

WESTFIELD COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Early Reading Policy

September 2026

Early Reading Policy at Westfield

At Westfield we believe that reading is a complex skill which contains many components. Therefore, we have adopted a comprehensive, consistent approach to the teaching of these skills throughout the Foundation stage, Key Stage One and Two. We believe that reading is a valuable and rewarding experience which allows children to successfully access all areas of the curriculum. We believe that success in reading opens doors to a world of knowledge and therefore it is our aim to ensure that high quality teaching of reading is delivered.

Our Aims-

- To promote and develop a love of reading
- To deliver a structured and consistent approach to teaching reading
- To create a strong, embedded reading culture through a rich language environment within classrooms and the wider school environment
- To rigorously monitor and assess children's progress in reading and identify those who require extra support and intervene at an early stage
- To recognise the value of parents/carers as essential scaffolders to their child's progress in reading

The Teaching of phonics-

At Westfield we follow the programme of Read Write Inc to teach children to read.

Children in Nursery are taught pre-reading skills which are crucial to support their reading journey as they develop. Once these pre-reading skills are embedded, they will be introduced to the systemic teaching of Phonics following the Read Write Inc programme for Nursery.

In Reception children begin their reading journey from the start of the academic year. Children are taught the first letter sounds from the 'Read write Inc' programme. This is a systematic and structured way to introduce 1 phoneme (sound) per day. The sounds are taught at a rapid pace and the teaching is delivered in a multi-sensory way. Children learn to hear the sound, say it, read it and then write it. Alongside the teaching of individual sounds children are taught to blend sounds together to read words. The programme uses a 'character' of a frog named Fred who cannot talk in words - only sounds. Therefore, children must put the sounds together to listen for a word (Fred talk).

Tricky words are introduced gradually as 'red words' as they contain sounds that do not follow the conventional spelling for that sound (for example was, the, my).

The children continue to follow the programme on the Middle Phase.

Children build on the knowledge taught in the Foundation Phase. Children begin to learn set 2 sounds (the vowel sounds ay, ee igh ow oo etc) and then set 3 which teaches a different spelling of a set 2 sound which they have already learnt.

Children practice the sounds that they know by reading fiction and non-fiction books. The coloured Read Write Inc books allow the children to gain both confidence and fluency as they are practicing reading sounds that they have already learnt.

Children work with partners and every child is active during a Reading lesson. Comprehension is also taught from the earliest levelled book (Red) to the final group (Grey).

Reading Books

All children who access Read Write Inc take home an unfamiliar Read Write Inc book bag book. This book is perfectly matched to their reading ability and allows the child to read confidently at home whilst developing their reading skills. In addition children take home a copy of the book that they have read in their Read Write Inc to 'show off' to an adult at home. This familiar book helps the child to increase their fluency when reading.

Assessment of Reading

Children are assessed by the Early Reading Manager who groups them according to ability to ensure accurate teaching in accordance to where a child is up to in the programme. Regular assessments are completed every 6-8 weeks and children are regrouped. Children accessing Read Write Inc are taught it at the same time for a daily 40 minute session. The lessons are delivered by Teachers and Teaching assistants.

Children should complete the programme by the end of Key Stage 1. However, if children still need further support with reading they continue through the programme into Key Stage 2.

The Phonic Screening Check-

This is a national requirement for all children when they are in Year 1. The check confirms whether pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. The check consists of 20 real words and 20 pseudo-words which children read aloud to the Early Reading Manager.

The teaching of Read Write Inc supports and helps children to meet the standard.

Partnership with parents

In Reception we believe that strong parental relationships help children in their journey to become good readers. Therefore we invite parents to explore and learn how the programme is taught in Reception. This is facilitated through a meeting and we send the children and parents home with their own pack of set 1 cards.

In Year 1 we invite parents to learn about the phonic screening check that their child will complete and explain the purpose of the check. We give tips and advice to parents about how they can best support their child in preparation for the check.

