



Oak Lodge School

Reading Policy

Policy Date:	May 2022	Review: November 2023
Agreed to be adopted Signature:	Date:	Schools & Resources committee
Policy update Date	January 2026	Review: March 2026
Agreed to be adopted Signature:	Date	Schools & Resources committee
Review		
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*This policy needs to be read in conjunction with **Oak Lodge Language and Communication Policy**.*

Reading at Oak Lodge School

Reading is a core and fundamental skill that we expect all students to develop. Our aim is for all students to leave Oak Lodge School not only with reading skills, but also with a love for reading.

To promote reading across the school, we have built and developed a bespoke collection of books and resources specifically catered to the students' diverse interests, alongside continuing to review and modify (where necessary) our reading strategy.

We recognise the challenges our students face at Oak Lodge School:

- For most of our students, learning to read and write English can be challenging because **letters** (graphemes) **represent sounds** (phonemes) and deaf children have difficulty or are unable to access / perceive and / or do not make the subtle discriminations between speech-sounds required for reading.
- Reading (and writing) is much more than just decoding the written word, it is essentially about **reading for meaning**, providing an opportunity to share experiences and to further develop their vocabulary, language understanding and usage and enable students to gain metalinguistic understanding. This can be achieved by reading with the student or a group of students, where reading is done through one-to-one correspondence to ensure students gain an understanding at word / sentence level.
- Finding appropriate books that will interest students when books at their reading ability are not age-appropriate. For example, a 15 year old student with a reading ability of 6 years old.

We have addressed the challenges by:

- Promoting **reading for meaning** to ensure students gain not only metalinguistic understanding but contextual understanding too.
- Using specific **Blanks and/or Blooms Higher level reasoning questions** to consolidate and extend students knowledge of the text alongside developing their world knowledge.
- Using **Visual Phonics (VP) by hand** as a teaching tool to assist the students to develop their phonics and phonological awareness skills, and as a core strategy to make reading decoding more accessible and meaningful for our students.
- Developing a **Visual Phonics Curriculum** (Stage 1: Foundation Phonics skills) based on, and making use of, Visual Phonics by hand (Babs Day), the National Curriculum & existing Phonics programmes (Phonics development), existing speech programme (Nuffield) & normal development of phonological awareness & reading decoding skills; alongside creating a bank of resources. This curriculum is being taught to selected students through structured Visual Phonics Timetabled lessons (jointly delivered via the Speech & Language team and teaching staff).
- Developing a **Visual Phonics tracker** (Stage 1) to be able to assess and / or review the students' progress over time, and are trialling use of this tracker in order to make any modifications necessary.

- Developing **Stage 2 Visual Phonics curriculum**, which is still in its development stage, alongside implementing structured Visual Phonics timetabled lessons, to assist the students to develop more complex Phonics skills and knowledge.
- Introducing **reading schemes** (Big Cat, PM, Raintree books & Julia Donaldson Songbirds Phonic books).
- Purchasing **Hi-Lo** (High Interest, Low Ability) books and Raintree reading scheme that matches our students' cognitive levels as well as reading levels.
- Raising the **quality of reading** across the school by providing training to all staff on how to use strategies for reading.

We now have reading schemes (Big Cat, PM and Raintree) that have been carefully chosen to support and develop our students' reading skills. These books are a range of fiction and non-fiction, with visual re-enforcement (photos and drawings) that represent the diverse communities and backgrounds that our students come from. The books are all banded with a colour that matches the students' reading ability and allows the students to have a range of levelled texts to choose from.

