



Reading and writing policy

Reading

Reading

At The Village School reading may be interpreted as any activity that leads to the derivation of meanings from visual or tactile representations, *for example, objects, pictures, symbols or written words*. They may be accessed visually, orally or through touch.

Reading strategies and Personalised Reading Pathways

Pupils are taught a range of strategies to enjoy, to access and to understand, different types of symbolic representations, for example, objects of reference, pictures, symbols and text or any combination of these as appropriate to the **'Personalised Reading Pathways'** (see below) of the individual pupil.

At The Village School we have pupils who have a wide range of needs, abilities and ages. For this reason not one method of teaching of reading fits all. For this reason we bring a range of teaching methods into the curriculum and each individual pupil is assessed early in their school career as to which method is going to be the most effective in meeting their needs. Often it is a combination of many.

These approaches include:

Phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge

At the Village School phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge begins with exploring and listening to sounds. It moves on to linking sounds and letters and, where appropriate, continues with systematic and regular phonics sessions which are multi-sensory and 'age appropriate', in order to capture interest, sustain motivation and reinforce learning throughout the school life of the pupil. It is important to develop every pupil's ability to listen and to attend.

We believe that teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- locate, track and sequence sounds
- sustain attention in a listening activity
- recognise that sounds and words can relate to people, situations, actions and objects
- discriminate between different sounds, words and phrases

- blend sounds for reading and segment them for spelling
- develop a knowledge of grapheme and phoneme correspondences.

Depending on which reading pathway a child is on some may be using phonics as the main route into reading where for others it may be part of a combination of approaches. We have made a strategic decision to use the 'Ruth Miskin' approach to the introduction of sounds and age appropriate resources but we have a flexible approach to the introduction of these sounds depending on the learning needs of the pupils. Some pupils may only experience sounds as a means of locating, tacking and sustaining interest and attention. These pupils will be using level 1 letters and sounds alongside a variety of listening and discrimination activities as a tool for learning.

Word recognition and symbolic knowledge

At The Village, for some pupils, using sight recognition as an approach to reading may form part of their entire personalised reading journey. It would always begin with the introduction of The Village School Core Vocabulary where we would use the symbols in this package to read and sign or say depending on individual needs.

We believe it is always important to develop our pupil's ability to attend to objects, patterns, pictures, symbols and words. Pupils are encouraged to link these to people, situations, objects and actions and to learn how they can provide cues to an activity and to make choices. We have a whole school approach to symbols and have made a decision to mainly base this on Widget symbols.

Teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- discriminate between different representations
- distinguish between text and illustrations
- match and identify a range of familiar representations, *for example, signs, symbols and words of personal importance, high-frequency words, content words or phrases from familiar books or reading schemes, social and environmental vocabulary, cross-curricular and subject specific vocabulary.*

Development of symbolic understanding

Familiar objects → unfamiliar objects → photographs of familiar faces → photographs of familiar objects → photographs → coloured pictures → coloured symbols → black and white symbols → words

Sight vocabulary using objects, pictures or symbols and all of our pupils will use this to some extent or another. In some situations development begins with the names of objects, people, places and actions that a pupil needs to acquire in order to make sense of the world and influence events (see introduction), for others it will stay as this and for some it will form part of a more holistic approach. Every child is taught the initial Village School Core Vocabulary using their preferred symbolic representation and their vocabulary of words is extended from here to support the curriculum.

Grammatical awareness

We believe that grammatical awareness develops from, and supports our pupils' ability to use and understand how the different elements of speech, *for example, how nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions are used and combined in different ways so that meaning is clear.*

Reading may provide a visual prompt to support pupils who have difficulties with syntax or who use telegraphic speech in appropriate language structures. To develop pupils' reading comprehension, we believe that it is important to develop their understanding of words, sentences and whole texts and the ways in which these are selected, combined and sequenced.

We believe that teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- recognise patterns and continue a pattern of objects or symbols
- sequence objects, symbols and words from left to right, and understand that they need to be accessed in that way to make sense
- develop the concept of beginnings and ends, *for example, of a story, an information text, a sentence or a word*
- recognise when the order of an object, picture, symbol or word sequence has been changed and how such changes can alter meanings.

