

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

This document outlines the process of transition from phonics lessons to reading lessons within our school once pupils complete the RWI Phonics programme. The aim of this document is to provide guidance on why phonics lessons are replaced by reading lessons and to explain the areas that should be focused upon within these reading lessons.

Once children have completed the phonics programme and acquired a solid foundation in decoding skills, it is essential to transition to reading lessons that broaden their reading capabilities. This transition supports children's progression from decoding to comprehension and fluency.

The main areas of focus within reading lessons are;

- Vocabulary Instruction
- Reading with Fluency
- Developing Comprehension Strategies
- Reading for Pleasure.

Vocabulary Instruction

A rich and extensive vocabulary is vital for children to comprehend written texts effectively. Therefore, continued vocabulary instruction forms a crucial aspect of reading lessons beyond phonics. To ensure effective vocabulary instruction, the following practices are implemented:

- Pre-teaching key vocabulary before reading a text to increase familiarity and understanding.
- Providing explicit explanations, definitions, and examples of new words encountered during reading.
- Encouraging the use of new words in speaking and writing contexts.

Reading with Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read with accuracy, speed, and expression. Developing fluency allows children to read smoothly and effortlessly, enhancing their overall reading experience. To ensure effective teaching and practise of fluency, the following practices are implemented:

- Engaging children in oral reading activities daily, where they read aloud to develop expression and rhythmic flow.
- Use of guided repeated reading techniques, allowing children to practice reading a text several times to improve their reading speed and accuracy.
- Encouraging independent reading through providing a home reading book, providing ample opportunities for children to practice and improve their fluency skills.

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

Developing Comprehension Strategies

Comprehension is the ability to understand and interpret written texts. Developing comprehension strategies is vital to ensure children can derive meaning from what they read. To promote the development of comprehension strategies, the following approaches are implemented:

- Modelling and demonstrating the use of strategies during shared reading activities as and when they occur within a planned unit of work.
- Where additional teaching is required, teaching explicit reading comprehension strategies, such as predicting, questioning, summarising, and making connections.
- Providing ample opportunities for guided and independent practice of comprehension strategies.

Reading for Pleasure

Reading for pleasure fosters a love for reading and improves motivation and engagement. It also helps develop a broader range of reading skills and further enhances children's overall literacy development. To ensure the promotion of reading for pleasure, the following strategies are employed:

- Providing a wide variety of engaging and age-appropriate reading material, including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.
- Establishing regular dedicated reading time in the daily schedule.
- Creating a positive reading environment with comfortable reading corners and regular visits to the school library.
- Organising reading events and celebrations to foster a reading culture within the school community.

Reading Lessons in Action at Diamond Wood Community Academy

Once children have come 'off' their phonics programme, the 40-minute daily phonics lesson is replaced by a 'reading lesson'. During these lessons, all pupils are provided with the same key text to focus on. Key Texts chosen have been selected judiciously to ensure exposure to a range of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry texts that align with pupils' interests, reading levels, and the National Curriculum objectives. The chosen texts have also been selected to ensure that they are diverse, inclusive, and engaging to capture pupils' imaginations. Where possible, the use of whole texts rather than extracts are used. This ensures that children are also able to take the books home and engage in independent reading for additional practice. Any text chosen aims to foster enjoyment, interest and involvement.

Enjoyment	Interest	Investment
A text that delivers emotional engagement	A text that delivers cognitive engagement	A text that delivers social engagement

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

The weekly timetable for these lessons is outlined below. This timetable is followed on a continuous cycle until the text has been completed.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Vocabulary Instruction	Vocabulary Recap	Vocabulary Recap	Comprehension	Comprehension
Fluency	Fluency	Fluency	(Extended Reading)	(Close Reading)
Storytime	Storytime	Storytime	Storytime	Storytime
MTYT focus for adult teaching and then partner work throughout. Pair a middle-ability pupil with a lower-ability and stagger from there. Not highest with lowest.				

Each session generally follows the timings of;

- 30 minutes - vocabulary instruction, fluency/ comprehension (zoom in).
- 10 minutes - storytime delivered by the teacher daily (zoom out).

The adult's role during these lessons is mainly to model reading the text, model the processes used to unpick the text, and model the thought process being used as they unpick the text (demonstration reading/ thinking out loud). In preparation for this they must;

- Select the section of text to be focused upon in each session (pupil reading).
- Select the section of text to be used for a storytime (adult reading).
- Select any vocabulary to be explicitly taught alongside planned strategies.
- Select the aspects of fluency to be focused upon and consider if text marking needs to be completed.
- Plan the comprehension questions for both the extended reading and close reading sessions.

