

Ocker Hill Academy



Reading & Comprehension Policy

Reviewed September 2023

To be reviewed in line with Ocker Hill Academy Policy Guidelines and National Curriculum Reading Framework.

Ocker Hill Academy

Reading and Comprehension Policy

Value and Ethos

“Books shouldn’t be daunting, they should be funny, exciting and wonderful; and learning to be a reader gives terrific advantage.” - Roald Dahl

At Ocker Hill Academy, reading is at the heart of our curriculum. It is our belief and ethos that without the skill to read and the breadth and knowledge of language, the world is a very difficult place to access. We teach reading at Ocker Hill Academy in many ways and forms but always with passion and aim to build young learners who love reading and have sufficient reading ability to access all areas of the curriculum and ultimately, the wider world.

Rationale

We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our Academy, we provide a rich and varied learning environment which allows children to develop their reading skills to their full potential.

We aim:

- To develop enthusiastic, responsive and knowledgeable readers.
- To teach children to read accurately, fluently and with understanding.
- To enable children to understand and respond to what they read.
- To enable children to form and respond to opinions, views and text content
- To deduce, infer or interpret information or events from a text.
- To read, analyse and evaluate a wide range of texts, including literature from the English literary heritage and from other cultures and traditions.
- To enable children to grow up as adults who can function in the literate environment around them and operate as independent readers.

Teaching and Learning

The reading objectives, as outlined in the National Curriculum Reading Framework 2023 and content domains are distributed on the Ocker Hill Academy Progression Maps and Formative Assessment Grids, will be delivered within the flexible framework of this Reading Policy. These skills are taught implicitly within the unit of work and will match the genre/text of the unit that is being taught. This ensures that all staff follow all requirements of the National Curriculum, close gaps and stretch pupils where necessary. The progression maps demonstrate the increasing complexity of the skills taught across the academy and these in turn reflect our assessment grids which are used as one of our methods to assess the children in reading. Reading is also widely encouraged outside of literacy sessions in our wider curriculum with topic related books being used as class readers, relevant independent read books as well as huge range of topic related books being available in classrooms for the children to use.

Sequencing and Progression

Lessons and learning are sequenced using the Academy's termly overviews and progression maps. These ensure that all children receive coverage of all the appropriate knowledge, skills and genres required to meet National Curriculum objectives in addition to allowing them access to a world of exciting reading. Reading texts are distributed throughout school, for class based, guided and independent reading, on a text progression map allowing a natural progressive transition between year groups. This enables staff to tailor work appropriately for every child in their class regardless of ability by giving staff access to the full journey of the child's learning. For those children really in need of differentiated objectives, these are available to all.

Selection of books.

The books used across all areas of the curriculum are selected to ensure there is the right level of ambitious challenge and that these reflect as much as possible the topics being covered in humanities subjects. For focused guided reading sessions these books are levelled by the Badger Books scheme in three levels per year group. These are accessible, developing and complex. The books are split across the year as outlined on our Reading Text Progression Map. The audio books and independent read books are based around the topics or units that are being covered in science and foundation subjects. These books are replenished half termly. These cover both fiction, non-fiction and poetry and come with relevant topic-based questions to encourage enquiry and deep thinking. Particularly during independent read, children are encouraged to choose areas that they are interested in and enjoy bolstering reading for enjoyment as well as purpose. The books used for story time cover a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry and are also outlined on the Reading Text Progression Map. These are selected to ensure that they build in difficulty and vocabulary but also to build on knowledge of areas already covered. These may, however, be supplemented by books chosen by the class teacher to meet the needs and interest of the class.

Vocabulary and Oracy

Vocabulary is a strong indicator of reading success (National Literacy Trust, 2017). We know from research that the size of a child's vocabulary is the best predictor of success on future tests. Children with a poor vocabulary at five are four times more likely to struggle with reading in adulthood (Why Closing the Word Gap Matters: Oxford Language Report, 2018). Without a broad and varied vocabulary, comprehension of texts will always be limited and the teaching of oracy at Ocker Hill Academy is believed to be paramount as a result. At Ocker Hill Academy, we have a language rich curriculum - introducing words and language that might not be heard in day to day conversation that supports learning in all curriculum areas. Children are taught to not only articulate their methods of learning and develop their ability to question but also to seek and stretch their vocabulary and sentence structural bases. Vocabulary development occurs in three main ways. Firstly, through weekly vocabulary teaching. Pupils are given vocabulary lists containing words both from the statutory word lists but also topic related words in their year group units. These are supported by definitions in context, grammar and word class activities and retrieval practice puzzles. Secondly, through indirect instruction; using rich reading experiences to grow vocabulary 'naturally.' Paying attention to context to work out meaning and using background knowledge during lessons and guided reading sessions. Finally, through explicit 'robust' vocabulary instruction involving discussion/ audience about which words to use and their impact on the reader and modelling how these can be used in context.

