

Approaches to the Teaching of Reading -

At Stansfield, we prioritise the teaching of reading.

Why? Why is reading such a priority to us in APA?

Reading is at the core of the curriculum, and of lifelong learning. In Alternative Provision, our opportunity and 'window' to teach pupils to read is short and precious. It is here, we can change lives and make some of the biggest differences to our young people, families, and wider communities. Our intent is around preparing pupils for their next steps and life in modern Britain and this is one of our biggest levers for change in creating social justice. This document lays out for stakeholders how we are prioritising the teaching and development of reading and language in our settings, and our high expectations of our Academies. Due to the small numbers of pupils in classes compared to mainstream, adaptive teaching, we leave no stone unturned in our drive to support confident readers. We swiftly assess pupils for any gaps, and to understand the nature of these gaps, in order to precisely and effectively address them.

To support this:

In 2021, our Trust commissioned bespoke support for our sector through the DfE English Hub. In 2022-3, our Cornwall and Devon Academies with large Primary settings are Medium Level Support Schools through the DfE Accelerator fund. In 2022, all Primary teachers and Teaching Assistants received training in the chosen Synthetic Phonics Programme Read Write Inc (following previous training in 2016 and 2019) and have 'Development Days' booked throughout the year to support implementation. We have developed, and continue to develop, our expertise as teachers of reading. This includes training for secondary leaders of reading too, where Fresh Start is in place, or must be accessed via regional training as needed. Principals attended Reader Leader training alongside, and the training portal enables staff to access training all year round.

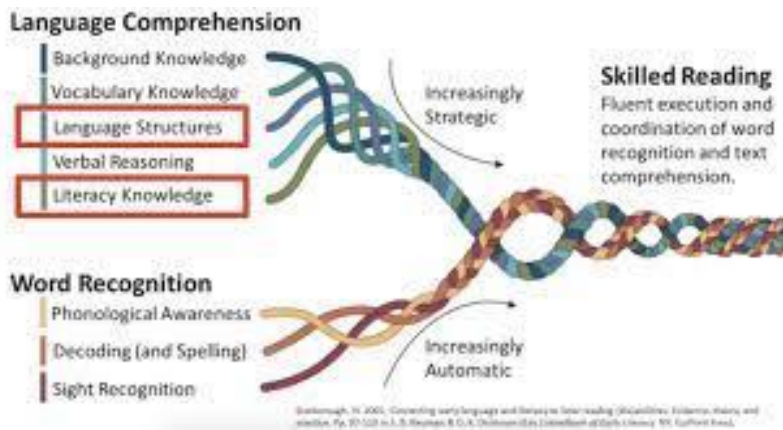
The importance of our approach

Various PISA studies suggests that finding ways to engage students in reading may be one of the most effective ways to close the attainment gap.

We understand at WAVE and know first-hand, children do not just 'become' readers, or enjoy reading by 'doing it more'. We work with young people who often have become frustrated and disengaged as an increasingly demanding curriculum in mainstream is not fully accessible to them and compounds a sense of failure.

Many pupils join us who, due to a number of factors and discontinuity in the educational journey prior to placement in Alternative Provision struggle with reading; both in terms of decoding, language comprehension and fluency. We know if we are to tackle reading effectively, we must support BOTH word recognition, and language comprehension.

Our approach and intent outlined below defines how we tackle each of these components.



Supporting Decoding- Developing effective word readers

Our chosen Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme is Read Write Inc. We have chosen it due to the rigour of the scheme and training available. This supports word reading and decoding.

Decoding refers to: • reading unfamiliar words (words that have not been decoded before) by saying the sounds corresponding to the letters in the words and then blending the sounds together, either aloud or silently • reading familiar words accurately and silently 'at a glance', that is, no longer saying the sounds consciously.

Pupils in our Academy receive phonics lessons daily as part of the RWInc programme. Children learn to write through often one to one and small group teaching of phonics, bespoke to their starting point upon entry, and as assessed every half term through the programme. Our teachers and Teaching Assistants are trained in RWINC, and for new staff, our Reading Leader will support them to access the online training regularly through the online training portal.

