



BROOK INFANT SCHOOL
AND NURSERY

Why Do We Need a Reading for Life Policy?

Our school motto says “Learning with Love and Laughter”. This forms the background against which our policy operates as we want to work in partnership with our families in order to support our children with becoming readers for life.

At Brook Infant School we realise that learning to read is not a skill which we are hard wired for in the same way that our brains are hard wired for speech. Learning to read takes persistence, skill and benefits greatly from the enthusiasm of parents and teachers! Therefore, we understand how important the partnership between home and school is for our children and we strive to ensure that we are constantly striving to strengthen our links, encouraging our parents to become learning partners and immersing our children in their reading.

Reading is a multi-sensory approach to getting at meaning. It is not simply the decoding of black marks on the page but involves the ability to read, with understanding, a wide range of different types of texts including fiction, non-fiction, real world texts such as labels, captions and lists, and print in the environment.

Competence in reading is the key to independent learning and therefore the teaching of reading is to be given a high priority by all staff.

Aims of Our Reading for Life Policy

Our reading for life policy aims to:

- Support the motto of the school “Learning with Love and Laughter”.
- Foster a love of reading in our pupils.

We aim for the children at Brook Infant School to:

- Become fluent and confident readers.
- Read with enjoyment.
- Read and respond to a wide range of different types of literature.
- Understand the layout and how to use different types of books.
- Understand the sound and spelling system and use this to decode words with increasing accuracy.
- Be able to read aloud with expression and clarity.
- Understand and respond to literature drawn from the English literary heritage and from other cultures.

We aim to develop, through our teaching of reading, the following attitudes:

- Curiosity and interest
- Pleasure and sensitivity
- Critical appraisal
- Independence
- Confidence
- Perseverance
- Respect for other views and cultures
- Reflection

Purpose of Our Reading for Life Policy

We have a reading for life policy in order to:

- Establish an entitlement for all pupils.
- Give children, staff, governors and parents a common understanding of the school’s policy.
- Promote continuity and coherence across the school.
- Encourage a positive learning culture with clear links between home and school.

Statutory Requirement

In the Foundation Stage children should be given opportunities to be immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication. They use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum, and they are given opportunities to speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities.

In Key Stage One, children should begin to read independently and with enthusiasm.

The programmes of study for reading at Key Stages 1 consist of 2 dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

'It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each. Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (ie unskilled readers) when they start school. Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and nonfiction. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world they live in, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.'

National Curriculum 2013

Key Principles of Our Approach to Reading for Life

At Brook Infant School, we believe that the staff must love books, must be excited by them, and moved by them. This is because far too often books are used as educational tools which can develop into an attitude that can stifle early enthusiasm.

We believe that the choosing of books is crucial. We understand that if we get it wrong, we risk boring a child with a badly written uninspiring read or proposing a poor book that disappoints. Therefore, we can cause serious damage which can even be permanent. However, we know that if we pick a good book, we can turn a child to reading for life and we believe it is hard to find a much greater gift.

Our Use of 'Real Books' versus the Use of Reading Schemes

Although we have a variety of structured texts within our school for use in each class, we also use 'real books'. The use of real books is recommended for the following reasons. The first is that children's long-term success in reading depends on the way they adapt to texts, which in turn, depends on the material they read. Children need to encounter a wide and diverse range of books which reflect the literary structures they will experience as their reading progresses. This will help to ensure that they can apply their skills to books varying in style and difficulty. Where vocabulary is heavily controlled within a reading scheme, children may appear to progress but may ultimately have difficulties in transferring their skills to books which are not part of the scheme.

The second reason is that children are more likely to learn the distinctive and critical features of individual words when they are encountered in many different contexts. For example, if children only see the word 'and' written in one font, size, colour etc., they may not appreciate its defining features as readily as seeing the same sequence of letters in numerous fonts, sizes and colours in a variety of books.

