



READING AT THAMESIDE

“Pupils who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.”

DfE, National Curriculum

“There are many ways to enlarge [a] child’s world. Love of books is the best of all.”

Jacqueline Wilson, Children’s Laureate 2005-07

VISION

At Thameside, we recognise that **reading is the master skill**. Our vision is that every Thameside pupil will become a competent reader so they can achieve well academically, flourish personally and function effectively in the wider world.

INTENT

Thameside staff and pupils value reading highly. ‘Read’ is one of our four curriculum drivers because we recognise that reading for purpose and for pleasure is of fundamental importance, impacting every subject in our curriculum and each pupil’s own wellbeing. Our school culture looks for every opportunity to promote and celebrate reading.

In order to be competent readers, Thameside pupils must:

- decode accurately and with automaticity
- monitor their own comprehension and self-select from a toolkit of strategies when the meaning is not immediately clear
- use key skills such as retrieval and inference to understand a writer’s message and methods
- read independently and for pleasure

Pupils who struggle with reading receive timely support which is matched to their difficulties. Staff work collaboratively with the SENCo where students have significant barriers to reading.

IMPLEMENTATION: Whole School Culture

Reading Culture and Enrichment

At Thameside, we share high-quality texts with the children at every possible opportunity during the day. Our reading-rich curriculum ensures that children encounter a broad range of fiction and non-fiction texts throughout their time at school and care has been taken to craft a bespoke spine for English which allows the pupils to make links and strengthen their knowledge, while also enjoying fantastic writing from a diverse collection of authors.

Thameside staff share their love of books with the pupils through small daily acts of reading, including hearing children read, recommending texts to individuals and reading aloud a story at the end of the day. Pupils are praised for both attainment and progress, and a 'reader of the week' is chosen from every class, receiving a book prize in the celebration assembly.

Every year, each class chooses a class author and the children enjoy texts by their chosen writer. We are also looking forward, post-Covid, to more opportunities to engage with writers and literary events, such as author events (we have already had visits this year from Matt Oldfield, Sarah Coyle and Rab Ferguson) and shadowing the Oxfordshire book awards. Finally, World Book Day is a big event in our school calendar, with everyone dressing up as a word (to promote vocabulary) and pupils supported to spend their £1 in the local independent bookshop.

Since September 2022, we have been improving our class bookshelves and displays, such as monthly book recommendations in the reading hive on topics like Black History, remembrance and the football World Cup. Future projects include redesigning the library and appointing reading champions who will be helping practically, as well as giving ideas about how to further develop our shared reading areas.

We recognise the essential role that parents and carers have in encouraging children with their reading and will be exploring ways to support this going forwards. The free book box in the reception area has already proved very popular, as was the book sale at parents' evening and the book recommendations in the school newsletter.

Learning to Learn

For many years now, Thameside has started each long term with a 'Learning to Learn' focus. These six attributes of a successful pupil, including collaboration, managing distractions, imagination – are explored in a two-year cycle, supported by some wonderful books to introduce the characteristics. In September 2022, KS1 pupils looked at 'How to Catch a Star' and KS2 read 'Salt in His Shoes' (a biography of Michael Jordan) to launch the L2L value of perseverance. Other texts in the English spine demonstrate the L2L attributes too, enabling pupils to make links on a conceptual and textual level.

IMPLEMENTATION: Early Reading & Phonics

Promoting a love of reading from the beginning

Promoting a love of literature is the first step in creating lifelong readers. In Nursery, we provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences to meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy'. These include sharing high-quality stories and poems, learning a range of nursery/action rhymes and activities that develop focused listening and attention. Daily stories are used to develop the children's language and love of books. The book corners in Early Years are carefully curated. Books are added at regular intervals to match the current topic, such as dinosaurs, healthy bodies and

festivals. They also contain the children's favourite stories to build reading confidence as they independently 'read' familiar texts.

Phonics

At Thameside, we have chosen the Little Wandle validated phonics scheme because we valued the whole class teaching approach and high-quality decodable readers that accompany it.

In Nursery, the pupils begin their journey of identifying sounds and words in their environment (Phase 1 Phonics) through songs, games and music. Oral blending activities prepare them for the phonics work they will do in reception. From Reception, the children have daily Phonics lessons. They are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, as well as words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy. Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4, then learn to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs.

In addition to the daily phonics lessons, the children have three reading practice sessions per week. These are taught by a fully-trained adult in groups of around six children, using the Collins 'Big Cats' series. The sessions are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis. Each session focuses on a specific skill, so as not to overload the children's working memory: decoding, prosody (reading fluently with expression) and comprehension (understanding the text).

Decodable Readers

Once the children are familiar with their decodable reading book through the reading practice sessions, they take them home to share with an adult. Books are changed once a week to promote confidence and fluency.

We use the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources to engage our families and share information about phonics, how children learn to blend, the benefits of sharing books, and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

IMPLEMENTATION: Reading Independently and for Pleasure

EYFS and KS1 – independent reading choices

As well as decodable readers, we encourage the children to take home books to share with their families from the beginning of their time in Thameside. Book bags are available in Nursery for parents and carers to swap whenever they would like. In Reception, there is a wide selection of reading for pleasure books from which children can choose every Friday to take home.

