



Ashperton Primary Academy Trust

Reading Policy

Policy Review Date: September 2026
Policy Reviewed By: Naomi Margetts
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Intent

At Ashperton, it is our intent that children are taught the skills they need to become confident, fluent readers who understand and enjoy what they read. Reading is an essential life skill and therefore is a central component of our curriculum and daily school life. Children must acquire good reading skills in order to access the information that will support their development in all curriculum areas.

Furthermore, we aim to foster a love of reading in the children we teach so that they will continue to read for pleasure throughout their lives, therefore improving their imagination, understanding of the world and use of vocabulary.

We recognise that learning to read involves both learning to decode accurately and fluently and developing language comprehension, vocabulary, knowledge and understanding. We therefore provide a systematic approach to phonics alongside rich opportunities to listen to, discuss and respond to high-quality fiction, non-fiction, poetry and other texts.

Children are exposed to whole books as well as extracts and are given opportunities to develop their reading stamina, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary across the curriculum. We want every child to develop a positive reading identity and to see reading as both an essential skill and a source of enjoyment, curiosity and discovery.

Implementation

Guidelines for teaching reading

- Positive attitudes to reading are developed through providing children with access to a range of high-quality texts. Throughout the curriculum, children are given frequent opportunities to read and be read to using a variety of teaching activities.
- Teachers use a balanced approach. Teaching activities promote children's abilities to decode written language at word and sentence level and to search for meaning in a text. Teaching activities also reflect the need for children to engage imaginatively with texts, to empathise with characters and to understand and discuss themes in texts. Children are given frequent opportunities to consolidate their knowledge of the topics they are studying in class through the use of non-fiction texts.
- In order to make reading engaging, activities will be embedded within meaningful contexts wherever possible. Fiction and non-fiction books that link with what children are learning in other areas of the curriculum will be shared with and used by children. We aim to use real-life experiences, such as trips, drama and role-play activities, to help children understand what they read.
- Children are exposed to a wide range of high-quality literature, including whole novels, traditional tales, modern fiction, poetry, non-fiction, biographies, information texts and texts linked to different cultures and experiences.
- Whole books are valued alongside extracts. Each year group develops a reading journey/reading spine so that children experience a carefully selected range of texts across their time at Ashperton. Texts are selected to develop vocabulary, knowledge, cultural understanding, comprehension and a love of reading.
- Teachers read engaging books to children regularly, including daily opportunities wherever possible, to encourage children's enjoyment of literature, model how to read aloud and understand texts, and discuss new or interesting vocabulary.

- Children are encouraged to talk about books, make predictions, ask questions, explain their thinking, discuss characters and themes and express their opinions about what they read.
- Reading opportunities are provided across the curriculum so that children understand that reading is not simply an English activity but an essential means of gaining knowledge and understanding.

Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

Intent

To develop each child's ability to learn to read accurately and fluently, understand and respond to a variety of texts and develop a lifelong love of reading.

To provide children with a strong foundation in systematic synthetic phonics while simultaneously developing language, vocabulary, comprehension and enjoyment through high-quality books, stories, rhymes, poems and talk.

Implementation

Through a range of engaging activities, children are encouraged to acquire a love of books and to develop respect for them. We aim to use books to stimulate children's imagination, improve their vocabulary and increase their understanding of the world around them.

Developing early reading

The teaching of reading begins from the very moment children enter school. In Reception, children are immersed in language-rich provision alongside their systematic phonics teaching. They experience stories, rhymes, songs, poems and high-quality books throughout the day. We recognise that children enter school with different experiences of books, stories, language and reading, shaped by their home experiences and starting points. We therefore value the role of parents and carers in developing children's early love of books and reading and work in partnership with families to build on what children already know and can do. Children are encouraged to share books and stories at home, with parents and carers supported to understand how they can develop reading, language and a love of books alongside the school's teaching. Through careful observation and assessment, we identify children's starting points and use this information to ensure that teaching, provision and support are appropriately matched to their needs.

Children are introduced to the conventions of books, including handling books carefully, turning pages, understanding print direction and recognising the role of illustrations. Children are encouraged to retell stories, discuss characters and events, develop vocabulary and make links between texts and their own experiences.

In EYFS, language comprehension is developed through high-quality interactions, storytelling, songs, rhymes, discussion and imaginative play. New vocabulary encountered in books is deliberately explored and revisited within the provision.

Phonics is taught systematically through Supersonic Phonic Friends, the school's systematic synthetic phonics programme. Phonics sessions are taught daily and follow a clear structure of Revisit and Revise, Teach, Practise and Apply. Phonics teaching enables children to recognise and use grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs), blend sounds to read words and segment words for spelling. Children are taught to apply their phonics knowledge when reading unfamiliar words.

