

The importance of 'talk'

Hart and Risley (1995) found that there was a very tight link between the academic success of a child and the number of words the child's parents spoke to the child at the age of three.

For children in homes where there is constant one-to-one chatter about things, people, characters, feelings and ideas, the parents deliberately build on what their children say every time they speak. 'Dog' grows to 'big dog' and eventually to 'huge shaggy alsation.' Children talk and ask questions, endlessly! Parents build on what they say and soon children are talking in elaborate and extended sentences. Parents also praise their children and encourage them to ask questions. These children have listened to over a thousand 'storytimes' and know nursery rhymes and fairy stories by heart.

Talk is essential, and talk plays a vital part in the delivery of the Read Write Inc scheme. Good word recognition is dependent upon decoding rapidly and good oral language comprehension is dependent on the deliberate use of talk.

Organisation of the Scheme

The phonics teaching in Read Write Inc is at a level that is always slightly ahead of the story text, enabling children to read fluently whenever they move on to the next book in the scheme.

Children are introduced to 'green' words (where they practise word blending based on their prior phonics learning) and 'red' words (which are the tricky spellings that don't always follow the rules!)

Each child is assessed and placed in a suitable group. The groups are reviewed periodically as the children progress through the scheme. This caters for the children who make accelerated progress as well as those who require a little extra support.

The groups are made up across our KS1 and Reception classes, with children working alongside those at a similar level regardless of whether they are in Year 1, Year 2 or Reception.

The sessions take place at the start of each day. The scheme is run alongside the literacy curriculum rather than in place of the literacy curriculum. This ensures that the correct balance of skills is addressed without compromising the opportunities for children to write creatively and to read a much wider range of books.

So what does a lesson look like?

Each lesson begins with a quick consolidation of the key sounds (speed sounds.) Children are also introduced to picture sound cards and they learn the vital skills of blending and segmenting.

Children use 'sound buttons' to blend words, applying the letter shapes and sounds that they have already learnt.

The teacher introduces the group to a 'new' sound or 'blend.' At the start of the scheme the children also use 'ditties.' These are short, decodable passages that make an important bridge between reading single words and tackling stories.

Each group has a story book and a workbook for the week. The children read through the story book with their Read Write Inc partners, following the text with coloured lolly sticks. As each group progresses through the week they re-read the story on a daily basis with a growing emphasis on expressive reading and reading for meaning. They discuss the text with the teacher, and their partners, and this leads on to written exercises in their workbooks. The written exercises support the development of reading comprehension whilst also consolidating basic skills of grammar and punctuation.

Importantly, each session stands out as being 'FUN'. Children are quick to develop their confidence through Read Write Inc and have a secure grasp of the 'nuts and bolts' of reading and writing by the time they make the transition into Key Stage 2.



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