



Drumbeat

School & ASD Service

Reading and Writing Handbook

Guidance to Drumbeat's Reading and Writing Strategies and Interventions

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Read Write Inc Phonics

Read Write Inc. Phonics teaches children to read accurately and learn to form each letter. It aims to enable children to read and write independently. *Read Write Inc.* Phonics has been adapted to meet the varied needs and abilities of pupils at Drumbeat School. All staff teaching phonics systematically; teaching the sounds in the prescribed order, using the *Read Write Inc* resources and agreed terminology.

Getting Ready for *Read Write Inc*: Phonics

At the earliest stages of learning to read children are still developing their vocabulary. Each letter in *Read Write Inc*: phonics has an associated picture. At Drumbeat school children practice playing with, finding and labelling these objects. Children will also engage with objects beginning with this specific letter as part of play activities in class. For instance, 'm' is for mountain, milk, mouse, mat, etc. Pupils also take part in structured sound play activities which focus on symbolic sounds, environmental sounds, rhythm and rhyme and body percussion. Pupils are also exploring sensory and wordless books.



Read Write Inc: Phonics

Pupils begin learning speed sounds set 1, they say the sound, read the sound, review the sounds and write the sound in a typical speed sounds lesson. Pupils who are pre-verbal will hear and find the sounds. Once a pupil has learnt five sounds which includes one vowel and understands 1:1 correspondence they also begin word time lessons where they learn how to blend receptive and expressively, read, segment, spell and write words containing the sounds they have already learnt. Pupils then move onto speed sounds set 2 and 3 lessons. These sessions follow a similar pattern and also include made up words to ensure pupils have generalised their sound knowledge. Once children have completed speed sound set 1 they begin to apply their knowledge of reading in *Read Write Inc* Storybooks. Children also complete the related reading and writing activities that relate to the books they read. Children work their way through the reading book levels which correlate to speed sounds they have already learned.



Beyond *Read Write Inc*: Phonics

Once pupils have completed reading all storybook levels they move on to *Read Write Inc* comprehension scheme which follow a similar structure to *Read Write Inc* storybooks. The pupils read and examine a text and complete related reading and writing activities. This scheme acts as a bridge between *Read Write Inc* Storybooks and *Read Write Inc* Literacy and Language. Once children are able to; automatically decode words and read a range of texts with consistent accuracy, fluency and confidence, make plausible inferences and predictions, based on what they have read, new words are understood through the exploration of their meaning in context, and by making links to known vocabulary and personal experience, they are ready to access *Read Write Inc* Literacy and Language. All children reading at this level should be encouraged to read freely, for pleasure and access reading resources from libraries and online sources.

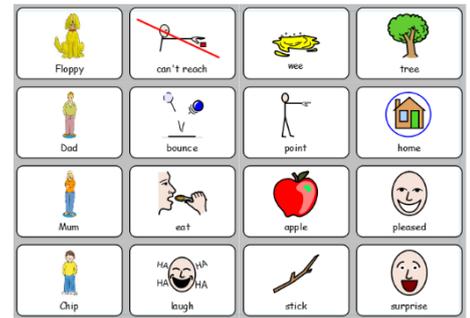


Storyboards

Storyboards are symbol based communication boards that are created to accompany books. They aim to help pupils understand stories as well as retell them. Their use is based on the principle of aided language stimulation. This is a communication strategy, where a communication partner teaches symbol meaning and models language by pointing to symbols whilst talking.

A storyboard provides a concentrated vocabulary of symbols to be used to aid communication about a story. Vocabulary is included on each display to represent key people, actions, objects, adjectives and places. Symbols are arranged to encourage left to right reading when an adult or pupil is combining symbols to create a sentence.

Adults read the story to the pupil as usual and at the end of each page they use the storyboard to summarise what has happened e.g. 'Dad can't reach the apple in the tree' pointing to the key symbols as they talk. Pupils are then given the book and story and encouraged to retell the story using the storyboard to support. Children learning aided symbols need to have the opportunity to experience how aided language can be used to communicate for a range of purposes in their daily lives. It is important that adults model using the storyboard first as children learn to communicate in the way they experience their system of communication used. Children can develop an understanding of how aided symbols can be used to communicate for genuine purposes in his natural environment and generalise this skills to other activities.



