



WREN'S NEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Key Policy 2025-2026

Learning to Read (Phonics) Policy

September 2025

Document to be read in conjunction with ***other key school policies (listed within document)***



Wren's Nest Primary School



Learning to Read Policy - September 2025

How we teach your children to read and write

Every child deserves success right from the start. We know that the sooner children learn to read, the greater their success at school. This is why we put reading at the heart of what we do. We use a teaching programme called *Read Write Inc. Phonics* to teach our children to read and write. We make sure every child can read the last set of phonic stories before they progress to our higher level programmes - Literacy and Language, and Spelling. Some children complete the programme in Year 1 and others in Year 2. Year 3 and 4 children who need extra support follow this programme too.

During this time, we group children by their reading progress for one hour a day (20 to 45 minutes in Reception) and re-assess children every half-term so we can place them in the group where they'll make the most progress. We provide extra daily one-to-one sessions for children who need a bit of a boost to keep up.

How do we get children to remember what we teach them?

It's much easier teaching one child - we can get them to repeat what they have understood in their own words, step by step. Then, if they haven't understood, we can try different words and explanations. So, in order to replicate this back and forth dialogue with a group or class, we use partner work. Children answer every question with a partner, the teacher checks what they know and only moves on when they understand. It means that all children stay focused throughout the lesson. Partner talk is fundamental to the success of our school. We use, 'Turn to your partner' in every lesson throughout the day.

How do we make phonics easy for children to learn?

Read Write Inc. Phonics depends upon children learning to read and write sounds effortlessly, so we make it simple and fun.

The phonic knowledge is split into two parts.

First, we teach them one way to read and write the 40+ sounds in English. We use pictures to help, for example we make 'a' into the shape of an apple, 'f' into the shape of a flower. These pictures help *all* children, especially slower starters, to read the sounds easily.

Children learn to read words by sound-blending using a frog called Fred. Fred says the sounds and children help him blend the sounds to read each word.

Then we teach children the different spellings of the same sounds, for example, they learn that the sound 'ay' is written ay, a-e and ai; the sound 'ee' is written ee, e and ea. We use phrases to help them remember each sound for example, ay, may I play, a-e - make a cake?

How do we ensure children can read every book?

The first thing we do is to give children books we *know* they can read - without any guessing. (We read lots of other stories to them, but do not expect them to read these yet.)

Before they read the story, they sound out the names of characters and new words, practise reading any of the 'tricky red' words and tell them a thought-provoking introduction to get them excited about the story.

Then, over three days, children read the story three times: first to focus on reading the words carefully; the second to help them read the story fluently; and on the third, we talk about the story together for example, how characters might be feeling and why. By the time your child reads the story to you at home, they will be able to read it confidently with expression.

How do we teach children to spell confidently?

We use just two simple activities: Fred Fingers to spell regular words and Red Rhythms for tricky words.

Fred Fingers

We teach children to spell using 'Fred Fingers': we say a word and then children pinch the sounds onto their fingers and write the word, sound by sound.

Red Rhythms

We teach tricky words with Red Rhythms. We say the tricky letters in a puzzled or annoyed voice and build the letter names up into a rhythm, for example, s-ai-d.

Children learn to spell new words and review past words every week, they practise spelling them with a partner and - when they're ready - we give them a test to celebrate their spelling success.

How do we make writing simple for children to learn?

We teach handwriting, spelling and composition separately, gradually bringing each skill together step-by-step.

We teach children to form letters with the correct pencil grip and in the correct sitting position from the very beginning. They practise handwriting every day so they learn to write quickly and easily.

Once children can write simple words, we teach them to 'hold' a sentence in their heads and then write it with correct spelling and punctuation.

Very soon children are able to write down their own ideas. We try out different sentences together, drawing on new vocabulary and phrases from the storybook they've just read. They practise saying their sentences out loud first so they don't forget their ideas while they're writing. They also learn to proofread their own writing using ready-made sentences containing common grammar, punctuation and spelling errors.

