



Reading Policy

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Introduction

At Hope House School we educate pupils with a wide range of learning needs. To make our reading policy inclusive to all pupils, we are guided by the following definition of reading:

"... reading may be interpreted as any activity that leads to the derivation of meanings from visual or tactile representation." (QCA 2001)

This definition allows us to include the use of objects of reference, photographs and symbols as well as formal systems such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), as reading. These may be accessed visually, orally or through touch and through these resources children learn that one thing can represent something else.

All pupils attending Hope House School are entitled to be a part of the reading process at whatever level they can access it and using whatever methods are most appropriate to their needs.

Our pupils are individuals, as a result their reading journey could lead to a range of different outcomes, such as: gaining qualifications which act as passports to further education and employment; developing their functional skills which will allow them to access the community safely and fully, to travel and be independent as much as possible and to enable their needs to be met; and giving them the skills that need to develop their sense of self, by accessing areas of personal interest and pleasure, thus developing their sense of self-worth.

All classrooms have a reading corner/area or small library. The school has a well-stocked library to cater for all students.

Aims and Objectives

- For all pupils to enjoy reading for leisure - either being read to, sharing a book with an adult, or choosing and reading a book independently.
- For all pupils to have access to a wide range of literature to enrich and broaden their experience at school and at home.
- For all pupils to develop and use pre-reading and reading skills to extract meaning from visual or tactile representation to enhance their communication and literacy skills.
- For all pupils to develop functional reading skills that enable them to communicate choices, interact with others and access both the school and the wider community.

Implementation

Our curriculum is broad and focuses on developing pre-reading skills at the earliest stages before we move through to teaching reading skills to those pupils who will learn to read print in a more formal way. Reading is one of the key skills which underpins our curriculum.

Pre-reading skills will be including activities that promote the development of:

- Communication, play and thinking skills. Opportunities to develop children's communication skills at all levels from pre-intentional communication, through learning to anticipate, share joint attention, make choices, to joining in with imaginative play and small world play learning activities.
- Listening attention skills. Start with developing awareness of environmental sounds such as birds and a car passing and including the sound of familiar voices. Using sensory stories, maintaining attention, learning to anticipate what will happen next in a predictable sequence.

- Visual attention skills. Develop visual attention skills such as looking at light sources, make choices from photos and pictures, progressing to identifying elements within a picture, commenting and labelling pictures, linking real things with a symbol and symbol matching.
- An appreciation of the sounds and the patterns of language through songs and rhymes.
- An enjoyment of books and stories through positive and exciting encounters with printed media, including access to books from a variety of genres and including non-fiction texts.
- An understanding of single words through the consistent and systematic use of objects of reference, photographs, and symbols. For all pupils this will begin with learning the names of objects, people, places, and actions that a pupil needs to acquire to make sense of the world and influence events.
- The development of an increasing vocabulary by using an individual student's preferred symbolic representation and with the aim of supporting all areas of the curriculum.
- The introduction of early phonics skills through interactive multisensory phonics sessions.

Formal Teaching of Reading

For children who can develop these pre-reading skills, the next step will be to extend their understanding of phonics, beginning to decode words and to introduce sight vocabulary. For these children the development of phonological awareness will start with the learning of single letter sounds and corresponding letters.

As a school, we follow the DfE validated Twinkl Phonics programme. The scheme divides phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) into 'phases' which are numbered; the scheme is highly sequential and designed so that children develop strong foundations in both reading and writing that they can continue to develop.

Initially, we teach phonics by encouraging pupils to hear, play and respond to sounds, rhythm, and rhyme. These skills are referred to as phase 1 sounds.

Pupils progress through, and develop, this skills base, before they begin to learn the main sounds heard in the English Language and how they can be represented, as well as learning 'Common Exception' words in phases 2, 3 and 4. They use these sounds to read and write simple words, captions, and sentences.

As they progress into phase 5, they learn alternative spellings and pronunciations for the graphemes and additional 'Common Exception Words'.

By the end of these phases, pupils will have the skills to use phonics to decode and blend when reading and to segment when spelling.

Due to the wide range of pupils here at Hope House School, the timeline of teaching the full phonics programme is pitched at each student's individual pace of learning, this allows them to cover the whole scheme. This means that some pupils continue to follow the programme throughout primary, secondary and where appropriate, in post 16. This provides the time that some individual learners need to develop these crucial skills that form the building blocks of reading and writing.

The scheme is delivered using multisensory elements, such as actions and images. However, due to our pupils' need for over learning, individual teachers include additional multisensory based activities, linked to the scheme, to help embed learning and to increase fluency.

Formal Reading activities will include -

- Speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities which allow pupils to explore and practice their phonic knowledge, blending and/or segmenting skills both independently and with adult support.

- Shared reading and/or writing sessions led by an adult who demonstrates reading and writing strategies (including phonics) in a meaningful way - the teacher models the reading process, and the children are actively involved.
- Shared or whole group reading session where pupils listen to the text being read aloud, join in, following the reading, and contributing to discussion and response.
- Book buddies across the school.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn how to apply the knowledge and skills they are acquiring in their word level work in other areas of the curriculum.
- Activities that teach pupils how to interpret and make sense of what they have read.

Fluency and Comprehension

Through questioning, pupils will be taught to understand the meaning of what they have read or had read to them. From the earliest stages of engaging with books they will be taught comprehension skills through looking at and talking about stories and pictures, anticipating what will happen next in a familiar story and relating idea and events in a story to their own experiences. This will extend into to activities such as sequencing the events in a story, answering more complex 'how' and 'why' questions, the re-reading of text to improve fluency and skills such as predicting and making inferences from what has been read.

Sun and Moon classes study a range of popular children's books linked to their class topic. Mars and Neptune classes study a range of texts, such as short stories or whole novels, as well as non-fiction texts, linked to an overall topic of learning each term. In Jupiter, the focus is on functional skills reading, therefore real-life texts, such as articles, newspapers, forms and other employment-based texts form the basis of this curriculum.

Pupils in Mercury and Saturn follow individualised curriculums based on their individual learning priorities. Where appropriate, pupils who can access subject specific learning also follow the Twinkl Phonics programme, at a timescale which is appropriate to their learning needs.

Reading Schemes

At Hope House School we promote a 'phonics first' approach; texts are very closely matched to a child's current phonics knowledge so that every child can experience real success in their reading.

In these crucial early stages of reading, we use books from Rhino Readers, to ensure complete fidelity to the Twinkl Phonics teaching programme.

Pupils then progress to National Reading Book bands, and we have books from a number of schemes in school in order to provide breadth across, as well as progress through, the bands. The schemes offer pupils a variety of genres and promote pupil's comprehension skills as well as a range of other language skills.

Other Reading related Resources

Pupils may use other systems and resources to enhance their language and communication skills that involves using reading skills. These include.

- Objects of reference, symbols, and photos.
- Visual timetables
- Communication books
- PECS book
- Augmentative Communication Aids
- Grid Player
- Communicate in Print