The phonics programme is supported by carefully matched decodable books. The reading scheme is aligned with the phonics programme so that children are able to apply the GPCs and words they have been taught. The school's current phonics policy states that, once children begin Basics 2 in Reception, fully decodable books are carefully selected so that children can apply their recently acquired phonics knowledge and segmenting and blending skills.

Phonics-linked reading books

Children take home a carefully matched phonically decodable book alongside a sharing/reading-for-pleasure book. The decodable book closely matches the sounds and words that children have recently been taught and are secure with in school. Books will normally reflect sounds taught recently, rather than necessarily the sounds being taught that week.

Where a child is working below the current class phonics sequence, their reading book is matched to the sounds they are secure with. Children are not expected to read books containing phonics knowledge that they have not yet been taught.

Books are changed regularly to provide children with repeated opportunities to practise newly taught phonics knowledge. Children need sufficient opportunity to practise each new set of sounds before moving on. For example, children may read approximately three or four books within a particular phonics set or box before moving on. This does not mean that every book within a box must be read. Rather, teachers and teaching assistants use professional judgement to ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to practise the relevant sounds and words so that they become increasingly accurate, fluent and automatic.

Tracking information is used to monitor which books and phonics sets children have accessed and to ensure that children are receiving appropriate opportunities for practice. Children do not progress through the reading scheme simply because they have read a certain number of books. Progression is based on their phonics knowledge, accuracy, fluency and confidence, alongside ongoing assessment.

Once children have successfully decoded a text, they are encouraged to reread it to develop fluency, expression, confidence and automaticity. Adults model fluent reading and support children to reread familiar texts with increasing fluency.

Children requiring additional support

Phonics support

Children who are identified as falling behind in phonics receive **daily catch-up phonics sessions** in addition to their normal phonics lessons.

The reading books taken home by these children are carefully matched to the sounds and words being addressed through their catch-up sessions. This gives children frequent opportunities to practise and consolidate the knowledge they are developing.

Progress through the reading scheme is reviewed alongside phonics assessment so that children move to the next appropriate level of decodable text when they are ready rather than simply because the rest of the class has progressed.

The school's phonics policy confirms that assessment is used to identify children requiring additional support and that catch-up provision is planned to address identified gaps.

Reading frequency

Individual reading frequency is determined according to children's reading needs, academic attainment and the level of support available at home. This is regularly reviewed in response to progress, assessment information and changing needs.

Children are identified as:

- **Daily readers** – heard reading their banded book by an adult every day.
- **Three-times-a-week readers** – heard reading their banded book by an adult at least three times each week.
- **Weekly readers** – all other children are heard reading with an adult at least once each week.

Where these expectations are not consistently being met, staff review the organisation of group reading, teaching assistant deployment, volunteer support and timetabling to ensure that children receive the reading opportunities they require.

Reading for pleasure

Alongside their carefully matched decodable book, children have a reading-for-pleasure book which they choose themselves. This book does not need to be matched to their phonics level. It may be a picture book, story, comic, magazine or another text that interests them. Children may choose books that are beyond their independent reading ability and share these with an adult or choose easier texts that they enjoy sharing with eg siblings, pets or friends.

This distinction allows children to practise the skills of decoding while also developing a strong personal relationship with books and reading. Parents and carers are encouraged to share the reading-for-pleasure book with their children and to discuss stories, characters, vocabulary and ideas.

Comprehension in EYFS and KS1

Teachers regularly read high-quality stories, poems and non-fiction texts aloud to children. Children are encouraged to respond orally through discussion, drama, drawing, role-play, questioning and retelling.

In Reception and Year 1, comprehension activities are primarily developed through oral discussion and shared experiences alongside the development of phonics and early reading skills.

As children progress through Key Stage 1, written comprehension activities are gradually developed. Children are taught the stamina and strategies required to find information and answer questions about increasingly longer and more complex texts.

Key Stage 2

Intent

Our intent is that children will be able to read a range of texts fluently and with understanding. They will be given frequent opportunities to read for pleasure and to find information that extends and consolidates their learning.

As children become confident readers, the emphasis increasingly moves towards fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, inference, interpretation and critical response, while children who have not yet developed secure decoding and fluency continue to receive targeted support.

Implementation

At Key Stage 2, children continue to use the school's colour-banded reading scheme where appropriate. As children become confident readers, this is supplemented with a wider variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.

All children have access to a colour-banded reading book from school. Children may also choose a free-reader from the class library or bring a suitable book from home.

Children are encouraged to read to an adult at home at least three times a week and this is recorded through the school's reading system.

Children are encouraged to have two books: one book that supports the development of their reading ability and another that is chosen primarily for enjoyment. The second book may be a comic, a challenging novel that the child shares with a parent or adult or an easier book that they enjoy sharing with siblings or others.