The third reason is that the use of reading schemes can only be justified if their structure is different from and easier than that of non-reading scheme books. There have been university studies into this and they have found that the high frequency words occurred as often in real books as they did in the structured reading schemes. However, we also teach the high frequency words alongside reading in all of our classes.

What is more, the dominant use of a reading scheme has also been found to discourage some children from attempting to read any book, including those existing outside of the scheme.

The Learning Environment

All classrooms have well-stocked book areas with fiction and non-fiction titles. Our own stock is supplemented by titles from loan collections from the Schools Library Service. Classroom library loan collections are changed termly.

The school's library is a key resource. Pupils should have ample opportunities to browse and make personal selections, in addition to learning how to locate and use all the book and media resources.

Care is taken to ensure that a wide range of texts is available in terms of content, form and genre, e.g. texts which are accessible and challenging, texts which show cultural diversity and avoid stereotyping of race, gender and class. The Schools Library Service will assist the school and teachers in evaluating provision.

Book promotion is very important. Pupils are involved in planning, setting up and maintaining book areas, where information is displayed attractively. Books are changed regularly. Interest in books is stimulated through the library area by providing display materials such as posters and book jackets, reviews posted by pupils, biographical information about writers taken from authors' and publishers' websites and special school promotions such as book fairs, book events and author visits. In addition, pupils are made aware of the importance of print both inside and outside the classroom through the use of interactive displays, notices, charts, posters, advertisements, signs, etc.

Our Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning of reading will run across the entire curriculum. We aim to provide a rich reading environment to develop the children's skills in reading. Teaching strategies aim to enhance children's motivation and involvement in reading and to develop their skills through the following:

- Reading with other children
- Reading with an adult
- Shared Reading
- Guided Reading
- Reading aloud
- Independent reading
- Questioning, investigations, debates
- Building phonic skills
- Developing vocabulary
- Understanding of sentence structure and punctuation
- Comprehension, inference and implication
- Ability to skim
- Understand persuasive writing
- Instructions
- Story/character/plot/setting
- Idea of an audience
- Reading and interpreting dictionaries, index, glossary, contents
- Developing critical skills
- Participating in play reading
- Performance of poetry, song etc.
- Supporting key topic vocabulary
- Using Makaton and communication in print alongside written words
- Using quality texts in class
- Discussions around comparing texts and author preference

How Will We Organise the Teaching and Assessment of Reading?

Reading will be taught in dedicated sessions (Shared and Guided Reading) and through the rest of the curriculum.

In shared reading the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader, providing a high level of support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned, and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The teacher's role is that of the expert reader who models how the text is read. The learner readers join in where appropriate with the reading of the enlarged text – singly and/or chorally. The texts selected are rich and challenging, being beyond the current reading ability of the majority of the class.

In guided reading time, there will be groups of children working around a text, but occasionally a one to one basis may be necessary.

Teachers will ensure that shared and guided reading is planned for. There will be ongoing teacher assessment of the skills needed for reading, and the ability to read aloud. Comprehension activities are undertaken, oral or written, to assess children's understanding and skills at finding information.

Teacher assessments are based on our own Reading Continuum and are tracked throughout the school through Target Tracker.

Parents are informed about reading through a reading information pack and family learning opportunities.

Parents are informed about their child's progress in the termly parent consultations and the annual reports sent out in July. In addition, each term their child's reading targets/next steps are put into their reading diaries so that parents know which areas to focus on when reading at home.

Daily Phonics Teaching

At Brook Infant School and Nursey, our phonics sessions are practical and fun! They include a wide variety of games, songs and hands on learning to support the children to practise, apply and embed their learning.

We use the Letters and Sounds document to ensure systematic teaching of phonics. Letter and Sounds is designed to help teachers teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling by fostering children's speaking and listening skills and teaching high quality phonic work. Phonics is taught daily across the school. All children are assessed regularly to ensure they are taught in the correct phonic phase. Some children will work in ability grouping to ensure a rapid pace of phonological learning. Phonic sessions include revisiting learning, applying skills and time to practice. Each session includes reading skills at either word level or sentence level. We use 'Jolly Phonics' to introduce the phonemes in Reception.