Contextual understanding

We believe that the development of pupils' knowledge of object permanence will support the understanding of cues and signals linked to reading activities, and the ability to consider the text as a whole.

Contextual understanding is built upon knowledge, skills and understanding developed in speaking and listening activities, *for example, pupils' appropriate responses to specific sounds, words and phrases, their use and understanding of a developing vocabulary and their exploration of language used across different contexts.*

We believe that teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- become familiar with, and anticipate, routines linked to reading activities and the content of different texts, *for example, through story sacks, handling objects linked to information texts, a mood created within the classroom before reading a particular type of story using lights, music, sound effects to prepare for a scary story or the opening of a book providing the cue that an adult is about to read aloud*
- make connections between different parts of a text, *for example, how stories begin and end, the sequence of stories, the order of a recipe, what has been included and omitted in information writing*
- predict what happens next in a story or what a book might be about □ apply knowledge gained from experience of other texts.

Reading for information and Reading for Pleasure

It can be an important for many of our pupils, as they continue through school, to make a clear differentiation between reading for pleasure and reading for information.

The former can include listening to stories, watching films and being involved in dramatic performances and the arts.

The latter is developing our pupil's ability to recognise and to obtain information from objects, photographs, pictures, symbols and text.

Teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- access information from a wide variety of sources, *for example, objects of reference, pictures and photographs, reference books, tables, charts, maps, diagrams, dictionaries, CD-ROMs, audio tapes, internet sites*
- choose, select and handle books with care and to use a library
- understand terms about books and print and use them correctly, *for example, cover, beginning, end, page, line, word, letter, title*

recognise and name different types of non-fiction and non-literary texts and understand their uses, *for example, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, cookery books, atlases, diaries, telephone directories, leaflets, letters*

- identify, understand, and use subject-specific and specialist vocabularies
- use some of the organisational features of non-fiction texts to find information, *for example, headings, captions, illustrations, contents, index and chapters*
- identify facts and opinions and compare information from different texts

STRATEGIES FOR READING (Developing Personalised Reading Pathways)

There are four categories which “engage” the reader in some way to the text and can help to support the identification of appropriate strategies for each individual pupil.

1. Responsive engagement

Responding to what is being read, bringing ones own experience and individuality.

2. Semantic engagement

Making meaning from text. Understanding what has been read.

3. Syntactic engagement

Understanding the organisation and structure of the text

4. Grapho-phonemic engagement

Seeing the shapes of the letters and transforming them into sounds

TYPES OF READER

In The Village School we have many different types of reader. Identifying this helps to plan the personalised learning Journeys in reading development.

Exploring books and stories-

Engaging in and enjoying the essence of the story

Responding to props

Anticipation of familiar routines

Emergent reader

Knows what books are for

Enjoys stories

Can talk about books

Aware of the function of print

Supported reader

Learns about letters, sounds, words and grammar

Show interest in tackling some print

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Fluent reader

Builds up knowledge of how texts work
Will start to read some text silently

Independent reader

Chooses text from a variety of sources
Understands what is being read
Can discuss what is read with reference to the text
Reads between the lines for hidden meanings

The role of parents

At The Village we value the role of our parents in the education of our pupils and believe that their role in the teaching of reading is vital, irrespective of whether they will be independent readers or just enjoy books and stories. We run a programme of 'family learning' where we work with parents on the value of their contribution and suggest strategies they may use to help their child at home. In addition we ask them to read at home with their child and comment on the responses of their child in a reading record book.

Book Corners and Leisure Areas

Every class at The Village School has a book corner or leisure area where books are readily available. The purpose of these areas is to encourage engagement with literature by inspiring curiosity. We strongly believe that these areas are 'age appropriate' to the pupils in the class. This becomes more difficult as pupils move through village 2 and into village 3 where they are still 'exploring books and stories'. Here you may find more of a range of picture catalogues of everyday items together with 'coffee table' type picture books.

