

Seven Aspects of Reading at St Stephen's



St. Stephen's School
and Children's Centre
Learning for life

At St Stephen's our aim is to foster a generation of lifelong readers, who love books and see literature as a means of exploring new worlds and better understand their place in this one. To achieve this, we place a significant emphasis on the importance of reading. We firmly believe that nurturing both reading skills and a genuine passion for reading opens up a world of possibilities for our children. Reading not only plays a vital role in accessing the primary school curriculum but also serves as a crucial foundation for learning at the secondary school level.

Reading is at the heart of everything we do!

ASPECT 1 - Reading is a Priority

- We ensure the priority of reading is embedded throughout the Federation by including it within our School Development Plan. As such training and monitoring takes place regularly and is reviewed throughout the school year, allowing us to be responsive.
- The children's enjoyment of their learning is enhanced by aligning all our curricular areas to high quality core texts. Enhancing these topics through books helps to foster a love of reading and deepen children's understanding of the topic.
- The core book approach ensures that teachers plan for opportunities for reading across the entire breadth of our curriculum.
- We use a bespoke Federated systematic synthetic phonics programme from 2 year olds through to KS2.
- We protect time for daily, independent reading 8:30-8:45.
- Our English teaching sequences include a weekly, one hour VIPERS lesson which ensures that all reading content domains are covered weekly and key skills are continually taught and children are given time to apply these.
- On top of daily individual reading time we have timetabled sessions for whole class Read Aloud.
- Reading is celebrated during our half termly Reading Celebration assembly and other reading events throughout the year such as World Book Day, themed days based on the classes core text and our annual Scholastic Book Fair.
- We run several reading based parent workshops based on our core texts.
- The school prioritises funding for ensuring books are up to date, high quality and representative of cultural diversity.

ASPECT 2 - How do we promote a love of reading?

- Our children and staff are passionate about the books that they read.
- Our whole curriculum stems from high quality core books which are linked to our immersive curriculum themes and threads. This helps to promote literacy and reading across the breadth of our curriculum.
- Our teachers are expert readers: modelling reading skills, discussing texts, making links with other stories, reading with prosody and sharing their own love of reading.
- Each year group has a mini-library with a selection of age appropriate books banded as either gold, silver or bronze. This selection is also high quality, diverse and language rich.
- The mini-libraries are frequently restocked with new books, many of which are chosen directly by the children themselves.
- Each class has a nominated class librarian who is an ambassador within their class whose role it is to promote a love of reading; support children in selecting books which will excite and engage them as well as ensuring that the libraries and the books that stock their shelves are looked after, respected and organised.
- The core book approach offers many opportunities for children to learn reading skills through a variety of drama techniques such as role play and hot seating activities. We feel this style of learning benefits our young learners in developing their spoken language skills and enhances, not only their reading experience, but also their cultural capital.
- Each Year Group receives and promotes a Book of the Month from our Chicken and Frog subscription. These books have a sharp focus on diverse and inclusive characters and stories.

- All children take home a Reading Record which is signed and returned to school daily to promote and encourage reading at home with parents or carers.
- Each half term during our Reading Celebration Assembly we hold the Reading records raffle. Children selected visit a local bookshop to select a new reading book for their year group's mini-library.
- Each class visits our local library on Green Street to browse and borrow books. We work alongside the library to promote their initiatives such as the Summer and Winter Reading Challenges.
- We invite Green Street Library to attend our parent workshops to promote it with the school community.
- We celebrate reading by taking part in events such as World Book Day; book centred themed days; an annual book fair to engage families in reading and provide exciting new books at a low cost.

ASPECT 3 - How do we make sure children make progress?

- Reading is made a priority from the very start of every day where we have safeguarded time from 8.30-8.45 where all children are reading. This gives teachers an opportunity to hear all children read each week and ensure they have the appropriate level of reading book.
- Formal phonics teaching begins at the very beginning of Reception, though our systematic synthetic phonics programme. The teaching of reading across the Federation begins even earlier, starting in our 2 year old provision. Lessons take place every day for half an hour and each lesson follows the same structure, giving children the opportunity to recap, learn and apply their phonological awareness.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to promote progress in reading and reading fluency such as modelling good prosody, 1:1 reading, peer or buddy reading and choral reading.
- Our core texts are progressive in terms of their readability and complexity of theme.
- Reading fluency is assessed termly as well as through our rigorous 1:1 weekly reading expectations. Those who are not reading with age appropriate fluency are supported with additional reading sessions.
- Our more able children are stretched through a weekly book club which is run by our Senior Support Staff team. They select texts to read and share with the group what they are enjoying about it. When they have finished the book they write book reviews which are published.
- A book club for More Able Readers in Year 6 is run at 11:30 on a Friday by a very passionate teacher of English with a flare for words herself.
- In EYFS and KS1 children are given a banded decodable book to take home which is linked to their current phonological awareness. They also have access in class to a range of high quality picture books to help promote a love of reading.
- In KS2, children take home a book from their mini-library. These books are banded into Bronze, Silver and Gold to ensure the book is pitched at an appropriate level and can be accessed and enjoyed by the child reading it. Staff members are trained to identify where a book's pitch is not instructional for a child and redirect them towards more appropriate reading material.
- Teachers routinely collaborate with parents to engage them in the teaching of reading. These sometimes tough conversations help to ensure that reading is a priority at home, as well as in the classroom, and this collaboration helps to support the child's progress.
- We hold a number of parent workshops throughout the school year, centred around reading and phonics. We invite Green Street Library to attend these to promote it with parents and the school community.
- Reading is part of our ongoing assessment and monitoring systems in place across the school curriculum. Each term reading progress for all children is assessed and provisions are put in place to ensure any children not meeting the expected reading levels are supported to do so quickly.
- In Years 2-6 children sit the NFER Reading Assessment papers and in Reception and Year 1, bespoke phonics assessments are used to assess and track attainment in reading.
- We monitor the bottom 20% of readers with mindful consideration of their contextual data and how we can support them effectively to ensure they make accelerated progress.

