



OPPORTUNITY WITH DIGNITY

# **Breakspeare School Reading Policy**

**Date of last review 2015**  
**Governors' SIC Committee**  
**Due to review 2017**

Merja Paakkonen  
Head teacher

Michael Wheeler  
Chair of Governors

## HOW THE READING POLICY WAS DEVELOPED

Reading and research followed by discussion amongst school staff at department, whole school staff development and senior management meetings.

Dyslexia, (Snowling 1998)

QCA 2001

Teaching approaches and literacy, (Mike Connor)

Uta Frith – various publications 1969 – 1999

Peter Imray - SLD Experience Summer 2015

## HOW IT RELATES TO THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Achievement of students
2. Quality of teaching

## KEY TARGETS FOR THE PERIOD TO DATE OF POLICY REVIEW

| TASKS   | ACTION GROUP | TIME SCAL E | COSTS                          |
|---|--------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Continue to build bank of sensory story boxes for parents to borrow | Emily Gooden | Ongoing     | Allocation from Library budget |

## INTENTIONS

It is the intention of this policy to provide a framework for knowledge and principles that this school employs when teaching reading. The policy, handbook and programmes of study are guided by the following definition of reading:

“For pupils with learning difficulties, reading may be interpreted as any activity that leads to the derivation of meanings from visual or tactile representation.” QCA 2001

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To ensure that pupils use reading skills to extract meaning and for all pupils to enjoy reading for leisure.

To ensure all pupils have access to a wide range of literature to enrich and broaden their experience at school and at home.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All pupils at Breakspeare are entitled to be a part of the reading process at whatever level they are able to access it.

There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach that works for all the varied special needs at Breakspeare. Whilst there has been a big drive and directives from DfE to make more and better use of a phonics approach, this will have limited results for some pupils.

We know that pupils with ASD struggle to combine sounds to make a meaningful word as phonemes are not readily seen by them as building blocks for words.

Using phonics to decode words can be more difficult for young children with Down's syndrome because it involves accurate hearing and good auditory discrimination of sounds as well as problem solving skills. Reading materials will take into account gender and ethnicity. Work will be presented in a way that best suits their learning style.

## **CURRICULUM AND IMPLEMENTATION**

"For pupils with learning difficulties, 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, as reading. In line with guidance from the framework for literacy our teaching objectives cover three key strands:

1. Word reading skills & strategies
2. Understanding and interpreting texts
3. Engaging with and responding to texts

A supporting adult works with small groups of children who are able to read at a similar level. The adult scaffolds the learning by guiding children through the text and prompting them to apply what they've learnt in shared reading and other literacy activities. Guided reading also develops their comprehension skills; discussing the sequence of events and thinking more about why events happened and what caused them.

Many pupils and particularly those with ASD can become proficient at reading, often using the look and say method, but do not read for pleasure or meaning. Many pupils with ASD have weakness in auditory and phonological skills and awareness. Their delayed or disordered acquisition of language leads to language impairment and they themselves unable to make inferences, cope with idioms or multiple meanings. This is exacerbated when only limited use is made of surrounding context. The areas that need emphasis are those of sensory processing, pragmatic use of language and communication with the adults supporting them.

The recommended approach with Down syndrome children is to wait until they have a sight vocabulary of 50 words before introducing phonics. (Teaching children with Down syndrome to read – Sue Buckley, University of Portsmouth & Gillian Bird, The Down syndrome education trust)

Uta Frith suggests that most children learn to understand and use phonics from their own experience as they progress with their reading and writing. Teaching letter sounds as an activity isolated from the reading task is less likely to help the child realise the relevance of the knowledge. We also find that a reliance on phonics is not useful for pupils learning to spell. For pupils relying on augmentative communication aids on which they spell out sentences this can be a real disadvantage, e.g. Missus for Mrs.

## **CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION**

See Appendix. 'Teaching of reading at Breakspeare' handbook

## **RESOURCING**

The school has a range of books to aid the teaching of reading.

Schemes in use include:

Oxford Reading Tree

Ginn 360

Letters and Sounds

Jelly and Bean

These schemes offer pupils a variety of genres and promote pupils' comprehension skills as well as a range of other language skills. The children experience symbol supported texts to help with their communication skills, as well as using texts which enhance their understanding of core vocabulary.

The Library also houses fiction books organised in degrees of difficulty and non-fiction in curriculum linked topics.

## **ASSESSMENT, RECORDING & REPORTING**

Teachers conduct regular teacher based assessment including phonics assessment where appropriate

Records are kept in home school reading record books for pupils who have reading homework.

Reading p-levels are reported on annually as part of the annual review process.

