Reading at Worth Valley Primary School

2-year provision and nursery

Research underscores the importance of early exposure to sounds, rhymes and phonics for literacy development in young children. In both our 2-year provision and nursery settings, children are introduced to phonemic awareness activities via the *Little Wandle Foundations for Phonics* programme which are critical for developing the foundational skills necessary for reading and writing.

Studies have shown that engaging children in listening games, rhyming activities, and songs enhances their ability to recognise and manipulate sounds. For instance, activities such as clapping out syllables, identifying initial sounds in words and singing nursery rhymes help children develop an awareness of the phonetic structure of language. Additionally, the use of playful, interactive methods to introduce letter-sound correspondences and phonological patterns has been found to significantly impact children's ability to decode and spell words as they progress through school. These early interventions are crucial as they lay the groundwork for more structured phonics instruction in subsequent years, ultimately supporting better reading outcomes in primary school.

Examples of teaching strategies:

- Sound Play: Games that focus on listening to - and distinguishing between - different sounds. For example, "Sound Bingo" where children match sounds they hear to pictures on their bingo cards, or items in a bag which begin with different sounds
- Rhyming Games: Use rhyming picture cards and encourage children to find pairs of words that rhyme. Rhyming stories and songs can also be very engaging
- Syllable Clapping: Clap out the syllables in children's names or common objects around the classroom to help them recognise the breakdown of words into smaller parts
- Letter Sound Matching: Use magnetic letters or alphabet puzzles to help children match sounds to their corresponding letters. This can be done through songs or simple matching games

Developing a Love for Reading:

Enabling our very youngest pupils to develop a love of reading is crucial because it fosters lifelong learning and cognitive development. Early reading experiences enrich a child's vocabulary, enhance comprehension skills and improve concentration and focus. Children who enjoy reading are more likely to engage with texts critically and creatively, which supports academic success across all subjects. Moreover, a passion for reading nurtures empathy and imagination, as children are exposed to diverse perspectives and ideas through stories and informational texts. Ultimately, cultivating a love for reading early on lays the foundation for confident, curious, and capable learners.

Examples:

- Story Time: Timetable daily story sessions where children are read to in an engaging and animated manner. Use books with repetitive text and rhymes to hold their interest
- Picture Books: Provide access to a variety of picture books that children can explore independently. Encourage them to "read" by looking at pictures and telling their own stories
- Library Visits: Visit the school library to expose children to a wide range of books and to participate in storytelling sessions
- Reading Corners: Create cosy reading corners in the setting with comfortable seating and a selection of age-appropriate books



Reception and Year 1

At Worth Valley Primary School we teach Little Wandle Letters and Sounds - a comprehensive systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme designed to teach young children how to read. The programme is structured into sequential phases that introduce and build upon phonetic skills. During reception and year 1, these phases progressively introduce grapheme-phoneme correspondences, blending and segmenting words and more complex phonics patterns and spelling rules. The teaching approach is multi-sensory and interactive, incorporating visual aids, manipulatives and engaging activities. Teachers use daily, structured phonics sessions, alongside decodable books and resources, to ensure children can apply their phonics knowledge in reading and writing. Regular assessments help identify pupils who need additional support, ensuring that all children develop strong foundational reading skills.

Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in the first full week of the Autumn term and we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress. Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy. In year 1, children review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy. Daily keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read.

Reading sessions

Alongside daily phonics sessions, we teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week.

- Sessions are taught by fully trained adults to small groups of approximately six children
- Adults use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of 'Application of phonics to reading'
- Children are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so as to not overload the children's working memory and have been designed to focus on three key reading skills: decoding, prosody comprehension
- In year 1, pupils are introduced to specific comprehension skills through *Complete Comprehension*



<u>Developing a Love for Reading:</u>

Research and evidence demonstrate that the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) plays a pivotal role in helping our pupils develop a love of reading in Reception and Year 1. SSP provides a clear, structured approach to decoding words, which enhances reading fluency and accuracy from an early age. By rapidly equipping children with the skills to read independently, SSP fosters a sense of achievement and confidence. This positive reinforcement is crucial in motivating young learners to engage with books and reading activities voluntarily. Furthermore, when children can decode words effortlessly, they can focus on the content and enjoyment of stories, rather than the mechanics of reading, which enhances their overall reading experience. Consequently, the early success and enjoyment derived from reading through systematic synthetic phonics lay a strong foundation for a lifelong love of reading.