ASPECT 4 - How do we match the pupil's reading books to their phonic ability?

- Our bespoke reading book banding system ensures all books are fully decodable to match the phonetic awareness of the children.
- Our whole school daily reading time between 8.30 and 8.45am ensures children are heard read regularly and teachers can monitor that their book is matched to their phonic ability.
- Reading and phonics are part of a regular, ongoing assessment cycle throughout the school and data is used to inform and adjust reading books to ensure they are compatible.

- By the start of the Year 3, children should have exited the decodable book band system and transitioned to free readers. In KS2, children who are secure in their phonological knowledge, take home either a Gold, Silver or Bronze book to ensure appropriate pitch.
- Some key, identified children in KS2, who failed their Phonics Screening resit in Year 2, or who still struggle with blending and applying their phonological awareness independently, take home a banded, decodable book.

ASPECT 5 - How do we teach phonics from the start?

- Our bespoke Federated phonics programme is based on DFE Letters and Sounds synthetic phonics programme with resources from Jolly Phonics and RWInc to support the delivery of high quality phonics.
- We believe in ensuring reading and phonics are taught as early as possible. Therefore formal phonics teaching begins at the very beginning of Reception, though our systematic synthetic phonics programme. The teaching of reading across the Federation begins even earlier, starting in our 2 year old provision. Lessons take place every day for half an hour and each lesson follows the same structure, giving children the opportunity to recap, learn and apply their phonological awareness.
- We follow a comprehensive phonics progression document which outlines which sounds are taught & when.
- We hold a number of Parent Workshops throughout the school year, including some centred around reading and phonics to stress the importance and value.
- Staff are trained through a cycle of peer-observation to ensure high quality teaching and consistency.
- We closely track our mid phase children's phonics ability as well as those who have not passed their phonics screening to ensure they make age appropriate, accelerated progress.

ASPECT 6 - How do we support children to keep up and catch up if needed?

- We have identified and tracked the bottom 20% readers in each year group, identifying the need (phonics; comprehension; word recognition) putting provision in place to close the gap & make accelerated progress.
- We closely track and monitor the progress of children's phonetic understanding to ensure all children make consistent progress. This includes all children who have not passed their phonics screening in KS1.
- Children are assessed and are grouped into intervention groups within their year groups.
- All children are heard read by a teacher weekly, while our focus 20% children are read with daily by a trained member of staff.
- We closely track our mid phase phonics ability to ensure they make age appropriate accelerated progress.
- We hold a number of Parent Workshops throughout the year, including some centred around reading and phonics to stress the importance of reading as well as how they can support their children at home.

ASPECT 7 - How do we train staff to be reading experts?

- We ensure the priority of reading is embedded through the Federation by including it within our SDP.
- Reading training features in our Staff Meeting training cycle - in '22-'23 teachers received training in teaching prosody to support reading fluency. In '23-'24 teachers will receive training in planning and delivering VIPERS lessons. SSS and EAs also received separate training in modelling and teaching prosody.
- Model VIPERS lessons were planned for each year group by the subject coordinator and assistant head to provide a high quality exemplar of standards and expectations in reading. Ongoing support has been offered to staff in the planning and delivery of these lessons.
- Staff, including Early Careers Teachers, have expressed their enthusiasm and increased confidence in the planning and delivery of these lessons.
- EAs and SSS have received specific training in effective 1:1 reading strategies.
- As part of our ongoing observation cycle the teaching of English and reading in particular is a focus in both teacher observations and support staff observations.
- There are many and varied high quality resources linked to the core texts available on the system to support teachers in the planning and delivery of reading lessons, particularly around VIPERS.
- The teaching of reading is part of our ECT induction training which includes collaborative English planning followed by an observation.
- The induction process for new start EAs includes 1:1 training from the English Coordinator in hearing children read.