Story sacks

A Story sack is a large cloth bag containing a children's picture book with supporting materials that brings the story to life and promote children's engagement. The sacks usually contain puppets, toys or props relating to characters or key events in the story. As the adult reads the story they use these to support their story telling. The sacks also contain an activity related to the story that further promotes literacy skills e.g. a puzzle of one of the illustrations or a lotto game. Non-fiction material is also included to extend learning e.g. if the book is about a giant eating cake the sack may also include a cake recipe book. All these engaging materials mean the children have more opportunity to listen to, understand and talk about stories.



Colourful semantics

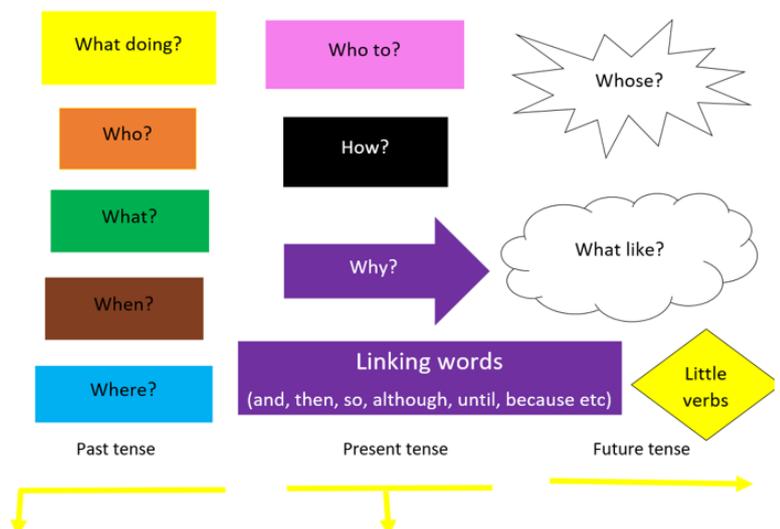
Colourful semantics is a visual way of coding the information in words and sentences. It helps children to understand how questions and the meanings of words in sentences are linked. Each question word has a designated colour and Drumbeat's coding system can be seen below. One of the main results from using colourful semantics is that once pupils understand the strategy they are then able to complete reading and writing tasks much more independently. This guidance focuses on how to use the strategy to support reading and writing. For further information on using colourful semantics to support communication please read the information in the communication handbook.

Colourful semantics can support reading and writing in the following ways:

- To support reading comprehension** words can be underlined in specific colours and then coloured questions can be used alongside verbal questions to indicate the type of answer needed. For example if you wanted to know 'who is in the kitchen?' an adult would display the orange who question and the pupil would look for his orange underlined words in the text to find the answer needed. Alternatively storyboards can also be colour coded and coloured questions asked in a similar way. (More information on storyboards can be found in this handbook)
- To support story planning and creative writing** coloured grids can be created with sections for each question word. Pupils can then write key words or place colour coded symbols into each question section to help them plan what will happen in their story e.g. a blue beach symbol could be placed in the where question section to represent the setting for their story. This colour coded story grid could also be used in a similar way to help pupils show understanding and summarise a story they have just read.
- To construct symbol or written word sentences** blank colour coded sentence strips can be used to show which types of words needs to be included in a sentence and the order the need to be in. The pupils are then given a choice of a range of symbols and the correct colour coded symbol is then placed onto the strip to describe the picture or a event. Some pupils can be given coloured coded word banks and can then use the coloured sentence strip to write the words in the correct order from their word banks.



- Colourful semantics can be used to improve grammar and the content of writing.** For example when a teacher is marking a piece of writing they could add a cloud shape to a sentence to indicate that a pupil could improve his sentence by adding an adjective at that point. Or if a pupil uses the wrong tense the appropriate yellow arrow could be used to indicate how to change it.



