



DAWN HOUSE SCHOOL – STAFF HANDBOOK	
<b>Policy Title: Reading and Literacy Policy</b>	
<b>Section: L</b>	<b>Policy No: L. 3</b>
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## Context

Pupils at Dawn House School 's primary need is Speech Language and Communication and so most of our pupils find aspects of Reading difficult. This may include challenges with...

- Attention and listening difficulties
- Processing, storing and articulating sounds and words
- Recalling and sequencing sounds and letter names
- Vocabulary learning and word finding
- Understanding and forming a range of sentences including using grammatical markers
- Using the context to predict a word and understand what has been said
- Comprehension and expression of language in words, sentence and text levels

At Dawn House School, we know that reading skills need three strands to develop – the technical skill of recognising words and decoding words into sounds, comprehension the understanding of what words and sentences mean, and reading for pleasure and enjoyment. \* (Appendix 1 and 2)

## Aims

We aim to **engage** pupils in by meeting them where they are; delivering a precisely targeted literacy program so that they feel the satisfaction of becoming successful readers and communicators in written and spoken language.

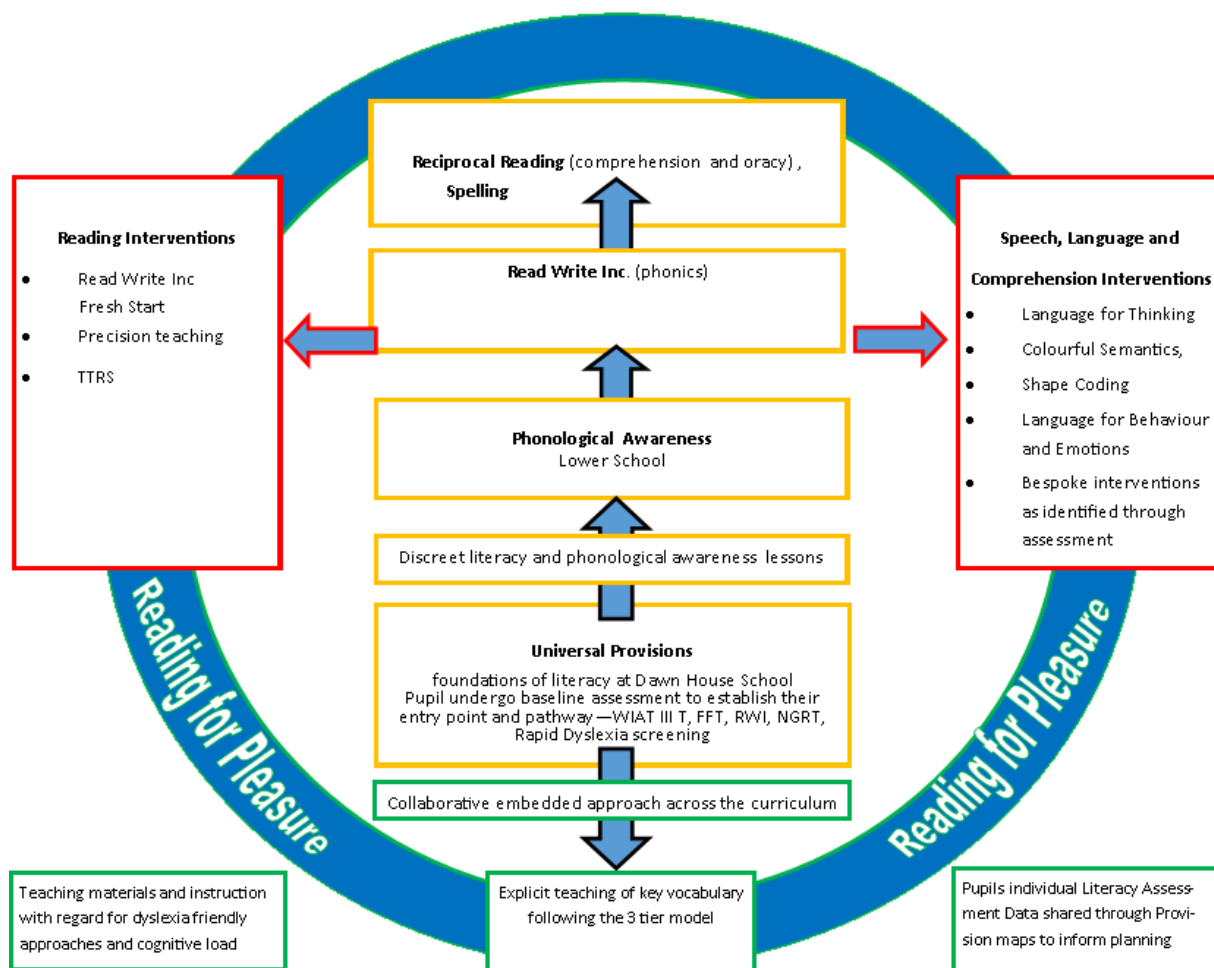
We **develop** fluent readers by supporting them to progress through phonological awareness, decoding, grammar and comprehension.