Teaching of Vocabulary

Adults take into consideration the three tiers of vocabulary. In general Tier 2 language is taught through our Literacy/ English curriculums and therefore within these lessons.

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Basic, common words that we use through conversation.	Specific to informational text and literature across the curricula, and it's used in a variety of modes.	Domain-specific vocabulary, particular to one content area or subject matter.

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

When preparing for vocabulary instruction, adults will consider both vocabulary depth and breadth. Vocabulary Breadth refers to the skill of decoding or how many words a pupil can read. Vocabulary Depth refers to the level of understanding a pupil has about a particular word, including its multiple meanings, usage in different contexts, and connections to other words. Planning and preparation must include;

Vocabulary Mapping	At the start of each week, the teacher must identify key vocabulary related to the topics, texts, and objectives covered during the reading lessons. This will act as a guide for explicit instruction and integration of vocabulary throughout the week and across the unit of work (recapping prior knowledge).
Explicit Instruction	During reading lessons, teachers will select target words from the vocabulary mapping and explicitly teach their meanings, including synonyms, antonyms, and any relevant word forms if appropriate. They will provide clear explanations and relevant examples to encourage pupil participation through discussions and questioning.
Vocabulary in Context	If and when appropriate, teachers will focus on using vocabulary in different contexts to deepen pupils' understanding. They will provide opportunities for pupils to explore how words can change meaning depending on the context in which they are used.
Word Mapping and Associations	If and when appropriate, teachers will encourage pupils to create word maps and associations, linking new words to familiar words, concepts, and experiences. This will enhance comprehension and retention of vocabulary. They will carefully consider how vocabulary is displayed (orthographic mapping).
Word Learning Strategies	Teachers will explicitly teach pupils a range of word learning strategies, such as using context clues, word parts (e.g. prefixes, suffixes). Pupils will be encouraged to apply these strategies independently when encountering unfamiliar words.
Vocabulary Reinforcement	Teachers will provide regular opportunities for pupils to revise and reinforce previously taught vocabulary. This can be through word games, vocabulary-building activities, and revisiting words in different contexts.
Adaptive Teaching	Teachers must adapt instruction to meet the needs of all learners. This may involve providing additional support for pupils who require it, or offering more challenge and extension for advanced learners.
Assessment	Teachers will assess and track pupils' vocabulary progress using a variety of formative assessment strategies. This will inform future instruction and enable timely interventions where necessary.

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

Explicit Teaching of Fluency

We recognise that fluency needs teaching explicitly and dedicated time needs to be given to practice reading and develop this skill. We agree that fluency is the prerequisite for comprehension. If pupils are not fluent readers, this often indicates a decoding or vocabulary issue. In this case, teachers will seek the support and guidance of each other and the Reading Leader in the first instance.

Opportunities for teachers to read aloud to our pupils are maximised in order to provide a fluency model. Time for this is planned into each reading lesson in addition to a class storytime each day.

We recognise the progression of fluency to be: Accuracy (decoding) > Automaticity > Prosody. When considering automaticity, we generally consider this to be pupils reading 90 words per minute. This increases to 110 words per minute for pupils to read with prosody.

Breakdown of Prosody	
<p>Intonation</p> <p>Intonation refers to the rise and fall of pitch patterns in speech. To develop pupils' intonation skills, teachers should:</p>	<p><u>Model intonation:</u> Teachers should demonstrate different intonation patterns to portray various emotions or intentions, encouraging pupils to imitate and experiment with their own voice.</p> <p><u>Utilise drama and role-play activities:</u> Engage pupils in activities, such as role-playing characters from stories or building dialogues, to practice different intonation patterns in a meaningful context.</p> <p><u>Use audio and video resources:</u> Expose pupils to a range of audio and video materials, such as speeches, poems, or storytelling performances, to highlight the importance of intonation in effective communication.</p>
<p>Stress</p> <p>Stress refers to the emphasis placed on certain syllables or words within a sentence. To develop pupils' understanding of stress, teachers should:</p>	<p><u>Teach syllable stress:</u> Help pupils identify stressed syllables in words by clapping or tapping rhythms, exploring multisyllabic words, and discussing how stress affects meaning and pronunciation.</p> <p><u>Focus on word and sentence stress:</u> Draw attention to stress patterns within sentences, allowing pupils to identify and stress keywords to convey appropriate meaning and emphasis.</p> <p><u>Provide ample opportunities:</u> Engage pupils in speaking and reading activities where they can practice stressing specific words or syllables for effective communication.</p>