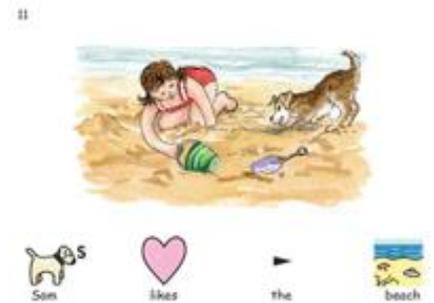
Symbol books (including symbols making sense books)

Staff at Drumbeat dedicate lots of time to making personalised symbol books for pupils. These take a variety of forms and can include photos, symbols and the written word. Lots of these books require matching skills e.g. matching symbols to corresponding photos. Some of these require pupils to read one symbol at a time and some need pupils to read 2-3 symbols together e.g. teaching may include a photo of peer in the class doing a fun activity (blowing bubbles or cutting paper) and pupils will need to describe the photo from a choice of Velcro symbols. Some of the books also use the colourful semantics strategy to help student order symbols correctly. Personalised symbol books can be used with pre-verbal and verbal pupils.



Symbols Making Sense(SMS) books comprises of more than 40 books, ranging from Widget symbol supported text of basic nouns into more complex sentences, social stories and non-fiction. SMS books aim to meet the needs of a wide range of ages and abilities and may also be helpful for some pupils who have English as a second language. At Drumbeat some of the introductory books have been made into interactive workbooks so they do not necessarily require spoken language to read and enjoy.

- Introductory books aims to create an interest in reading, reinforce the use of left to right orientation and build pupils confidence to read familiar and new symbols.
- Finding out books focus on the use of questions e.g. What? Where? Who? Which? Why? and when? They include aspects of safety, seasons and travel.



- Level 1 stories use simple plots about domestic pets and include the previously introduced characters. Each story links to the next book with opportunities to reinforce previously learnt vocabulary.
- Level 2 stories continue to use simple plots with books again being linked to the next book in order to encourage pupil's interest in gaining a new book. As with all story books any new vocabulary is highlighted at the back of each book and is accompanied by associated comprehension tasks.
- Level 3 stories introduce some additional characters for added interest, and include the use of dialogue for the first time. Humour is also used within level 3 and many of the stories link to everyday situations such as visiting the dentist, moving house and starting school (social stories). These books are particularly helpful for those pupils who find sudden change difficult.
- Level 4 stories again focus on social stories with an emphasis on family relationships, and the arrival of a new baby in the final book. All story books have a cross curricula theme drawing in opportunities for role play and creative skills within the tasks. By the end of Level 4 story books it is hoped that some pupils will be gaining some written word recognition.
- Advanced reader books are aimed at older pupils which focuses on age appropriate topics such as starting college or getting a job.

See and Learn Language and Reading Programme

(Downs reading scheme) (whole word approach)

The See and Learn Language and Reading programme (sometimes known as the Downs Reading scheme) was initially created to meet the specific learning needs of children with Down syndrome but it can also be helpful for other children such as those with ASD. See and Learn Language and Reading is designed to teach children early vocabulary, sight words, simple phrases and sentences, and grammar rules. Learning to read offers the children concrete and visual representations of language concepts to also support the development of their spoken language skills. The matching and finding element of this programme means it can be used for pupils that are pre-verbal. It is also highly effective to help pupils who have reading comprehension difficulties. During the sentences stage of the programme pupils can read a sentence and match it to the appropriate picture to show they have understood what they have read without having to answer lots of complex questions about their sentence.



The see and Learn Programme contains the following steps:

- **See and Learn Vocabulary** steps introduce children to match, find and read first words at the earliest stage of language development in approximate developmental order.
- **See and Learn Phrases** steps teach children to put spoken words together in a range of two key word phrases and to read their first sight words and phrases.
- **See and Learn Sentences** steps teach children to put spoken words together in longer sentences and use grammatical markers, including plurals, personal pronouns, past tenses, conjunctions, prepositions, negatives and question forms. These steps also continue to teach children new vocabulary and to read sight words and sentences.