It is our ambition for our students to **communicate** confidently in social and professional circumstances. We support our pupils in developing their language acquisition by raising their phonological awareness, providing vocabulary and developing their syntax structure skills.

We **aspire** for pupils to transition from learning read to reading to learn by becoming fluent independent in reading , writing and oracy; gain knowledge; record their ideas: access an exciting curriculum and qualifications; express their needs wants and creativity build on understanding of the world around us so that they meet their full potential in all aspects of life at Dawn House School and reading and writing in the wider world.

## Implementation and assessment

Pupils reading and phonological awareness are assessed through standardised assessment (and are screened for indications of Dyslexia) on entry to Dawn House School and then follow an identified programme.



**Phonological Awareness**, the ability to recognise and manipulate the spoken parts of sentences and words, is an essential foundation for reading. It is an essential skill for being able to decode (understand and read) and encode (say and spell) words and sentences.

The SLT team deliver weekly whole class sessions to lower school pupils designed to support development of their phonological awareness skills, following frameworks including Time 4 Sounds, **Newcastle Intervention for Phonological Awareness (NIPA)** and activities tailored to the needs of each class. This forms part of the literacy provision for lower school pupils

Most pupils who have a reading age of below 9 follow our phonic programme. Most pupils who have a reading age of nine and above follow our programme to develop fluency and comprehension.

Pupils in lower school, key stage 3 , 4 and 5 access **four literacy lessons per week**.

Pupils who are developing their **technical decoding** skills follow **Read Write Inc**, a sequential synthetic phonic approach. This is delivered one to one or in small groups tailored to pupils' stage of development. Some Key Stage 3 and 4 who are still developing their decoding skills are better suited to the **Read Write Inc Fresh Start** Programme Pupils baseline is measured using FFT and Read Write Inc assessment and thereafter progress is measured half termly using those assessments in rotation and provision adjusted accordingly. Using both assessments allows for greater precision and for progress in comprehension to be measured.

Pupils who are developing their **comprehension** follow the **Reciprocal Reading programme** twice per week. This is a discussion-based approach to explicitly teaching pupils strategies for reading and understanding texts. It focuses on the skills of predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing. Pupils are supported by staff using The Blank Model of Language Learning to ask targeted questions. High quality sequential texts matched to pupils reading ability are provided. Reciprocal Reading supports oracy, builds fluency and develops independence and the confidence to approach and comprehend unfamiliar texts. Pupils are baselined, and progress is measured once per year using NGRT.

These pupils also practice spelling once per week. These are based on the National Curriculum statutory word list delivered at stage not age. Progress in spelling is measured through standardised assessment using the spelling battery of **WIATT -III- T once per year**.

