

## **St. Mark's Elm Tree approach to phonics and the teaching of reading.**

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the *Read Write Inc. Phonics* programme.

### **The *Read Write Inc.* Phonic programme**

The programme is for:

- ☑ pupils in Year R to Year 2 who are learning to read and write
- ☑ any pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly.

Struggling readers in Years 5 and 6 follow *Read Write inc.* very rarely, however it is a 'catch up' option

We teach pupils to:

decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills

read 'tricky' 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 easily 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 will lag behind progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

In Year R 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. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – 'tricky words'.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the 'tricky 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. 2

Alongside this, the teachers read (and discuss) 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, that is, they use their knowledge of the alphabetic code and the tricky words they have learnt. They can soon spell more complex words confidently and accurately. 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.

## **Achievement in our school**

### **Assessing and tracking progress**

We assess all pupils from Year R to Year 4 on the *Read Write Inc.* Sound and Word Entry Assessment and we use these data to assign them to either *Read Write Inc.* Phonics. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points. We do this for all pupils, whenever they join us, so we can track all of them effectively, including those eligible for the pupil premium.

For those on the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme, we record their starting date and entry point on the tracker to monitor the rate at which they are making progress. We can also easily identify those who joined the programme later.

By the end of Key Stage 1, our pupils are able to read aloud age-appropriate texts accurately and with sufficient speed. This means that we can focus on developing their comprehension, preparing them well for transition to Key Stage 2. Their good decoding skills mean that they have a sound strategy for decoding unfamiliar words when they come across them at whatever stage or in any subject, even into secondary school.

Pupils who are making slower progress usually complete the programme by the end of Year 2. We support pupils who have identified special educational needs for however long it takes until they can read. 3

### **Children who are off the *Read Write Inc.* phonic program**

Reading is taught through Reading Together. This a whole class reading scheme designed to ensure all children read a high quality text together. The children who no longer need *Read Write Inc. phonics* access this for 40 minutes a week, within their class. Reading Together allows the children's comprehension skills to be developed and challenged in a range of ways, through questioning or through verbal and written responses to a text. Vocabulary understanding and meaning is discussed and a focus is put on how children can work out the meaning of unknown words using a variety of skills taught in school.

Children also access a wide range of reading through planned English lessons.