

The Teaching and Learning of Reading at Valley Road School

Intent

The National Curriculum 2016 states:

It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.

The teaching and learning of reading therefore underpins the teaching and learning of all subjects at Valley Road School. It is our core intent that every child in our school leaves us as a fluent and confident reader who has developed a rich vocabulary, a love for stories and reads a wide range of literature for pleasure. We do this through the carefully designed teaching activities provided by our ambitious English curriculum and through the language-rich curricular of other subject areas including history, geography, and science.

Implementation

Reading has been described as the product of decoding and comprehension, a model first proposed by Gough and Tunmer in 1986, who called it the Simple View of Reading¹. This is the model of Reading which underpins how we teach Reading at VRS.

Reading is a complex process that draws upon many skills that need to be developed at the same time. To be a fluent and confident reader, a child will need to be taught the specific skills of **word reading** and **language comprehension**. Word reading and language comprehension require different sorts of teaching² and our curriculum is designed to ensure that every child develops both these skills in tandem.

Every teacher and Teaching Assistant in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.

Reading in Reception and Year One

At VRS, we first teach our children how to decode accurately by using a robust systematic programme of synthetic phonic (SSP) using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds (Revised).³ During this time, children's understanding of language is predominately taught

¹ Gough PB and Tunmer WE (1986). 'Decoding, reading and reading disability' Remedial and Special Education: volume 7, issue 1, pages 6-10

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The Reading Framework, July 2021

³ <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/>

through speaking and listening activities, the sharing of stories, rhyme and poetry and regular book-talk both in the classroom and at home. Children at this stage in their learning read phonically decodable books which they also take home to read with their parents/carers. Children are also encouraged to share a 'reading for pleasure' book with home. This book will have been chosen from our library of carefully collated stories and non-fiction texts and are designed to be read aloud to the child (rather than by the child themselves) thus broadening their understanding of stories, aiding their acquisition of rich vocabulary and their story language further.

We also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a 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.

We start teaching phonics in Reception in the early Autumn term and follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression](#), which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- 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.
 - Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.
 - Any child who needs additional practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.

We use the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources](#) to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Impact (early reading and phonics)

Assessment of early reading and phonics

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

- **Assessment for learning** is used:
 - o daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - o weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** is used:
 - o every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
 - o by SLT and scrutinised through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Reading from Year Two onwards

Once a child can read most words 'at a glance' and can decode unfamiliar words easily using their phonic knowledge (usually by the end of Year One), we can begin to develop their understanding of language (comprehension) through their reading. At VRS, this means that children take part in regular small group guided-reading, whole class shared-reading or individual reading activities as well as experiencing a range of quality texts taught in both our English and other curriculum areas. How we teach these specific comprehension skills is explained in the '*An explanation of the 'skills of reading'*' section below.

In every class, adults read stories and poetry aloud to children daily ensuring that we not only model the principles of proficient reading but also help our children to learn how to use language to make sense of the wider world. Listening to others read broadens children's vocabulary and fosters an understanding that reading is a pleasurable activity for everyone.

Children who have reached this stage in their reading journey will be provided with a banded reading book from our library to read aloud to an adult at home. Book bands are a proven approach to developing successful readers as the system helps us to carefully grade our library books and reading scheme materials by difficulty level. At VRS, we are also using the internationally recognised system of Lexile Levels to assist us in banding our books which means that we can ensure that every child has access to a wide range of reading materials which will continue to challenge and develop their reading skills throughout their journey across KS2.

For the most part, it is best to choose books within a child's Lexile range; the child will comprehend the books better without getting frustrated and will be systematically introduced to new vocabulary and sentence structures. However, there are times when we might want to choose books which are below or above a child's Lexile reading measure.

For example:

Materials with a higher Lexile text measure can be a good challenge for confident and enthusiastic readers. A hard but interesting book can open the door to other books on the same subject.

Materials with a lower Lexile text measure often helps reluctant readers to build confidence and skills with less challenging books on their topics of choice.

If a child in KS2 is not confidently using systematic phonics to enable them to decode words automatically, then we will continue to develop this skill, alongside the other skills of reading, using age-appropriate phonics teaching following the approaches used throughout KS1. We timetable regular 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. We also utilise *Nessy Reading and Spelling* for children in Years 3-6 providing these children with 20 minutes of highly personalised reading and spelling teaching 4 times a week.

Impact (Year 2 onwards)

Assessment of reading and spelling from Year 2 onwards

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

Assessment for learning is used:

- o daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support in both reading and/or spelling;
- o weekly in spelling assessments or through the use of Spelling Shed;
- o Weekly in guided reading and/or shared reading sessions focusing on VIPERS (as explained below.)

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Summative assessment is used:

- o twice yearly using Testbase National Curriculum Tests (three times yearly for Year 6) to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
- o twice yearly using *Hodder Group Reading Test* to provide age-standardised scores to enable the identification of children in need of catch-up and keep-up support (as well as identifying our most able readers.)
- o by SLT who can scrutinise the Testbase Results to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

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Summative assessment is also used:

- At the end of Key Stage One (Year 2) in the form of Teacher Assessment informed by National Curriculum Key Stage 1 Tests to inform progress when transitioning to Key Stage Two;
- At the end of Key Stage Two (Year 6) when children sit the National Curriculum Key Stage Two Tests to inform progress when transitioning to Key Stage Three.