Phonics and decoding.

In accordance to statutory guidance, pupils should be able to read age appropriate books accurately with the ability to decode 90% of the text independently and at a speed that is sufficient for understanding rather than decoding. In years three and four, to ensure that this is the case, the literacy curriculum has been adapted to ensure all children are able to access reading. Children are taught phonics using the Little Wandle scheme on a daily basis outside of literacy lessons. This enables any children, who have not yet reached phase 6 or have gaps in phonic knowledge to do so and make certain that they are able to access the key stage 2 curriculum. In addition to this wave 1 teaching, the lowest 20% of learners in this area, receive further phonics intervention following the Rapid Catch Up programme from Little Wandle. From year 5, as the majority of children by this point are able to phonetically decode and blend, phonics is only taught to those who require it, during 1:1 or 1: small group interventions using the aforementioned scheme.

Fluency and Language

All children, throughout the academy have several opportunities to read aloud to an adult across the course of the week. It is expected that every child read to an adult (teacher or support staff) at least once per week on a one-to-one basis where decoding is refined, punctuation recognised, unfamiliar words tackled and the speed at which they are reading fluently, improved and practiced. Further to this, children read to their class teachers within guided reading once per week within a small ability group where reading skills are demonstrated and shared collaboratively. At Ocker Hill Academy, we believe that fluency is very important in the building of reading for enjoyment and therefore this is practiced too. Choral reading, copy reading and echo reading are all used as methods to demonstrate and teach the use of expression and intonation as well as to build confidence in the use of language and punctuation. This can take place not only in guided reading and literacy, but in all areas of the curriculum. There is also an expectation that the children practice these skills at home with a parent or guardian a minimum of three times per week- a home reading record book is then completed by the adult to be checked and responded to in school by their teacher. Fluency is assessed in school by using Collins 'Assess Fluency in Reading' which identifies reading behaviours and the speed at which children can fluently decode the text proficiently for understanding. This assessment links directly to the Collins 'Big Cat' scheme in school and outlines the band that the children should be working at. Once the pupils reach the highest 'pearl' band, it is deemed that the child has enough ability to choose their own books independently from our library as 'free readers.' These are checked periodically to ensure that they match ability. Vocabulary boards for each subject area are in place in every classroom to underpin the teaching of language and strong links to word classes and SPAG teaching are made.

English Lesson Based Reading

Much of the reading that is covered in English sessions is implicit. The majority of English sessions whether reading, writing or spelling, punctuation and grammar based are centred on a given text therefore the children receive regular exposure to good quality writing. As previously mentioned, these are set out on a whole school text progression map to ensure appropriacy of level and difficulty. It also ensures that solid links are made between what children are reading in class and at home and the topic areas that they are studying within the curriculum. It is important that the link between children reading as writers and writing as readers is made to support both areas of English. Children are given the opportunity to read independently, aloud to the class and in pairs or small groups to improve intonation, fluency, prosody and expression. Skills such as retrieval, inference, text structure and authorial

impact and taught and built upon with a line of progression as the children move through the school. Texts are taught by genre to ensure coverage of a wide range of styles to envelop fiction and non-fiction. Text analysis is often carried out at the beginning of units to unpick language and structural techniques to engage and entertain the reader, leading to innovation; editing and improving, followed by invention where children begin to write their own versions using the gathered techniques. All of which develop and improve the child's reading ability.

Reading for Pleasure.

All children are read to on a whole class basis at least 3 times per week. This can include, fiction, non-fiction and poetry and allows children to hear how punctuation is used and how expression and intonation can impact upon the way a story is portrayed. Much of the time, these books are made up of texts related to the topics that are being taught in other subject areas such as science, humanities, RE or PSHRE. In every classroom of the school, the children have access to their own class libraries and reading areas. These areas are used during guided reading time, but the children are also encouraged to use them during break and lunch times. In addition to this, our reading for pleasure ambassadors also keep our playground reading shed topped up and refreshed with new themes each week. A laptop is available to use for audio books, but also a range of books, magazines and comics are available here too. Each assembly in school also starts with a short story related to the content of the assembly and ends with assembly staff recommending an 'author-a-week' and books written by the author. Independent read time is given each morning during registration but also widely encouraged across the weekly timetable.