Sensory stories

Sensory stories a simple, fun and engaging way to bring stories and books to life so they can be enjoyed by everyone. Sensory stories uses a combination of words, pictures and sensory experiences so pupils can experience literature. Sensory stimulation is important as it is central to our cognitive development. An inability to access sensory stimulation independently affects individual's attitude towards learning and engagement with life, it limits their desire to communicate. This approach also aims to develop communication and attention skills as well as provide opportunity to encounter, get used to and respond stimuli. It is most suitable for pupils working at the earliest Drumbeat levels.

Children with ASD will benefit from sensory stories because:

- Verbal communication difficult to understand
- Concise and simple language makes information easier to process
- Concepts explained through sensory media are easier to understand

To tell a sensory story you don't necessarily need a book, but can use one if you wish, illustrations or graphics from the story can also be displayed on an interactive whiteboard. The leading adult should select 10 key words they are going to represent through a range of sensory experiences and props e.g. feel water spray to represent the rain, smell soap to represent a clean or listen to sad music to represent a characters emotion. The adult should use 10 short and simple sentences to tell the story alongside the sensory experience.



ASDreading.com (Online interactive approach using 6 skill integrated method)

ASDreading.com is an online programme that supports pupils with ASD with their reading and typing skills. It can be accessed on the iPad, laptop or desk top computer depending on what fine motor and keyboard skills a student is developing at the time. At first it focuses on sequencing and letter recognition skills. It then uses an "intensive word teaching" system where every component of a word is taught in a comprehensive and integrated manner: its spelling, its meaning, its relationship to other words, its placement in sentences, etc. Once pupils have learnt to read single words they then read the associated online book.

At Drumbeat this intervention is mainly used to develop a pupil's reading comprehension. Many children on the spectrum find decoding to be easy and are able to accurately read complex texts but find it hard to understand them (hyperlexia). ASDreading teaches pupils how to make sense of the "little" words that they often find so puzzling e.g. those, but, then, after etc and also other key skills needed for comprehension such as how to summarise. This programme can also help to develop a pupil's typing skills if they have poor fine motor skills which make handwriting difficult. ASDreading can be a great motivation tool for pupils to engage in reading activities. It's also used effectively to help pupils who are pre-verbal or have limited spoken language as the reading and writing activities do not require spoken language. The programme is split into the following sections:

Core Skills

- Seeing Sequences: If the Skills Survey determines that a child needs to develop the visual sequencing and memory skills of reading, he or she is guided to the Seeing Sequences format.
- Letter Land: If the Skills Survey determines that a child requires additional keyboard skills to smoothly use the program, he or she is guided to the Letter Land format.

Reading and Writing Formats

- Level 1 presents the simple, basic phrases and sentences needed to discuss these key characters of the story world.
- After being introduced, in Level 1, to characters (such as kids and animals) and key properties of those characters, Level 2 increases the complexity of the writing to introduce more multi-syllable words, longer sentences, more sentences on a page and some unique features of text such as quotations and the punctuation they require. This level also offers pages of text unaccompanied by pictures.
- In Level 3, the past tense, a form that is critical to effective retelling of events, is systematically introduced. The words at this level involve more advanced concepts, the stories are longer and extend over two books. Comprehension activities are introduced aimed at teaching children the vital skill of knowing how to summarise stories.
- At level 4, children are introduced to science-related texts such as the habits of animals and the manned space flight to the moon. Presentation of this material naturally entails more complex vocabulary (the words continue to become more advanced in terms of both meaning and spelling) and more sophisticated sentences.
- Level 5 offers richer, fantasy-based stories that contain characters who experience complex thoughts, emotions and experiences. Additionally, the words continue to become more advanced in terms of both meaning and spelling. This sets the stage for the children to independently and successfully read the wide array of appealing books that are aimed not at teaching reading, but at enjoying reading.