Story and poetry time

Storytime is the highlight of every day. We have a bank of fairy stories that children get to know really well, and others we read just for fun. You can find the list of fairy stories on our school's

website (see Appendix 6) so you can read different versions to your children at home. Children learn to retell the story, learn the refrains by heart and act out the stories in the role-play area. Children learn poetry too. We've chosen wonderful, memorable poems so children can learn them by heart. The poems focus upon feelings and situations with which young children are likely to be familiar, e.g. bedtime, siblings and feeling poorly.

How can you help at home?

Here are two things that will make the biggest difference to your child's progress. Every night:

1. Read a bedtime story to your child.

Your child will bring home lovely books from their class story corner. Read these stories to your child – don't ask them to read the story themselves as this is beyond their current reading stage. There is some really good advice about how to make bedtime story time fun on www.ruthmiskin.com/parents

2. Listen to your child read the storybook we send home.

Your child will bring home a reading book suitable for them to read. Please discuss the book with your child and ask questions relating to what they have read. Try to ask open questions that involve a more detailed answer. Praise your child for how well they read – celebrate what a great reader they are. They'll sometimes bring home previous stories they have read too. Re-reading stories develops their fluency on every reading. There's more good advice on how to listen to your child read on www.ruthmiskin.com/parents

3. Book Bingo

Your child will receive a 'Book Bingo' book to share with an adult at home. Again please ask your child questions relating to the book. Once they have shared this book it can be changed for another book out of the box. Your child will have a bingo card where it is marked off when they have read or shared a book at home. The idea is to mark off the whole of the card. Prizes are awarded for each line, row and full bingo card. Your child's class teacher will ask questions about the book to find out if the book has been read or shared with at home.

Monitoring and Review

The whole policy is available for all parents from the school office and published on the school website. www.wrensnest.org.uk

The Reading Leader and the Curriculum and Standards Committee of the Governors will review the policy annually.

Date: September 2025

Review date: September 2026

Appendix 1



Speed Sound Set 1 Knowledge Organiser



Read Write Inc.
Phonics

Speed Sounds Set 1

m	a	s	d	t
i	n	p	g	o
c	k	u	b	f
e	l	h	sh	r
j	v	y	w	th
z	ch	qu	x	ng

Red Words

Put, the, I, no, of, my, for, he, your, said, you, be, are, to, me, go, baby, paint

Key Vocabulary

Fred Talk —Fred is the green frog who can only speak in sounds. So Fred talk is when the children sound out each sound to help them blend and read the word.

Fred out loud —sound out the word by talking out loud.

Fred in your head —sound out the word in your head.

Special Friends —are two letters that make one sound. E.g ay in p-lay

Blend —putting sounds together to read.

Segment —breaking up a word into sounds.

Red words —These are tricky words that cannot be sounded out with Fred talk. E.g the, all.

Fred fingers —When segmenting a word we match each sound to a finger and press the finger as we say the sound to help us write.

Nonsense words —words that are not real words but allow the children to practice Fred talking and blending sounds.

Magnet eyes —When the teacher says "Magnet eyes" this is the signal for the children to look at the teacher.

Stop —When the teacher holds their hand up in the air this is a silent signal that means stop.

My turn, your turn —The teacher places their hand on their chest to signal it is their turn to talk. The teacher stretches their hand out with their palm facing upwards to indicate to the children it is their turn to repeat what has been said.

Examples of nonsense words:

sut, yad, reb, jub, uct, dat, cag, rin, ept, jash, chum, shig



a	b	c	d	e	f
Around the apple and down the leaf.	Down the leaves to the head and around the tail.	Curly around the caterpillar.	Around the dinosaur's bottom, up his tall neck & down to his foot.	Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.	Down the stem and draw the leaves.
g	h	i	j	k	l
Around the girl's face, down her hair and give her a cut.	Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.	Down the body and dot for the head.	Down his body, curl, dot for his head.	Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.	Down the long leg.
m	n	o	p	qu	r
Down Mavis, mountain, mountains.	Down Noddy and over his net.	All around the orange.	Down the pirate's plait and around his face.	Round her head, up past her ear, down her hair and then.	Down the robot's back and curl over his arm.
s	t	u	v	w	x
Slither down the snake.	Down the tower, across the tower.	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.	Down a wing, up a wing.	Down, up, down, up.	Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.
y	z				
Down a horn, up a horn and under head.	Zig zag zig.				