In the Year 1 and 2 classrooms, additional Big Cat Phonics books are made available in baskets for the children to select independently. The baskets are labelled so that pupils can select an appropriate decodable book for their own reading level. Year 1 particularly enjoy reading these to the Tsumtsums.

There are book corners in each of the KS1 classrooms with a range of fiction and non-fiction books for the children to select. As with the younger year groups, additional books are displayed each term to link with the wider curriculum foci.

Independent Reading and Accelerated Reader

From Year 2 onwards, pupils who have completed the phonics programme move on to use Accelerated Reader. This has two key functions: ensuring that they are reading the optimum level of book to ensure continued reading progress and motivating independent reading through the quizzing function. Five times a year, an online adaptive reading test generates a book level for each child which is matched to coloured stickers on the classroom books. It's very hard to judge the difficulty of a book from the size and cover alone, so this system ensures that the text chosen is neither too easy nor too hard. Each time a pupil finishes a book, they can complete a quiz, providing immediate feedback on how well they've understood the text. The quizzing function can be accessed from home at www.tinyurl.com/dk98jpc

The AR system has a number of helpful diagnostic features for staff, as well as a word count for pupils which is very motivating! There is a friendly competition between the class as to which can read the most words, as well as the accolade of 'Word Millionaire' for any pupil who hits 1,000,000 words in one academic year. These children receive a shield badge to wear on their uniform.

IMPLEMENTATION: Whole Class Teaching

Reading Spine

Our reading spine has been carefully curated to include a range of ages of text, genres, text structures and diversity of characters and authors. Fiction texts are selected to be more challenging than the majority of pupils could access independently. The writing must be of high quality supported, where relevant, by similarly high-quality illustrations, and with opportunities for inference. They are also texts that our staff enjoy, as we know that our enthusiasm rubs off on the pupils! Non-fiction texts are included for every year group to teach the skills of reading for information. Many are taken from this year's UKLA longlist, representing the best and most up-to-date non-fiction texts for young people. Both fiction and non-fiction texts are used to make the process of reading explicit through modelling. Some terms group shorter texts, for example focusing on 'overcoming adversity'. Where appropriate, they link to other areas of the curriculum, reflecting our 'link' driver; we recognise the opportunity that this gives pupils to reinforce and extend their schema.

Whole Class Reading

As part of the Vale Academy Trust, our teaching of reading has been shaped by the VAT Reading Framework. This document is based on recent evidence-based research and explores each of the individual skills required to be a competent reader, including practical strategies for reading instruction. It is a foundational document which staff use to ensure that their subject knowledge is secure and to aid planning.

In whole class reading lessons, we use 'DRICKY' to make core reading skills accessible and more easily understood by the pupils – an adaptation of the popular 'DERIC' acronym. The 'K' for Knowledge replaces the slightly more generic 'explain', as we know that expanding vocabulary, background knowledge and knowledge of text conventions are key priorities for Thameside pupils. The additional 'Y' is in recognition of the fact that reading is about so much more than acquiring some skills to pass a test and be functionally literate: it's about personal engagement and enjoyment of books, so 'You' completes our approach to teaching reading:

D: Decoding (including fluency and comprehension monitoring)

R: Retrieval

I: Interpreting

C: Choice

K: Knowledge

Y: You



IMPACT

Phonics Assessment

Those delivering the daily phonics sessions use formative assessment to monitor which pupils have grasped the sounds and which need keep-up support. In particular, the weekly review lesson is used to assess gaps in GPCs, word reading and fluency. Summative assessment is used every six weeks to gauge progress. Results are added to the Little Wandle tracker and the resulting heatmaps inform planning for teaching and interventions.

KS1 Statutory Assessment

Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child who does not pass the check re-sits it in Year 2.

KS2 Reading Assessment

We understand that the assessment of reading is a “gathering of multiple...glances” (Prof. Coe) involving a range of formative and summative methods, including hearing pupils read, group/class discussion and written evidence. As a consequence, we employ a range of different techniques to gain the widest possible understanding of each child’s reading ability: Star Tests, reading aloud 1:1, verbal/written responses in whole class reading lessons and a written paper on unseen extracts in Term 4. Each pupil has an individual tracker card in the class reading folder where their strengths and areas for development can be noted by the class teacher. This holistic approach to assessing reading gives a much fuller picture of a child’s achievement levels in reading than a single summative score and equips staff to know how best to support their progress.

KS2 Statutory Assessment

Year 6 pupils sit the KS2 statutory reading paper in May. Prior to this, mock papers are completed in October and January/February. These enable the children to become familiar with the demands of the test, as well as any access arrangements to which they are entitled. In addition, feedback is planned by the Year 6 staff – whether 1:1, group or whole class – to address areas of development from the mocks, enhancing their usefulness as an exercise which informs teaching, not just producing numerical data.