

“We want all our pupils to develop extraordinary reading habits. Simply put - Read Write Inc. Phonics makes this possible.”

Venessa Willms, Director of Education

Venessa Willms chose Read Write Inc. Phonics (RWI) as the core early reading programme when she was founding principal of an Ark academy in 2007. ‘I observed and reviewed many early reading programmes – Read Write Inc. came out on top every time. After 15 years and excellent results, I know I made the right decision. The programme is key to how we train teachers and teach phonics and early reading across all our primary schools’.



Consistently high reading data

Phonics Screening Check (PSC):

Year	Ark PSC	National PSC	Ark non-pupil premium (PP)	National non-PP	Ark PP	National PP
2023	89%	79%	91%	83%	86%	67%
2022	87%	75%	88%	80%	84%	62%
2019	93%	82%	95%	84%	89%	71%

Ellie Whitehorn, English lead for Ark Primary, tells us about the network’s partnership with Ruth Miskin Training (RMT)

Secure, fluent and comprehending readers

I meet with our RMT lead every half term to review progress data for all 24 schools; we identify trends and actions and plan half-termly training for our reading leaders. These meetings embed consistently high expectations and standards across our schools. All children complete RWI, meaning our children are both accurate and fluent readers.

Half-termly assessment identifies children for tutoring and fast-tracking

Our RWI teams are vigilant about progress. Reading leaders rigorously assess and track every child’s progress and provision half-termly. Children are regrouped, if needed, and taught every day according to their progress; every child works at the right challenge level to guarantee progress.

Reading leaders identify gaps in children’s phonic knowledge and organise targeted daily tutoring for children who are reading below.

Tutoring is timetabled and protected. Reading teachers flag children making speedy progress between assessment dates too. The reading leader will assess and fast-track children to the next group if appropriate.

A rigorous approach to ongoing professional development

Reading leaders meet with me and our RMT lead every half term. Training is linked to the outcomes of the trust data meeting. The regularity helps ensure clarity, consistency and that actions are manageable and immediate.

Each Ark school has an in-school development day every term. The reading leader works alongside the RMT trainer to dive into the data for the slowest progress children and coach reading tutors. Trainers help set up practice sessions and online training pathways for individual teachers and tutors too.

Portal films for weekly practice, coaching and refreshing

The portal films help RWI teams build confidence. Staff watch the relevant film before weekly practice sessions with the reading leader. We call this 'prep to practise'. It means we maximise time in the session for practice and coaching. Reading leaders run targeted sessions according to pupil groupings so that staff practise skills relevant to their group.

High standard of learning behaviours across 24 schools

RWI teaching strategies are integral to our high standard of behaviour. They align with Ark's calm and consistent climate for learning. The routines set clear expectations for children's entire school experience. It means that our reading leaders and their teams have a shared language both within each school and across the trust.

Strong home learning habits - storybooks and links to phonics films

We send parents and carers links to the virtual classroom films to share with children. This is an essential and valued part of what we offer.



Children practise and share with their families: they take home the storybook they have just read in school and other previously read and loved books.

Fluent, confident readers who love reading

Our aim is for all children to become fluent, enthusiastic readers, not just to pass the PSC. Working with RMT helps us achieve this mission. Our next step is to explore RMT's Talk Through Stories and to continue to ensure the stories children hear and the books they read truly reflect their lived experience.

Trust information

High levels of disadvantage

Ark works in communities where they can make the biggest difference to children's lives.

42% of pupils across Ark schools are from disadvantaged backgrounds (national average of 22.5%).

Of Ark's primary/all through schools:

All 24 schools are Ofsted Outstanding or Good.