Storytelling using the attention autism framework

Attention autism is an invention and framework created by Gina Davis that aims to inspire and develop shared attention and communication skills in children with autism. The framework for attention autism is divided into four stages that follow a developmental path. For further information on general use of attention autism see the communication handbook. The attention autism framework can be applied to many curriculum research including telling stories, poems and rhymes. Stage 1 (the bucket) contains key characters or props from the story, this sets the scene for the story and introduces some key vocabulary the children will need to learn. Items in the buckets still need to be engaging themselves if possible but toys the children already love can be altered e.g. wigs or hats can be put on dancing toys. In stage 2 (attention builder) the leading adult often tells the story or part of the story (don't feel you need to tell all the story at once e.g. if telling the 3 little pigs, the first story time session you could focus on the straw house, the next the stick house and the last session the brick house). Again the attention builder needs to engage the children and maintain their attention so is likely to include well-loved activities such as pouring water, splatting foam and sieving flour. In stage 3 pupils have a chance to use their role play skills to act out part of the story. This is a great way to develop role play skills as pupils are able to watch an adult model before they give it a go. Role play does not need to include talking just any action from the story. Masks can be used to represent characters or the 'don't take my... game' is a great way to reinforce key vocabulary at this stage. Stage 4 (independent tasks) can range depending on the ability of the pupils, pupils could be required to explore a sensory element from the story e.g. playing with straw, they could build a playdoh character, do a craft activity e.g. making Elmer, or follow instructions to cook e.g. making Gruffalo pie, they could match photos to words or sequence story pictures, , creating their own sentences using colourful semantics support or they could retell the story using written words.

Sample story plans:

Story Title	Introducing the story What items could you put in the bucket?	Telling the story How to link the story to your attention builder	Role play Pupils take a turn acting out a part or concept in the story	Story Comprehension work An independent task which shows the pupils have understood some of the story
Goldilocks and the 3 Bears (part 1)	dancing girl, bear style Russian dolls, box or porridge to shake	Make porridge by pouring oats and water and plop into different size bowls	Pupils sprinkle porridge oats in bowls or pupils take it in turn to feed Goldilocks puppet porridge	Pupils follow visual instructions and make porridge
Snail and the Whale	snail you squeeze with tongue, wind up swimming whale, water spray	Pour water or use spinning water to represent the sea and sprinkle sand to represent the beach and use props to tell simplified story.	Adult (whale) gives pupils (snail) a piggyback ride round the classroom.	Pupils make a playdoh snail with a shell, place on paper and write a trail saying 'save the whale'
Humpty Dumpty	Bricks, marching soldiers, wind up horse, squeaky egg that come apart	Build wall with bricks, draw face on egg, put it on top of the wall and watch it fall and splat	Pupils sit on big ball and then fall off	Pupils retell story with the own small set of bricks and an egg (with the yolk removed)

For more information watch this video created by Amy, an Attention Autism Advanced Practitioner which focuses on how using this strategy can help children's understanding of stories

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qs4jyj2JOos>

Personalised Fine Motor programmes

Fine motor programmes are fun activities for children to build up their upper body strength (gross motor skills) and finger/hand strength and control (fine motor skills) which are needed for writing. Through improving fine motor skills children also develop independence in things such as buttoning their own coats or opening their own packets. Some teachers may have activities set up as part of an individual work activity or have a station set up which pupils can access as part of child initiated play. Below are a list of just some of the ideas you can use within sessions to help your pupils improve gross and fine motor skills and get pupils ready to write.

