



# Phonics (RWI)

We strive to ensure that all children become fluent, confident readers through a systematic and consistent approach to phonics. Our curriculum prioritises fluency and decoding skills to reduce cognitive load and build reading stamina, using the RWI phonics programme. Through explicit phonics teaching and carefully selected texts, pupils develop confidence, curiosity, and critical thinking. Our approach is underpinned by research from the [DfE Reading Guidance](#), [EEF Guidance Report](#), [Ofsted's English Report](#) and [Strong Foundations](#).

## Intent

We aim to:



Ensure all children become fluent, confident readers.

Children show enjoyment and curiosity in reading, developing a love for reading.

All children will learn all phonetic sounds, enabling them to decode words fluently and confidently,

All children make progress from their starting points in phonics and reading fluency, with most achieving age-related expectations or better.

Teaching teams are confident in delivering the RWI programme, using effective strategies to support and challenge all learners, ensuring phonics is taught consistently.

## Implementation

How we achieve our aims:



### Ambitious Curriculum for All

Holywell's reading curriculum aims for all children to become skilled readers:

**Scarborough's Reading Rope**

**Language Comprehension (LC)**

- Background Knowledge: facts, concepts, etc.
- Vocabulary: breadth, precision, links, etc.
- Language Structures: syntax, semantics, etc.
- Verbal Reasoning: inference, metaphor, etc.
- Literacy Knowledge: print concepts, genres, etc.

**Word Recognition (D)**

- Phonological Awareness: syllables, phonemes, etc.
- Decoding: alphabetic principle, letter-sound correspondences
- Sight Recognition: of familiar words

**Skilled Reading (RC)**

**LC x D = RC** *Fluent word recognition and comprehension.*

This interpretation of the Reading Rope incorporates Gough & Tunmer's (1986) Simple View of Reading.

### Substantive Knowledge

A spiral approach, revisiting key concepts as children progress:

- Phonemic awareness (manipulating sounds)
- Phonics knowledge (letter-sound relationships)
- Fluency (decoding with accuracy)
- Blending and segmenting (combining and breaking sounds)
- Sight words (automatic recognition)
- Application (using phonics in reading and writing)

### Disciplinary Knowledge

We develops pupils' ability to think like a reader:

- Phonemic awareness: Understanding and manipulating sounds.
- Phonics decoding: Applying letter-sound relationships to read.
- Fluency: Recognising words quickly for better reading.
- Blending and segmenting: Combining and splitting sounds for reading and spelling.
- Word recognition: Recognising high-frequency words automatically.

### Curriculum Links

Reading is the cornerstone to the curriculum:

- English: Supports reading and writing development.
- Spelling: Links directly to word formation and writing.
- Listening and Speaking: Enhances sound recognition and communication.
- Reading Across the Curriculum: Phonics aids reading in all subjects.

### Enrichment

We provide experiences that inspire a lifelong love of reading:

- Visits from authors, poets and storytellers to bring literature to life
- Regular trips to school and community libraries
- Theatre visits and performances to support comprehension and engagement with narrative
- Reading rewards and incentives, including 'Starbooks' and book swaps

## Inclusive and Adaptive Teaching

By using homogenous grouping, regular assessments and targeted support, we tailor instruction to meet the individual needs of each child, helping them progress at their own pace while maintaining high expectations for all.

### Support

- Fast track tutoring - targeted, intensive support for children who need extra help.
- Frequent practice of sounds, words and blending to build fluency.
- Regular phonics checks to identify and address gaps in learning.
- Addressing specific areas of difficulty through tailored teaching.

### Challenge

- More complex blends and longer words.
- Pupils are encouraged to apply their phonics knowledge independently.
- Children who master phonics skills quickly can progress through the levels at a faster pace.

## Assessment

- Formative assessment in every lesson through observation, questioning and pupil responses. Daily assessments of word recall and blending speed to ensure fluency and progression.
- Half-termly phonics assessments to track decoding and blending skills, with targeted intervention where needed.
- Frequent check-ins on phonics fluency and reading accuracy to ensure children are on track.
- Phonics screening checks to identify pupils needing extra support and monitor their progress.

## Effective Teaching in Phonics

- Connect to prior learning: Begin each lesson by revisiting key knowledge and linking to the text.
- Vocabulary focus: Explicitly teach new or challenging words to support understanding and confident use.
- Teacher modelling: Read aloud daily to model fluency, expression, and prosody.
- Pupil practice: Pupils read aloud every lesson through partner reading for fluency.
- Modelled questioning: Teachers model how to approach and answer comprehension questions, thinking aloud to show strategies.
- Guided and independent practice: Support pupils as they tackle questions in pairs or independently, gradually releasing responsibility.
- Consolidation: Summarise key points and checking for understanding of the text and vocabulary.

### Home Learning

- Pupils read at home at least 3 times per week.
- Books are matched to individual decoding and comprehension levels.
- Pupils also take home a library book to share at home.

### Subject Leadership

#### Resources

- RWI sound cards and flash cards.
- A range of books matching phonics sounds.
- Digital resources for extra reinforcement.

#### CPD

CPD ranges from professional discussions, in-house training, external courses and online subject knowledge videos accessible through RWI portal.

#### Quality Assurance

We quality assure through:

- Pupil book study
- Learning walks
- Book looks
- Staff voice
- Data analysis
- Coaching

## Impact

Our outcomes:



Children show enjoyment and curiosity in phonics, actively engaging with sounds, words and texts.

Children use a range of strategies such as decoding, automaticity and chunking to read new and longer words.

Children develop strong reading comprehension skills that support learning across the curriculum.

All children make progress from their starting points, knowing more and remembering more over time, with most achieving age-related expectations or higher.

Teaching teams are confident in delivering the RWI phonics programme, using effective strategies to support and challenge all learners.