Each reading book supports reading by:

- using repetition of words or phrases and targeted spelling patterns (linked to phonics)
- encouraging use of reading strategies, such as breaking up words (segmenting into syllables and sounds (sounding out)), blending sounds together to form the word, and 'working out' words (applying learnt phonics knowledge) (decoding). Visual Phonics is used as a tool for some students to be able to make sense of the bottom up processing.
- using contextual cues to assist (pictures, meaning of sentence as a whole).
- expanding / re-enforcing knowledge of the high frequency words.
- Use of Blanks and/or Blooms questions* (dependent on the student's ability- assessed by the Speech and Language Therapy Team)) to help consolidate understanding of vocabulary, concepts and contexts, as well as to extend the meaning of the text itself.

We have specifically chosen books so that students do not have to rely heavily on phonics as their only means to decode words.

Our future plan is to have a library that houses new, exciting, and relevant books. We also aim to have an area dedicated specifically for Deafness which includes Deaf history, biographies of Deaf people and educational books about deafness and BSL. Each class will be timetabled to visit the library on a weekly basis and can choose at least one book to take and read.

Reading Bands / Levels

Each reading book is colour coded in bands and is categorised according to the reading age.

Find Engage Literacy Books by Book Band Colour

 PINK Reception Nursery 4-5 Years	 RED Reception Nursery 4-5 Years	 YELLOW Rec-KS1 P1 5-6 Years	 BLUE KS1 P1-2 5-6 Years	 GREEN KS1 P2 5-6 Years	 ORANGE KS1 P3 6-7 Years
 TURQUOISE KS1 P3 6-7 Years	 PURPLE KS1 P3 6-7 Years	 GOLD KS1 P3 6-7 Years	 WHITE KS1 P3 6-7 Years	 LIME KS1 P3 6-7 Years	 BROWN KS2 P4 7-8 Years
 GREY KS2 P5 8-9 Years	 DARK BLUE KS2 P6 9-10 Years	 DARK RED KS2 P7 10-11 Years			

Book band	Expected Reading Age
Plum, Pink	4-5 yrs old
Red	4-5 yrs old
Yellow	5-6 yrs old
Blue	5-6 yrs old
Green	5-6 yrs old
Orange	6-7 yrs old
Turquoise	6-7 yrs old
Purple	6-7 yrs old
Gold	6-7 yrs old
White	6-7 yrs old
Lime	6-7 yrs old
Brown	7-8 yrs old
Grey	8-9 yrs old
Dark Blue	9-10 yrs old
Dark Red	10-11 yrs old

We also provide a range of interesting books and texts for those working towards/at age-appropriate reading levels.

Guided Reading

We have introduced Guided Reading sessions at Oak Lodge where structured reading takes places in time-tabled one-to-one or paired/small groups a minimum of two to three times a week. The aim of these structured reading sessions is to provide support and strategies for reading and/or to bridge both languages, i.e., English and BSL, in order to make the reading more accessible, meaningful and enjoyable for the students. This is particularly relevant for our students, for whom a large proportion are learning English as a second language. The aim

is to enable our students to develop an understanding that both languages have their own grammatical and linguistic rules.

We use Big Cat, PM and Raintree reading scheme for Guided Reading books. This is to enable the students to progress from one level to the next and to independently select the next book within the same band or the next reading band. We also use Julia Donaldson Phonics books to support development of decoding skills at different progressive levels making use of Visual Phonics and reading for meaning to re-enforce existing knowledge and skills.

We also use other reading books such as Hi-Lo, Beyond Words and National Geographic Kids books for independent reading time.

