

Thorn Primary School

The Teaching of Phonics and Reading



Intent

At Thorn Primary School, we believe that reading is the key to learning and improving life chances therefore, reading is central to all we do. Our approach to teaching reading incorporates Thorn Primary School's attitudes to learning:

- Resilience and Perseverance
- Teamwork and Cooperation
- Respect and Communication
- Motivation and Curiosity
- Self-confidence and Esteem
- Independence

We develop pupils' reading pleasure, alongside their fluency and understanding, through sharing stories, rhymes and poems, systematic synthetic progressive phonics teaching, individual reading, whole-class guided reading and an engaging, well-resourced library.

Aims

Our aim, to foster an interest in words and their meanings, is embedded fully in our class and school environment. We aim to nurture a love of books and gain an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage through a variety of genres. We aim for every child across the school to have a high-quality text read to them everyday.

At Thorn Primary School, reading encompasses several processes:

- Reading fluency: the ability to read with accuracy, automaticity and prosody.
- Comprehension: the understanding of written and spoken language.
- Reading habit: reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- Language & discussion: the ability to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas with quality and varied language

Implementation

The Teaching of Phonics & Early Reading

At Thorn Primary School, we teach a detailed and progressive systematic programme in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 where children are taught to decode words using a synthetic phonics approach. This is continued into KS2 where necessary, and where individual cases arise, intervention and additional support is given.

All phonics sessions follow a structure of:

- Revisit/Review
- Teach
- Practice
- Apply

Through a range of fast-paced, varied and engaging multi-sensory approaches and games, children are taught grapheme-phoneme correspondence, to synthesise (blend) phonemes in order to read words and sentences, to segment words into their constituent phonemes for spelling words and sentences and that blending and segmenting are reversible processes. Within each weekly unit of work, children are taught

automatic reading of *Tricky Words and High Frequency Words* (Common Exception Words). Sessions also ensure children regularly meet *pseudo* ('nonsense') words. The writing of words and sentences – being able to hold a sentence internally and record – as well as letter formation and pencil control is reinforced through the 'Phonics Journals' where children record their learning.

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, phonics is taught in discrete daily 30 minute sessions with children grouped by their reading and phonics ability; this is to ensure that teaching is targeted successfully to the needs of the group. Grouping is fluid and flexible; responding to the needs of the children.

Children in the Foundation Stage cover Phases 2, 3 and 4 of the programme. For those pupils who need it, Phase 1 is also covered utilising the Lancashire Red Rose '*Communication, Language and Literacy Phonological Awareness – Phase 1*' documentation.

In Year 1, children cover phases 4 and 5 of the phonics programme. Opportunities are planned for revisit and review of previously taught phase 3 and 4 learning to ensure secure knowledge. If needed, previous phases will continue to be taught where necessary for identified children.

All phonics teaching is reinforced at home through closely and carefully matched phonetically decodable home reading books, as well as *Tricky & High Frequency Word Flashcards* (Common Exception Words) and matched phoneme mats.

In Year 2, children build on their phonics learning through daily spelling sessions following the *Red Rose Year 2 Spelling Programme* – a comprehensive daily spelling programme based on the National Curriculum requirements for spelling in Y2, including 'common exception words'. This teaching and learning is further consolidated through grammar, reading and handwriting sessions.

Reading Comprehension

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, Guided Reading sessions are used to practise phonetic decoding skills through the use of phonetically decodable books. Children are grouped according to their phonics phase and guided reading books are matched to the particular sounds the children are learning that week following Thorn's book and phoneme matching chart. The use of phoneme/grapheme and tricky word flashcards reinforce the children's phonics learning and support application into reading. Children read *Bug Club Phonics*, *Collins Big Cat Phonics* books and *Little Blending Books*. This allows children to access a range of print. The same books are then sent home for re-reading a few weeks later, ensuing children have opportunity to embed their practise and develop fluency.