Our approach to Developing Language Comprehension and Composition

As well as phonics, as we know, language comprehension is the other significant strand in AP we seek to address.

When children start learning to read, the number of words they can decode accurately is too limited to broaden their vocabulary. Some pupils who join us in AP have limited vocabulary in comparison to their mainstream peers. We therefore place high emphasis on developing language through listening and speaking, whilst they are being taught to decode through phonics.



In our setting, we use 'Talk through Stories' with younger pupils, as well as adapted sequences through the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education to put a high emphasis on developing language and vocabulary through talk. Tier 2 vocabulary is also developed through our broader curriculum and quality planned lessons where we identify key vocabulary and actively promote meaningful use.



Equally we know that before children can write independently, they need to be able to say (aloud or just to themselves) what they want to write. A wide spoken language gives them more that they can write about and more words for what they want to say. Their expressive and receptive language develops through talk and listening. Following the Read Write Inc programme in Primary, children learn to spell familiar words accurately and how to form letters. When they can do this, and can spell any word in a way that is at least phonically plausible, they can begin to write down what they want to say.

Our planning for the teaching of reading, comprehension, spelling, punctuation, grammar and spoken language for pupils is adapted to need.

Once pupils can read words at a glance, we further develop language through reading in many of the ways listed below. Our planned sequences are continually being reviewed, and this year, we are strengthening planning drawing from CLPE as well as Hamilton Trust.

To support Language Comprehension, our curriculum places a strong emphasis on developing talk.

Adults talk to pupils in a language rich classroom environment throughout the day. Our small group and high adult to pupil ratios enable this, and TAs are supported by Teachers to know their important role in quality and purposeful questioning and talk. Key vocabulary is planned for within our schemes of learning that are shared between class teachers and support staff.

High quality dialogue and teaching supports our pupils to articulate what they know and understand and develop their knowledge across all areas of learning, using the vocabulary they need to support learning.

Techniques you will see in our Primary classrooms involve adults in thinking out loud, modelling new language for children • paying close attention to what the children say • rephrasing and extending what the children say • validating the children's attempts at using new vocabulary and grammar by rephrasing what children say if necessary • asking closed and open questions • answering the children's questions • explaining why things happen • deliberately connecting current and past events ('Do you remember when...?') • providing models of accurate grammar • extending children's vocabulary and explaining new words • connecting one idea or action to another • helping children to articulate ideas in well-formed sentences.

Our emphasis on quality planning in developing reading and comprehension

In our planning of learning around developing pupils' language in primary and our literacy schemes of learning, we are clear on

- What do we want children to know and think about?
- What vocabulary is associated with this knowledge and thinking?
- How can we engage the children in back and forth talk that supports their knowledge and thinking?
- What photos could we take that would reinforce the vocabulary and language after an activity or visit?
- Which books could be read aloud and shared before and afterwards?
- Which songs might introduce or reinforce the vocabulary?

Sharing non-fiction stories:

We broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the immediate and local through sharing high quality non-fiction books too, linked to our curriculum planning. For example, books about Space, other cultures, diversity and difference, food, history.

We support pupils to learn to listen and we support pupils to interact through our high focus on developing social skills as part of our core intent in Alternative provision in preparing pupils for reintegration.

Story time

Underpinning all of the above, and as part of our curriculum throughout KS1-3, we believe in the power of shared stories. Enjoying stories together. To this purpose, we have created our own Reading Spine. This shows many of our carefully selected books that we will read and talk about over the year and time pupils are with us in APA. We have chosen them carefully for our pupils –to broaden, enrich, develop empathy and appreciation of diversity and inspire. You can read our dynamic reading spine here. Our teachers liaise with feeder schools, and Centre for Literacy and Primary Education resources, and wider subject networks for book recommendations, so they are able to match books to interests, as well as inspire and extend. We are developing our Reading Spine.

We as teachers, when reading aloud to a class, know we are in a position of power to make a difference and privilege to do so. We try to replicate for children with us in Alternative Provision what it feels like to have someone’s undivided attention while sharing a story.

Reading aloud matters. We rehearse, we prepare, and we practise...

Not only do we always read once, we read passages again. We model, and we support pupils to read aloud.