Pupils in the junior class and above enjoy a weekly **reading for pleasure** session during their literacy programme, where they can choose a book from the school library or bring their own book, or share a book with their class. We encourage adults to read to pupils so that they can experience engaging and exciting fiction and non-fiction texts beyond their own reading ability, and so adults can model a lifelong value for and love of reading. We know that this can also support the acquisition of vocabulary.

## **Interventions**

We understand that a very small number of pupils may, despite high quality phonics provision, fail to make progress through phonic teaching because of their speech and language or cognitive needs. Those pupils follow a **Precision Teaching** approach which increases their number of sight words through a whole word recognition approach. Progress is measured through the number of new words acquired.

**Touch Type Read Spell** a multi-sensory touch-typing programme based on the Alpha to Omega dyslexia programme may be used to support pupils who would benefit from further support with spelling or who may need help developing word processing as a normal way of working. It is phonically arranged in its early stages and encourages pupils to recognise common spelling patterns including prefixes and suffixes.

Some students also receive additional targeted interventions from speech and language therapy to develop the **speech and language skills that underpin the development of reading and writing skills**. For example, pupils who are developing or have gaps in their decoding skills may access the Newcastle Intervention for Phonological Awareness programme to develop their ability to break sentences into words and words into sounds.

Pupils who are developing their comprehension skills may access interventions that develop their understanding and use of language skills, for example, **Language for Thinking programme, Colourful**

## **Semantics, Shape Coding, Language for Behaviour and Emotions Programme or a bespoke intervention.**

### **Literacy in Chimes**

The literacy curriculum in Chimes is carefully designed to support pupils who face a range of challenges, including more complex anxiety, and social communication issues. Most Chimes pupils have difficulty accessing a formal literacy programme.

Each pupil in Chimes follows an engagement first approach to a highly individualised literacy programme, regularly reviewed and adapted to reflect their progress, strengths interests and any emerging needs.

Anxiety is reduced and sustained engagement developed. For example, some pupils join a small, ability-matched group for a twice weekly book club. In this relaxed setting, they explore texts that spark their curiosity and practise skills such as reading comprehension, speaking and listening. These discussions, often focused on themes or stories that resonate with the pupils, also provide opportunities to develop social communication skills and build confidence in interacting with peers.

Other activities designed to make literacy learning enjoyable and accessible include watching and discussing the news stories fostering listening skills, critical thinking and an opportunity to practise expressing opinions. Pupils listen to audiobooks, allowing them to access rich vocabulary and stories without the pressure of decoding written text. These sessions are often followed by reciprocal conversations about the plot, characters and themes, encouraging pupils to reflect and share their thoughts in a supportive environment.

To promote a love for reading, pupils are actively involved in choosing the materials they engage with. They research topics of interest and participate in the selection process, which gives ownership, empowers them and enhances their motivation and connection to the content. Some may explore books or articles related to a favourite hobby, while others might delve into stories that align with their personal experiences or imagination.

Baseline assessment and progress in reading is measured through NGRT assessment where pupils are emotionally and cognitively able to access the assessment. Where that is not possible the Toe-by-Toe assessment is used a low demand alternative.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

A 'word of the week' (one for lower school and one for upper school), is chosen to be a useful word to be able to decode and understand across the curriculum. This is introduced in assembly through a multimodal approach and then explored further during tutor times and lessons throughout the week.

Vocabulary is identified for teaching within Medium Term Plans. It is categorised using the 3 tier model (Beck and McKeown 2002 (can provide full reference if needed), so that teaching staff can prioritise pre-teaching relevant cross-curricular and subject specific key vocabulary in collaboration with SLT.

Gradually extended opportunities for reading and writing are encouraged across the curriculum. Adults encourage pupils to use their phonic knowledge to read and spell (Tools such as word banks,

and In Print are available to give visual support to pupils who are not yet fluent reader and need scaffolded support to independently.

Adults are encouraged to use the language of Reciprocal Reading (predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing) when helping pupils to analyse texts in class.

The English Department include a broad range of engaging texts within the curriculum.

To maintain a love of learning and creating adults may sometimes scribe for pupils to capture ideas which are more sophisticated than their literacy, yet skill can capture.