Principles and Practice

- To ensure that staff have a clear understanding of the importance of reading and their role in developing students' literacy in conjunction with language and communication.
- To promote the importance of reading to students and parents.
- To ensure that systems are in place to track and monitor students' reading skills, and levels and progress over time e.g. York Assessment for Reading Comprehension (YARC), PM Reading Assessment tracker, VP tracker and the BoomReader app.
- To establish the importance of reading in lessons across the school and to develop consistency in practice with and making use of strategies for reading that are meaningful and accessible for our students.
- To share good practice in reading and ensure there is designated reading time on the schools' curricula.
- To provide topic based themed books to support the development of the curriculum.
- To use Visual Phonics as a core reading strategy to develop students' awareness of phonics, through the implementation of a structured Visual Phonics curriculum developed and differentiated to meet the needs of the Oak Lodge students, as well as through practise and use of Visual Phonics in Guided reading sessions, and integration of Visual Phonics, initially within English lessons, and in time (with training of staff) throughout other core learning subjects and as a school wide approach.
- To develop and build upon a bank of resources that are underpinned by BSL, SSE, Communicate in Print (Widgit) (Symbol supported resources), and Visual Phonics, so that reading can be scaffolded to provide the relevant support, where needed.
- To create a whole school reading initiative that allows students opportunities to read in differentiated groups.
- To promote a positive attitude to reading amongst all staff, students, and parents/carers.

Aims

The reading strategy aims to provide a rich repertoire of texts and accompanying video / visual resources (accessible in either BSL/SSE and/or written/Spoken English) that will allow students to learn strategies for reading. It is essential that students are given opportunities to explore different types of text and to recognise that reading has purpose.

- To develop an interest in, and a love of books and other texts.
- To show students that it is possible for them to access and learn how to read / to improve upon their reading skills.
- To promote and encourage a lifelong love of reading.
- To recognize the importance of reading.
- To understand that reading and writing assists with their communication and with access to functional activities / tasks of daily living.
- To understand that fluent reading offers greater opportunity for employability.
- To read with enjoyment and evaluate what they have read in order to justify personal opinions and preferences.
- To enable students to access, understand and begin to manage information.
- To begin to understand and discuss with others the meaning of what is read to them and what they have read.
- To develop reading strategies to decode and to develop key skills such as accuracy, fluency, understanding and response to texts.
- To experience the past, the future and other worlds (both real and imaginary) through reading.

At Oak Lodge School we commit to:

- Make reading fun and enjoyable.
- Ensure reading has a high profile throughout the school.
- Set and share appropriately high standards.
- Give learners responsibility for their reading.
- Encourage students to reflect on their reading.
- Encourage parents/carers to take an active role in promoting reading at home.
- Train our staff to use strategies for reading effectively with students.
- Appoint a team of in-house trained Guided Reading Readers to read and model good reading practice.

Staff will:

- Use a range of reading activities and explicitly teach reading techniques in order to support students' reading in their subject.
- Update vocabulary booklet for new vocabulary and/or update BoomReader to show progress.
- Ensure the bespoke Language and Communication tracker is updated termly. This applies to teachers teaching English as a subject.

- Promote the importance of reading within their curriculum.
- Develop subject-related texts and displays for students to refer to in lessons for additional research on a topic, for extension tasks or for independent learning activities.
- Engage with training on strategies to support students' reading across the curriculum.
- Use an agreed approach to reading across the curriculum, including the consistent use of strategies for supporting students with decoding texts/comprehension and vocabulary.

The students will:

- Take responsibility for their reading by choosing appropriate texts from a range offered to them and by changing these texts regularly once finished.
- Pupils will learn, be encouraged and supported to use effective strategies when faced with an unknown word so that they can become independent readers.
- Ask for help or support when they are unsure about their reading.
- Read at home for homework activities, and be encouraged to read for enjoyment.
- Work with staff and peers to develop strategies to support them in their reading.

Subject Leads will:

It is the responsibility of the Subject Lead to ensure:

- Language used in teaching is accessible to individual students' linguistic level and ability e.g., worksheets, presentations, teaching resources.
- Explicit teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar takes place in lessons in line with exam specifications in order to maximize student's achievement.
- Students have access to the key words for the subject and the unit they are studying. These could be displayed in the classroom, on presentations, made accessible via visual re-enforcement and BSL (included in the Oak Lodge on-line dictionary).
- There is sufficient support for reading within lessons including use of In Print (Widgit) symbols, BSL, SSE, VP, AACs etc.
- All staff in the curriculum area are aware of the key words for each topic and that there are pre-established signs used to support the learning of these key words.