Policy into practice

A range of strategies are in place to ensure that policy is put into practice. These strategies are monitored by the middle and senior leadership team. They include:

- Assessment ongoing and linked to Pivots, Routes for Learning and National Curriculum levels
- Books linked to themes and curriculum
- Individualise Reading Pathway documents
- Age appropriate books
- Specialist teacher leading on English as an Additional Language □ Specialist teacher for visual and hearing impairment pupils

Literature

At the Village School we recognize that responding to, and developing an understanding of, literature will initially be accessed through attending to a familiar voice reading aloud and to objects, pictures

and varied sensory stimuli linked to a story. We believe that it is vitally important to develop our pupils' understanding of fiction, poetry and drama.

Teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- Attend and respond to the sound, rhythm and mood of a variety of literary texts
- Respond in different ways to what they have read or heard, *for example, through movement, mime, role play, art, music, shared writing activities*
Develop a wide understanding and use of vocabulary linked to text, supported where appropriate by objects, pictures, symbols and multi-sensory resources
- Respond to, identify, and describe characters, events, settings and emotions in fiction texts
- contribute to a shared discussion, making reference to the characters and plot and indicating personal preferences
- Compare the work of the same and different writers, identifying similarities and differences, *for example, compare two poems by the same poet; compare two pieces of writing on the same theme, but in different styles or from different cultural traditions*
- Respond to, and be aware of, the different uses of language and subject matter from different traditions.

Writing

At The Village School we interpret writing as any activity that communicates and records events, experiences, information, thoughts and feelings. This may be in stories, scripts, poetry, personal writing or functional writing, *for example lists, instructions*. ...the most appropriate form of recording are selected according to pupils' needs, *for example using objects, pictures, photographs, symbols and text*.

Writing is broken down into 5 different areas.

They are:

Composition

Giving pupils the tools to develop their skills to record information in a variety of ways. We believe that teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- Record events, experiences and information
- Link objects, pictures, words and symbols to convey meanings
- Select and choose an appropriate vocabulary
- Use the experience of stories, poems and simple recounts as a basis for shared and independent writing
- Write in different styles
- Vary their writing for different purposes and for different readers

Planning and drafting

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Developing the ability to select and assemble objects, photographs, pictures, symbols and words appropriate to the activity

We believe that teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- Trace, overwrite, copy and write familiar words and phrases
- Plan, note and develop initial ideas
- Draft, and develop ideas from a plan into a structured text
- Revise, change and improve drafts

Spelling and punctuation

- Making sense of what is read and the needs of the reader.
- The development of grammatical awareness.
- Activities that highlight the similarities and differences between sounds, words and letters.

Handwriting, mark making and presentation

- Developing the awareness of, and attention to, hands and fingers and the ability to use them with increased control.
- Knowing that pupils can effect their world by making their mark upon it

For many pupils at The Village this will be best supported through ICT.

We believe that teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- Be aware of, attend to and manipulate switches
- Develop hand/eye co-ordination
- Take pride in their work
- Recognise and understand how to set out their work, how to check that it is neat and clear, and how to revise it and amend mistakes

Standard English and language structure

Supporting the pupil's ability to use and understand the different structures of language in speaking and listening. Developing our pupil's ability to understand that pictures, symbols and words need to be ordered correctly and that appropriate vocabulary is crucial to meaning.

We believe that teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- Select an appropriate vocabulary
- Order pictures, symbols and words and link them in sentences and then sequences of sentences
- Recognise the function of different words and use the appropriately by linking them in sentences and sequences of sentences

- Be aware of how written English varies in degrees of formality, depending on the intended readers, relationships and contexts

Nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, are used and combined in different ways so that the meaning is clear. Listening to, and being aware of how colloquial English and local spoken dialect can differ from Standard English is important, even for pupils who may not develop speech. Pupils may be taught about how language varies and may experience varieties of expressive language associated with different situations.

