

A Policy for the Strategic Approach to the Teaching of Reading

As Barack Obama once said, 'reading is the gateway for children that makes all other learning possible.' At Willow Brook we know that words, whether they are spoken or written, enable humans to communicate their ideas and emotions and understand others. In so many ways, competency in language equips an individual to become an effective and active member of their community.

Through reading, children will learn to make sense of the world. They will absorb their cultural and spiritual ideas and build intellectually on all that they have been taught and experienced for themselves. Through writing and oracy, children will learn how to sift and craft their thoughts, justify their views and express themselves succinctly. With each year in the primary phase, well-sequenced learning builds on age related expectations and equips a child to be adventurous and independent.

Creativity is at the heart of Willow Brook's ethos. As well as arming our children with the technical tools they need to be successful in this area of the curriculum, we aim to include regular opportunities to encourage self-expression and confidence. By weaving stimulating whole-school projects into our topic-based curriculum, we aim to guide children as they move from learning to read to reading to learn.

The teaching of phonics

At Willow Brook, we nurture the needs of every child as they progress from learning their first sounds in Reception until they become a fluent and confident reader.

Our intent is to:

- Teach phonics systematically with regular consolidation and revision to ensure the success of every child.
- Deliver high-quality systematic synthetic phonics sessions daily, with additional support for those who need it.
- Give children the tools and practice they need to read with independence and confidence.
- Enable and facilitate the success of every child.
- Teach comprehension and language skills alongside word reading.
- Work in partnership with families to share and support early reading at home.
- Promote a love of reading in every child.

To implement this we:

- Teach children to read using Oxford Reading Tree's Floppy's Phonics program and all members of staff who teach and support phonics have been trained in its delivery.
- Teach phonics daily and systematically, with many opportunities for children to practice and use their phonics skills.
- Recognise that children make progress at different rates and offer challenges and additional support within our daily phonics sessions and throughout the day.
- Closely monitor the progress of every child and respond swiftly to their current needs.

- Match every child's reading book carefully to their current phonic knowledge to ensure their success and promote a positive attitude towards reading. They will take home a book that contains an appropriate level of challenge for their current needs, this is constantly reviewed for every child's individual reading journey and to give them a wide range of reading experiences.
- Share our phonics learning with families at curriculum evenings and through phonics folders which are sent home weekly.
- Promote comprehension and language skills within our phonics sessions and throughout the day.
- Immerse the children at Willow Brook in a vast and varied selection of high-quality stories, non-fiction books and poetry to broaden their reading experiences. Our story-focused topics host many interactive and exciting opportunities for the children to engage with and become engrossed in.
- Have dedicated story time in our classrooms. We encourage children to question and respond to texts with their own ideas and to relate them to their own personal experiences.

Impact

- The impact of our carefully planned phonics curriculum is demonstrated in every child at Willow Brook, they:
- Are highly motivated and eager to join in during phonics sessions, they relish opportunities for incidental phonics learning and are excited for their next steps.
- Make progress quickly.
- Use phonics to accurately decode and read words in their carefully matched reading books.
- Take pride in demonstrating their phonics skills when reading at home and at school.
- Challenge themselves when reading and are ambitious in their word choices when writing.
- Are resilient and keep trying when they make mistakes, they know how to ask for help when they need it.
- Enjoy reading and learning to read.
- Confidently and independently use classroom resources and displays to aid their independence in both reading and writing.

The teaching of reading

The teaching of reading at Willow Brook school is given the utmost importance. From our youngest children who enjoy creating their own books during their structured play to our oldest children who are rewarded with time spent reading their favourite book in the sunshine, we believe that reading is everything.

Our reading lessons are divided into three principle areas: guided reading, independent reading and reading across the curriculum. Progression in teaching of reading is underpinned by a systematic reading spine of book titles that allow teachers to revisit and build on reading content domains whilst facilitating the making of connections, within and across a range of books and texts.

Progression of texts

Our reading spine ensures that children regularly revisit and build upon their prior knowledge of literature. Each year children work with classic folk tales and in doing so interact with texts which have the same hallmarks of the genre but build in complexity. This enables our teachers to teach children how to make connections within and across the books that they have read. Our selected texts often link to our creative curriculum half term theme and provide our children with a breadth and depth of literary experiences. Poetry, picture books, non-fiction, contemporary and classic works of fiction are given time in classrooms and occupy space in our children's imaginations. Our progression of texts continues to change grown and evolve, responding to the needs of our children whilst staying true to the guidance principles of ensuring progression by building on what is familiar to our children.

Whole class guided reading

The evidence suggests that whole class guided reading is a very effective component of the teaching of reading. This area focuses more on the mechanics of the reading process. Children are supported by the teacher to work with more challenging texts than they would typically read independently and as such, build their vocabulary and knowledge of writing composition and how it affects the reader. Guided reading builds a sense of collective involvement in a common, shared story where children invest in characters and plots. This means that all children in a class join our guided reading sessions. Children with SEN are supported to access these texts alongside their peers. Our guided reading sessions are focused on specific content domains and often support the teaching of writing in other English lessons. The texts that are used are a mixture of fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Our list of texts to support the teaching of English includes some but not all of our choices for guided reading. Children respond to their text through classroom discussion and record their ideas in their guided reading books. Our youngest children begin to learn this process in small groups supported by their class teacher to help prepare them for whole class guided reading in year two.