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

Rhythm Rhythm refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in speech. To develop pupils' rhythm skills, teachers should:	<u>Use rhymes and chants:</u> Introduce pupils to nursery rhymes, poems, and chants to help them recognise the rhythmic patterns and internalise them through repetition and recitation. <u>Explore music and lyrics:</u> Encourage pupils to explore songs with varying rhythmic patterns, helping them internalise rhythm through singing and clapping along. <u>Engage in rhythmic activities:</u> Incorporate movement-based activities, such as clapping or marching to a beat, to develop pupils' understanding and appreciation for rhythm.
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Opportunities for Repeated Reading

During the weekly timetable, pupils are provided with the opportunity to re-read a short and meaningful passage a set number of times or until they reach a suitable level of fluency. Repeated reading allows pupils to develop a smoother and more fluent reading style. As they encounter the same text multiple times, they improve their accuracy, speed, and prosody. Repeated reading exposes pupils to a wider range of vocabulary, helping them to expand their word knowledge and comprehension. Fluency development achieved through repeated reading directly correlates with improved comprehension skills. As pupils become more fluent, they can focus their attention on understanding the meaning of the text. Repeated reading allows pupils to gain confidence in their reading abilities, fostering a positive attitude towards reading, and encouraging further engagement.

Throughout the reading lesson, pupils work in carefully selected pairs. Pairing pupils of different abilities provides opportunities for peer collaboration and support. More fluent readers act as mentors, assisting struggling readers with repeated reading tasks. The more fluent readers provide an additional 'model' for reading as they always go first, allowing the less fluent reader to hear additional examples of the reading taking place. This is in addition to teachers frequently modelling fluent reading themselves, employing appropriate expression, pace, and phrasing. This serves as a demonstration for pupils, helping them understand the desired fluency standards.

General Overview of Fluency Lesson:

- Adult demonstrates, modelling pronunciation, phrasing and prosody.
- Partners then read to each other. Partner A more able of the two.
- Adults providing appropriate feedback throughout.
- Repeat but focusing on a particular element of pronunciation, phrasing or prosody.
- Use of text marking if appropriate. If so, use of symbols to help emphasis e.g. / for pause. Wiggly line for loud voice.

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

Fluency Rubrics

Fluency rubrics are tools that help teachers assess and monitor pupils' reading fluency progress. They provide a clear framework to evaluate pupils' oral reading skills, including rate, accuracy, and expression. The use of fluency rubrics can:

- Enable teachers to identify areas for improvement and provide targeted support to individual pupils.
- Ensure consistent and objective assessment practices across the Year 2 cohort.
- Facilitate ongoing formative assessment, allowing teachers to track pupils' progress and adjust instruction accordingly.
- Help pupils develop self-awareness and self-assessment skills by providing clear criteria for evaluating their own fluency.

Our educators are aware of the Fluency Rubrics below and use this to guide their teacher assessments of fluency.

Figure 7: The fluency rubric—adapted from Zutell and Rasinski (1991)³⁷

	Expression and volume	Phrasing	Smoothness	Pace
4	Reads with <i>good expression and enthusiasm throughout the text</i> . Varies expression and volume to match his or her interpretation of the passage.	Generally reads with <i>good phrasing</i> , mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression.	<i>Generally reads smoothly</i> with some breaks, but resolves word and structure difficulties quickly, usually through self-correction.	Consistently reads at <i>conversational pace</i> ; appropriate rate throughout reading.
3	Make text sound like <i>natural language</i> throughout the better part of the passage. Occasionally slips into expressionless reading. Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text.	Reads with a <i>mixture of run-ons</i> , mid sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness, reasonable stress and intonation.	<i>Occasionally breaks smooth rhythm</i> because of difficulties with specific words and/or structures.	Reads with an <i>uneven mixture of fast and slow pace</i> .
2	<i>Begins to use voice to make text sound like natural language</i> in some areas of the text but not in others. Focus remains largely on pronouncing the word. Still reads in a quiet voice.	Frequently reads in two- and three-word phrases, giving the impression of <i>choppy reading</i> ; improper stress and intonation fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses.	Experiences <i>several 'rough spots'</i> in text where extended pauses or hesitations are more frequent and disruptive.	Reads <i>moderately slowly</i> .
1	<i>Reads words as if simply to get them out</i> . Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language.	Reads in a <i>monotone</i> with little sense of boundaries; frequently reads <i>word-by-word</i> .	Makes frequent <i>extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts</i> .	Reads <i>slowly and laboriously</i> .

