

Reading and Phonics Policy

West Kirby School and College

Reading Intent

At West Kirby School and College, we recognise that reading is fundamental to pupils' academic achievement, communication skills, personal development and future life opportunities. We are committed to developing confident, fluent and enthusiastic readers through a whole-school approach that combines phonics, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, reading fluency and Reading for Pleasure.

Our reading provision spans both primary and secondary phases and is designed to meet the diverse needs of our pupils. Through high-quality teaching, targeted intervention, rich literary experiences and a strong reading culture, we aim to ensure that every pupil develops the skills, knowledge and confidence required to become a successful lifelong reader.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Develop pupils' fluency, accuracy and comprehension skills.
 - Foster a lifelong love of reading.
 - Promote Reading for Pleasure across the school community.
 - Ensure all pupils have access to high-quality, diverse and inclusive texts.
 - Develop pupils' vocabulary, language and communication skills.
 - Support pupils to become independent and reflective readers.
 - Provide timely assessment and intervention where required.
 - Engage parents and carers as partners in supporting reading development.
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Reading for Pleasure

Reading for Pleasure is central to the school's reading strategy. We believe that pupils who enjoy reading are more likely to read frequently, develop stronger literacy skills and become lifelong readers.

The school promotes Reading for Pleasure through:

- Dedicated primary and secondary libraries.
- Inviting reading environments across the school.
- An outdoor literacy garden and reading spaces.
- Carefully curated Reading Spines.

- Author and poet visits.
- Literacy Week and World Book Day celebrations.
- The annual Literacy Festival.
- Reading competitions and enrichment activities.
- Community reading projects.
- Partnerships with local libraries and bookshops.
- Parent workshops and Reading for Pleasure events.

Pupil voice plays a significant role in shaping reading provision. Pupils regularly contribute recommendations for library stock and Reading Spine texts through surveys, discussions and book-voting opportunities.

Reading Spines

The school maintains progressive Reading Spines for both primary and secondary phases. These provide pupils with access to a carefully selected range of high-quality literature throughout their school journey.

Texts are selected through consideration of:

- Nationally recommended reading lists.
- Professional recommendations.
- Local English leader networks.
- Curriculum requirements.
- Pupil interests and feedback.

Reading Spine texts reflect:

- Diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives.
- Protected characteristics and inclusion.
- Contemporary and classic literature.
- A broad range of genres and authors.
- Age-appropriate poetry.
- Themes that promote empathy, curiosity and critical thinking.

The Reading Spines are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant, engaging and representative of the pupils we serve.

Phonics

The school uses the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programmes to deliver systematic synthetic phonics instruction.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

Pupils in Years 1–4 who require phonics support access Read Write Inc. Phonics.

Read Write Inc. Fresh Start

Pupils in Year 5 and above who require continued phonics intervention access Read Write Inc. Fresh Start.

Phonics sessions are delivered by trained members of the Reading Team through personalised teaching approaches designed to meet individual learning needs. Progress is assessed every six weeks and outcomes are shared with teachers, parents and carers.

Shared Reading

Shared Reading provides pupils with regular opportunities to hear high-quality texts read aloud by skilled adult readers.

Primary Phase

All primary pupils participate in a daily shared reading session using texts from the Primary Reading Spine.

During these sessions, adults model:

- Fluent and expressive reading.
- Vocabulary development.
- Reading comprehension strategies.
- Prediction and inference skills.
- Discussion and reflection.

Secondary Phase

Secondary pupils participate in Shared Reading sessions three times each week using texts selected from the Secondary Reading Spine.

Shared Reading supports the development of:

- Vocabulary knowledge.
 - Listening skills.
 - Reading fluency.
 - Comprehension and inference.
 - Critical thinking.
 - Reading engagement and enjoyment.
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Independent Reading

Independent reading forms an important part of the school's reading provision.

Pupils with secure phonics knowledge participate in regular independent reading sessions through the school's Read at Form Time (RAFT) programme.

Pupils select books using the Accelerated Reader system, ensuring that texts provide an appropriate level of challenge whilst promoting reading enjoyment and success.

The Reading Team monitors participation, progress and comprehension outcomes to support pupils in developing positive reading habits and increased reading stamina.

Assessment and Monitoring

The school uses a range of assessment tools to monitor reading development, identify barriers to progress and inform teaching.

Assessment information is used to:

- Track pupil progress.
- Inform intervention planning.
- Support teacher assessment.
- Guidebook selection.
- Share progress with parents and carers.

Assessment tools include:

- Star Reader Assessment.
- Accelerated Reader.
- Read Write Inc. assessments.
- Diagnostic Reading Analysis.
- Dyslexia Portfolio Assessment.
- Visual Stress Screening.
- Statutory reading assessments.

Reading data is reviewed regularly by the Reading Team, English Leaders, and Senior Leaders to ensure that the provision remains effective and responsive to pupils' needs.

Additional sections:

Accelerated Reader and Star Reader

West Kirby School and College uses Accelerated Reader as a whole-school system to support independent reading, monitor reading progress and encourage Reading for Pleasure.

All pupils complete a Star Reader assessment annually. This assessment provides a reading age, comprehension data and a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) range. Pupils are introduced to their ZPD range as a colour band, which helps them select books that offer appropriate challenge whilst maintaining confidence and motivation.

The school library contains a wide range of Accelerated Reader books organised according to reading levels. Pupils select books within their ZPD range and read independently both in school and at home. Upon completion of a book, pupils complete an online quiz to assess their understanding of the text.

Accelerated Reader provides staff with detailed information about reading engagement, comprehension and progress over time. The Reading Team monitors Star Reader and Accelerated Reader data regularly to identify strengths, celebrate success and provide additional support where required.

