



Reading



"Reading is fundamental to education. Proficiency in reading, writing and spoken language is vital for pupils' success. Through these, they develop communication skills for education and for working with others, in school, in training and at work."

(The Reading Framework, 2023)

"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free." – Frederick Douglass.

At Abbey Primary School, staff and pupils value reading as the 'key' needed to 'unlock' the whole curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to develop an innate love of literature from the moment they enter school. As such, high priority is given to teaching pupils to read as quickly as possible with the aim of developing accurate, automatic, and expressive readers in readiness for the demands of their secondary education, and adult life.

The systematic teaching of phonics, alongside high-quality reading resources, ensures that all pupils read fluently to make the shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn". In daily reading lessons, pupils' reading ability develops to the point where they rely less on their working memory to decode words, learning to read them by sight with increasing fluency, enabling comprehension of the text.

High value is given to the role of reading for developing and maintaining pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils are encouraged to discuss the experiences, ideas and feelings encountered through stories, with the aim of feeling more equipped to deal with their own personal, social, and emotional challenges, and develop empathy for the lives and situations of others.

Early Reading

Pupils entering the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught via a systematic, synthetic phonics programme. Highly-trained staff plan and deliver progressive phonics lessons in line with the needs of pupils. These are taught daily, throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, with the aim of introducing pupils to the English alphabetic code that represents the sounds (phonemes) in words to the single letters and groups of letters (graphemes) that denote them.

Lessons are interactive, ensuring that all pupils participate fully in tasks that enable them to practise what they have learnt. Regular review of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences ensures that pupils receive further timely practice when gaps are identified. Pupils are explicitly taught correct letter formation as part of their phonics lessons and have the opportunity to practise this daily.

The complexity of the English alphabetic code means that pupils need to be taught how the spoken and written forms of the sounds correspond. Once this knowledge is secure, alternate representations of the sounds are gradually introduced (e.g. 'o' - old, 'oa' - boat, 'ow' - crow, 'oe' - toe, 'o-e' - mode).

Pupils are taught to blend the sounds together to read words. Pupils are also taught to segment (separate) the sounds which enables their spelling and subsequent writing of words (e.g. **the sounds sh-ee-p when blended, are read as 'sheep'**). In this way, word reading and spelling are both the result of high-quality phonics teaching.

High frequency words are also introduced. These are the words which occur most frequently in written material, for example, 'and', 'the', 'as' and 'it'.

- Some of these can be sounded out using basic phonic rules; for example, 'it' is a decodable word (can be sounded out and blended).
- Many are **not phonetically regular** and are therefore trickier to read in the early stages because they require sight recognition (e.g. **come, some, water**). At Abbey Primary School, these are called '**star**' words.

Pupils in the EYFS and Year One are provided with reading books to take home from the Pearson Bug Club Phonics Scheme and the Oxford Reading Tree Songbirds Phonics Scheme. These are matched to the pupils' current phonics stage to enable practice and consolidation of the sounds and star words that have already been taught in school.

Comprehension develops alongside fluency, as a result of pupils' access to a language-rich environment in school. Adults explicitly model good practice when reading to, and with, pupils. The meaning of new words is explained and links are made to events and experiences within the pupils' own lives to support their understanding.

Continuous assessment enables pupils not making the required progress to be identified. Early intervention takes place to address any potential barriers with the aim of closing gaps in a timely manner. Pupils who begin school with a poor understanding of language, which could be a barrier, receive considerable support within the Early Years to develop their spoken language prior to learning to read.

Phonics Screening Check

A statutory 'Phonics Screening Check' takes place in the Summer Term of Year One. This is carried out on a one-to-one basis with the class teacher and is used to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress in their ability to decode words.

Pupils who do not pass the check in Year One receive targeted support and intervention. A further opportunity to pass the check is provided in the summer term of Year Two. If a pupil does not pass the screening check after two attempts, phonics continues to be taught in an age-appropriate way in Key Stage Two.

Daily Reading Lessons

In all year groups, fluency, accuracy, and automaticity are given high priority. In daily lessons, pupils benefit from hearing their teachers read, as good role models, with the aim of mirroring the same, pace, accuracy and expression that makes reading accessible and therefore enjoyable. As a result of exposure to high-quality texts that are carefully chosen, children experience and enjoy a wide range of stories and non-fiction that challenge and inspire them.