Love of Reading and Reading for Pleasure

Children who read for pleasure do significantly better at school. Children who read for pleasure make more progress in mathematics, vocabulary and spelling, as well as in reading.⁴

At all stages, from the very first weeks in Reception to their last day in Year 6, we encourage parents to read aloud to and listen to their child read aloud regularly. In doing so, parents/carers can help their child to develop the specific reading skills/vocabulary explained in this document as well as fostering their child's love for reading.

In school, children will be read to frequently by adults in all classes. This will include a range of modern, traditional and classical stories, poems and rhymes as well as books linked to topics they are learning about. Stories and books will be chosen to enrich the cultural appetite and knowledge of every child as well as developing their vocabulary and language comprehension.

Children will also be encouraged to independently choose and share with home books from our well-stocked libraries which contain a wide range of quality fiction and non-fiction books. Parents/carers are also welcome to borrow books to read to/with their child at home.

We are extremely fortunate to have annual access to the fantastic author talks organised by the Henley Literacy Festival. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that every child participates in many workshops with well-known authors throughout their time at VRS. This not only provides the children with the opportunity to listen to, and learn from renowned authors such as Michael Morpurgo, Katherine Rundell and Chris Riddell, but also encourages the children to see the link between the reader and the writer thus enhancing their understanding of the writing process.

Our libraries are well-stocked and contain both modern and classical children's literature, poetry and a wide range of non-fiction texts. We ensure that we keep our stock up to date by using reading lists recommended by organisations such as the Schools' Library Service, the Book Trust and The Schools' Reading List to audit our library regularly. Class teachers also provide selections of carefully curated books within their classrooms, often linked to current learning to ensure children have easy access to books.

Children in all year groups take part in sharing assemblies, plays and performances where they learn and recite poetry and rhymes and sing songs, they have learnt to each other, and to their parents and carers. This provides all children with an opportunity to further develop

⁴ Institute of Education, University of London research 2013

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their reading fluency and vocabulary as well as providing an emotional connection to language, creating shared memories for whole classes.⁵

⁵ The Reading Framework, July 2021

An explanation of the 'skills of reading' taught at Valley Road School in guided-reading, shared-reading and individual reading sessions

Comprehension

Comprehension is the understanding and interpretation of what is read. To be able to accurately understand written material, children need to have developed the skills of:

- Decoding (Word Reading)
- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Fluency
- Thinking and reasoning skills

Decoding (Word Reading)

This is the ability to apply the knowledge of letter-sound relationships, including knowledge of letter patterns, to correctly read and pronounce written words. At VRS, we use a systematic synthetic phonic programme (SSP) called *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds (Revised)*. Understanding these relationships gives a child the ability to recognise familiar words quickly and to work out words they haven't seen before. Some words cannot be easily decoded, so children will be taught to recognise these 'tricky words' and apply the principles of phonic decoding as well as recognising some words automatically as fully explained in our phonics policy.

Vocabulary

To understand what you're reading, you need to understand most of the words in the text. Having a strong vocabulary is a key part of learning to read. Children will learn new vocabulary through direct teaching and through everyday experience as well as through reading a wide variety of texts.

Grammar

Understanding how sentences are built or how ideas connect within sentences (this is called cohesion) might not seem like a reading skill. However, these skills are key to developing reading comprehension. To fully understand what they have read, children need to

understand how punctuation tells them how a sentence is constructed and how it should be read. They also need to understand how ideas connect within the text. We develop this when reading aloud to children as well as through specific teaching focused on grammar and punctuation.

Fluency

Reading fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. In order to understand what they read, children must be able to read fluently both silently and when reading aloud. When reading aloud, fluent readers read in phrases, obeying punctuation, and add intonation appropriately, their reading is smooth and has appropriate expression.

Children who do not read fluently sound choppy and awkward when reading aloud. This might be due to a need to further develop decoding skills or may indicate that a child needs more practice at reading, silently and aloud, with speed and smoothness. The children will receive direct instruction on how to develop these skills as well as experience adults modelling fluency frequently as they read stories and text to the children regularly.

Thinking and reasoning skills

In order to fully comprehend a text they have read, a child needs to develop a range of thinking and reasoning skills. We call these the Reading VIPERS skills.

For KS1, the Reading VIPERS are:

- Vocabulary – Draw upon knowledge of vocabulary in order to understand text.
- Infer – Make inferences from the text.
- Predict – Predict what you think might happen based on the information that you have been given.
- Explain – Explain your preferences, thoughts and opinions about text.
- Retrieve – Identify and explain key features of fiction and non-fiction texts such as: characters, events, titles and information.
- Sequence – Sequence the key events in the story.

For KS2, the Reading VIPERS are:

- Vocabulary – Find and explain the meaning of words in context.

- Infer – Make and justify inferences using evidence from the text.
- Predict – Predict what might happen from the details given and implied in the text.
- Explain – Explain how content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole; explain how meaning is enhanced through language choices; explain how themes, patterns and information develops across a whole text.
- Retrieve – Retrieve and record information and identify key details from fiction and non-fiction.
- Summarise – Summarise the main ideas from more than one paragraph.

Every child will be taught VIPERS skills as part of our English curriculum from Year 2 onwards.