



Woodend Farm school

Kindness comes in many forms

Reading Policy

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RECORD OF POLICY AMENDMENT / HISTORY

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V1.0 – initial draft	Nicola Overland	06/01/2023	26/01/2023	New policy
V1.1	Nicola Overland	03/01/2024	24/01/2024	Updates
V1.2	Nicola Overland + Emma Dolby	25/11/2024		Amendments to schemes of works and assessments
V1.3	Nicola Overland + Emma Dolby	13/02/2025	17/09/2025	Edited changes for phonics groups
V1.4	Gemma Quantrill & Emma Dolby	10/10/25	17/09/2025	Amendment to job titles
V1.5	Emma Dolby	5/02/26		Amendments to schemes of work, assessments and our reading programme

Contents

Aims	4
Our curriculum	4
Phonics	4-5
Reading for Purpose	5
Reading for pleasure.....	5
Reading journals	6
Overview of our Reading Programme	6
Assessment of Reading	6-7
Interventions for Reading.....	7-8

Aims

At Woodend Farm School we aim to foster a love and enjoyment of reading which encourages all children to read regularly, experiencing a selection of books from a wide range of genres and authors. We value reading as a life skill, and we are committed to our pupils becoming lifelong readers who are able to read for pleasure and apply their skills functionally. We want pupils to develop a love of reading and be able to understand more about the world in which they live, through the knowledge they gain from texts. Reading will also allow them to access the world they live in meaningfully.

Our Curriculum

Our reading curriculum is built on the principle that every pupil requires an individualised reading programme designed around their unique strengths, needs and starting points. Each programme is multisensory, enabling pupils to learn through a combination of visual, auditory, tactile and experiential approaches that support engagement and meaningful progress.

For our emergent skilled readers, reading begins with the foundations of listening and attending to sound. These pupils learn through rich multisensory experiences that help them recognise environmental noises, musical and instrumental sounds, rhythm, and patterns in speech. Activities may include sound discrimination, sensory stories, object-based exploration and interactive technology, all of which support pupils to develop early reading behaviours and build their awareness of print.

Some pupils are primarily sight-word readers, accessing texts through whole-word recognition and familiar visual vocabulary. For these learners, we continue to develop their phonics knowledge to strengthen their ability to segment and blend sounds for writing. Phonics is carefully integrated into their individual programme, ensuring it is accessible, meaningful and connected to their communication and functional literacy needs.

Other pupils are able to read fluently and require a curriculum that extends their understanding beyond decoding. These pupils are taught a range of comprehension skills, such as inference, retrieval, prediction and summarising, enabling them to interpret texts, deepen understanding and apply reading skills across the wider curriculum.

Across all pathways, our aim is to ensure every child can access reading in a way that is purposeful, motivating and developmentally appropriate.

Overview of our reading programme

Regular and ongoing assessment takes place throughout the year and this information is used to plan for future lessons, ensuring pupils are challenged and supported appropriately. Logging and monitoring of these assessments is recorded on Evidence for Learning.

Baseline assessment is carried out for pupils at the start of each year and on entry and teachers use the Letters and Sounds and Toe by Toe reading age assessments for this.

Pupils are then assigned to the appropriate phase group. These groups go from a phase 1 group whose daily focus is phonological awareness. This group follows the 'Ultimate guide to Phonological Awareness' guidelines. Phase 2 and phase 3 groups work through the sounds in their groups – these being single sounds, digraphs and trigraphs. There is an emphasis on segmenting and blending CVC sounds and CVCC sounds. Phase 4 group move on to polysyllabic words using previously taught sounds. When phase 4 is completed pupils move onto our Talk for Writing programme and are taught phase 5 sounds and spelling as an intervention.

Each class teacher is responsible for creating their weekly plans for phonics but these follow a consistent structure following revisit and review, teach, practise and apply. Most classes will move at a pace of a single sound for two days (one day reading and one day writing). All groups will focus their learning on tricky words on a Friday. A copy of the planning proforma is included in appendix 1.

