Dear Families,

I am writing to give you a brief overview and update on Read Write Inc and the progress it is ensuring for our learners in their formative early reading, writing and phonics skills.

**Why invest?**

We felt that we had outcomes which required some research into how reading was being taught and whether it was meeting the needs of our learners. There was not a scheme in place per-se but we had lots of Oxford Reading Tree books and a Letters and Sounds approach. However, the subtle differences in how staff might pronounce a sound, what resources they would choose to teach that sound and the resources the children would use to then practice their skills and knowledge did not match or were not well suited to their needs. Phonics outcomes at the Year 1 Screening reflected this picture as we had the following results

2017 - 85%

2018 - 77%

2019 – 63%

Obviously, some of this was cohort dependent – but mixed with the professional picture above – we decided to make a change.

**What we did (Intent and Implementation)**

Read Write Inc had been extensively used and led by Mrs McGarey (Year 1 Teacher) in previous settings and she was eager to share that it could have great benefits at Bollington Cross. She led the initiative to begin with and began researching costs associated but also which schools were using it and what their outcomes were at Year 1. I too did some research with lots of focus on how school could support our lowest achieving 20% of readers (ability), how closely our teaching met the needs of the pupils and how often this was checked and reflected upon. Also, how well the resources and materials used reflected the teaching. These elements were pivotal in ensuring our teaching would make the learning ‘stick’. Couple this with the daily nature of the teaching and also the ‘keep up-not catch up’ mantra, we felt Read, Write, Inc was the right direction to move in.

We initially invested funds in training as many staff as possible – ensuring that all ability groups could be led by skilled adults (teachers and TAs) and that we could use Development Days (in the form of visits from a Read Write Inc consultant) to guide us to make it work for our school and our learners.

Since implementing the scheme, a lot has happened! The pandemic has caused a major disruption – especially for younger learners. The younger the learner the greater the impact / disruption in our experience. However, Read Write Inc allowed parents access to online videos in order to support their child in practising at home. We had a healthy take up on this and saw lots of evidence during the pandemic/closure of pupils practicing the ‘Sound of the day’ and uploading evidence in the form of written work or short videos to their online portfolios. There is no doubt that continuous access benefitted some of the pupils enormously if their parent was accessing the materials.

Prior to the pandemic we had already had a successful RWI workshop for parents and an opportunity to stay and learn and experience a session. We look forward in the future to being able to do this again soon.

We have also had some staffing changes too and these changes make a difference because they mean that we need new staff members to undertake the online training. Having membership to the online portal means that we can offer new staff training as quickly as possible.

**Where we are now? (Impact)**

*The last submitted data set we had was a* ***95%*** *pass rate of the Year 1 Phonics Screening****. This was above both National and Local Authority averages****.* We have a greater efficiency with our data now as we assess the children every six weeks in order to ensure the teaching meets the needs of the pupils.

There has been a great deal of hard work and effort put into maintaining a consistent approach. The scheme also puts onus on all adults to be involved in the planning of sessions, as adults lead a mixed age group at times, rather than their own class or group.

Our pupils enjoy ‘Fred Time’ as they refer to it and take home their RWI book to ‘show off’ their learning. They take home their RWI book and another book chosen from the KS1 library. The children should be able to confidently read the RWI book – which closely matches their teaching/lessons from that week.

Parents have been positive in their feedback and Miss Asbury, who took over the leading of RWI just prior to the pandemic, has done a fantastic job of keeping parents informed regarding the scheme and any results/assessments the children have had.

We feel that RWI has been a successful, valuable and impactful addition to the school’s curriculum and look forward to training up recent newly recruited Teaching Assistants to ensure we maintain a strong, consistent, rigorous approach and continue to embed RWI further into our practice.

Bearing in mind that the older the pupil, the more disrupted the last two years have been for them, current in-house tracking shows that currently we have…

* **100%** of our new Reception intake at or beyond expectations
* **75%** of our Year 1 class at or beyond expected
* **40%** of our Year 2 class at or beyond expectation\*

\*This is not a concern as a large percentage of the class will tip into the ‘expected’ bracket in six weeks.

**The Future**

We will continue to train any new staff and we are currently training up two parent volunteers who will begin to have impact 1:1 with any readers who need to keep up with their group in terms of progress.

We look forward to our current Reception class eventually becoming the first class to have uninterrupted access to the RWI teaching/scheme and the impact that has on their journey to being competent and confident readers who can ‘unlock’ the rest of the curriculum.

We have already been asked by another local school to showcase what we are doing and share our knowledge. I feel this may become the case more often as we further embed and show the success and impact of this reading curriculum at our school.

In Miss Asbury, we have a leader who can answer any questions regarding our reading teaching for young learners. She always has her finger on the pulse of our data and progress outcomes and is thorough in her tracking. In future we aim to free her up more often in order to support high standards of teaching of reading, consistency and also enabling staff to share best practice with each other.

Thank you to all parents supporting our young readers at home and to the governors for supporting this initiative. The importance of developing reading skills quickly for our pupils is essential, as it builds their self-esteem and supports them in accessing, and indeed unlocking, the curriculum with greater independence.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr Yenson Donbavand

Headteacher