Guided Reading

Daily guided reading sessions also take place. Children work in ability groups with their decoding and comprehension ability considered. Each week the children work through a carousel of activities devised to test and support their reading skills as well as build their love of reading. These include a teacher focus session where each child is listened to, where the teacher can model high quality reading including modelling fluency and prosody and where a discussion to check and stretch understanding takes place. This is underpinned by high quality key questions planned for and prepared in advance to get the most out of the half an hour session. These sessions are followed by a session of independent reading, an opportunity for the children to listen to an audio book as well as the opportunity to work on reading and comprehension skills independently. These skills are outlined across the academy on our reading skill progression map used by all staff and ensure high quality, focused skills practice.

Library and Reading Books

We have a wonderful library of books available for all children at the academy to use. Libraries should be places of wonder, like miniature bookshops where children can easily select books that may interest them. To aid this, our library is structured in genres, book length, style and topic rather than alphabetically. We want our children to browse what interests them and try out new themes rather than just selecting books by the order of the author's surname.

Organised by our staff and pupil librarians, the pupils have one set session per week where they are able to visit the library with their class and have our school librarian, as well as their class teacher, on hand to help select engaging and appropriate books. In addition to this, the children are free to visit the library each morning when they arrive but also during break times if they wish to change their books more frequently. Our year six librarians are available

during these times to assist the children but also carry out book reviews each week in classes. At Ocker Hill Academy, we use the Collins Big Cat scheme of books which are banded according to fluency and cover a wide range of fiction, classic texts, poetry and non-fiction. The children are able to select one ability-based 'reading' book from this scheme at a time but are also encouraged to choose up to two other 'library books' of their choice to foster their love of reading. A range of Hi-Lo books are also available for those that should need or choose them.

Reading Outside of School

Children are encouraged to read a variety of texts at home with three times per week being a suggested minimum. It is requested that the child be listened to by an appropriate adult and that their home reading record books be signed and their reading be commented upon. In addition to this, comprehension questions, accompanying the books, offer the children the chance to practice their comprehension skills at home too. These books cover both fiction, non-fiction and poetry in a range of themes and genres and the children are required to complete the questions which are marked by the class teacher before they are able to change their book. This ensures that not only confident decoding and fluency is happening but also a good level of comprehension of what has been read. Staff can use the answers to these questions to judge the child's understanding and inform their teaching and assessment. Support for parents is offered with decoding, fluency and comprehension through parent sessions for each year group at the beginning of each year and through a parents' guide.

Assessment

In reading, both summative and formative assessment is used to review progress. Reading can be broken down into the elements of phonic knowledge, decoding, comprehension and fluency. These are assessed in different ways depending on the element. Phonics is assessed using The Little Wandle Phonics scheme assessments at the end of each of the units. Decoding is tested throughout school on a termly basis using Holborn and Salford Reading Age testing. Class teachers carry out these tests, the results of which are used to track and identify intervention groups across the academy. It is also considered on our formative assessment grids which are completed during English and guided reading sessions. In English lessons, the children complete reading comprehension exercises within literacy sessions on a half-termly basis. These exercises are often linked to the genre/ unit that is being taught at that time but the reading skill that is being focussed on is made clear and demonstrated by the class teacher. These objectives are outlined on our Literacy progression maps. In addition to these, in year's three to five, children sit a full NFER comprehension test at the end of each term. The results of these are used to guide teachers with the following term's planning but also with groupings for guided reading sessions. Following both, the NFER tests and half-termly comprehension sessions, a full hypercorrection session takes place. This means that the test also becomes a method of refining reading skills and provide opportunities for learning as well as a gap finding exercise.

Monitoring and Review

Within the Academy, reading is constantly monitored and reviewed for coverage and effectiveness. English planning is checked on a weekly basis to ensure that reading skills and objectives are being taught frequently and pitched at an appropriate level. Additionally on Fridays this is cross referenced in pupils' books. Regular learning walks and pupil conversations led by the English co-ordinator alongside school governors and school

improvement advisors help to quality assure the teaching and learning that is happening in this area. This is also used to check that guided reading is happening with enough quality and frequency. Each half term, the formative assessment grids and comprehension folders are collected by the co-ordinator and monitored for accurate levelling, coverage and progression. These are matched to the online pupil trackers to ensure parity. Interventions for reading are monitored by the SEN co-ordinator at the end of each term and used to inform whole school improvement plans.

Date: September 2023