Reading Lessons – Years 2–6

Ideally, children in Years 2–6 receive daily Whole Class Guided Reading using high-quality texts.

Reading lessons provide pupils with regular opportunities to practise reading aloud and develop fluency, alongside explicit teaching and discussion of comprehension skills.

Lessons include a combination of verbal and written questioning to develop pupils' ability to:

- retrieve information;
- understand and develop vocabulary;
- make inferences;
- make predictions;
- explain their thinking;
- summarise information;
- sequence events and information;
- identify key information;
- understand characters, settings and themes;
- recognise how authors use language and structure;
- discuss and justify their opinions;
- make connections within and between texts.

Children are given regular opportunities to read aloud. Teachers model fluent, accurate and expressive reading and children are supported to develop appropriate pace, intonation, phrasing and expression. Children are also given opportunities to read independently and silently so that they develop reading stamina and independence.

Recommended resources

Teachers may draw upon a range of high-quality reading resources, including:

- Grammarsaurus Comprehension Crusher, including its explicit vocabulary instruction;
- Ashley Booth's Reading Curriculum;
- high-quality whole texts and extracts selected by teachers;
- appropriately challenging fiction and non-fiction texts;
- texts linked to the wider curriculum.

Resources are used flexibly and teachers use professional judgement to select texts and activities that meet the needs of their pupils.

Whole Class Reading

Whole Class Reading is used to ensure that all children have access to rich, challenging texts, regardless of their independent reading ability.

Lessons are based around high-quality fiction or non-fiction texts which provide opportunities for children to encounter ambitious vocabulary, varied sentence structures, different genres, themes and ideas.

Whole Class Reading will be used to:

- model how to read texts aloud using fluency and expression;
- develop reading fluency through regular oral reading;
- discuss how settings and characters are developed in books;
- develop vocabulary and understanding of how words are used in context;
- model and provide opportunities for children to develop a range of strategies to find answers to questions in texts;
- give children the opportunity to develop their concentration and stamina when finding answers in texts;

- develop retrieval, inference, prediction, explanation, summarising and sequencing skills;
- promote lively discussion of books and for children to express their views and preferences;
- increase children's understanding of the features of a variety of texts and how texts are structured;
- give children access to challenging texts that they might not otherwise experience.

Teachers use both verbal and written questioning, ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to explain their thinking rather than simply provide short answers.

Shared Reading

Shared reading will be used regularly in literacy lessons and across the curriculum in KS1 and KS2. The texts chosen may be linked to writing activities and other curriculum areas and can be used as models to stimulate and support pupils' own writing and thinking.

Shared reading will be used to:

- demonstrate how to read a wide variety of different genres and text types;
- demonstrate that reading is a pleasurable experience;
- give all children access to challenging texts that they might not otherwise experience;
- enable teachers to model the skills and strategies used by effective readers;
- provide a structure that children can use as a scaffold or stimulus for their own writing;
- model reading with fluency and expression.

Individual Reading and Assessment

Children's individual reading is closely monitored to ensure that they are reading books at an appropriate level of challenge and are developing both accuracy and fluency.

Individual reading is used to:

- teach reading strategies and behaviours at the level each child is at;
- support decoding where required;
- develop fluency, pace and expression;
- support vocabulary development;
- explicitly support the application of comprehension skills;
- check that reading books remain appropriately matched;
- identify gaps in reading knowledge and understanding;
- monitor progress over time.

Teachers and teaching assistants hear children read according to their identified reading frequency. Teachers should hear every child read regularly, even where teaching assistants, volunteers or reading buddies provide additional reading opportunities. This enables teachers to maintain an accurate understanding of each child's reading ability.

Reading accuracy and rate

Children are assessed when considering whether they are ready to move to the next reading book band. The school's Reading Rate and Accuracy Table is used alongside teacher professional judgement.

The table provides age-related expectations for reading rate, measured in words correct per minute (WCPM), across the autumn, spring and summer terms. It also provides guidance on reading accuracy.

The school's accuracy guidance identifies:

- **Above 95% accuracy – Independent level:** the text can be read with ease and consideration should be given to moving the child up a book band.
- **90–94% accuracy – Instructional level:** this is considered the ideal level of text for developing reading.
- **Below 90% accuracy – Challenging level:** the text is difficult to access and consideration should be given to moving the child down a book band.

Children should generally be reading at approximately **90–95% accuracy**, so that they encounter some unfamiliar vocabulary without the text becoming inaccessible.

Reading rate is considered alongside accuracy. Where a child is reading accurately but too slowly, they may remain on the same book band to develop fluency and automaticity before moving on. A child does not automatically move up a book band because they have reached a particular WCPM. Teachers consider accuracy, reading rate, fluency, comprehension and confidence when making a decision about progression.