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

Focusing on Comprehension within Lessons

Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. The main key concept in terms of comprehension within Reading Lessons is Inference. When teaching inference, it is essential to understand the difference between local cohesion inferences and global cohesion inferences. Local cohesion inferences refer to the child's knowledge of text structures (text, sentence or word level). Global cohesion inferences refers to the background knowledge children have and their knowledge of wider vocabulary that may need to be used to 'fill a gap' left by the writer. When teaching comprehension to pupils teachers must be aware of and implement Situation Modelling and Comprehension Monitoring.

Situation Modelling	Comprehension Monitoring
When reading our brain processes what we are reading and links it to what we do or don't already know. This helps us to try and comprehend what we are reading. Teachers need to model this through 'demonstration reading' and 'thinking out loud'.	As we continue reading our brain updates the information it is receiving linked to what we have read so far. This helps to shape the way we comprehend what we are reading. Again, teachers need to model this by 'thinking out loud' so that children become aware of this process.

Questioning

To be effective, the questions that teachers plan need to be text-specific. We do not use banks of generic questions as these are unlikely to lead to deep thinking and discussion. Teachers using questions to drive thinking and discussion, and questioning for assessment are not the same. At times, questioning can go too far and can stall the progression within lessons. Therefore, our teachers must carefully consider if at times telling pupils something as part of explicit teaching is a more efficient way of teaching than asking elaborate questions to reach the same point.

General Overview of Comprehension Lesson

- At the start of each lesson recap vocabulary instruction. Then – the focus is to begin to interrogate and respond in a scaffolded and supportive way. It is not a test.
- Children to read the text in pairs (check fluency). Partner A and then Partner B.
- Teacher to 'Talk Out Loud' (TOL) - situation modelling into comprehension monitoring (in the role of the child considering their knowledge not the adults themselves).
- Model making annotations showing that process. Pick out all of the important information.
- Children to do this themselves in their pairs.
- Always consider - what are we finding out from the text? (local cohesion and global cohesion).

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

Extended Reading Lesson	Close Reading Lesson
<p>2-part reading/ 1-parts discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Select an appropriate text of sufficient length➤ Identify and discuss any new vocabulary➤ Choose key stopping points➤ Share questions to be answered for each section of text <p>Use fluency practice to support slower-progress readers</p>	<p>1-part reading/ 2-parts discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Select a shorter text extract from the class text.➤ Discuss concepts and vocabulary <p>Repeated read the text with a shared focus to discuss (give time to discuss)</p>

Evidencing Reading Progression

Teachers must assess pupils' progress in reading skills. This includes fluency, accuracy, understanding, and interpretation. In line with the National Curriculum and OFSTED expectations, our approach prioritises the development of strong oral response and book talk skills in Key Stage 1. Engaging in discussions about texts, sharing opinions, and demonstrating comprehension through verbal interactions are vital components of reading development in this age group. By focusing on book talk and oral responses, we create a rich reading environment that promotes deeper understanding, critical thinking, and the building of vocabulary.

Our approach aligns with the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL), which encourages ongoing formative assessment and feedback. By prioritising book talk and oral responses, teachers can engage in regular dialogue with pupils, providing immediate feedback and identifying areas for improvement. This approach enables teachers to tailor their teaching to suit the needs of individual pupils effectively.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 are at a crucial stage in their educational journey, where building a positive attitude towards reading is fundamental. By placing less emphasis on written responses to comprehension, we reduce stress and pressure on pupils, allowing them to develop a love for reading and a sense of enjoyment in engaging with texts. This approach fosters a positive and inclusive learning environment, nurturing the development of confident readers.

Time is a valuable resource in the classroom. By minimising the collection of written evidence for comprehension, our approach enables teachers to dedicate more instructional time to engaging in meaningful book talk and oral activities. Allocating sufficient time for interactive discussions and modelling effective reading strategies enhances pupils' reading experiences, leading to improved outcomes.

Our Reading Curriculum: Reading Lessons Beyond Phonics

Videos of pupils reading aloud may be used by teachers at times to support their assessments of reading. Taking videos of a child reading can provide a comprehensive and authentic means of gathering evidence of reading progression. They can allow teachers to closely observe and assess the development of pupils' reading skills, including their fluency, expression, and comprehension.