



Phonics Policy
September 2025
Review date: June 2026

Subject Statement

At Barwick and Stoford Primary School, 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, decoding and encoding words as well as spelling and accurate letter formation.

Using the RWI Scheme 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 40+ phonemes
- Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) that they have been taught
- Read common exception 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)
- read books aloud, accurately, that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words
- Reread these books to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading
- Read most words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding and blending, when they have been frequently encountered
- Spell words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught by segmenting the sounds in words
- Spell common exception words
- Add prefixes and suffixes to previously taught words
- Spell effortlessly so that all their focus when writing can be directed towards composition

At Barwick and Stoford Primary School, these skills are embedded within daily RWI lessons. By focussing on the teaching of skilled word reading in the Early Years and KS1, using a synthetic phonics scheme, children learn to pronounce unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and speedily recognise familiar printed words. 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.

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 small homogenous groups, vertically 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 'tricky words'; so they experience early reading success and gain confidence that they are readers.
- RWI teachers have all of the RWI resources needed to teach RWI and they follow detailed lesson plans to maintain consistency of the teaching of reading across every RWI lesson, irrespective of the RWI reading teacher.
- Teachers attend weekly regular in-house CPD practise sessions, where they have the opportunity to 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 and 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 are able to maintain high standards in the teaching of the early stages reading in EYFS (using the Reading statements in the EYFS Profile), in Year 1 (using the PSC materials) and in Year 2 (using the statutory KS1 Reading assessment materials).

Children in year 3 and 4 who require additional phonics teaching continue with RWI in vertical groups until they are fluent readers.

Teaching and Learning

This is based on the 5 Ps. Praise – Children learn quickly in a positive climate.

Praise

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!

Practice.

Nursery

Nursery children have daily exposure to phase one (RWI Nursery) through embedded routines and planned activities. Children who are developmentally ready to move onto Set 1 formal are introduced to letter sounds through the RWI Nursery Scheme with a short 15min session daily.

Years R – 2

Children are vertically grouped into phonic classes these are taught for an hour every morning. (Children who are assessed as still requiring phonics teaching in year 3 and 4 follow this program) RWI lesson sequence as follows:

- Speed sound lesson - children learn or revisit a phoneme or a grapheme and practice reading it in words and spelling 10 minutes
- Handwriting - 5 minutes
- Linked text - children practise reading words that will appear in the text, read the text, and listen to the teacher read the text and answer comprehension questions orally. 10 minutes
- Write about - children write a supported sentence/paragraph(s) about the text 20-30minutes
- Story - children listen to a story on a similar theme to the next text.

Children take home a Book Bag book that is phonetically matched to the sounds being taught. Year 1 children have an additional speed sounds lesson daily at the start of the afternoon to close sound gaps and practise reading real and nonsense words.

Inclusion

All pupils are entitled to access RWI resources and teachings at a level appropriate to their needs arising from race, gender, ability or disability. A range of inclusion strategies, as listed on the school's inclusion planning key, are embedded in practice and teachers are aware of the special educational needs of the children in their RWI group, as well as those who have English as an additional language.

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.

In years 5 and 6, children who require additional support attend interventions where they follow the RWI 'Fresh Start' Programme. This follows the same structure as RWI lessons (mentioned above) but with more age - related texts.

Assessment

Assessment for Learning:

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

The teachers' assess: - pupils' phonic knowledge - the speed at which pupils are able to read the text
- their understanding of the stories they read

Formative Assessment:

Daily formative assessment opportunities are built into every RWI lesson. Choral response, group work, partner work, the small class size all allow teachers to evaluate pupils' phonic knowledge and hence modify the pace and focus of their lessons. Formative assessment opportunities proved 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.

Summative Assessment:

All pupils are assessed every 6-8 weeks, or more frequently for those making speedier progress, using RWI Assessment materials. The assessment is conducted by the Reading Leader and the materials assess a pupils' sound to grapheme correspondence, ability to apply phonic knowledge to decode regular words and to read common exception words. Pupils reading fluency is also evaluated. Pupils' progress is tracked, to record their phonic knowledge and decoding skills, and this information is used to reorganise groups, RWI Storybook level and the focus of the phonics input of the lesson.

Summative assessment is used to update RWI tracking sheets, which monitors pupils' progress over time, and also to update AWL assessment grids. Assessment information, from both the formative and summative assessment progresses, is used to provide updates to parents via Parents' Evening updates or more specific meetings with parents. Planning and Resources Planning is minimised as we follow the RWI Handbooks and plans. This ensures consistency across the program, as well as freeing up time for teachers to source additional resources etc. to make the lesson come alive to the class. 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 3 or 5-day teaching cycle.