Independent reading for pleasure

At Willow Brook we understand that reading for pleasure is fundamental to learning. Our children are given protected time to read silently in class and read their book to an adult at least once per week. This is recorded in the children's reading diaries. The children use these with increasing independence as they progress through the school. This is the time for 'informal book talk' that helps children make connections within and across the books that they read. Our staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about children's literature and invest in the reading choices of their class. Each classroom has a well-stocked collection of bookshelves which are arranged in accordance with the needs of the class.

Reading across the curriculum

Teachers at Willow Brook know the importance of giving children regular opportunities to practise their reading skills. As such, teachers plan lessons across the curriculum that deliver their subject specific content but are also underpinned by the application of word reading and language comprehension. In this way children do not only learn to read, but read to learn.

A rich reading environment

Every classroom has a selection of contemporary children's literature alongside more classic titles. Our children also have access to poetry and non-fiction within their classrooms. Children are supported in choosing books that they will enjoy reading and are pointed in the direction of more challenging titles as deemed appropriate by our teaching staff. Some children need a little extra support in establishing good reading for pleasure behaviors. Such children have access to additional, specially curated collections of books that go further in igniting a spark of curiosity or the desire to read.

The status of reading

Reading is given a very high status in Willow Brook school. Events such as World Book Day, school wide reading competitions, poetry recitals, celebration assemblies, library and book shops visits, work alongside classroom and corridor displays to build a culture that values reading. Our older children model their reading habits and act as role models for our younger children during our paired reading lessons.

Story time

Many busy days at Willow Brook end with dedicated, distraction free time for the children to be immersed in a story that they are invested in. The teacher reads aloud to their class. The aim of this time is to allow children to enjoy a story without stopping to unpick and analyse the content. Books may be chosen from our progression of texts, but may also reflect the tastes of the class as a whole.

Reading at home

The focus for home reading at Willow Brook is to consolidate reading progress and involve parents in their own child's reading. There is the expectation that the youngest children read at home to an adult on a regular basis. Support is given to families to help them achieve positive reading routines at home. The importance of reading at home is stressed by all staff at parent's evenings, in our half termly curriculum 'learning letters', through homework communication, home-school reading records and at parent information evenings. Our older children often record their own reading habits in their reading record books and encourage family members to sign on their behalf.

Monitoring

The teaching and learning of reading is monitored by the headteacher and reading subject leader. In KS1 a selection of children read their books to an adult each term. In KS2 guided reading planning and the children's workbooks are monitored termly. Children's independent reading records are also monitored termly, and children are often heard reading their own book by SLT. Records are kept the curriculum file on Teams.

Staff development and CPD

In order to achieve high standards in reading, CPD is targeted at the needs of the staff as identified in recent monitoring activities. Willow Brook has been driving a 'Reading for Pleasure' agenda, using INSET days and staff meeting time to undertake training delivered by STL and the National College.

Assessment

Assessing reading involves examining pupils' competence in both word reading and comprehension. Rich opportunities to gather evidence include, whole class guided reading, phonics sessions, hearing children read their own book aloud, reading new vocabulary across the curriculum, reading playscripts during drama sessions and through intervention sessions. Teachers keep their own assessment records to help inform their teaching decisions.

Summative assessments are also completed on a termly basis (although often more regularly in Y6) by using a range of assessment materials e.g. National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) assessments, past SATS papers and other word reading and comprehension assessing activities. The outcomes of this assessment are reported to SLT on a termly basis and collated using Scholarpack. Teachers use this data to determine interventions or amendments to teaching as appropriate. The reading habits of the lowest attaining 20% of children in each class is monitored in extra detail to ensure support is directed to the most effective places within the classroom.

Interventions

It is a priority to ensure that all children read with an adult in school at least once per week. Those children who read at home less regularly are heard more often in school.

Children who did not pass the phonics screening check receive 1:1 intervention sessions twice per week focusing on the gaps in their phonics knowledge. These sessions are led by a fully trained teacher and the outcomes are recorded in a running commentary available for their class teacher and SLT to monitor.

Inclusion

Where a child has SEN/D, or EAL we take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective provision in place. Where a child is new to the English language, they receive a daily language session in which a responsive program to teach English is delivered.

Impact

By the end of EYFS, children will be able to read and understand simple sentences, use phonics knowledge to decode regular words, read some common exception words and be able demonstrate that they understand

what they have read. By the end of KS1 the children will be able to decode most new words, outside their spoken vocabulary, in a fluent manner. They will be able to read books at an age-appropriate level at a suitable speaking pace.

By the end of KS2, children will be 'secondary school ready' by reading sufficiently fluently and effortlessly with a good level of understanding of what they have read. Children will be able to use their reading skills to develop a good knowledge of the wider world. They will be able to apply the vocabulary that they have learned across the wider curriculum in a range of suitable contexts.

Having learned to read, children leave Willow Brook reading to learn.

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