<u>Examples:</u>

- Author Visits: Arrange for authors to visit the school and talk about their books and the writing process, inspiring children to read and write (we recently welcomed Bethan Woollvin in April 2024)
- Reading Championship: a real strength of our school, the reading championship recognises and rewards pupils for reading a certain number of times
- Reading Areas: Each class has a reading area with a selection of carefully-chosen, high quality texts which cater to different interests and reading levels
- Daily storytime:

Year 2 and Year 3

In Years 2 and 3, following the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme, pupils transition from foundational phonics to more advanced reading skills. Evidence shows that continued systematic synthetic phonics instruction helps solidify decoding and encoding abilities, allowing pupils to read with greater fluency and accuracy. As children master basic phonics, they are introduced to more complex grapheme-phoneme correspondences and spelling rules. This advanced phonics instruction is paired with increased exposure to a variety of texts, enhancing comprehension skills. We use Little Wandle fluency books to ensure our children continue to read confidently and become efficient readers.

Research indicates that this combination of phonics and exposure to diverse reading materials supports the development of critical thinking and interpretative skills, fostering a deeper understanding and enjoyment of reading. Regular group reading sessions and independent reading practice further consolidate these skills, ensuring pupils become confident, proficient readers.

Examples of teaching strategies:

- Fluency: the focus shifts from decoding words to developing reading fluency. Teachers provide ample opportunities for group and independent reading to enhance pupils' speed, accuracy and expression.
- Comprehension Skills: Explicit instruction in reading comprehension begins, focusing on skills such as summarising, predicting, making inferences and understanding themes and main ideas. We use *Complete Comprehension* to ensure our children are equipped with everything they need to become strong, successful readers
- Questioning Techniques: Teachers use a range of questioning techniques to deepen understanding, including literal, inferential, and evaluative questions.
- Reading Comprehension Strategies: Pupils are taught strategies like skimming, scanning, and cloze reading to extract meaning from texts.

Developing a love for reading:

Fostering a love of reading in pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 is crucial for their academic and personal development. At this stage, children are transitioning from learning to read to reading to learn; making it an ideal time to cultivate a passion for literature. We encourage this love of reading by creating a motivating and engaging environment.

We provide access to a diverse range of books that cater to various interests and reading levels, allowing students to find stories that resonate with them personally. Our teachers play a pivotal role by incorporating regular read-aloud sessions, which not only model fluent reading but also bring stories to life through expressive narration.

Examples:

- Reading corners contain a wide range of texts from different genres; including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and plays. This exposure helps pupils develop a broad understanding of different writing styles and content
- Cross-curricular reading: reading is integrated across the curriculum. Pupils read historical texts, scientific articles and geographical reports - linking reading skills with subject knowledge
- Visual displays and resources: classrooms and school corridors are decorated with reading-related displays, book recommendations and pupil reviews to create an environment that celebrates reading
- Our core reading spine comprises carefully-chosen books which we know our pupils will find engaging, interesting and enjoyable. These books are known as 'Worth Valley Classics' – timeless books by well-known authors proven to ignite a love of reading!



Years 4, 5 and 6

In Years 4 to 6, the teaching of reading at Worth Valley Primary focuses on enhancing comprehension, fluency and critical thinking skills. Using *Complete Comprehension* alongside the Pixl (Partners in Excellence) approach, we follow a systematic framework that includes diagnostic assessments to identify individual pupil needs, supported by targeted interventions to address gaps in understanding.

Whole class reading sessions feature in our weekly timetables; where classes read n interesting and engaging text whilst developing a specific comprehension skill. This allows for high-quality instruction and immediate feedback, helping students tackle complex texts and improve their reading strategies. Additionally, the use of these carefully-selected, diverse texts helps to build vocabulary and background knowledge; making reading a more enriching and relatable experience for students.