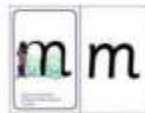
Key Information

Speed Sounds Set 1

To begin with we learn a new sound every 2 days. We use pure sounds so that your son/daughter will be able to blend the sounds into words more easily.

Letter-sound pictures are used to help your son/daughter learn these sounds quickly.

e.g. mmmaissie mmmountain is transformed into m



t-t-t-tower is transformed into t



Set 1 sounds are taught in the following order:

masdt inpgoc kub felh rjvy wxz

Then the following set 1 special friends are then taught:

sh th ch qu ng nk

Appendix 2



Speed Sound Set 2 Knowledge Organiser



Speed Sounds Set 2

ay may I play?	ee what can you see?	igh fly high	ow blow the snow	oo poo at the zoo
oo look at a book	ar start the car	or shut the door	air that's not fair	ir whirl and twirl

Read Write Inc. Phonics

ou
shout it out

oy
toy for a boy

Red Words

All, like, I've, want, call, we, her, she, washing, some, so, what they, do, old, was, saw, watch, school, watch(es), small, their, were, who, tall, one, brother, I'm, there, any, where, wall.

Key Vocabulary

Fred Talk —Fred is the green frog who can only speak in sounds. So Fred talk is when the children sound out each sound to help them blend and read the word.

Fred out loud —sound out the word by talking out loud.

Fred in your head —sound out the word in your head.

Special Friends —are two letters that make one sound. E.g ay in p-l-ay

Blend —putting sounds together to read.

Segment —breaking up a word into sounds.

Red words —These are tricky words that cannot be sounded out with Fred talk. E.g the, all.

Fred fingers —When segmenting a word we match each sound to a finger and press the finger as we say the sound to help us write.

Nonsense words —words that are not real words but allow the children to practice Fred talking and blending sounds.

Examples of nonsense words:

toop, zat, veep, figh, vair, nirth, morch, shoom, trow



Appendix 3



Speed Sound Set 3 Knowledge Organiser



Speed Sounds Set 3

ea cup of tea	oi spoil the boy	Read Write Inc. Phonics		
a-e make a cake	i-e ride a bike	o-e phone home	u-e huge brute	aw yawn at dawn
are sare and thore	ur nurse with a purse	er a better letter	ow brown cow	ai snail in the rain
oa goat in a boat	ew cheer the crew	ire fire, feet	ear fear with your ear	ure sure it's pure

Red Words

does, other, two, could, ball, would, wash, water, anyone, over, wasn't, through, once, son, whole, people, should, come, many, mother, above, father, here, buy, bought, great, someone, another, walk, caught, worse, everyone, talk, thought, love, wear

Examples of nonsense words:

wirp, dake, frerb, bline, braits, meve, meast, vaw, pobe, scrid, splire



Key Vocabulary

Fred Talk —Fred is the green frog who can only speak in sounds. So Fred talk is when the children sound out each sound to help them blend and read the word.

Fred out loud —sound out the word by talking out loud.

Fred in your head —sound out the word in your head.

Special Friends —are two letters that make one sound. E.g ay in p-l-ay

Chatty Friends —these are special friends that are split up by another sound going between them. E.g a-e in s-n-a-k-e

Red words —These are tricky words that cannot be sounded out with Fred talk. E.g the, all.

Fred fingers —When segmenting a word we match each sound to a finger and press the finger as we say the sound to help us write.

Nonsense words —words that are not real words but allow the children to practice Fred talking and blending sounds.

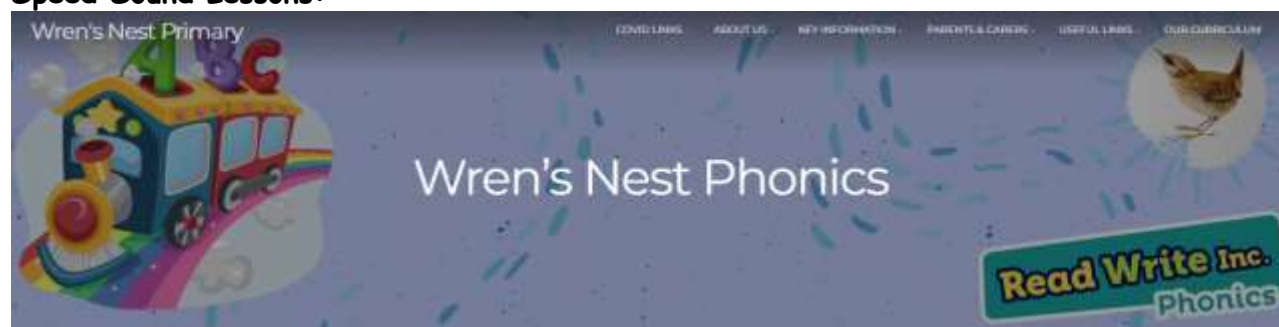
Expression —when we read using expression our voices change to match the mood of the book and take into account the way sentences have been punctuated.