## **Other Related Policies**

Passionate about Teaching and Learning

Autism



## **Breakspeare School**

### **Teaching of Reading Handbook**

(This should be read in conjunction with the teaching of reading policy)

#### **Developmental stages of reading**

For children with complex needs, reading is a sensory and physical activity and the development of reading skills requires teachers to break down reading into its basic components. To an outsider it may not be obvious at all that children are indeed learning to read.

The development of reading skills relies on the progressive acquisition of skills together with a broadening and reinforcing of acquired reading skills. An important aspect of the acquisition of reading skills is access to a rich and varied range of motivating, high quality texts for individuals (at home and at school), small group and whole class reading.

The acquisition of reading skills:

- By developing listening attention skills. Start with developing awareness of environmental sounds such as birds and a car passing and including the sound of familiar voices. Use sensory stories maintaining attention, learning to anticipate what will happen next in a predictable sequence
- By developing 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
- Followed by children encountering and enjoying the sounds and the patterns of language through songs and rhymes
- Moves on to children encountering and enjoying printed media
- Involves children becoming aware that pictures and print convey meaning
- Will be supported by the use of objects, photographs and symbols to develop children's understanding of single words
- Leads on to the development of phonological awareness starting with single letter sounds
- Moves on to ask children to identify end letter sounds and middle letter sounds
- Develops understanding of the meaning of single significant words in simple phrases and simple sentences

Pupils start with reading traditional orthography when they are able to recognize each other's names in print, favourite words such as those used at snack time. Pupils need practice with eye tracking activities, playing puzzles, mazes, block building and board

games and practice crawling. Look for letters in their names and those in the room, play letter bingo etc.

The following advice from Down Syndrome Education International is sensible for all pupils at Breakspeare.

- First, teach the child a small sight vocabulary (point out words in the environment when out on walks etc. )
- Teach them to use these words in simple sentences
- Read from predictable books so pupils can repeat back a refrain. Point to words in books as they are read to.
- Share music with a strong rhythm and with rhyming lines/nursery rhymes)
- Ensure they can read and understand these sentences
- Teach comprehension skills and strategies
- Provide practice in creating/constructing sentences
- Develop phonic skills
- Teach spellings
- Make personal books with the child using their own sentences
- Support literacy skills with computer-based activities
- Ensure that learning to read is a fun and relaxed process which is based on the child's own life and interests

In developing phonic awareness, the 'Letters and Sounds' scheme with 4 phases, has been found to be very useful with our pupils. This scheme is well supported with resources and games including those on the computer. (Given the distractibility of many of our pupils the use of computer programmes can be helpful in providing a focus for attention.)

Because the English language is full of exceptions to the rules of phonics, pupils have to be taught to recognize those irregular but high frequency words separately. This can be done in many different ways, but a personal word wall is one way. This has the advantage of personalizing the vocabulary that is meaningful to individual pupils.

Writing with symbols is used extensively through school and the size of a printed symbol can be made smaller whilst pupils learn to rely less on them. For some pupils it is better to phase out the use of symbols as over-reliance on symbols is a potential pitfall. Staff need to be aware of the problem of printing work with a symbol above each word for pupils who are at a key word stage.

Think carefully before using coloured symbols.

### **Reading in EYFS**

Throughout the week Communication and Language (CL) and Literacy (L) is divided into discrete adult directed sessions: Reading skills & visual awareness, communication & language (including letters and sounds phases), pre-writing & write dance, as well as daily story time and 1:1 reading sessions using reading schemes, such as oxford reading tree, Jelly and Bean. CL and L are also developed through daily greeting time, snack time and child initiated play with access to literacy activities through their continuous play provision: reading area, songs and music, computing

## **Middle School**

### **Word reading skills and strategies**

Regularly throughout the week each child will be engaged in

- Speaking, listening, reading and writing activities which allow them to explore and practice their phonic knowledge, blending and segmenting skills independently
- An interactive multisensory phonics session
- Shared reading and/or writing led by the teacher to demonstrate reading and writing strategies (including phonics) in a meaningful way
- Regular story sessions

### **Shared reading**

Within literacy sessions

The teacher models the reading process and the children are actively involved; listening to the text being read aloud, joining in and following the reading, and contributing to discussion and response. Children learn how to apply the knowledge and skills they are acquiring in their word level work. The teacher leads discussion about the text to help children develop their understanding. Children learn how to interpret and make sense of what they read. Having progressed further some pupils will attend guided or group reading sessions.

## **Upper School 14 -19**

Once pupils reach the age of 14 we take a different approach to teaching phonics. If they have not learned to sound words out by then, they are unlikely to advance with this skill and we should be aware of the age appropriateness in how we present phonics. Knowing the initial letter is an important skill for functional skills such as searching the dictionary and this is pursued throughout school.

### **Reading Music**

In the context of music lessons, the names of musical notes will be taught traditionally as the names of letters. However, when teaching pupils to read the words to songs, the method will be consistent with reading strategies used at other times with that pupil.

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