In the Foundation Stage and throughout Key Stage One a phonic record is kept, detailing which sounds a child knows and records are kept of the high frequency words recognised by each child.

In KS1, grammar, spelling and punctuation are taught alongside phonics to ensure children see how these elements relate to each other. This helps them with their understanding and application of skills needed to become a confident reader who can read fluently with good expression.

Nursery begin working on Phase One and Reception work on revising Phase One and quickly starting on Phase Two, making sure that the children learn three or four phonemes per week so that they have a word by the end of the week, so S-A-T ... P-I-N ... etc. Tricky words are also taught alongside new phonemes.

Children who are not making expected progress in whole class learning will take part in phonic interventions such as 'Read Write Ink' in small groups, at least three times a week.

We understand that phonics application is only one way in which children learn to read and that this approach may not be successful for some of our children. In this instance, we support children with other approaches such as errorless learning through the 'See and Learn' technique to help them to become a more confident, fluent reader.

How Will We Ensure Equal Opportunities?

We will ensure all children have equal access to the curriculum, regardless of gender, race, religion or ability. Children with specific reading, speech and hearing difficulties will be identified and supported through support programmes in school (and external help will be sought where necessary. For children in the bottom 20%, we ensure that adults in the school give them extra reading time.

Within the school are a few collections of structured texts set to one side to support the teaching of reading for a child who is struggling. We can also outsource dual language texts as necessary.

Involvement of Parents

When it comes to reading, all staff (and many volunteers) at Brook Infant School work extremely hard to support every child's reading journey. However, we understand that it is parents more than anyone who can instil a love of books in their children. Nothing is more important than the early experience of parent and child loving and wondering at the same book. It is a shared joy, the parent's closeness, the familiar voice inviting the child to dream along. No invitation to reading can be more persuasive. Whether it is an old favourite, or a new book, parent and child live in the story together. Our wonderful library is open after school on Mondays so that parents and children can share the love of reading together. The library helpers are on hand to recommend titles or genres to encourage children to get excited about reading.

We therefore believe that all home reading should be designed to:

- Build on real life reading opportunities.
- Be enjoyable and fun.
- Support the extension and enrichment of children's reading.
- Support the consolidation of children's reading.
- Encourage independent reading.
- Involve parents in the children's learning journey.

Above all we believe that home reading is our main tool for developing strong learning partnerships with the parents and we want to ensure that we provide quality experiences.

At Brook Infant School we promise to ensure that:

- Unless on longer chapter books, the children have the chance to change their books daily, but they can choose to keep their books if they are enjoying them.
- At least one comment is written from the teaching team in the reading journals each week.

At Brook Infant School we expect that:

- Our children will be read to, share read or read as much as possible (ideally every night), but we have asked parents to make this an enjoyable experience and one that really promotes reading.
- Our children and parents will communicate about reading in a positive way through the reading journal, but we will only expect one comment per week.

In terms of reading enrichment, we also provide the following:

- Parental workshops about phonics and early reading so that parents have as much information as possible.
- 'Males and Storytales' reading sessions for which we invite, in the first instance, male family members into school to share a story to the children and to raise the profile of reading. We also welcome female family members, but the project began because we are short of male reading role models for the children.
- An open school library event for parents after school to highlight a love of reading and share resources with families.
- Access to the library van for our Nursery children.
- Library Loans for the school so that we ensure we have as many exciting books about the theme as possible.
- Regular book auditing to ensure our books are relevant and boy friendly.
- Sponsored reading events and books fairs to raise the profile of reading and also raise funds for new books.

In Conclusion

Reading is an exceptionally important life skill and we believe in enabling our children to become independent lifelong learners and reading is central in giving children the tools to achieve this.