Every RWI teacher has their own box of RWI Resources these include: simple and complex speed sounds charts, small and large phonic flash cards, magnetic boards and letters, green 5 and red word flash cards, phonics wall friezes and Fred the Frog. Set 1, 2 and 3 teaching sequence resources. RWI storybooks (with Story Green words and Speedy Green words), ditties and linked texts and props are all stored in the lower school office.

Organisation

Teachers follow the RWI lesson plans and ensure that the 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, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge. Teachers demonstrate their enthusiasm and passion in the program and this has a very positive affect on the teaching and learning environment.

Role of the Subject Leader

The RWI Reading Leader:

- Oversees the assessment of all Reception & Key Stage 1/2 pupils and designate pupils to the correct groups
- Provide RWI teachers with a list of graphemes that their group requires consolidation of • 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 model lessons
- Delivers a weekly practise session to all staff delivering the RWI scheme
- Ensures that all staff are trained on RWI Phonics and book regular development days with RWI trainers
- Does not have her own reading group but covers for staff absence, assesses, models and coaches RWI teachers
- Speaks with the head teacher regarding groupings, teaching spaces and other relevant matters
- Is responsible for reporting to the governors about the quality of the implementation of RWI and the impact on standards
- Tutors children one to one and trains TAs to do the same • Organises regular workshops with parents
- Liaise with class teachers to discuss the progress of children in RWI
- Provides class teachers with a report on children’s RWI grouping, any sounds needed to be consolidated and also any additional comments.

Parents In Nursery and Reception, whilst children are learning the Set 1 speed sounds at school, children will have the opportunity to practise the speed sounds that they have learned at school with their parents/carers using the speed sound practise books. When children can blend independently, RWI ditties and Storybooks will be sent home so that children can read these books to their parents. We change the story books at the beginning of each new class book so this may be every 3 days or every 5. 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 invite Nursery, Reception and Year 1 parents/carers to initial meetings at the start of every academic year and we hold workshops, during the year, to show how parents can help their children read at home, depending on which stage of the RWI program they are on. We also hold a Phonics Screening Check meeting for Year 1 parents, during the spring term, to help parents understand the PSC and suggest ways to best support their child at home. We encourage parents to help their child learn to read. With links on the school website to gain further information. Parents are informed of their child’s progress at open evenings and in the annual end of year report .

Vocabulary

- Teachers are to use the term ‘special friends’ to refer to digraphs and trigraphs.

- Children spot special friends in word before they decode them.
- We use 'Fred' frog and 'Fred' fingers to decode words.
- Decodable words are displayed in green and tricky words are displayed in red in all displays and on working walls

Assessment and Monitoring

- From years R – 2 children are vertically grouped into phonic classes these are taught for an hour every morning. (children who are assessed as still requiring phonics teaching in year 3 and 4 follow this program)
- Children are assessed every 6-8 weeks and move fluidly through the groups.
- Year 1 use previous phonics screeners and RWI phonics screener assessments to inform teaching (see assessment cycle).
- All Year 1 children sit the phonics screener at the end of the year.
- All children in Year 2 that failed the phonics screener complete a practise Phonics Screener check every term, to inform teaching and until they pass.

Resources

- There is a central Phonics Resource storage area in the lower school office.
- Each group has a phonics teaching box which contains all the resources required to teach that group. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure that these resources are returned at the end of the term ready for the next member of staff to use.
- Teachers have a login for Oxford Owl where resources linked to RWI books and interactive activities should be used to support teaching.
- Teachers also have a login to the Ruth Miskin website which has training videos and additional documents.

Interventions

- Pinny time staff in Reception, Year 1 and 2 have aprons which they store speed sound cards and green/red word cards. These are then used to target specific children across the day to ensure that they receive additional exposure and teach of sounds/words they require.
- A specific TA has been trained to run interventions daily with targeted children identified through assessment. These interventions are tracked and monitored to ensure impact. As often as possible the interventions are 1:1.

Parents

- Parents are invited to the Phonics workshops school club x2 terms a year to have an insight and workshop into how their children learn phonics.
 - Children will take home a Book Bag Book which directly links to the Colour level of their teaching.
 - Slower learners will also have an extra blending book sent home in order to practice further.