The Literacy TA coordinates the use of an attractive Library space and Sensory Garden for intervention, lending, hosting lessons, and as a space of reading for pleasure.

The school community come together to celebrate events such as World Book, and an annual Novel Writing Competition.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

Our rigorous whole-school literacy approach is implemented systematically with all professionals regarding themselves as teachers of the development of literacy, regardless of their subject specialism or professional discipline.

### **Literacy Working Group**

- strategic development of reading and literacy across the school
- coordinating the collaboration of professional groups in developing and delivering literacy
- providing high quality training and CPD
- measuring and tracking progress and managing provision and intervention
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in Literacy
- creating a culture in which the ability and love of reading are highly valued

### **Teachers, SLT and TAs**

- work collaboratively to adapt curriculum planning and delivery of lessons to support pupil's access to lesson content, including understanding and talking about academic vocabulary and questions using The Blank Model of Language Learning as a framework. Having regard to pupil's reading ability (shared in Provision Maps) when planning
- active involvement in the delivery of Reciprocal Reading provision
- active involvement in the delivery of Read Write Inc / Fresh Start provision
- active involvement in whole school initiatives, including World Book Day, Reading for Pleasure competitions
- active involvement in the delivery of Reading for Pleasure provision, activities and events for pupils
- sharing their own enjoyment of reading and being a role model for reading for pleasure

### **Teachers:**

- English Department: take a lead in providing learners with knowledge, skills and understanding they need to be able to develop their reading, writing and spoken language skills effectively
- contribute to learners' development of language, since spoken language, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral in all lessons

- Actively engage with whole school approaches to literacy in the curriculum e.g. acquisition of vocabulary, consideration of cognitive load and adaption of materials to meet individual needs such as dyslexia

### **SLTs:**

Contribute to supporting pupils to develop their **comprehension** through:

- direct therapeutic interventions targeting language (understanding and talking), which may be delivered 1:1 or in small groups, including the use of approaches such as Colourful Semantics, Shape Coding, Language for Thinking as well as bespoke language programmes based on assessment of understanding and talking about concepts, sentence structures and grammar
- providing training, advice and resources about implementing support strategies, including visual support such as the use of real objects, photos, drawings, Makaton signing and symbolised text; text to speech and speech to text
- bespoke support to access this due to their communication needs.

Contribute to supporting pupils to develop their **decoding** through:

- screen all pupils on entry to school using the Newcastle Assessment of Phonological Awareness (NAPA) to, to identify those pupils who require specific support to develop their phonological awareness skills.
- direct therapeutic interventions targeting phonological awareness and speech sounds, which may be delivered 1:1 or in small groups based on assessment.
- providing training, advice and resources to teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils to use their phonological awareness skills to support reading and spelling within lessons, for example, breaking words down into syllables
- providing information and advice to teachers and teaching assistants about how best to support pupils who have specific speech sound difficulties that impact upon their ability to say sounds accurately

### **OTs:**

- work collaboratively with teachers and SLTs to provide support with approaches to fine motor skills that underpin handwriting

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### **Parents:**

- encourage their children to their developing literacy skill through incidental real-life opportunities to have fun with literacy e.g. reading a shopping list, reading making a recipe.
- celebrate their child's successes
- take opportunities to borrow and return from the school library
- enjoy reading to and with their child.

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### **Pupils:**

- take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements by accepting and utilising the support provided
- Develop a curiosity to explore a varied range of texts

## **Statutory Requirements**

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England Document (2014) and Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Document (2014).

Further guidance is given in The Reading Framework (Department for Education, 2023).

## Further reading

The Simple View of Reading (Gough and Tunmer, 1986)

Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001)

The Reading House (EEF, adapted from Hogan, Bridges, Justice and Cain, 2011).

## \*Appendix 1



## Appendix 2

Figure 2: Reading comprehension—the sum of many parts  
Adapted from Hogan, Bridges, Justice, and Cain (2011)