We believe that teaching this aspect across key stages will help our pupils to:

- use different facial expressions and body posture in formal and informal situations
- use appropriate structures to refer to the present, *for example, two to three element combinations*, including statements, negatives, questions, commands or the use of adjectives, prepositions and determiners, *for example, 'my coat'*
- apply a familiar word to a range of others, *for example, 'more gravy', 'more books'*
- use a range of structures, *such as plurals and pronouns* and refer to activities and experiences in the past and the future link clauses with connectives, *for example, 'and'*
be aware of differences between written forms and verbal and non-verbal communication systems
- discriminate between, and make active choices about, formal and informal vocabulary in different situations, *for example, phrases on a communication aid, different tones of voice, different signs*
- develop an understanding of how language varies over time, and the influences on language, *for example, peer group colloquialisms, media and advertising*

Improving access to the English curriculum

Staff at The Village makes reading and writing more accessible by:

- Ensuring that communication opportunities are of a high quality and enjoyable, relevant and motivating
- Providing access to appropriate ICT to support and develop pupils' work
- Providing opportunities for pupils to communicate through the most appropriate means or by a combination of means, *for example, body movements; eye gaze; facial expression; gestures including clapping, waving, pointing and signing; finger spelling; photographs; pictures and symbols; objects and objects of reference; electronic communication aids and switches.*
- Supporting their own speech and prompting pupil responses in shared reading and writing activities and in discussion work through signs, symbols, visual prompts and through appropriate models to support pupils' responses.
- Encouraging interaction with the other pupils, in addition to interaction with staff.
- Using materials and resources which pupils can access through sight, touch, sound, taste or smell, *for example, tactile books, story sacks and boxes, tapes*
- Sensitive and thoughtful adult support, *for example, correct positioning so that pupils can make purposeful movements or focus on an activity; coactive exploration; sensitive interpretation of the meaning and purpose of communication*

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- Allowing time for pupils to settle and be familiar with their environment, and to respond and communicate, *for example, to reach for, grasp or release an object, and to attempt tasks independently*
- Adapting equipment, tasks or environments and providing alternative activities where necessary, *for example simplified text*
- An awareness of the pace at which pupils work and the physical effort required □ A balance of consistency and challenge, according to individual needs.

Pupils with a hearing impairment may need:

- A greater emphasis on visual and tactile approaches
- A carefully considered environment in which listening activities can take place, *for example, limited noise levels and background noise for those pupils wearing hearing aids.*

Pupils with visual impairment may need:

- An emphasis on tactile and auditory cues
- Activities and objects presented in particular ways, *for example, with a verbal cue within their visual range; with verbal descriptions of objects and pictures*
- To know who is working within their group
- To be carefully positioned in the group, so that they can make effective use of their vision
- Equipment to support access, *for example, appropriate lighting, enlarged or reduced print, tactile books, materials with clear contrasts, equipment to enlarge pictures and texts, the use of objects of reference, specific alternative communication systems such as the use of “Moon” or Braille*
- A carefully considered environment in which listening takes place, as the auditory input for pupils with visual will have a greater significance, and some pupils may benefit from the use of small enclosed spaces where sounds are enhanced and extraneous noise is reduced

English as an Additional Language (See also separate EAL Policy)

Many pupils at The Village School regularly are experiencing or speaking a language other than English. As well as being committed to diversity and building on our pupils’ knowledge of other languages and cultures, we also ensure that all our pupils develop as competent and confident communicators and writers of English.

This guidance is intended to help teachers do this. It focuses in particular on ways of assessing Our Speech and Language therapist work closely with our specialist teachers, all teachers, class staff in identifying the early progress pupils make in communication skills and learning English as an additional language (EAL), in such a way as to ensure that pupils’ attainment is appropriately linked to their full national curriculum entitlement.

Our class and subject teachers are:

- knowledgeable about pupils’ abilities and their needs in English and other subjects
- use this knowledge effectively in curriculum planning, classroom teaching and pupil
- grouping

- make good use of specialist language support teachers and bilingual assistants, and speech and Language therapists when teaching and monitoring progress

Our additional therapist and support staff will:

- work with class and subject teachers effectively to make focused and systematic
- assessments of pupils communication, including their use of first language, as appropriate
- help match the language demands of the curriculum to pupils’ skills and needs, to
- maximise pupils’ development of communication and English
- provide effective specialist teaching for groups or individuals
- contribute to curriculum planning as members of a teaching team, to ensure continuity and progress within the national curriculum subjects;
- help strengthen links between home, school and community

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Date	Details	Author
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