



Policy on phonics and the teaching of reading

Reading

By the time children leave Sandridge Primary School they will be able to:

- read accurately, fluently and with enjoyment and understanding
- respond sensitively and critically to a wide range of texts
- confidently use reference materials for a range of purposes
- demonstrate an enjoyment of reading; this will cover a range of genres that the children will be taught to select
- read aloud showing an awareness of their audience through their fluency and expression.

Through the course of each week all children will receive a guided reading session with their teacher; in this session there will be a clear focus on an identified skill. As part of their reading sessions the children will encounter a diverse range of reading materials including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Where possible these will be linked to the topic/theme they are studying in class.

Children will be taught a range of decoding strategies that are then reinforced throughout their school career.

Children are grouped according to attainment and taught at an aspirational level in order to make continuous progress throughout the year.

A text, or an interactive text based on the topic /theme, is used in every classroom for shared reading and as a stimulus for writing opportunities.

The reading scheme is made up of books from a variety of commercial schemes and other appropriate materials. The books are carefully organised to ensure there is progression between levels and that there are a wide range of genres including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The children will be provided with books at a level appropriate to their phonic understanding. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence as readers. Re-reading and discussing these books supports their increasingly fluent decoding skills.

Classrooms have their own collection of quality reading materials for children to access whenever they need to.

Regular formative assessment throughout lessons allows teachers to pick up on difficulties, such as pupils' articulation, problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

The reading team is made up of both teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) who each teach a group of pupils at the same reading level. Our TAs teach small groups of four to six pupils.

Phonics

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress.

To support the teaching of phonics we follow the Letters and Sounds programme alongside 'Jolly Phonics'. This is then followed by the Support for Spelling document.

Each class in the EYFS will have 5 x 20 minute sessions per week. In Key Stage 1 they will receive 4/5 x 20 minute sessions in a week and in Key Stage 2 there will be 2 x weekly phonics/spelling sessions.

These sessions are used for specific, focused teaching and learning. They are also differentiated to meet the needs of the whole class.

Every phonics session will adopt the same format of 'Revise, Teach, Practise and Apply'. During a phonics session a range of teaching and learning approaches will be used. This may include 'outdoor' learning, ICT and games to engage and motivate the pupils.

The phonics teaching is then reinforced at every opportunity throughout the week; this includes guided reading and English sessions.

Every week in the EYFS, children will take home sound cards to practise and a set of tricky words to learn.

Every week in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the children will take home spellings that will include sounds they are learning in their phonics sessions. These are then tested weekly.

Phonic screening check

We have high expectations of our pupils' progress. In the June 2016 phonic screening check, 96% of our pupils reached the threshold, which was higher than the national outcome.

We attribute this to our phonics programme and to the high expectations it has.

Achievement in our school

Assessing and tracking progress

We assess all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 using the assessment materials provided by Herts for Learning. This is achieved through regular observations of the children's reading. This gives us a good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points. We do this for all pupils, whenever they join us, so we can track all of them effectively, including those eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant.

By the end of Key Stage 1, our pupils are able to read age-appropriate texts accurately and with sufficient speed. This means that we can focus on developing their comprehension skills, preparing them well for transition to Key Stage 2. Their strong decoding skills mean that they have a sound strategy for decoding unfamiliar words when they come across them at any stage or in any subject, even when they move into secondary school.

We support pupils who have identified special educational needs for as long as it takes until they can read confidently. For example, we identify those who are at

risk of falling behind their peers immediately – whatever their age. Highly trained staff tutor them for 15 minutes every day.

Narrowing the gap – and the pupil premium

We know from tracking that our pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant have made progress in line with that of our other pupils or are catching up quickly. We achieve this through increased reading opportunities and more focused sessions with an adult.

Quality of teaching in our school

The groupings of our sessions allow the teachers to focus on all pupils for the whole lesson. This means that all the pupils are engaged, which has a positive impact on their behaviour. They learn to participate fully: we agree with them the rules for working in a group or discussing with a partner.

Effective teaching strategies and a lively pace ensure that all the pupils participate fully– there is no chance for them to lose concentration and miss key elements. In addition, because all the pupils are grouped across the school in terms of their reading ability, they are reading at an appropriate decoding level every day.

Additional support for lower-attaining pupils

Pupils in the ‘lowest’ attaining group have the widest variety of needs. This is, therefore, the least homogeneous group. In order to give these pupils the same carefully targeted teaching as all the other groups, some of these pupils have daily one-to-one tutoring for 10 to 20 minutes, in addition to their group session in the morning. This tutoring helps us to meet their individual needs.

Homework

We support pupils to select appropriate books to take home, depending on what support they might receive at home. Pupils who receive less help take home books that they have already read in school. This means that they are confident to read at home, even if their parents cannot read with them. Pupils also take home stories and non-fiction texts that they cannot yet read for themselves but that have been read to them. Stories and new vocabulary are explained and discussed so all pupils have access to the books they read. Pupils also take home familiar picture books so that they can re-tell the story out loud and recall details and vocabulary.

Quality of teaching and pupils’ progress

The Headteacher and English Leader monitor pupils’ progress together until every child can read. No child is left behind to struggle. We record lesson observations and any subsequent coaching so that we can see if there is a correlation between the quality of the teaching and the progress pupils make.

Leadership and management in our school

Shared vision

The school's shared vision is that every pupil learns to read quickly and continues to read – widely and often. The Headteacher works with all the staff to ensure that this happens. In particular, she works closely with the English Leader to monitor the quality of teaching and to provide coaching for staff who need it (teachers and teaching assistants).

Role of parents and carers

Parents are the initial teachers of language and, as such, we at Sandridge value the role that parents have in assisting with their child's language development. We invite parents/carers to an initial meeting to show how they can help their children read at home. We would like them to help their children, but we also recognise that some are not well-placed to do this. If they can't, their children do not suffer; it is our job to teach their children to read.

Parents are a valuable support at home in helping children develop as readers, we encourage the regular reading of books. However, this does not necessarily have to be a school book - the child can read anything; a newspaper or comic for example, even a cereal packet!

At Sandridge, we do not want to restrict their reading material or stifle their enthusiasm for reading. Parents are encouraged to support their child by discussing texts with their child, asking questions and encouraging their child to engage with the text, this then needs to be recorded in the child's reading record.

We will also ask parents to support their child with the regular phonics and spellings lists that go home as these will support the phonics and spellings sessions taught through the week.