In the Foundation Stage, children read in small adult-led guided reading groups at least 3 x weekly. These Guided Reading sessions have a focus on both decoding and comprehension skills. During the decoding sessions, children practice their blending for reading strategies through a 'my turn, your turn' approach and there is a strong focus on vocabulary exploration. During comprehension sessions, the use of copy-cat reading supports children's fluency to allow them to develop simple retrieval and inference. Children draw on their own experiences (the language and stories they know), the setting of the story and the pictures to help them understand what they are reading about. Comprehension skills are vital in making sense of what the words say and interpreting meaning. During daily story time sessions, the children are asked questions about what they have heard, and early comprehension skills of retrieval and simple inference are further supported and developed. For example: how many oranges did the very hungry caterpillar eat? (retrieval) How do you think the Stickman is feeling here? (Inference)

In Year One, there are daily adult-led and independent guided reading sessions following a 'carousel' approach. Children read in small adult-led guided reading groups at least 2 x weekly. Session one has a 'Word Reading' focus developing the skills of: *decoding, sight words, fluency and correcting inaccuracies*. Session two has a 'Comprehension' focus to develop the following areas:

- 1a vocabulary
- 1b literal retrieval
- 1c sequencing
- 1d inference
- 1e prediction

During adult-led comprehension sessions, the use of the Lancashire Reading Domain question prompts are used to question children and model structured practical and verbal responses first before answering written questions. Running throughout both sessions is a focus on 'Reading Experiences' to develop *pleasure in reading, listening to & discussing texts, poetry & performance and non-fiction structure*.

In Year Two, upon successful completion of the phonics programme, children will continue with small group guided reading sessions with a greater focus on fluency to ensure children are reading with accuracy, automaticity and understanding. 'Little Wandle Fluency Books' will be used to support the teaching and learning of:

- 'Word Reading' developing the skills of: *decoding, sight words, fluency and correcting inaccuracies*
- 'Reading Experiences' to develop: *pleasure in reading, listening to & discussing texts, poetry & performance and non-fiction structure*.
- 'Comprehension' to develop the skills of: *retrieval, inference, prediction, word meaning, authorial intent*

In both Year One and Two, children will then have opportunities to apply their comprehension skills as well as opportunities to respond to what they have read in various ways such as, orally using Book Talk, teacher modelling and response hooks, as well as in writing. In Year Two, structured weekly Guided Comprehension sessions are introduced to further develop children's written responses to a range of texts. Daily story time sessions and high-quality text-led English lessons, provide further opportunities to develop reading fluency, comprehension and a love of books.

During the last term of Year Two and onwards into Key Stage Two, children take part in both whole class reading and whole class comprehension sessions on a two-week cycle. These sessions are planned and delivered around a series of fictional and non-fictional core texts which are studied within each year group and mapped out in Thorn's whole school progressive curriculum. Forming the structure of the Thorn Reading Journey, these age-appropriate, challenging high-quality texts, have been carefully selected in order to cover a wide range of text types across a school year as well as providing direct links and enrichment to our creative curriculum when appropriate. A substantial amount of time must be spent in immersion in these texts; for interpretation, response and enjoyment. Reading of these texts will be used to inform writing.

Children are given the opportunity to listen to and study 'whole texts' in order to discuss themes, character and plot development as well as begin to make links between other texts and authors. These texts are used as the basis for whole-class reading and comprehension lessons where children are taught, through shared reading, modelling and a variety of practical activities, to apply specific reading skills to the written word covering the key reading domains for Key Stage Two:

- 2a explain the meaning of words in context
- 2b retrieve and record information
- 2c summarise across more than one paragraph
- 2d make inferences and justify with evidence from the text.
- 2e predict
- 2f Identify / explain how content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole
- 2g identify/explain how word meaning enhances meaning
- 2h Comparisons

Alongside the whole text being read, a wide variety of poetry, fiction and non-fiction extracts are used for whole class reading lessons which are often linked to the topic being studied in class in order to support key knowledge and add further enrichment to our creative curriculum.

It is also essential to continue to develop reading fluency throughout Key Stage Two to ensure children have the reading accuracy, automaticity, prosody to comprehend what they have read. Therefore, the teaching of reading at Thorn Primary school in KS2 covers the areas of:

- 'Word Reading' developing the skills of: *decoding, sight words, fluency and correcting inaccuracies*
- 'Reading Experiences' to develop: *pleasure in reading, listening to & discussing texts, poetry & performance and non-fiction structure.*
- 'Comprehension' to develop the skills of: *retrieval, inference, prediction, word meaning, authorial intent, summarise*

THORN'S READING DIET INCLUDES:

