

Reading at Whitehill Community Academy

'If you are going to get anywhere in life, you have to read a lot of books!'

Roald Dahl

At Whitehill Community Academy, we know that reading is a vital skill which opens many doors both in and out of school. Our aim is to promote a love of books from an early age as well as to support children to build the skills they need to be able to read fluently and confidently. We immerse children in a range of high-quality texts, matched to their reading level as well as linked to their interests and our Topics.

How is reading taught at Whitehill Community Academy?

We understand that children all develop at their own rate, and some children take a little longer than others to master a complex skill such as reading. No matter what year group a child is in, we endeavour to make sure that they are supported to make progress at their own pace through adapting teaching, providing intervention and streaming into groups. The information outlined below is our aim for all children, although some move through the journey to being a fluent and perceptive reader at a slower pace.

Word Reading

In Nursery, phase 1 phonics is introduced to develop children's listening skills and prepare them to begin to learn that letters make 'sounds' and can be put together to form words. During this phase, children learn to differentiate between different types of sounds and identify their sources. They also begin to orally blend and segment sounds within words. During the Summer term, if children are deemed 'ready' by the Nursery Lead, they may begin set 1 phonics from the Ruth Miskin, Read Write Inc. scheme to prepare for Reception.

In Reception, children begin Ruth Miskin, Read Write Inc. Phonics. This programme teaches children what sound each letter makes, then progresses to combinations of more than one letter (digraphs and trigraphs, or 'special friends'). Children practise reading words (decoding) as soon as they are able to by reading books linked directly to the sounds and words they have learnt.

Children are sorted into groups based on the progress they make in Phonics, and these groups continue until most children complete the programme when they are in Year 2. For some, these groups continue further up school with the aim of ensuring that they are fluent and confident readers.

When children achieve full fluency (usually in Year 2), they move onto our main reading scheme. We have libraries filled with a range of books, starting at level 2.1 (meant for Year 2 children), all the way up to 7+ (meant for year 7 children and older). We level these books using the Accelerated Reader Book Finder to ensure that they are appropriately challenging and build pupils' skills as they become more skilled readers. Children are guided to the correct level of text based on teachers' termly assessments. Within each level, we ensure that there are a range of books from different genres and suited to a range of interests, and children are encouraged to choose for themselves.

Teachers listen to children read at least once every half-term on a 1:1 basis. There are also planned sessions within class that give pupils the opportunity to read aloud and practise fluency and expression.

Text Comprehension

Discussion and understanding of texts is promoted throughout school. In Nursery, adults read aloud to pupils frequently and high-quality texts are available throughout the unit. Children explore popular story characters and plots through the resources available within the provision.

Children in EYFS and Year 1 develop their understanding of a text through reading comprehension lessons. Pupils have stories read aloud to them daily and have group discussions to develop their ability to recall information and use it to answer questions. We follow the VIPERS system, which focuses on skills linked to Vocabulary, Inference,

Predictions, Explanation, Retrieval and Summary / Sequence. During phonics sessions in EYFS and Key Stage 1, children read books that they are able to decode and discussions around what they have read is built into the lesson.

In Year 2 and Key Stage 2, children access more formal text comprehension lessons, again using the VIPERS system. Each week, children look at a different short text and use a combination of group discussion and written work to answer questions. In Key Stage 2, this is used alongside discussions and targeted questioning linked to ongoing class reads which are often related to Theme lessons or interests of the pupils.

Reading is also used as a cross-curricular tool for children to research topics and follow written instructions.

How do we support struggling learners in Reading?

In Key Stage 1, children are grouped according to their phonics ability. Children who fall behind their age-related expectations are targeted for additional support. For some, this continues into Key Stage 2.

Children who are working below their age-related expectations throughout school are targeted for additional 1:1 reading time with an adult and may access interventions tailored to their needs when necessary.

How do we assess Reading?

Children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 are assessed half-termly to ensure that they are accessing the correct phonics group for their ability. Children are re-grouped when they are ready to move on. Children who continue to access phonics in KS2 are regularly assessed to measure their progress in this area. Once children are deemed ready in KS1, they begin to access formal reading comprehension assessments.

Children in Year 2 and Key Stage 2 access formal reading comprehension assessments twice a year. Alongside this, teachers assess a child's reading level whilst carrying out 1:1 reading.

How do we promote a love of reading at Whitehill?

To ensure children are immersed in a variety of rich quality texts we have recently replenished our school libraries. The children now have a range of carefully selected books that are aimed at their reading level whilst also capturing their interest. Children are encouraged to choose their own books within their academic band.

How can you support your child in reading?

EYFS

From the beginning of nursery, children are encouraged to take a story bag home and fill it with their favourite book. This is then shared with their key worker and group at the end of each day. This is continued in Reception. In Reception, reading books and weekly sounds will start to be sent home. Towards the end of the year, words are sent home for children to read and put into sentences. Parents are encouraged to support their child with this.

There is an annual 'learning at home' information evening which parents are encouraged to attend to learn how they can support their children at home.

KS1 and KS2

Children are expected to read a minimum of 3 times a week at home. We encourage parents to continue to listen to their child read aloud as this will further improve their fluency and confidence in this area. Although we do encourage children to read their school reading book, as this has been chosen to match their ability, this can also be done through other resources such as magazines, newspapers, kindle apps, own books from home etc. Any form of home reading should be recorded in their school reading records and rewards will be given to children who read regularly at home.