Gross motor activity ideas

- Complete activities whilst lying on their tummy, taking the weight through their elbows. E.g. watching TV, reading a book, puzzles.
- Climbing, seesaw, tug of war and swing activities with the child holding onto ropes
- Ribbon dancing
- Playground equipment e.g. slides and obstacle courses
- Running up and down hills
- Climbing in and out of boxes

Fine motor activity ideas

- Wind-up toys
- Finger puppets
- Songs and rhymes e.g. two little dickie birds, finger family
- Craft activities – cutting, tearing scrunching, gluing and ripping paper and bending pipe cleaners.
- Toy tools such as sawing, drilling, hammering, screws and bolts.
- Games involving flicking small objects e.g. flicking balls of paper of a table into a 'goal'.
- Place a firm elastic band around tips of fingers and thumb. Open and close it 10 times with each hand.
- Dough gym – pinching, pressing, rolling, squeezing
- Holding a handful of items in hand and posting them into a jar one by one (buttons, coins)
- Lego
- Inset puzzles
- Peg boards
- Picking up items with pegs, tongs, tweezers.
- Threading beads, straws etc.
- Walking fingers e.g. along tape placed on the table. Ring and little finger curled out of the way.
- Pop bubble wrap
- Turn keys in padlocks
- Tying knots into string and linking paper clips
- Picking up sequins off a table or stickers off a sticker sheet



Write Dance

Write Dance is a movement based prewriting and handwriting programme. It aims to teach children the basic skills required to write. These include:

- Gross motor skills e.g. movement of the whole body, dancing, using both hands together, crossing the midline
- Fine motor skills e.g. opportunities to use a range of different writing and drawing tools and experience grading of pressure.
- Sensory processing e.g. messy play for fine motor and mark-making. Pupils need to be able to tolerate and differentiate between different textures and get used to having things in palm of hand.
- Visual skills e.g. making links between whole body movements and visual representations.
- Confidence and motivation so children begin to understand that writing could be fun.



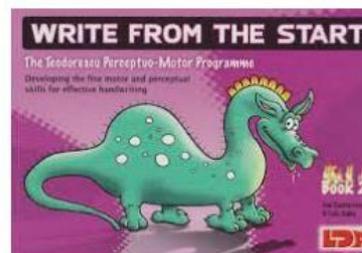
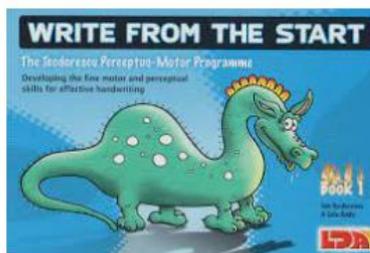
Write dance sessions start with a song and movement activity e.g. The Grand Old Duke of York is sang alongside marching or climbing actions. Following this is a gross motor play activity e.g. building towers and knocking them down. Finally children are provided with mark-making opportunities where over time they use a range of materials e.g. sand, flour, paint, chalk to make or draw a range of patterns and shapes. The write dance programme does go on to develop letter formation and cursive writing, however Drumbeat pupils mainly use the prewriting and early handwriting development sections of this programme

Write from the start by Ion Teodorescu and Lois Addy

The Write from the start Handwriting programme is a unique programme that develops cognitive, visual perceptual and motor skills required for writing. Write from the start aims to develop the foundation skills required for fluent and effective letter formation.

The programme contains 400 developmentally sequenced activities that use the small intrinsic muscles of the hand to develop control and accuracy, whilst developing the following visual perceptual skills

- Form constancy
- Spatial relations
- Hand eye coordination
- Figure ground
- Laterality



The programme is developmentally sequenced and structured into 8 sections over two books, with photocopiable sheets. The programme also includes a teacher/parent manual. The work sheets can be completed at the students own pace and should focus on quality rather than quantity of work.

Messy play

Using the hands and fingers in playing with a range of materials and textures promotes fine motor development such as finger dexterity, hand strength and shoulder strength. These skills are the building blocks for future handwriting. Messy play also helps children to understand how things feel, such as textures and temperatures, and helps them to develop spatial awareness which will be needed when they start to put letters next to each other to make words.

Children can develop many great pre-writing skills with messy play through pouring, scooping, and grasping while perfecting eye-hand coordination skills. Messy play helps children to learn to tolerate a range of textures in their hands in order to move on using paint, chalk and pencils in future; practising squeezing, squishing, spreading and making patterns will be helpful to children when they go on to using pens and pencils, touchscreens and marker pens, so they know about pressing harder or lighter on different surfaces.