- **Whole Class Reading / Comprehension** – The teacher models effective age-related reading and use of reading strategies to the whole class through a wide range of genres, as well as modelling strategies for comprehending texts.
- **Guided Reading/Comprehension** – Children are grouped according to their stage of reading development. The teaching addresses the children's targets and objectives pertinent to the group. Objectives/targets for the Guided Reading and Guided Comprehension sessions are indicated on the short term planning sheet. Children have the opportunity to study a wide range of genres.
- **Independent/Personal reading** – Children have daily opportunities to read for pleasure or pursue independent lines of enquiry. All classrooms have access to the school libraries and teachers provide an appealing, uncluttered 'mini-library' in their classrooms including a carefully selected range of age-appropriate texts linked to topics, authors or genres. These texts are changed regularly to enhance children's reading diet. To support children in making reading choices, books have been categorised into genre/subject. A selection of 'recommended reads' are displayed linking with learning and are discussed regularly in class.
- **Home Reading** – we understand the importance and positive impact that parents reading with their children at home can have. Throughout each child's school career parents are encouraged to share in their child's reading, and comment on their child's reading behaviours at home in a Home-School Reading Record.
- **Cross curricular reading** - children are supported to read for information across the breadth of the curriculum through a range of high-quality texts.
- **Story Time Reading** – children are read to at least three times a week with a mix of year-group stories, rhymes and poetry.

Reading in our School and Class Environment:

At Thorn Primary School we have two engaging and well-resourced libraries which have been recently updated with new and well-loved texts. The libraries are regularly visited and utilised by all classes across the school. New series and titles are promoted through engaging displays and by staff across school. Each classroom provides an engaging and accessible 'mini-library' which contains age-appropriate books covering a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Children are given the opportunity to enjoy these books within individual reading time in class and take them for personal reading as their 'free-reader' book. Book corners also contain 'real texts' - newspapers, cookbooks, menus - in order for children to see the importance of books within a real-life context. Age-appropriate recommended reads are displayed in each class and regularly discussed and advocated by class teachers as well as new releases in order to promote reading for pleasure.

Impact

Assessment

In the Foundation Stage and Years One and Two, children read to the Teacher and/or Teaching Assistant at least two/three times a week in small groups as part of the guided reading session. In Key Stage Two, Teachers and/or Teaching Assistants will listen to each child read at least weekly. The lowest 20% of children in each cohort further receive a minimum of 3 x weekly 1:1 reading sessions to support fluency skills. Teachers / Teaching Assistants write in the children's planners to inform parents of their child's progress in reading. Throughout the year, ongoing assessment is utilised during guided / whole class reading sessions and '*Target Booklets*' are completed against the children's targets. Termly, '*Progress in Learning grids*' are completed for each child to allow for accurate assessment.

In addition to reading to the teacher, phonics is assessed using '*Thorn Primary's Assessment Record*' at key points in the year – identified in the '*EYFS and Year 1 Phonics Trajectories*'. Teachers delivering phonics meet half termly in moderation meetings to discuss the progress and attainment of children. Data is recorded on Thorn's phonics tracker termly. Moderation meetings and data trackers are used to identify areas that need to be revised or repeated as well as any further interventions required and ensures children are stretched and challenged appropriately within the correct phonics group.

At the end of Year 1, all children will complete the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check which is a short, standardised assessment set by the Government. This assessment provides information on each child's blending skills. It will help to identify if a child needs additional support as they move into Year 2 so that they do not fall behind in this vital early reading skill. Any children that do not meet the requirements of this test are given support in order to develop the necessary phonics skills. This continues into Year 2 where identified children will access discrete phonic interventions in addition to mainstream teaching to support them in making progress and filling any gaps in learning using resources such as '*Lancashire Red Rose Bounce Back Phonics*.'

In Key Stage Two, a spelling baseline assessment is taken by each child at the start of each term to identify and prioritise key learning and children who may need additional support. After completion of the term's spelling targets, the assessment is re-taken to identify progress made. Any children at risk of falling behind are identified and appropriate intervention is put in place to allow them to catch up and keep up.

During whole class reading comprehension lessons, teachers frequently assess children's reading ability against National Curriculum objectives. This information is used to plan future reading lessons and any interventions which may be necessary. From Year One onwards, each child regularly completes a comprehension test which assesses reading fluency, speed, stamina and comprehension skills. Teachers and support staff use this information in order to plan next steps for each child.

At the end of the Reception year, children's reading ability is assessed against the Early Learning Goal for reading. During the month of May in Year 2 and Year 6, all children will complete the optional/statutory end of KS1 / KS2 Reading Test.

