

Research-informed reading instruction

Fluent and automatic decoding

Fluency supports comprehension. Early phonics instruction aims to give pupils the skills to decode accurately, fluently and with automaticity so that it appears that children are 'sight reading'. They are not - they are decoding with automaticity.

To support fluency, give pupils plenty of practice using flashcards and 'my word list' tasks. We also make use of timed repeated readings, during which children read a text whilst being timed. They then practise rereading the text independently and re-read until they can decode with automaticity. It is important to note that fluency does not mean speed reading. We support children to read with prosody so that they are reading meaningful chunks together. One strategy is for children to annotate the text with 'scoops' when planning to read.

We assess fluency rates for target children. The following are rough average reading rates by year end:

Y1 60 words per minute

Y2 90 wpm

Y3 115 wpm

Y4 140 wpm

Y5 160 wpm

Y6 170 wpm

Vocabulary development

A broad and deep vocabulary supports reading comprehension. We support children to make sense of what they read by highlighting key 'take-away' vocabulary that has high semantic density and low semantic gravity - we call this power+ vocabulary. Teachers unpack the meaning by giving commonsense definitions and contexts and then support children over time to take on this new vocabulary for themselves. We select words from the texts that will support schema development or deepening.

We are also aware that children can have limited knowledge-of-the-world vocabulary. To support them to develop this, we introduce word clusters and super-clusters during reading to help schema development.

To support vocabulary development we follow a 5 step plan:

1 log the words and have common sense definition

2 Sentence generation and easy practice with the words

3 Generate contexts where the words might be used

4 Quick match words and definitions

5 Multiple choice quiz

We also encourage children to find the words being used in their own readings.

We teach the children how to make use of their growing knowledge of etymology, roots and morphology to help them generate a word meaning as they read.

Background knowledge

Comprehension requires knowledge. Without relevant background knowledge, comprehension becomes difficult if not impossible. We aim to develop a broad knowledge base through our curriculum and reading curriculum so that children can develop schema and make connections between them. We have sequenced our reading curriculum to provide opportunities to develop knowledge before being required to use this to make inferences. We have chosen units in our reading curriculum that will supplement knowledge gained in our wider curriculum.

Syntax

The children are taught explicitly how text works by talking about grammar for reading. The children are taught how writers make use of forwards (cataphoric) and backwards (anaphoric) referencing. They are taught how writers maintain cohesion by using a range of device such as synonyms, pronouns and connectives. We teach the children how sentences are generally constructed to provide given information and then new and how writers assume some information is 'given' or 'a given' so that the children can make necessary and elaborative inferences.

Text structure & organisation

Texts have internal structures depending on their purpose. Writers organise their ideas to suit their purpose. The children are taught how texts are structured and organised to meet different purposes. They are taught how we can make use of text structure to help us make sense of a text or to read for a specific purpose. For example, children are taught how to make use of sub-headings and topic sentences in paragraphs to help them skim or scan for information. Graphic organisers can be used to help children make sense of internal text structures through graphic re-presentation.

The children are taught how structure and organisation of text are signalling systems. The children are taught how to make use of the following to make sense of text:

- * given then new order of ideas
- * topic sentences to signal thematic ideas
- * transitional words and phrases
- * anaphoric & cataphoric referencing
- * synonyms for cohesion
- * identifying compare and contrast
- * identifying problem & solution
- * identifying cause & effect
- * identifying setting, character, narrator & plot
- * identifying sub-plot & theme

Strategic reading

Effective comprehenders are strategic readers. They read with purpose and are actively involved in making sense of the text to meet their purpose. They coordinate multiple strategies to actively make sense of what they read. Therefore we teach children strategies, how to deploy them and to make sure that all children participate in practising.

General comprehension strategies

We teach the children to make use of a range of strategies to support comprehension:

- * Prediction, cumulative summary, questioning and clarification
- * Activation of relevant prior knowledge
- * Development of mental imagery and visualisation to create and update situational models
- * Graphic organisers
- * Comprehension monitoring and fix-ups
- * Question answering - FTT- from the text retrieval, from the text inference etc
- * Question generation
- * Cumulative summary building