Language and Communication Lead will:

- Regularly assess individual student's reading and comprehension levels and review their progress over time (in conjunction with Speech and Language team, and English teachers).
- Share reading/comprehension/spelling data across the school via B-squared/Bespoke Language and Communication tracker and Visual Phonics Trackers, as well as EHCP annual review reports (in conjunction with Language and Communication team) to support the lesson planning of all teachers.

- Model good reading practice by reading books/texts with the students and checking their understanding, to ensure students are reading for meaning.
- Ensure that staff are aware of students' literacy level so that the quality of curriculum access is appropriate for students.
- Ensure that the English curriculum includes a wide range of texts and richness of opportunity to engage with these texts in a meaningful and accessible manner.
- Ensure that reading is promoted throughout the school.
- Ensure that the reading policy is up to date and reviewed regularly.
- Provide reading strategies through 1-1 and small group support.

Head Teacher Responsibilities:

Implementation Oversight: The Head Teacher oversees the execution of the Reading Policy across the school, ensuring that it aligns with the schools' overall vision and goals.

Reporting to Governing Body: Regularly reports to the governing body about the implementation of the Reading Policy, highlighting its impact on educational standards and overall quality within the school.

Evaluation and Review: Facilitates periodic reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy. This involves assessing how well the policy supports and challenges the staff, Head Teacher, and governing body, and determines its impact on raising academic standards.

Support and Guidance: Offers support and guidance to the Language and Communication Lead, ensuring they have the necessary resources and strategies to assess individual students' reading levels and provide appropriate support.

Integration with School Improvement Plan: Ensures that the Reading Policy aligns with the broader objectives outlined in the School Improvement Plan, allowing for cohesive development across various aspects of the school's functioning.

Governing Body Responsibilities:

Policy Monitoring and Implementation: The Governing Body monitors the implementation of the Reading Policy, ensuring that it is effectively carried out throughout the school.

Receiving Reports: Receives reports from the Head Teacher and curriculum teams, comprehensively examining areas that require improvement concerning the Reading Policy.

Decision-Making and Action: Acts upon the information received in reports, making decisions and taking action based on identified areas that need improvement. This could involve allocating resources, providing additional support, or suggesting amendments to enhance the policy's efficacy.

Policy Review and Adaptation: Engages in the review process of the Reading Policy, participating in discussions and decision-making regarding potential adaptations or revisions to ensure it remains current and impactful.

Alignment with **School Improvement Plan**: Ensures that the Reading Policy aligns with the objectives outlined in the broader School Improvement Plan, reinforcing consistency and congruence in the school's developmental strategies.

Related Documents

- **School Improvement Plan 2024-25**

Glossary:

Widgit (In Print): Simply-drawn, colourful symbols each illustrating a single word/concept in a clear and concise way.

Blooms Taxonomy: Bloom's taxonomy is a classification system used to define and distinguish different levels of human cognition—i.e., thinking, learning, and understanding. It used a hierarchical, series of questions to determine what complexity of questions a student can access and use- going from concrete to more abstract levels.

Test of Abstract Language Comprehension (TALC): The TALC assesses a pupil's reasoning skills based on the Blanks Model of verbal reasoning. Four levels are assessed: Naming, Describing, Sequencing and Justifying/Problem Solving, using pictures and a range of questions (this assessment provides more details to supplement the Blooms level assessment).

SHAPE CODING: Use of a visual coding system to show the rules for how words are put together in sentences, to develop the child's understanding and use of grammar, so that they can communicate more effectively.

VISUAL PHONICS: Visual phonics (VP) uses a **visual “cue”** (gesture / action) to show the **sound** (phoneme) linked to the **letter** (grapheme/written English):

- Each sound has a visual cue which is signed near the face and is linked to:
 - the BSL alphabet (fingerspelling) &
 - how the sound is made.