Supporting our SEND, EAL and more able pupils:

Phonics is taught in discrete daily sessions with children grouped by their reading ability which ensures that children receive teaching targeted appropriately to their needs. Within their planning, teachers identify further differentiated activities for the wide spectrum of abilities in their class. Some children will require further support and will regularly attend smaller intervention groups led by a teaching assistant outside of the phonics session which reinforce previous sounds taught and supports children in applying these to their independent writing. Interventions include:

- Bounce Back Phonics
- Better Reading
- Reading Partners

- Echo reading
- Early Talk Boost & Talk Boost
- Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)
- Words First

Children in the Lighthouse provision receive Words First to supplement phonics teaching and to support their move to guided reading as part of their bespoke learning plans. The Lighthouse also make use of the '*Phonic Books' Catch-Up Reader* series of books which are decodable, synthetic phonics, reading books with age-appropriate and exciting stories for older, struggling and/or reluctant readers. Designed with an interest age of 8 – 14, these chapter books are highly structured and help to fill in the missing gaps in phonic skills.

Pupils who enter our school with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are assessed on entry and are supported within their daily phonics sessions with visuals, adult and peer support and bilingual texts. If it is deemed appropriate, a referral is made to the Additional Language support team. Guidance is offered to parents of EAL pupils, helping them to support their child in early reading and how to reinforce our phonics teaching at home.

Differentiation within our phonics provision allows our more able readers to be appropriately challenged by exploring alternate spelling patterns for sounds and more advanced vocabulary. In EYFS, our more able readers are supported in choosing books that match their reading ability and books which reflect their interests in order to ignite their passion for reading. In KS1 and KS2, these children are given time to discuss books as a group, answering challenging inference questions with justifications for their ideas, in order to develop their understanding of a text.

Parental Engagement

At Thorn Primary School we believe that parental engagement is vital for our pupils to develop as confident and independent readers. At the start of each year, a reading newsletter is sent home reminding parents of the school's approach to reading, how parents can help their children and how the school can support both parents and children. From Year 2, reading bookmarks are taken home with suggestions of questions and activities for parents to support their children before, during and after reading at home.

The Foundation Stage staff have an initial reading meeting to explain the schools phonic approach to the teaching of reading and a reading information pack is distributed. The children are given regular activities to complete with parents both at home and during early morning parent-teacher sessions. This is then followed up with a reading meeting in the Autumn and Spring terms of Year 1 and in the Autumn terms of Year 2 and Year 3 to explain changes to the reading curriculum as children progress through school.

At Thorn Primary School we encourage children to read and enjoy books with family members in many ways: Children still completing their phonics programme receive a phonetically decodable reading book to take home to support them with their phonics learning and provide continuity with the learning that has taken place in class. This book is changed a once a week, as it is essential the book is over-read to ensure fluency & understanding, and is linked directly to the phonics stage the child is working within. As well as their school reading book from our reading scheme, all children in Foundation Stage and KS1, take home a 'Free-Reader'. This high-quality and engaging text is a book of choice picked by the child from a selection of library books chosen by the class teacher which link to in class topics and learning. This is a book to be enjoyed with family and exposes children to a wide range of stimulating texts with the aim of fostering a love of reading.

In Year 2, once children have successfully completed the phonics programme, they select from a range of carefully chosen reading books which allow them to embed their knowledge of phonics and develop fluency. Children in Key Stage Two have access to 'mini-libraries' in their classrooms with banded novels, poetry and non-fiction books to select as their home reading book. Children are supported in making reading choices by the Teacher and Teaching Assistants as well as by the reading genre classification system. Children are encouraged to read within, as well as out of their 'comfort zone' to open them up to

new reading opportunities but are aware that they are able to swap their book if they are not enjoying it. The home/school planner is used for dialogue about progress in reading. A whole school reward system promotes regular reading and is celebrated in reward assemblies.

Scholastic book fairs are held at school regularly throughout the year where children are provided with time in school to browse the titles and then to visit with their family members at the end of the school day. As a school, we celebrate 'World Book Day' each year with a range of varied activities and events such as, author visits, camp-fire story-telling, character dress up.

Governors

Our literacy linked Governor plays an active role in our reading culture at Thorn and reports regularly to the full Governing Body. Tasks include:

- Pupil interviews
- 1:1 reading with children
- Reading journal and home reading record scrutiny
- Book fair support
- Library assistance