Reading Plus

Reading Plus is used as an additional intervention for pupils who would benefit from targeted support in reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and reading stamina.

The programme adapts automatically to each pupil's reading level and provides personalised activities designed to improve understanding of increasingly complex texts, develop concentration and strengthen independent reading skills.

The Reading Team monitors progress and uses programme data to identify pupils who would benefit from additional support in developing higher-level reading skills and comprehension.

Dyslexia and Literacy Assessment

West Kirby School and College is committed to identifying and supporting pupils with literacy difficulties and potential barriers to reading development.

A Level 5 Dyslexia-trained member of the Reading Team completes Dyslexia Portfolio assessments for pupils where concerns have been identified. The assessment helps identify patterns of strengths and difficulties commonly associated with dyslexia, including phonological awareness, reading accuracy, spelling, working memory and processing speed.

The Dyslexia Portfolio is a screening tool and does not provide a formal diagnosis. Instead, it creates a detailed profile of a pupil's literacy strengths and areas of need, enabling appropriate support and provision to be implemented.

Following assessment, teachers and parents/carers receive a guidance document outlining practical strategies and recommendations to support the pupil both in school and at home.

The Reading Team also carries out Diagnostic Reading Analysis assessments. These provide detailed information about a pupil's decoding skills, reading fluency, comprehension and reading behaviours, allowing staff to identify specific barriers to reading and plan targeted support.

Where appropriate, trained members of the Reading Team complete visual stress assessments using Crossbow Education resources. Findings are shared with teachers, pupils and parents/carers to inform classroom practice and support reading access.

Statutory Reading Assessments

The school participates in all statutory reading assessments and uses outcomes to inform teaching and support.

Phonics Screening Check

Pupils in Year 1 complete the statutory Phonics Screening Check. This assessment measures pupils' ability to apply phonics knowledge when reading both real and pseudo words and helps identify those requiring additional phonics support.

Information and guidance are provided to parents and carers to support phonics development at home.

Key Stage 2 Reading Assessment

Pupils working at age-related expectations in Year 6 complete the statutory Key Stage 2 Reading SATs assessment.

The assessment measures pupils' ability to:

- Retrieve information from texts
- Make inferences
- Explain vocabulary choices
- Summarise key ideas
- Analyse authorial intent and text structure

Parents and carers are provided with information about the reading domains and example questions to support reading comprehension at home.

Poetry

Poetry is an important and celebrated element of the reading curriculum across both primary and secondary phases.

Primary pupils study dedicated poetry units annually and encounter poetry regularly through storytime sessions and Reading Spine texts. Secondary pupils explore a range of poetic forms and authors through the English curriculum.

Pupils are encouraged to engage with poetry through a variety of enrichment opportunities, including poetry competitions, Literacy Week activities, the annual Literacy Festival, visits from professional poets and interactive workshops.

These experiences develop vocabulary, creativity, reading fluency, speaking and listening skills, confidence in performance and an appreciation of language in its many forms.

Parental Engagement

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting reading development. The school works closely with families to promote positive reading habits both at school and at home.

Support is provided through:

- Reading workshops for parents and carers
- Reading for Pleasure events
- Home reading guidance
- Newsletters and reading updates
- Communication regarding reading progress
- Recommendations for books and local library services

The Reading Team and school librarian regularly communicate with families to celebrate reading success and encourage continued engagement with reading outside school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Reading provision is monitored by the Reading Team, English Leaders and Senior Leaders.

Monitoring activities include:

- Analysis of reading assessment data
- Accelerated Reader and Star Reader reports
- Phonics assessment outcomes
- Reading Plus progress data
- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Library audits
- Pupil voice activities
- Parent feedback
- Reading intervention reviews

This information is used to evaluate the effectiveness of reading provision, identify priorities for development and ensure that all pupils are supported to become confident, capable and enthusiastic readers.

Equality and Inclusion

At West Kirby School and College, equality, inclusion and accessibility underpin our whole-school approach to reading. The majority of our pupils have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), with many also identified as Pupil Premium, Children Looked After (CLA), or within the lowest 20% of readers nationally. We recognise that these groups may face additional barriers to reading and literacy development and are committed to ensuring that every pupil has equitable access to high-quality reading provision and rich literary experiences.

Reading assessment data is used to identify individual strengths, needs and barriers to learning. Targeted interventions, including Read Write Inc., Fresh Start, Reading Plus and personalised reading support, are carefully matched to pupils' needs to accelerate progress and close literacy gaps. Additional assessments, including Dyslexia Portfolio screening, Diagnostic Reading Analysis, and visual stress assessments, help ensure that support is appropriately tailored.

We believe that all pupils should have access to the wider cultural experiences that help bring reading and literature to life. Through our annual Literacy Festival, pupils meet authors, poets and storytellers and participate in workshops that inspire reading, writing and creativity. During Literacy Week, pupils engage in a range of literary experiences, including author visits, book-related activities and reading celebrations. Pupils also visit local bookshops and libraries, attend theatre productions, and participate in educational visits such as the Harry Potter Studio Tour, allowing them to experience how stories, characters and scripts are developed and brought to life. These opportunities help pupils develop cultural capital, broaden their literary experiences and strengthen their engagement with reading.

Our Reading Spines and library collections reflect a diverse range of cultures, experiences, identities and perspectives, enabling pupils to see themselves represented in literature while developing an understanding of the wider world. Texts are available in a variety of formats, including audiobooks and adapted resources, to ensure accessibility for all learners.

Through high-quality teaching, targeted intervention, inclusive practice, and enriching literary experiences, we aim to remove barriers to reading, promote equality of opportunity, and ensure that every pupil develops the skills, confidence, and motivation needed to become a successful reader.