Power words —Words that an author (or child) has used that are powerful and are a good alternative to a simpler word that the children are more likely to use. E.g 'sprinted' instead of 'ran', 'miserable' instead of 'sad'.

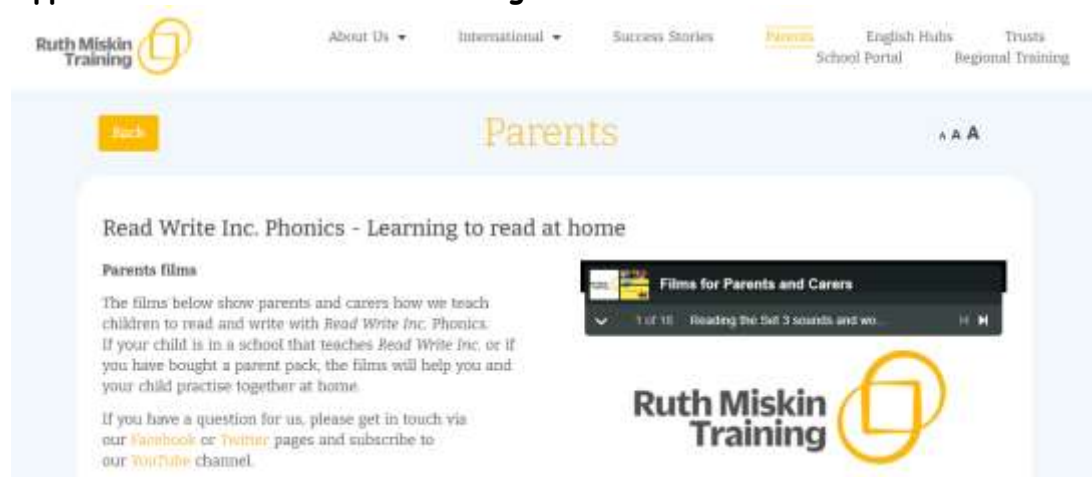
Hold a sentence —the teacher tells the children what sentence they want them to write. The teacher says it five or six times and the children repeat it before sitting down to write it.

Appendix 4: School Website resources

Speed Sound Lessons:



Appendix 5: Ruth Miskin Parent Page



Appendix 6: Story Time Stories

Introduction to Storytime

Storytime is a resource for teachers, aimed at encouraging an understanding and deep love of traditional tales in young children.

There are six stories for Reception Class and six stories for Year 1 Class. The stories are numbered one to six for each year group and gradually increase in difficulty. The stories cover a range of traditional tales, all of which have important, timeless messages to impart.

For each story, there is a set of accompanying artwork, presented in a slideshow, which can be displayed as you read the story to the class, and two printable files. The first file is a set of teaching notes, explaining how the story can be used in class; the second file is a printable version of the story for you to read aloud to the children. Please do not ask the children to read the stories themselves, as the stories are above most of your children's reading level. Their focus should simply be on enjoying the story. Once children are familiar with the story you can print out copies for them to take home for their parent or carer to read to them.

Storytime is for use in a whole class setting, outside of phonics lessons, for example at the end of the day. The same approach is used for each story. Children gradually build up familiarity with and understanding of the story, by hearing it three times.

Reception	Year 1
The Ugly Duckling	The Ant and the Grasshopper
Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Jack and the Beanstalk
The Enormous Turnip	The Elves and the Shoemaker
Little Red Riding Hood	Stone Soup
The King who wanted to touch the Moon	The Selfish Giant
Little Bear	The Fisherman and the Fairy