In addition, reciprocal reading is used as an effective intervention for small groups of pupils. The overall aim is to develop comprehension skills by having pupils take on specific roles—predictor, questioner, clarifier and summariser—while reading. This collaborative approach encourages active engagement with the text, as pupils discuss their thoughts and questions, leading to a deeper understanding and improved critical thinking.



Examples of teaching strategies:

- Weekly, timetabled reading sessions using high-quality texts
- Explicit vocabulary Instruction: new words are introduced in context, used in different sentences to enable pupils to consolidate and reinforce their understanding
- Comprehension Strategies: teaching specific comprehension strategies such as summarising, questioning, predicting and retrieval helps students understand and retain information. Using Pixl assessment tools, teachers can measure students' comprehension abilities and provide focused interventions where needed
- Activities like text-based discussions and comprehension questions align with the National Curriculum's reading content domains

Developing a love of reading:

Promoting a love of reading amongst our oldest pupils is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it enhances academic success. Research shows that children who enjoy reading and read regularly perform better across all subjects, not just English. A love for reading also improves vocabulary, comprehension and critical thinking skills which are essential for academic achievement and lifelong learning. Secondly, fostering a love of reading helps to develop empathy and emotional intelligence. Through reading diverse genres and perspectives, pupils gain insights into different cultures, experiences and emotions, which can enhance their understanding and empathy towards others. This emotional development is particularly important as children approach adolescence. Finally, promoting reading for pleasure can significantly impact pupils' mental wellbeing. Reading can be a relaxing and enjoyable escape from everyday struggles, helping to improve overall mental health. By creating a positive reading culture, schools can instill a lifelong habit that supports both educational and personal growth.

Examples:

- Peer reading: pupils in Key Stage Two often read to our youngest children, fostering a sense of responsibility and leadership as well as strengthening their fluency and prosody skills
- Project-based learning: Pupils engage in projects that require reading and researching various topics, promoting critical thinking and application of reading skills in real-world contexts
- Reading shed: our outdoor reading shed provides opportunities for pupils to read outdoors and during unstructured times. Children can choose to read alone, in groups, or enjoy listening to a story read by an adult or child

Achievement for All



Ensuring that pupils do not fall behind in learning to read is critical for their academic and personal development. At Worth Valley Primary School, we implement a variety of effective strategies and interventions to support this goal:

- Any child who needs additional phonics practice has daily '*Keep-up*' support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching - using the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning
- We timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the phonics screening check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the '*Keep-up*' resources – at pace
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics '*catch-up*' lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 20 minutes and take place at least three times a week. The children also apply their phonics skills in reading practise sessions which last 10 minutes at least three times a week. Rapid catch up mirrors the main phonics programme but has been created to help children catch up quickly, so has a faster pace
- Regular Assessments: teachers conduct regular assessments to monitor pupils' reading progress. These include phonics screening, reading fluency checks and comprehension tests
- Tailored Interventions: based on assessment outcomes, targeted interventions are provided to support pupils who need additional help. These might include one-on-one teaching, small group sessions or differentiated instruction within the classroom
- Underpinning this approach is a consistently strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects
- For pupils with more complex needs, Little Wandle SEND is used. This is a complete programme that mirrors the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds phonics programme, but with adaptations and support in place that make it possible for us to meet the needs of every single learner

Parental Engagement

- Reading at Home: we encourage parents to support reading at home and provide guidance on how to read with their children, ask questions and create a positive reading environment
- Workshops and Resources: we organise workshops for parents to demonstrate effective reading strategies and provide resources such as book lists and reading records
- Reading Championship: the structure and rewards of the reading championship are clearly communicated to parents; enabling them to support their children at home towards achieving the various rewards

Summary

In conclusion, the progression from Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised to explicit reading strategies and wider reading approaches in Key Stage Two involves building on phonics skills, developing reading fluency and comprehension, fostering a love for reading through diverse texts, continuous assessment and support, and creating a literate environment that encourages a lifelong love of reading.