Reading-rate and accuracy information is recorded so that teachers can monitor progress over time and ensure that information is passed to the child's next teacher.

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

Formative assessment

Teachers use ongoing formative assessment to:

- identify children requiring additional support;
- identify gaps in decoding, fluency, vocabulary or comprehension;
- adjust teaching;
- provide immediate support;
- determine whether reading books remain appropriately matched;
- monitor reading frequency and engagement.

Phonics assessment is used alongside individual reading information for children who are still developing secure decoding.

PIRA assessment

The school uses **PIRA (Progress in Reading Assessment)** at CP1, CP3 and CP5 during the school year.

PIRA assessment information is used alongside teacher assessment and individual reading information to:

- monitor progress;
- identify children who may be falling behind;
- identify strengths and gaps in comprehension;
- inform intervention and additional support;
- contribute to pupil progress discussions;
- monitor the impact of reading provision.

PIRA results are not used in isolation. Teachers consider them alongside children's day-to-day reading, fluency, accuracy, comprehension and wider knowledge of the child.

Reading for Pleasure

Developing a love of reading is a central part of our reading curriculum. Children are given regular opportunities to choose books, explore texts independently, listen to adults read and discuss books with their peers. Book in classrooms are displayed appealing and regularly updated and replenished. Teachers share whole books with their classes and ensure that children experience texts that they may not yet be able to read independently. Children are encouraged to read widely and to develop their own preferences as readers.

The school operates a weekly reading raffle to celebrate and encourage regular reading.

- In **Key Stage 1**, children who have been heard reading **five times during the week** are entered into the raffle.
- In **Key Stage 2**, children who have been heard reading **three times during the week** are entered into the raffle.

The child selected has the opportunity to choose a book. The purpose of the raffle is to celebrate reading, encourage regular reading and reinforce the message that books are something to enjoy as well as something through which children develop their reading skills.

Reading Buddies and Volunteers

The school makes use of additional adults and pupils to provide further opportunities for children to read.

Older children may act as reading buddies, providing opportunities for younger pupils to read aloud, share books and discuss stories. Volunteers are also encouraged to support the school by listening to children read.

Teachers remain responsible for knowing the reading ability and progress of the children in their class. Additional reading opportunities provided by buddies and volunteers supplement, rather than replace, teacher assessment and planned individual reading.

Independent Reading

Children will be given regular opportunities to read independently without teacher support.

Independent reading will be used to:

- promote enjoyment of reading;
- create a quiet, relaxing environment for children;
- provide opportunities for children to choose a book they want to read;
- develop reading stamina and independence;
- provide an opportunity for children to apply the skills and knowledge about reading they have learned in whole class reading and literacy lessons;
- encourage children to develop their own reading preferences.

Reading Across the Curriculum

Reading is developed across the whole curriculum. Children read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts linked to their learning in subjects such as science, history, geography, RE and computing. Teachers deliberately select texts that provide opportunities to develop subject-specific vocabulary and knowledge.

Children are taught to read for different purposes, including:

- gaining information;
- following instructions;
- researching;
- explaining;
- comparing;
- evaluating;
- entertaining;
- developing understanding.

Equality, Inclusion and Additional Support

At Ashperton, we recognise that children develop reading skills at different rates. Any child whose progress is limited is discussed with the class teacher, English subject leader, SENDCo and teaching assistant as appropriate. Relevant actions are put in place to address concerns and intervention work is monitored.

Early identification is vital. Teachers take full account of each child's individual strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, understanding and profile of need. Children who are not yet reading fluently or who have gaps in phonics continue to receive targeted support alongside access to the wider reading curriculum. Children with additional needs are provided with appropriate adaptations and support so that they can access high-quality texts and develop as readers.

Monitoring

The English Curriculum Manager and senior leadership team monitor the quality and consistency of reading provision across the school.

Monitoring includes consideration of:

- phonics teaching and assessment;
- the match between phonics knowledge and decodable reading books;
- reading frequency;
- individual reading records;
- reading accuracy and reading rate;
- PIRA assessment information;
- Whole Class Reading;
- the quality and range of texts;
- reading-for-pleasure opportunities;
- children's engagement with reading;
- progress of different groups of pupils;
- provision for children requiring additional support.

The school's phonics monitoring and assessment arrangements are used to identify gaps and ensure that additional support is put in place promptly.

Overall approach

Our reading provision therefore ensures that children experience a clear progression:

Systematic phonics teaching → carefully matched decodable books → repeated practice → regular adult reading → developing accuracy and fluency → comprehension and vocabulary development → increasingly independent reading → reading for pleasure.

This approach ensures that children who are learning to decode receive the precise practice they need, while all children continue to experience rich literature, challenging texts, discussion, vocabulary development and opportunities to develop a lifelong love of reading.