Comprehension is taught explicitly across all reading phases to ensure pupils not only decode words but understand, interpret and respond to the texts they encounter. Pupils develop comprehension skills through a combination of shared reading, guided discussion, modelling and structured questioning. Across the school, pupils engage with texts that are appropriate to their developmental level—ranging from sensory stories and simple narratives to more complex fiction, non-fiction and functional texts. Teachers support pupils to build essential skills such as making predictions, retrieving information, sequencing events, identifying key vocabulary and making simple inferences. For pupils who are fluent decoders, comprehension lessons are integrated within our Talk for Writing units, enabling them to analyse language choices, understand story structures and apply meaning-making strategies within both reading and writing. Throughout all stages, comprehension is taught in a supportive, scaffolded manner that allows pupils to access texts meaningfully and develop a deeper understanding of the world around them.

As pupils progress into the secondary phase, our reading curriculum continues to build on the strong foundations established in earlier years, with an increasing emphasis on independence, functional literacy and deeper text engagement. Pupils continue to receive targeted phonics, sight-word, or multisensory support where needed, but the overarching focus shifts towards developing fluent, confident readers who can access a broad range of subject materials. Reading sessions in secondary centre on building comprehension, expanding vocabulary, and strengthening pupils' ability to interpret information from a variety of text types including fiction, non-fiction, digital media and

real-world functional texts. Teachers explicitly teach skills such as summarising, inference, analysing author intent and navigating more complex text structures. For pupils working below age-related expectations, individualised reading pathways remain in place, ensuring that each learner continues to make progress through methods that match their profile. Throughout secondary, reading remains a central tool for learning, independence and preparing pupils for their next steps beyond school.

Phonics

Pupils are placed into an appropriate phonics phase based on their current reading development, and teaching is carefully matched to their individual needs. Our phonics programme runs alongside our Talk for Writing approach, ensuring pupils develop strong decoding, encoding and language-rich comprehension skills in tandem.

Phase 1 focuses on building pupils' phonological awareness through daily experiences in listening, sound discrimination, rhythm and rhyme. Pupils follow the *Ultimate Guide to Phonological Awareness*, which provides a structured sequence to develop early auditory and pre-reading skills. These foundations are reinforced through oral language and vocabulary work within Talk for Writing lessons.

In Phase 2 and Phase 3, pupils begin formal grapheme–phoneme correspondence work. They learn single-letter sounds, digraphs and trigraphs, with a strong emphasis on segmenting and blending CVC and CVCC words. These phonics skills are practised within Talk for Writing activities, where pupils apply their growing code knowledge to simple captions, retellings and shared writing.

Phase 4 focuses on reading and spelling longer words, enabling pupils to apply previously taught sounds with increased fluency. Pupils work on polysyllabic words and begin to read with greater automaticity. During Talk for Writing, pupils use these developing skills to engage with model texts, build vocabulary and apply phonics knowledge into functional and creative writing tasks.

Once pupils are secure in the expectations of Phase 4, they continue into a more advanced stage where Talk for Writing becomes their primary vehicle for literacy learning, and Phase 5 sounds and spellings are taught as targeted interventions. This ensures that pupils continue to strengthen their phonics knowledge while also being exposed to rich language structures, narrative patterns and comprehension skills.

Across all phases, phonics and Talk for Writing are integrated so that decoding, vocabulary, composition and understanding grow hand-in-hand, enabling every pupil to progress through a pathway that supports both reading and writing development.

Sight word reading

Sight-word reading is used for pupils who have accessed high-quality systematic synthetic phonics teaching but for whom phonics is not enabling sustained progress. It is also an appropriate strategy for children with specific literacy difficulties that make phonological decoding particularly challenging. For these learners, whole-word recognition provides a more accessible and meaningful route into reading.

