

Askwith Primary School

Reading (including phonics) rationale

Our curriculum offer for reading begins in Early Years. 'Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

EYFS Statutory Framework, 2021

'Reading is fundamental to education. Proficiency in reading...is vital for pupils' success.'

The Reading Framework, 2023

Intent

At Askwith Primary School, our curriculum offer for reading begins in Early Years and is highly prioritised and high quality. Reading consists of two dimensions: word reading and comprehension. Our planning, teaching and assessment from EYFS to Year 6 are informed by the nine principles of cognitive science (Daniel Willingham). We recognise the "must haves" (knowledge of grapheme-phoneme relationships, word knowledge including vocabulary and domain knowledge, and a positive self-image as a learner) and the "could dos" (phonics and reading lessons and retrieval practice for knowledge and skill). It is vital that we immerse all children, including SEND, EAL, PP and vulnerable pupils, in vocabulary and language from an early age, build phonic knowledge systematically and develop fluency and automaticity. Once children read with automaticity, working memory is freed to comprehend and make meaning. Our intent is that all pupils meet or exceed the expected standard in reading and are well prepared for secondary school.

Implementation

The reading curriculum is intentionally sequenced from EYFS to Year 6. In EYFS, provision is vocabulary- and language-rich for Nursery and Reception. Phonics is taught systematically in Reception and Key Stage 1 using Pearson's Phonics Bug, a systematic synthetic phonics programme. Children learn the 42 letter sounds through a multi-sensory approach and progress through blending and segmenting to develop reading and writing skills. Phonics lessons are taught daily for 20-40 minutes (depending on year group), follow a four-part structure (revisit, teach, practise, apply), and are accompanied by same-day intervention for any gaps or misconceptions. All EYFS and KS1 teachers and support staff receive regular phonics training from external providers and the English Lead, and lessons are monitored for consistency with school policy.

Transitions between year groups are carefully planned. At Askwith Primary School, we use Pearson's Bug Club as our reading scheme from Class 1 onwards. Fluency and comprehension continue to be systematically developed across KS2 through a wide range of high-quality texts, with book selection supported by the Lexile Range and Bug Club bands. Reading is taught every day and includes individual reading, guided reading in EYFS/KS1, and group

reading comprehension in KS1 and KS2. Individual reading provides frequent opportunities for children to apply phonics and comprehension strategies; all pupils on banded home reading books read daily with an adult.

Across school, a consistent set of comprehension skills is taught explicitly: questioning, visualising, clarifying, inferring/predicting and summarising. These are introduced in autumn and then applied throughout the year in guided and group sessions. Vocabulary is addressed first in every session and revisited using the "What do words mean?" display and pupils' vocabulary books, with further consolidation in weekly vocabulary lessons. Guided reading is adult-led in EYFS and KS1; children then transition to group reading in Years 2-3, with guided reading remaining appropriate for some pupils, including those with SEND. Texts are matched to phonics or reading ability and provide appropriate challenge. Questioning in oral and written forms draws on Bloom's Taxonomy, and active reading behaviours are modelled and reinforced.

Reading for pleasure is timetabled daily for 15 minutes. Children choose to read independently or with adult support; on Tuesdays and Thursdays, time is dedicated to poetry by the class poet, and on Wednesdays pupils share recommendations with peers. In EYFS, reading for pleasure begins with nursery rhymes and book-handling skills before moving to a carousel of storytelling activities. Each class enjoys a daily class story chosen to broaden vocabulary and provide purposeful opportunities to discuss British Values, mental health, well-being and citizenship. Storytelling clubs run every morning, and reading and storytelling are promoted through dedicated provision areas in EYFS.

High-quality literature underpins the curriculum. Pupils access banded books closely matched to phonics, free readers and junior library books as appropriate; the Lexile Range supports selection and Reading Cloud helps monitor choices. Recommended reading lists (ten per year group) expose pupils to classics and modern classics, and "Four Rs" texts are used to thread SMSC through daily story time. Classroom reading areas include live displays, reading strategies, recommended books, topic-aligned non-fiction and Global Theme texts; KS2 additionally accesses First News and The Week. We maintain infant and junior libraries, run a weekly Book Club for EYFS/KS1 and provide lunchtime access for KS2, supported by reading ambassadors.

Impact

Assessment is both formative and summative. Teachers use questioning, retrieval practice and observation to adapt instruction and address misconceptions. Summative assessments at key points evaluate pupils' acquisition of phonics, fluency and comprehension; findings feed termly progress reviews and inform future planning. Progress is tracked using the reading progression document from Reception to Year 6 to ensure knowledge builds cumulatively and gaps are identified and addressed promptly. By the end of KS1, pupils are expected to be fluent readers with secure word recognition. By the end of KS2, pupils demonstrate fluent, automatic reading and apply a broad repertoire of comprehension strategies to increasingly complex texts.

Inclusion

We adopt a determined approach to ensure all pupils meet or exceed the expected standard unless a specific need prevents this. Same-day interventions address forgotten or insecure knowledge. Daily phonics boosters are timetabled in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 as needed. Any child in Year 3 without secure phonics knowledge continues daily phonics and adult-led guided reading. Where appropriate, targeted supports include extra deliberate practice of phoneme flashcards, Phonics Bug same-day consolidation, Rapid Phonics, 1:1 daily reading and additional Reading Plus. Adaptations include visual aids, simplified vocabulary, scaffolded tasks and additional adult support.

Personal Development & SMSC

Reading develops pupils culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Carefully chosen class stories and recommended texts provide safe opportunities to explore British Values, mental health, well-being and citizenship, building cultural capital. Discussion, debate and empathy are promoted through shared reading, poetry and storytelling.

Leadership & Professional Development

The English Lead monitors phonics and reading through lesson observations, book looks and data reviews, ensuring consistency across year groups. Staff receive ongoing CPD on subject knowledge, the teaching of phonics and reading, and principles of cognitive science and memory. Parental engagement is actively fostered through curriculum meetings, reading workshops and "Come and read" sessions in EYFS/KS1.

Enhancements

A strong home-school partnership supports daily reading and re-reading. All pupils have reading records; parents in EYFS/KS1 record comments and communication, while KS2 pupils increasingly take responsibility for logging their own reading. Libraries, storytelling clubs, book-rich environments and reading ambassadors enhance provision and celebrate a whole-school reading culture.

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