

As a result of the national move towards revalidation of Phonics schemes and our own evaluation of existing Phonics provision, in September 2022 First Base moved to a validated SSP. This brings greater rigour, consistency and structure to our delivery of Phonics for those pupils who require additional support in this area. We also know that a validated SSP provides our teachers with the resources that they need to deliver excellent and precise teaching to every pupil, every day.

Due to the nature of our setting, specifically the fractional and temporary pathways that are offered, it was important to appraise ourselves of the prevalence of key SSP programmes in the local area so that we could, as far as possible, ensure that pupils have a consistent offer between their PRU and mainstream placements. Following consultation with mainstream partner schools we now deliver Phonics through the Read Write Inc. Programme.

The purpose of our Phonics sessions are to teach children how to decode letters into their respective sounds, and to apply this knowledge through segmenting and blending which is essential for them to read and write. Having secure letter-sound knowledge will enable children to make the link between unfamiliar print words and their spoken language. On the Springboard pathway pupils are taught, working progressively through the sound sets identified in the Read Write Inc. programme.

A phonics assessment is requested from the pupil's referring setting and where this is not available one is administered during induction visit or during the first 2 days of placement at First Base. This allows for identification of the current sound set the pupil is working within, as well as the identification of specific gaps in sound knowledge. It also serves as a quick indication of Reading and Writing ability if none have been provided.

Phonics is taught as a discrete 20-minute session 3 days a week during a pupil's placement.

Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to attend a phonics/reading workshop to support their own phonic and reading knowledge and to learn how best to support their child's reading development. During this session they will be shown how to sign up for an Oxford Owls account to access free e-books.

Read Write Inc. assessments are carried out every 6 weeks to monitor knowledge acquisition and inform planning and teaching. Sounds taught are shared with mainstream settings weekly and full assessments shared every 6 weeks to allow them to reach a holistic judgement of attainment. Gaps in learning and misconceptions are addressed rapidly. Where a pupil is attending the Springboard pathway it will be the expectation that they access the Phonics screening at their mainstream setting.

All teaching will be adapted to support pupil's individual needs, according to their starting point. First Base work closely with mainstream settings during induction to identify starting points and any specific strengths or difficulties.

When Phonics doesn't work

Whilst research shows that systematic phonics is the most effective way of teaching reading, we recognise that for some children phonics does not work. In those instances, alternative teaching methods and strategies will be put in place to help children overcome barriers to reading and writing.

Date reviewed: September 2024

Reviewed by: Stacey Laws