Daily reading lessons centre around the following principles:

- **Explicit teaching of new vocabulary:**
Prior to each lesson, teachers identify tier 2 and tier 3 words that are pivotal to understanding the text. The meaning and pronunciation of these words are taught at the beginning of each lesson.
- **Modelled expressive reading:** by the teacher who is the expert.
- **A range of strategies to practise fluent reading, including:**
 - **Echo reading:** Pupils echo what has been read by the teacher.
 - **Choral reading:** All pupils follow the lead of the teacher and read in unison.
 - **Paired reading:** Pupils practise reading sentences or paragraphs whilst the other listens.
 - **Independent reading:** Children read an increasing amount of text as they become more fluent.
- **Repeated re-reading:**
Pupils become experts at reading the same passage of text, thereby gaining a secure mental model of what good reading sounds like and understanding that this is sometimes necessary to fully comprehend the text.
- **Skilled questioning:**
Teachers plan questions, and opportunities for discussion, at key points within the text to support and expand the children's understanding of what is being read – these questions and discussions draw on a range of relevant reading skills such as inference, prediction, summarising etc. Teachers take the opportunity to support pupils whose existing background knowledge does not yet allow them to access the content.
- **Challenging texts:**
The selection of challenging texts enables children to have high aspirations in reading by bridging the gap between what they already know and understand and what they can potentially achieve.
- **Modelling comprehension skills:**
Teachers explicitly model the internal narrative process (asking questions, making comments, and linking ideas) that established readers use as they unpick the meaning and content of new texts.

Book-Banded Reading Books

To enable pupils to practise the learning that takes place in reading lessons, they are allocated a book from the book band that correlates to their level of reading. These books are those that pupils can read fluently, thus enabling them to focus on comprehending the text they are reading. Children who are still learning phonics in Key Stage Two read books that enable them to practise the sounds they have learnt in the context of an age-appropriate book.

Assessment

The level of the book-banded reading books accessed by pupils is reviewed formatively by class teachers who listen to pupils read both on an individual basis and during lessons. Progress in reading is supported by verbal feedback. Ongoing assessment methods support teachers in identifying and planning the next steps for pupils.

Summative assessments in Years One to Six are carried out on a termly basis during a whole school assessment week. These help to verify the teacher judgements made and enable the tracking of progress.

Reading at Home

Pupils' engagement with reading at home is monitored with the expectation that they practise at least 5 times a week. Where pupils struggle to maintain the expectation, provision is facilitated with an adult in school. Pupils' reading diaries provide a means by which parents can contribute to their child's reading journey.

Reading for Pleasure

At Abbey Primary School, pupils are encouraged to develop a lifelong love of reading from an early age and an exciting reading culture is interwoven in many different ways.

These include:

- Daily story time
- 'First Chapter Friday' whereby teachers introduce a brand-new genre or author to the children on a half-termly basis
- Weekly Rhyme Time
- Exciting class 'Treasure Chests'
- Class library sessions
- After school reading clubs
- Subscriptions to the Education Library Service
- Themed, celebration days such as World Book Day and National Poetry Day
- Themed story assemblies linked to the wider world (e.g. National Coding Week or Mental Health Day)

The much-loved 'Treasure Chests' in each classroom are stocked with a wide selection of modern and classic literature, which includes fiction, non-fiction and poetry books. These consist of age-appropriate, yet challenging, texts by a wide range of authors that complement the wider curriculum, whilst igniting curiosity and promoting further reading in line with the personal interests and preferences of the pupils. These books are intended to extend pupils' repertoire and ensure that all pupils have access to high-quality texts to read independently or share with family members at home.

Leaders and teachers actively promote books to pupils, in assemblies, in reading lessons, during library visits and by facilitating conversations about the books available within the classroom collections. A tangible reading culture is apparent as pupils recommend books to each other and make plans to read as many as they can from the class collection during each academic year. The treasure chest books are always a source of delight to the children as they enter each class - they ALL look forward to lifting the lid to countless new adventures!