

## EARLY READING AT COLPAI: INTENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

### INTENT

The aim of our phonics curriculum is to teach children to read quickly and skilfully, providing them with reading and writing skills to access all areas of the curriculum. We intend to enable children to read independently for purpose and pleasure as soon as possible.

At COLPAI, we believe the greatest gift we can give our children is the gift of reading; this has far-reaching implications for their future educational success. The systematic teaching of phonics and early reading has the highest priority in our school and we are dedicated to making our pupils lifelong readers.

Research into the efficacy of teaching early reading is unequivocal; it highlights the importance of daily, systematic, synthetic phonics teaching. At COLPAI, we are committed to ensuring every child is secure and fluent in matching GPCs and can segment and blend sounds in order to read and spell. At COLPAI we use the RWI scheme, complete with its high quality resources and carefully matched decodable books. This ensures pupils build their confidence in using, applying and practising their early reading skills with automaticity and fluency. We believe in fidelity to a formal phonics curriculum: it clearly sets out what early reading knowledge and skills children will learn within a clearly sequenced structure while being highly interactive, eliciting responses and full participation from all pupils, as this is how we believe young children learn best.

The Rose Review emphasised the importance of phonics being set within a language-rich curriculum; this recommendation underpins our intent at COLPAI. We believe children must have regular exposure to high-quality picture books so that they develop their familiarity with a broad repertoire of stories, storybook language and the grammatical structures found in books rather than everyday speech patterns. This, we believe, supports children's wider language development as they internalise high-quality book language. At COLPAI, our aim is to ensure children get off to a flying start with reading so that they can enjoy wonderful picture books for themselves by Year 2, and our approach recognises that this starts with the foundations of acquiring letter sounds, segmenting and blending skills set within a language-rich curriculum.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Reading and phonics are prioritised to ensure pupils are able access the full curriculum. In order to build secure blending and segmenting skills, children must be fully immersed in a strong foundation of early phonics in their early years and experience an effectively taught synthetic phonics curriculum in Reception and Key Stage One. (Where children join the school later and have poor phonic knowledge, we use the RWI Fresh Start Programme and tutoring to fill these gaps.)

Phonics is taught daily and we follow a rigorous and sequential approach that develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading and writing. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly trained in the pedagogy of the scheme and use Read Write Inc. resources to support the children as they learn to hear, say, read and write sounds and words, captions and sentences. During these sessions, children practice speed sounds, oral blending and segmenting. Phonics lessons are fast-paced and repetitive in order to introduce, recall and embed learning. At all stages, phonics attainment is assessed, and gaps are addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils. Interventions are planned for those children who are working below expected levels. Pupils have regular reading sessions to ensure they are regularly practicing and

applying their phonics knowledge. Children are matched with phonetically decodable reading books which reflect their current phonics ability. Pupils read the decodable book three times: once for decoding, a second time for fluency and a third time for comprehension. Pupils practice reading their decodable book at home, too. Pupils also choose a class and a library book to take home to share with a parent/carer to further develop their enjoyment of books.

### IMPACT

There is a strong focus on ensuring that children gain phonics knowledge and the language comprehension necessary to read, as well as the skills to communicate, giving them the foundations for future learning. Through the teaching of systematic phonics, our aim is for children to become fluent readers by the end of Key Stage One. This way, children can focus on developing their fluency and comprehension as they move through the school, where the emphasis then shifts from learning to read to reading to learn and focuses on the further development of reading comprehension and response to text. Attainment in reading is assessed through a combination of teacher assessment, informed by NFER assessments and RWI assessments. Attainment in phonics is measured by the Phonics Screening Test at the end of Year 1. However, we firmly believe that reading is the key to all learning and so the impact of our phonics curriculum goes beyond the results of the statutory tests.

At COLPAI, the success of our rigorous and robust approach to teaching phonics and early reading is demonstrated in outstanding outcomes for pupils. COLPAI is ranked within the top 5% of schools nationally for reading at the end of KS1, and we sustain phonic results, year on year, above 90%. COLPAI's phonic results have ranked within the top 3% of schools nationally with a letter of commendation from the education secretary of state. Reading lies at the heart of our school and pupils love to read and learn.