop a love of language and enjoy listening to stories. EYFS staff use 'Fred Talk' and Fred Games (saying words using pure sounds) with the children, with the expectation that the children will begin to encode the words. During the summer term, Nursery teachers use phonics flashcards to teach Set 1 Speed sounds, by the end of the summer term, all Set 1 sounds will have been taught. During this process children hear the sound, see pictures of objects that start with the sound, hear a phrase to assist the children to help remember the sound, see the grapheme, and then write the grapheme. Children review previously taught speed sounds daily and continue to have regular opportunities for Fred talk.

Reception

During the first few weeks of Reception, a Baseline RWI assessment is completed to enable the Phonics Leader to determine the phonic knowledge of each child. Following on from this assessment, children are organised into homogenous groups based on their phonic knowledge. Children that know no or very few sounds learn Set 1 sounds from the beginning, with a focus on repetition and Fred talk. Children that know some sounds, are taught unknown sounds and also have lots of opportunities for oral blending of sounds. Children that know many sounds and can orally blend, focus on learning the technique of assisted blending and then to quickly progress to independent blending. Those children that can orally blend and read CVC words, focus on using known sounds to independently blend words containing 3 or more sounds and reading RWI Storybooks. During their RWI lessons Reception pupils learn sounds and the corresponding grapheme, or groups of letters which represent each phoneme. Simple mnemonics help children to quickly grasp this phoneme-grapheme relationship. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Reception RWI lessons occur during the morning. Videos to support families are sent home by the phonics lead and these videos focus on helping children to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' and hence reduce the number of children needing 1:1 intervention. Speed sound sessions also take place in the afternoon for identified children.

KS1 and KS2

In KS1 pupils work within homogenous groups, which reflect their performance in RWI phonic assessments. We ensure pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and red words, ensuring they experience success, gain confidence and see themselves as readers. Pupils are re-assessed every six to eight weeks and the RWI groups are reorganised accordingly. KS1 RWI lessons occur from 9:20 until 10:20. The phonics lead sends videos to families to support their children at home. These videos focus on helping children to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' and hence reduce the number of children needing 1:1 intervention.

Intervention

Children working considerably below age-expectations are identified and their phonics teacher and class teacher are made aware of this fact. The Phonics Leader discusses ways that the child can be supported in their RWI group, in class and at home. If the child would benefit from inclusion in a 1:1 Fast Track Tutoring (FTT) intervention program, then this is planned for and resourced. The FTT program works best if the child has 5 – 10 minutes per day with an adult where they are taught unknown sounds and read words containing these sounds and also previously taught sounds. This intervention is tracked and monitored. Short additional afternoon RWI sessions, starting during the spring term, these support Y1 children to consolidate their knowledge of the 75 common GPCs and to read words containing these sounds. Children that already know all these sounds are taught in a group which focusses on the comprehension of age-appropriate texts. The Phonics Lead works with parents of children that are working considerably below age expectations; this takes the form of meetings, providing resources on Tapestry, modelling lessons and/or providing links to RWI videos on the RWI Portal.

Equal Opportunities

At Ditchling Primary school, we are committed to providing a teaching environment which ensures all children are provided with the same learning opportunities regardless of social class, gender, culture, race and disability or learning difficulties. The school strives to ensure the active participation and progress of all children in their learning. All children will be given equal opportunities to achieve their best full potential, whatever their current attainment and irrespective of gender, ethnic, social or cultural background, home language or any other aspect that could affect their participation or the progress of which they are capable.

Inclusion

All pupils are entitled to access RWI resources and teaching at a level appropriate to their needs arising from race, gender, ability or disability.

A range of inclusion strategies are embedded in practice and teachers are aware of the special educational needs of the children in their RWI group, PPG children and those children who have English as an additional language.

The 2014 National Curriculum states that:

‘Pupils who grasp concepts rapidly should be challenged through being offered rich and sophisticated problems before any acceleration through new content. Those who are not sufficiently fluent with earlier material should consolidate their understanding, including through additional practice, before moving on.’

Pupils making accelerated progress will move groups to ensure that an appropriate level of challenge is provided. Pupils that need additional support to consolidate their phonic knowledge and its application will generally be taught in smaller groups where they have the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge prior to moving onto the next stage. If appropriate, further intervention will be provided to support their phonic development. Specific arrangements for the provision of children with SEND will be communicated to parents and carers during SEND reviews.

Role of the Subject Leader

The Phonics Leader:

- Oversees the assessment of all Reception & Key Stage 1 pupils and reviews assessment data to organise pupils to the correct RWI groups.
- Ensures RWI teachers have got a list of graphemes that their group requires consolidation of and other organisational support.
- Assigns RWI teachers to RWI groups.
- ‘Drops in’ on RWI groups to give advice and to informally check that pupils are in the correct groups through learning walks and scrutiny of work.
- Where necessary, models lessons, team-teaches and coaches existing and new staff.
- Organises RWI Development Days, led by a RWI consultant trainer, where the teaching of RWI at Ditchling is reviewed and assessed. The RWI trainer also coaches staff, supports

RWI intervention teachers, updates the RWI Lead on new practices and helps the RWI Lead to create a plan of action to help develop the teaching of reading.

- Ensures that all staff are trained in RWI Phonics and book regular Development Days with RWI consultant trainers.
- Liaises with the Head Teacher regarding groupings, teaching spaces, staffing, training, progress, additional support and other relevant matters.
- Is responsible for reporting to the governors about the quality of the implementation of RWI and the impact on standards.
- Organises the Fast Track Tutoring program for any children that require additional intervention to learn to read.
- Meets with the RWI team, on a regular basis, focussing on the coaching, modelling and the development teaching of one aspect of the teaching of RWI, to ensure that RWI is taught to a consistently high level across the school.
- Organises workshops with parents.
- Liaises with class teachers to discuss the progress of children in RWI.
- Advises teachers on children's reading levels and targets for end-of-year reports.
- Ensure that the teaching of reading at Ditchling follows current guidance and advice e.g. The reading framework, EYFS Development Matters 2020 and Birth to Five Matters.

Parents/Carers

In Nursery and Reception, whilst children are learning the Set 1 speed sounds at school, children will have the opportunity of practising the speed sounds that they have learned at school with their parents/carers. When children can blend independently, RWI ditties and Storybooks will be sent home so that children can read these books to their parents. We teach RWI using a 1-day, 3-day or 5-day plan (depending on the stage of the RWI program that the child is on) to read storybooks so children will read their book several times before the book is changed. This is because each read through of the book focusses on specific skills; decoding, reading with expression, accuracy and fluency as well as reading for comprehension. We also send home a list of irregular words (red words) that need to be known by sight and cannot be decoded using common graphemes.

We invite all parents/carers to an initial meeting at the start of every academic year. This is to show them how they can support their children to read at home, depending on which stage of the RWI program they are on. We also provide Phonics Screening Check information for Year 1 parents, during the spring term, to help parents understand the PSC and suggest ways to best support their child at home. RWI videos are sent home to families via Tapestry or via email.

We encourage parents to help their child learn to read. Use the following link to gain further information: <https://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/parents/> Parents are informed of their child's progress during the Parents' Evenings during the autumn, spring and summer terms and in the annual end-of-year report. Details are also published on our website.