

Bridge Reading/Phonics Policy

We believe that reading, in all its forms, is important for all our pupils. We therefore ensure that pupils have daily opportunities to listen to and engage with a wide variety of books to help develop a love of reading.

Phonics Progression

Our pre-formal learners are given lots of opportunities to develop their early reading skills by listening and responding to a variety of stories. Pupils who are physically able to, learn how to handle a variety of books, for example, by turning pages, lifting flaps, textured books and pressing sound buttons. Pupils in the pre-formal pathway are supported to develop their speaking and listening skills through play, purposeful interactions (e.g. Intensive Interaction), songs, rhymes, rhythms (including body percussion) and learning to recognise sounds in the environment.

When pupils are ready, they are introduced to the next stage of our phonics programme, and are encouraged to listen and explore different sounds through a multi-sensory approach to teaching. 'Listen and Learn boxes' have been created and these include a wide range of activities such as:

- Listening games
- Singing
- Playing instruments
- Listening to and contributing to poems
- Sound games
- Use of switches/IT

The boxes contain an assortment of objects beginning with the same initial sound. The objects have been chosen to give the pupils opportunities to listen to, make and respond to sounds. Within the box is a list of ideas and suggestions for activities. There are also laminated poems and/or songs.

If/when the children are ready, they move onto the Read Write Inc reading programme, regardless of what pathway they are on. At The Bridge School we have implemented the Read Write Inc Phonics programme which teaches our pupils the individual sounds, the letters that represent them, and how to form the letters when writing. Our Reading & Phonics Lead works closely with all classroom staff, to ensure that both teachers and teaching assistants have ongoing support and training around the delivery of phonics. This helps ensure consistency across our school.

The teaching and resources are adapted where necessary so that they meet the needs of individual pupils and motivate and challenge them effectively. This may include the use of ALDs, post-it boxes, sound switches and 3d objects.

Progress for pupils who access the RWI programme is captured termly and monitored on a regular basis, through informal drop-ins to classes, by the Phonics Lead. We also complete assessments in September. Data from the assessment points is used to help inform future planning, as well as the grouping of pupils within their classes.

The pupils will work their way through the RWI programme. When pupils get stuck on a particular sound, staff will continue to find opportunities throughout the school day, for them to recall and revisit it, whilst continuing to work through the next stages of the phonics programme. The RWI programme therefore, will be adapted so that sufficient time is spent on each skill as necessary, for the children to progress.

Support material such as visual learning aids, additional booklets, reading games, and worksheets will be available to help meet the needs of individual pupils, whilst keeping fidelity to the RWI scheme.

Comprehension and understanding of reading are measured using the PIRA assessment scheme. These assessments are carried out, where appropriate every six months. Pupils who are free readers will focus on developing their comprehension skills, and will be given the RWI books that match their level of understanding of the text they are reading.

Stories and Comprehension

It is important to immerse our pupils in the world of stories and books to create a love of reading and increase their awareness and understanding of the world around them.

Enthusiastic staff share books, poems and stories with the children in a variety of ways, using a wide range of resources, including story massage and sensory stories.

Activities may include :

- WOW days - Sensory tents set up in hall themed to a specific book, for all classes to access at an appropriate level.
- Story sessions - Sensory stories, story books, puppets
- Poetry - use books/ poetry bags /recordings
- Video stories
- Drama activities
- Clocking up reading miles - Where possible, pupils sharing books with other pupils, staff and families.

As well as a large variety of books in our library areas, pupils also have access to a set of high-quality books, known as 'The Bridge Classics', during their time at school. This enables pupils to develop a real love of specific books, such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', and 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'.

Staff make full use of classrooms, the library, the hall, creative spaces and outside areas throughout the school, to provide stimulating environments to enhance the pupils' experiences.

We hold regular reading workshops where we invite parents/carers into school. Through a fun and interactive approach, we help support parents to teach their children to read and develop a love for books.

Reading & Phonics Lead: Paula Russell

Date to be Reviewed: May 2025.