

Alternatives to Read Write Inc

The school is fully committed to the RWI programme and uses systematic phonics to teach all children to read, including those with additional needs. However, for a very small number of children in the school, Read Write Inc is not 100% successful in helping them to be fluent readers. This may be because:

- Some children struggle with auditory discrimination (common with children with ASD or DLD) and therefore need a word paired with image approach in addition to a systematic phonics approach.
- Children have made slow progress and have completed all of the available books in the RWI scheme (either at their reading level or within the whole programme).
- The RWI books are not engaging or motivating for the child because of their age (for upper KS2 pupils particularly).
- Pupils' comprehension skills are **significantly** lower than their decoding and fluency skills (more than 1 year)

The school uses several alternatives to Read Write Inc, as detailed below. The decision to move a child to an alternative pathway would be through a meeting with the Reading Lead and the Inclusion lead/SENCo. The school have sought advice from Hackney Educational Psychology team to support reading strategy for struggling or reluctant readers.

Toe by Toe

Toe By Toe is a systematic, phonics-based decoding program that helps students struggling to read. The programme takes pupils back to the basics of phonic knowledge and consolidates their understanding of spelling rules and syllable division. Throughout the duration of the program, students develop a sound understanding of how to decode text, allowing them to improve not only their reading, but also their comprehension, writing and spelling skills. The programme uses a multi-sensory approach to learning specific words or sounds that the individual pupil finds challenging. Toe by Toe requires 20 minutes of coaching per day.

Shoreditch Park runs Toe by Toe for individual pupils who are not making the expected levels of progress in RWI.

Rapid Reading

Rapid reading is a reading intervention for children who are reluctant or struggling with reading. It is a programme that was developed for SEN readers and focuses on improving children's:

- Decoding skills (ability to read familiar and unfamiliar words with fluency)
- Comprehension skills (understanding of what they are reading)
- Confidence and pleasure in reading

It is different to RWI in that it has:

- Motivating topics and themes that are more appropriate to older readers.
- Limited number of words within each text.
- Chunked text boxes that divide the text, making information easier to process.
- Thematically linked fiction and non-fiction texts.
- A greater focus on comprehension, making them more suitable for children with good decoding skills but poor comprehension skills.

An independent study by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in the UK told us that children using Rapid make more than twice the normal rate of progress in reading.

Shoreditch Park Primary School use Rapid Reading for several small groups of children in the school, mostly within the autism resource provision. Currently many children in the ARP have good decoding skills but comprehension skills 2-3 years below their chronological age. The EP service have supported in developing comprehension teaching and assessing alongside this programme in the ARP.

At Shoreditch Park we combine Rapid Reading with the RWI phonics programme, by teaching a speed sound lesson alongside the text. This ensures pupils continue to access systematic phonics teaching whilst also working on comprehension skills.

Teaching comprehension in the ARP

Many students with autism spectrum disorder demonstrate difficulties in reading comprehension. These difficulties may be attributed to deficits in Theory of Mind, Weak Central Coherence, and Executive Functioning (Chiang & Lin, 2007; Nation, Clarke, Wright, & Williams, 2006; O'Conner & Klein, 2004; Whalon & Hart, 2011a, 2011b). Some students with ASD demonstrate the ability to decode text quickly and, many times, outperform their neurotypical peers (Newman et al., 2007). Around age 8, however, many children with ASD begin to be outperformed by their peers in terms of comprehension abilities. This is the current trend for pupils in the school's ARP and so we have worked along side the Educational Psychologist to develop an evidence based approach to teaching comprehension to autistic pupils. This approach is based on the national curriculum pre-key stage standards and Blanks (date) level questioning.

Step 1: Pre- teach vocabulary, through the use of images and discussion. Make connections to known topics or self.

Step 2: Complete a picture walk through the text.

Step 3: Adult read the text with expression.

Step 4: Pupils to sort key vocabulary into categories using a colourful semantics approach

Step 5: Pupils to answer questions with visual supports for question words (e.g 'who')

The 'questions' being asked will depend on the level of the child. The school uses Blooms Solo taxonomy for assessment for learning and questioning. However, many of our ASD pupils are stuck at the first level (knowledge) and so this has been broken down further through the use of Blank levelled questioning. The ARP manager will assess the pupils and decide on the level of questioning they are working on to develop comprehension skills.

Level 1

- "What is that?"
- "What can you see?"
- "Find one like this"
- "What is — doing?"
- "Is it a —?" (yes/no response)

Level 2

- “What is happening in this picture?”
- “Who is”
- “Where is the...?” (requires a location response not just pointing)
- “Find something that is ...(red) and ...(spiky)”
- “How are these different?”
- “Which one is ... (a fruit)?”

Level 3- Begin to use higher-order thinking skills.

- “What will happen next?”
- “How do you think he feels?”
- “How do I make... (a sandwich)?”
- “How are these the same?”
- “What is a ...?” (definitions)

Level 4: Involve problem solving, predictions, solutions and explanations.

- Predicting changes: “What will happen if...?”
- Solutions: “What should we do now?”
- Causes: “How did that happen?”
- Justifying: “Why can’t we ...eat ice-cream with a knife and fork?”
- Explanations: “How can we tell he is sad?”

Fresh Start

Read Write Inc. Fresh Start is a catch-up and intervention programme with proven results, for 9 to 13-year-olds still learning to read. Shoreditch Park use Fresh Start for pupils in upper KS2 who are still learning to read and who still benefit from the RWI style of teaching. These pupils may have made slow progress or had a gap in education, and require age appropriate books using the same scheme.

Developed by Ruth Miskin, Fresh Start teaches students at their challenge point, so they learn to read accurately and fluently. They will also develop good comprehension, spelling and punctuation skills through targeted activities.

Resources are age-appropriate, matched to students' increasing knowledge of phonics, and finely levelled to accelerate progress.