



# **The Sunflower Federation**

# **Reading**

# **Policy**

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## RATIONALE

Within the Sunflower Federation schools we educate students with a wide range of learning needs – from those with the most complex needs through to those who have a physical difficulty but can access education at a level comparable to their mainstream peers.

To make our reading policy inclusive to all students include 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. This forms the basis the teaching of reading within our schools.

All pupils within the Sunflower Federation are entitled to be a part of the reading process at whatever level they are able to access it and using whatever methods are most appropriate to their needs.

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

We know that pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) may have difficulty combining sounds to make meaningful words as they do not necessarily see phonemes as building blocks for words. They may also develop the ability to decode more sophisticated texts but without taking any relevant meaning from the words they read.

Research also shows that using phonics to decode words can be more difficult for young children with Down Syndrome because it involves accurate hearing and good auditory discrimination of sounds as well as problem solving skills. The Down Syndrome Education Trust suggests that it may be best to wait until a child has a sight vocabulary of 50 words before phonics are introduced.

For pupils with Physical and Neurological Impairments (PNI) reading can also present specific challenges. Examples of these challenges include more obvious skills such as handling books and turning pages as well as visual-perception difficulties that may cause words to appear backwards or with an inconsistent pattern (*Information for Parents – Cerebral Palsy*, DCFS, Every Child Matters, Early Support, 2010).

Our approach to reading within the Federation will be planned with the individual child at the centre and learning will be presented in a way that best suits every child’s unique abilities and learning style.

Reading materials used will take into account gender and ethnicity.

## 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 in order 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.

## CURRICULUM

This is a general overview showing the progression of reading in the Federation. There will be times when some students are working outside this model and therefore will require an individualised approach.

Curriculum	Learning to Read			Functional Reading Skills	Reading for Pleasure
	Pathway 1 BS Pre-formal MW	Pathway 2 BS Semi-formal MW	Pathway 3 BS Formal MW		
EYFS	Introduction of Pre-reading skills	Introduction of Pre-reading skills	Introduction of Pre-reading skills	Objects of reference Photographs	Sensory stories Stories with props
KS 1-3	Consolidation of Pre-reading Skills	Early Reading skills ↓ <i>Sounds and Letters</i> programme Phase 1 and Phase 2 ↓ Blending CVC words ↓ Word Comprehension	<i>Sounds and Letters</i> programme Phase 2 onwards ↓ Blending CVC words ↓ Word Comprehension ↓ Reading for meaning – phrases, sentences and whole books	Symbols Recognising own name in print Recognising the names of familiar people Recognising and understanding the meaning of signs and labels around school	Listening to stories Joining in with familiar stories Book handling skills Talking about books Sharing books with an adult Group reading 'Reading' aloud to an audience Role-play activities based on stories and books
KS 4-5	Transferring Pre-reading skills to different contexts and with a wider range of people.  Developing functional reading skills.	Transferring Early reading skills to different contexts and with a wider range of people.  Developing functional early reading skills.	Transferring reading skills to different contexts and with a wider range of people.  Developing Functional reading skills.	Using formal systems e.g. PECS <i>Grid player</i> or other communication aids and devices	

## IMPLEMENTATION

For children with special educational needs, reading is a sensory and physical activity and the development of reading skills requires teachers to break down reading into its most basic components. Therefore 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.

Our curriculum is broad and focuses on developing pre-reading skills at the earliest stages before we begin through to teaching reading skills to those students who will learn to read print in a more formal way.

**Pre-reading skills** will 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 in order 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 are able to develop these pre-reading skills, the next step will be to extend their understanding of phonics, begin 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.

Pupils will be taught phonic skills using the '*Letters and Sounds*' programme. This scheme is well supported with resources and games including those on the computer. Aspects of other phonic programmes (e.g. Jolly Phonics) may also be incorporated into learning activities.

Once phonic letter sounds are established pupils will be taught to blend sounds together in order to read individual words.

Alongside this phonic learning pupils will be taught high frequency words that are not decodable using phonic methods. Because the English language is full of exceptions to the rules of phonics, pupils will be taught to recognise those irregular but high frequency words separately using the 'Look and Say' approach.

At Meadow Wood School pupils who are making similar progress to their mainstream peers, will participate in the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check at the end of Key Stage One. These pupils may also take their National Curriculum Tests (SATs).

Formal Reading activities will include -

- Speaking, listening, reading and writing activities which allow students 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.
- 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**

Vital to the development of reading is the ability to understand and take meaning from the words and sentences that have been decoded. Some 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.

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.

## **RESOURCING**

### **'Real' Books**

Both Breakspere and Meadow Wood Schools have a wide range of books that foster our pupils' love of reading and enrich their experiences. Our libraries house both fiction and non-fiction books, including titles linked to curriculum topics, sensory books and big books. Books are also available to pupils in classrooms so that they can access literature throughout the school day.

Books are selected to match the age of the pupils but with varying degrees of difficulty to suit all pupils and include topic books and those that match the specific interests of individual pupils. Tactile books are available for children with a visual impairment.

### **Reading Schemes**

In the Sunflower Federation we do not use one particular reading scheme to teach reading. Reading books are read by pupils in developmental order and matched to their phonic, word reading and comprehension levels. We use the national reading book band colours to group books into levels so that individual reading books are presented sequentially and are well matched to a pupil's abilities.

Books from reading schemes in use include -

- Oxford Reading Tree
- Ginn 360
- Letters and Sounds
- Jelly and Bean
- Read Write Inc
- Heinemann Sunshine Series
- Bug Club
- Ransom Reading Stars
- Dandelion reading scheme

These schemes offer pupils a variety of genres and promote pupils' comprehension skills as well as a range of other language skills.

## **Reading Champions**

In the Sunflower Federation we operate a system of 'in-house' Reading Champions. Each class has a member of staff who takes on this role. They are responsible for promoting reading in their particular class, taking into account the level of ability of the pupils in the class and the way they access the reading curriculum. Reading Champions have opportunities to develop their own skills and knowledge about the teaching of reading and assist the Class Teacher to improve and develop the skills of all members of the class team.

## **Home School Reading**

Pupils are encouraged to take book home to share with parents and other family members. A home school reading record book is used for both home and school to share information about each child's reading experiences. Some pupils will also take phonic activities to practise at home and/or reading books to practise reading independently. These may be a level lower than the pupil is using at school so as to make reading at home an enjoyable and successful experience.

## **Other Reading related Resources**

Pupils in the Federation may use other systems and resources to enhance their language and communication skills and that involve 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*
- *Symwriter*

## **ASSESSMENT, RECORDING & REPORTING**

Teachers and Learning Support Assistants regularly record the progress of students including phonics assessment where appropriate.

As with other subjects, individual reading progress is documented and recorded on the school's 'SOLAR' assessment system.

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

Reading progress is reported both annually as part of the annual review process and in curriculum reports.