




Reading Policy

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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.

Every child at Hope House School is offered opportunities to read and share a range of books daily. Each area has an extensive assortment of books, as well as a well-stocked school library, which each class visit at least once per week. Hope House School actively promotes a lifelong love for reading and believe that this passion is best fulfilled when shared at home too.

Aims and Objectives

- For all pupils to enjoy reading for pleasure - 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.

As a school, we follow the DfE validated Twinkl Phonics programme. Twinkl Phonics is a fully comprehensive, synthetic phonics teaching series, which offers a coherently planned sequence of lessons to support the effective teaching of phonics for developing readers and writers. The scheme divides phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) into 'levels' which are numbered 1-6.

Pre-reading skills include 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, join in with imaginative play and small world play learning activities.
- Listening attention skills. Start with developing awareness of environmental sounds such as birds or 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. Level 1 phonics, focuses on developing children’s knowledge, skills and understanding to discriminate between auditory, environmental, and instrumental sounds through 7 aspects. Level 1 underpins learning throughout the teaching of Phonics Levels 2-6, with the overarching aim for children to experience regular, planned opportunities to listen carefully and talk about what they hear, see, and do. Level 1 interactive and multisensory phonics sessions focus on 7 aspects: 1. Environmental sounds; 2. Instrumental Sounds; 3. Body Percussion; 4. Rhythm and Rhyme; 5. Alliteration; 6. Voice Sounds; 7. Oral Segmenting and Blending.

Formal Teaching of Reading

Once pupils are ready to progress to Level 2, children will have had experience of a wide range of listening activities including songs, stories, and rhymes. They can distinguish between different sounds, including speech sounds and may be able to orally blend and segment words. Level 2 then teaches the first 19 most commonly used letters and the sounds they make. Pupils move on from oral blending and segmenting to blending and segmenting with letters, as well as being introduced to some tricky words for reading. At Level 3 children are introduced another 25 graphemes, including consonant digraphs, vowel digraphs and trigraphs so that pupils can represent 42 phonemes with a grapheme: securing knowledge of the basic alphabet code. They will continue to practise CVC blending and segmentation and apply their knowledge of blending and segmenting to reading and spelling simple two-syllable words and captions.

At Level 4, children consolidate their knowledge of graphemes in reading and spelling words, especially digraphs and trigraphs. They are introduced to words with adjacent consonants- CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, CCCVC, CVCCC, CCCVCC and CCVCCC. This supports them as they learn polysyllabic words and learn to read and spell further common exception words.

At Level 5 phonics, pupils learn alternative graphemes for known phonemes and alternative pronunciations of known graphemes. They are introduced to split digraphs, suffixes and prefixes and continue to learn to read and spell more common exception words. On completion of Level 6, learners will have developed their knowledge of

spelling patterns and best-guess grapheme selection. They will know more alternative graphemes for known phonemes and more alternative pronunciations for known graphemes. They will develop an understanding of the spelling rules for adding prefixes and suffixes. They will recognise homophones/near homophones and contractions and learn to spell more common exception words. By the end of our phonics scheme, our aim is that all learners have a secure understanding of grammar rules, and they can demonstrate effective writing techniques including editing and proofreading so that they can read and write independently.

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 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.

Primary pupils following a formal curriculum pathway study a range of popular children's books linked to their class topic. In Key stage 3, 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.

Pupils on a pre-formal curriculum pathway 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.

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