We use stories to develop language and vocabulary, and our planning reflects this, as outlines in some of the examples of teaching sequences we draw from.

Through stories, our pupils in AP encounter vocabulary that they are unlikely to hear in everyday conversation but will come across in writing, once they can read for themselves.

Book Corners

Our book corners are engaging spaces, that have been carefully curated not to overwhelm our pupils in AP classroom with stuffed shelves, but that are welcoming and enticing.

How do we make adaptations for pupils with SEND?

We are guided by the DfE Reading Framework and latest evidence and research ‘that the best reading instruction for children with SEND is Systematic Synthetic Phonics’. We are ambitious for all pupils that pupils are taught to read and write; after all pupils have to navigate the same written language, unlock the same code, learn the same skills and body of knowledge as their peers, making reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act of 2010. We must prepare all for this critical skill for life. ‘SSP, rather than a whole-word approach, provides children with moderate to severe and complex needs the best opportunity to gain functional literacy’. We work with our SENCo to support pupils with SEND widely across the curriculum.

How we support older pupils with reading in our AP?

In upper Key Stage 2 and in Secondary, through teacher identification, and where the reading entry test highlights need, a phonics screen may be considered appropriate. This is done on a one to one basis with a trained teacher or teaching assistant. If need is identified, pupils receive individual Fresh start catch up teaching on a one to one basis beyond English lessons, and careful thought and attention is given about how to sensitively manage this so that pupils get the support they need without this need being highlighted to others. Where fluency and extra practise is an identified need beyond the taught curriculum, again, a bespoke package might be appropriate. Our screening enables us to determine the most effective support. The importance of our well planned and taught KS3 and 4 curriculum, with focus on developing language, oracy, comprehension in small groups is also key. We rescreen in order to understand the impact and effectiveness of our interventions.

How do we encourage a love of reading for our older pupils?

Our Secondary curriculum is rich in story, where pupils develop writing and reading skills concurrently and coherently, along with a high focus on developing oracy, language and vocabulary.

Within the Key Stage 4 curriculum, we also teach English Literature, enabling our pupils to keep up with their mainstream peers. Our expectations are high within the Alternative Provision Sector in this respect. We adapt learning, but maintain the highest and inclusive expectations that pupils can attain this qualification.

Developing fluency and comprehension

For our older pupils in secondary and primary, we have pupils who have learnt to decode, yet are not yet secure, or where language comprehension and vocabulary still remains a barrier. Through our curriculum planning, we address fluency with many opportunities to read together in class and support comprehension and Tier 2 explicit vocabulary instruction. We screen pupils on entry, and ensure we have decodable texts matched to reading abilities for extra practise, and to move pupils progressively forward rather than casting adrift as 'free readers' once assessed off needing phonics. Equally, our planning at Key Stage 3 reflects ambitious and difficult texts, to prepare for demands of GCSE. Our subject specialists support pupils' fluency. Interventions where needed can support extra practise.

Fluency gives the reader the choice to read at a speed that allows for comprehension and can be adapted to the purpose of the reading. Beginner readers, however, do not have a choice about speed because they are still engaged in decoding the words on the page. Children do not pass through a magic barrier and suddenly become fluent. There is no point in children reading speedily if the words they read are wrong – for example, if they read 'place' for 'palace'. Equally, accuracy on its own is not useful, unless they can read at a sufficient rate to support comprehension. Both accuracy and speed are essential.

The Standards and Testing Agency says that around 90 words per minute is a good indicator of when children 'start to read with sufficient fluency to focus on their understanding'. However, it also says that some children might read more slowly than this while still being able to understand what they are reading.

The planned English curriculum, based on the full National Curriculum objectives; accurate assessment to identify gaps; our skilled and adaptive teaching, small teaching groups, high pupil to adult ratios, mean that pupils move forward from starting points.

Our approach to Assessing reading comprehension While children are learning to read, most of their attention and working memory are directed to decoding words. 'Decodable' books and other material written for them to practise reading are likely to be below the level of what they can actually understand. They are also unlikely to be reading at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on the meaning of what is written on the page. It is therefore neither necessary nor desirable to assess their reading comprehension using summative assessments before they are reading fluently. This is why, when children are learning to read, they should listen to and talk about books that include words beyond those they can read for themselves. When they can read, they are then more likely to have sufficient vocabulary and other knowledge to understand the books they can read for themselves.