At Woodend Farm, we teach sight-word reading through structured and evidence-informed approaches such as Action Words or precision teaching, ensuring that pupils practise reading familiar, functional and high-frequency words that they can use across the curriculum and in daily life. This approach allows each child to develop confidence, fluency and independence by working with words they already understand, while still receiving targeted phonics support where appropriate to strengthen their writing and spelling.

Reading for Purpose

Pupils also apply and practise their reading in the community and in all areas of the curriculum. Reading is fundamental for the pupils' personal development. We therefore encourage pupils to attempt reading in all different contexts - both inside and out of school. Our approach to teaching and learning in our school community enables all pupils to achieve the best possible skills set to be ready for their next steps in life.

Reading for Pleasure

We value reading for pleasure highly. We read to children every day. We choose texts carefully as we want pupils to experience a wide range of high quality books. This includes texts that reflect the pupils at Woodend Farm School and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

Every classroom has an inviting book area that encourages a love for reading. Each class has access to a set of core reading books to share with the class. Before reading to the class, we talk about the book to build the enjoyment of reading. Pupils are read high quality texts that are above their own reading level. These books also enable pupils to be exposed to a wider range of vocabulary.

The school library is made available for classes to use throughout the day. Pupils across the school have regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of reading for pleasure events (book fairs, author visits and workshops, world book day etc).

Reading Journals

All pupils will be provided with their own reading journal to log their reading throughout the year. The adults in school will write in this at least 3 times a week to ensure each pupil's reading journey can be tracked. As pupils progress through the school, they are

encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read. Throughout the year we will engage with our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how their children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both through letters home and during in-school meetings.

Assessment of Reading

The Letters and Sounds assessment is used (see appendix 2):

- with any pupil new to the school to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan provide appropriate additional teaching.
- termly to assess progress in phonics.

Assessment for learning is used:

- daily within class to identify pupils needing additional support
- weekly in lessons to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of phonics, words and spellings.

Summative assessment is used:

- every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any pupils needing additional support and to plan the support that they need.
- by SLT and scrutinised through the pupil progress meetings, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of pupils and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place. This can help identify the most appropriate intervention programme for the individual pupil and where precision teaching is needed.

Interventions for reading

At Woodend Farm School, we use different intervention programmes to support and plug gaps in pupils reading. Through assessment and pupil progress meetings we allocate pupils to the appropriate intervention. These include: Literacy Gold, precision teaching and daily reading.

Literacy Gold

This intervention proceeds at a suitable pace for each pupil - containing lots of short, varied activities. It has the following benefits:

- Limits distractions; is clear, linear and easy to follow.
- Uses instructional routines that become familiar.
- Every word is illustrated, making it suitable for EAL pupils.
- Spaced repetition of new concepts provides multiple opportunities for overlearning.

Precision Teaching

Precision teaching is a structured teaching method that's designed to improve the accuracy and fluency of reading and spelling. The main goal of precision teaching is to target and improve specific skills within an intervention.

Precision teaching is often used with pupils with SEND who might need additional support. It's a highly focused, evidence-based intervention. It is fast-paced and repetitive - pupils will learn to read or spell words until they become fluent and confident. They only move on to a new skill once they've mastered the skill they are currently working on.

Daily reading

In order for pupils to develop fluency in their reading they need to be given opportunities for them to read daily. This reading can follow the same book across a couple of days, but the books should be appropriate for the pupil's current phonics knowledge.

Paired reading

Paired reading is an intervention in which a pupil reads alongside both a peer and an adult, creating a supportive, collaborative learning environment. The adult models fluent reading, provides structure and ensures the session moves at a pace appropriate to the learner, while the peer acts as a reading partner, encouraging turn-taking, shared attention and positive social interaction. This triad approach helps pupils develop confidence in reading aloud, practise expressive reading and engage with texts in a low-pressure setting. Working with a peer builds communication, cooperation and empathy, while the presence of a trusted adult ensures accuracy, guidance and emotional security. Through paired reading, pupils strengthen both their reading fluency and the social skills essential for successful learning relationships.

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