



## **Boston Endeavour Academy**

### **Phonics and Reading Policy**



At Boston Endeavour Academy, we have adopted the 'Read, Write, Inc' Phonics and reading programme. The programme has been validated by the DfE and is an approved programme which provides effective systematic and synthetic teaching of phonics.

Our pupils have a range of needs and are working significantly below their chronological age. Majority of pupils have difficulties with communication and interaction and therefore may not be ready yet for phonics. We have created a criterion to assess each child individually to determine their suitability for the programme.

#### Criteria:

- Sustained engagement for up to 5 minutes
- Have the physical skills to visually track
- Understand the function of a book
- Has acquired enough muscular practice to verbalise simple words
- Have a functional communication system in place, e.g., eye gaze, iPad, use of switches, communication boards etc. to non-verbally demonstrate reading ability
- Have the knowledge to know the alphabet/ alphabetic code
- Beginning to distinguish between letters and words
- Beginning to demonstrate understanding that letters join to make words
- Understand some conventions of print and know where to start reading

(Where adaptations can be made to remove a barrier to a pupil accessing phonics, this will be done and monitored. Alternatively, pupils will be provided with time to learn the prerequisite skills with a view to review if they are phonics ready.)

Learners who are on the Phonics Reading Pathway at Boston Endeavour will follow Read, Write, Inc Phonics. Learners will have daily phonics and reading lessons (Monday -Thursday), for one hour.

#### **In Read Write Inc. Phonics pupils learn to:**

- say and read 70+ sounds and the corresponding letter/letter groups using simple picture prompts
- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills so that they can put all their energy into comprehending what they read
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read
- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- Spell quickly and effortlessly by segmenting the sounds in words
- Acquire good handwriting.

In addition, 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.

We group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing is slower than progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

In Set 1 group A, we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress and this learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – common exception words. We ensure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding. Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry, and non-fiction to pupils.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We encourage them to compose each sentence aloud until they are confident to write independently. We make sure they write every day. Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge. The quality of the vocabulary they use in their writing reflects the language they have heard in the books the teacher has read to them; they have also discussed what the words mean.

Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible. The sooner they complete it, the sooner they will be able to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

The programmes' 'cycle of instruction' means that, after direct instruction and guided practice, the pupils teach another pupil. 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.

In Read Write Inc. Phonics, because the pupils are grouped across the school in terms of their reading ability, they are reading at an appropriate decoding level every day. The homogeneous groups in the Phonic lessons help us to focus the teaching and ensure pupils learn to read quickly.

The reading leader records the results from Assessments 1, 2 and 3, which take place every half-term. This data allows us to intervene in different ways. For instance, we quickly move pupils to another group if they are progressing faster than their peers. Those who continue to struggle have one-to-one tutoring so that they keep up (**where appropriate – please note that due to some pupil's additional needs and disabilities they cannot always cope with this additional demand**).

The Read Write Inc. programmes have detailed lesson plans. These give the teachers practical day-to-day guidance, but we work hard to build on these plans so that the lessons are matched carefully to the needs of their particular group. Every activity is prepared thoroughly and has a clear purpose. The teacher explains this at the beginning so that the pupils understand, during the activity, what they are learning and why.

### **Additional support for lower-attaining pupils learning to read**

Pupils in the 'lowest' attaining group have the widest variety of needs. This is therefore the least homogeneous group. To give these pupils, the same carefully targeted teaching as all the other groups, some of these pupils have additional one-to-one tutoring for 10 to 20 minutes twice a week, in addition to their group session in the morning. This tutoring helps us to meet their individual needs. Once these pupils have learnt to read, they will receive additional support when learning to spell.

### **Feedback and marking**

We emphasise constructive feedback. For example, we praise pupils for how hard they work together to ensure that their learning is successful. We have clear systems for marking pupils' work. Pupils know their teacher's expectations for each activity. We mark short activities with the pupils in the lesson. Extended pieces are marked afterwards. We discuss the outcomes with the group and individuals so that the marking is genuinely used to take forward pupils' learning.

### **Homework**

We support pupils to select appropriate books to take home, depending on what support they might receive at home. Pupils who receive little help take home books that they have already read in the Read Write Inc. Phonics lesson. This means that they are confident to read at home, even if their parents cannot read with them. Pupils also take home stories and non-fiction that they cannot yet read for themselves but that have been read to them. Stories and new vocabulary are explained and discussed so all pupils have access to the books they read. Pupils also take home familiar picture books so that they can re-tell the story out loud and recall details and vocabulary.

### **Quality of teaching and pupils' progress**

The headteacher and reading leader monitor pupils' progress together until every child can read. No child is left behind to struggle. Every group leader delivering Phonics within our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. All staff use the same language, routines, and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load. We record lesson observations and any subsequent coaching alongside the 'teacher tracker' so that we can see if there is a correlation between the quality of the teaching and the progress pupils make. Group leaders complete a weekly content grid to map out the speed sounds taught throughout the term to support formal assessments.

1. Close grouping in Phonics is maintained – pupils are moved on quickly.
2. The purpose of each activity is clear to both teachers and pupils.
3. Planning and marking is thorough.
4. In Phonics, pupils read books at home that closely match their word reading ability.

5. Teaching is monitored thoroughly (see Leadership and Management).

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

#### **Shared vision**

The school's shared vision is that every pupil learns to read quickly and continues to read – widely and often. The reading leader works with all the staff to ensure that this happens. Focusing on monitoring the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for staff.

The role of the reading leader is critical. Alongside the headteacher, the reading leader drives the teaching of Read Write Inc. Phonics, ensuring that all pupils follow the programme where appropriate.

The reading leader's roles include:

- ensuring that our teaching of reading is of the highest quality and that all our pupils make progress
- ensuring pupils in the 'lower progress' group are making good progress and organising one-to-one tutoring for the pupils who need extra support
- keeping the groups homogeneous, i.e., at the same reading level
- providing further training (through masterclasses, coaching/ observation and face-to-face feedback).

Teachers alert the reading leader to any pupil whose progress is faster or slower than the rest of their group. The reading team is made up of a team of good teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) who each teach a group of pupils at the same reading level. Our TAs generally teach small groups of four to eight.

#### **Professional development**

A key element of Read Write Inc. is consistent whole-school practice, underpinned by appropriate professional development. The headteacher, all the teachers and teaching assistants are trained to teach reading. All staff have attended two-day Phonics training and we will have annual development days with our Read, Write, Inc trainer.

#### **Ensuring Reading for Pleasure**

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

- 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 Boston Endeavour and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- In an Investigators/ Adventurers classroom, pupils who are able to, will read daily, reinforcing their phonics skills and fluency.
- As our pupils' progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read within their reading for pleasure passports which provide reading suggestions too.
- Pupils have open access to a library area within school where they can exchange their home reading books.

## **Accelerated Reader**

Pupils beyond the stages of Read, Write, Inc follow the Accelerated Reader programme which aims to ignite an interest in reading amongst pupils and to develop comprehension skills. Each pupil will complete STAR assessments each half term to determine their reading level and areas for development. Pupils are then able to access books matched to their appropriate reading level and after reading, will complete a short multiple-choice quiz online to assess their understanding of what they have read. If pupils score 60% or more in the quiz, they will score points towards their personal target. The number of books read and scores in quizzes will be monitored, and teachers will provide 15 minutes quiet reading time in school most days. Children are expected to read at home 3 times a week for a further 10-15 minutes or more, if possible.