How do we support the leadership of the teaching of reading in our Academy?

All Academies have an identified Reading Lead in Primary, who liaises with the English Secondary Lead or Secondary Reading Lead. Coaching of staff in the teaching of reading is given explicit time in staff meetings. Appraisal for reading leaders is needs driven. Reading Leads in Primary agree with Principals, and working with the support of the Hub, what progress is expected of each individual pupil from their starting point on the systematic synthetic phonics programme, and this is tracked through the SSP tracker and portal. The English Hub supports this, as do the Development Days with RWInc. Practise and coaching work hand in hand, and the reading lead supports teachers and teaching assistants to do this. As expertise develops, leadership can be further shared and made sustainable. One of the reasons to do with the section of the Read Write Inc programme is to do with workload around planning, in that it is so well resourced it gives teachers 'time to think about how to teach rather than what to teach and enabling them to focus on the needs of individual children'

How can you support at home?

In APA, because our settings are small, we are able act in role of the 'home reader' to support you and your child in school as part of the family school approach. And sometimes, we may advise you not to read at home with your child where this may be causing upset and difficulty, (particularly where we may be working with you to rebuild confidence with reading where pupils in primary join

us on referral and disrupted educational journey) we will do this in school with support staff. However, here are 10 top tips if needed.

1. Encourage your child to read

Reading helps your child's wellbeing, develops imagination and has educational benefits too. Just a few minutes a day can have a big impact on children of all ages.

2. Read aloud regularly

Try to read to your child every day. It's a special time to snuggle up and enjoy a story. Stories matter and children love re-reading them and poring over the pictures. Try adding funny voices to bring characters to life.

3. Encourage reading choice

Give children lots of opportunities to read different things in their own time - it doesn't just have to be books. There's fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics, magazines, recipes and much more. Try leaving interesting reading material in different places around the home and see who picks it up.

4. Read together

Choose a favourite time to read together as a family and enjoy it. This might be everyone reading the same book together, reading different things at the same time, or getting your children to read to each other. This time spent reading together can be relaxing for all.

5. Create a comfortable environment

Make a calm, comfortable place for your family to relax and read independently - or together.

6. Make use of your local library

Libraries in England are able to open from 4 July, so visit them when you're able to and explore all sorts of reading ideas. Local libraries also offer brilliant online materials, including audiobooks and ebooks to borrow. See [Libraries Connected](#) for more digital library services and resources.

7. Talk about books

This is a great way to make connections, develop understanding and make reading even more enjoyable. Start by discussing the front cover and talking about what it reveals and suggests the book could be about. Then talk about what you've been reading and share ideas. You could discuss something that happened that surprised you, or something new that you found out. You could talk about how the book makes you feel and whether it reminds you of anything.

8. Bring reading to life

You could try cooking a recipe you've read together. Would you recommend it to a friend? Alternatively, play a game where you pretend to be the characters in a book, or discuss an interesting article you've read.

9. Make reading active

Play games that involve making connections between pictures, objects and words, such as reading about an object and finding similar things in your home. You could organise treasure hunts related to what you're reading. Try creating your child's very own book by using photos from your day and adding captions.

10. Engage your child in reading in a way that suits them

You know your child best and you'll know the best times for your child to read. If they have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) then short, creative activities may be the way to get them most interested. If English is an additional language, encourage reading in a child's first language, as well as in English. What matters most is that they enjoy it.

For more advice and videos on reading with your child visit : <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/>

How can I find out more about reading?

Recommended Books:

[Who next?: A Guide to Children's Authors](#)

[Book Trust: Best Book Guide](#)

[Waterstones: Guide to Kid's Books](#)

[70 Tried and Tested: Great Books to Read Aloud](#)

Recommended Websites:

www.booksforkeeps.co.uk

www.cool-reads.co.uk

www.ukchildrensbooks.co.uk

www.booktrusted.com

www.redhouse.co.uk

www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/

www.readformyschool.co.uk

www.oxfordowl.co.uk