Holy Name Primary School

Reading Policy

How do we teach children to read at Holy Name Primary?

Intent

At Holy Name Primary School, we recognise that learning to read is a fundamental life skill that underpins all areas of learning. Our core intention is to ensure that every child becomes a skilled, fluent and confident reader through the explicit teaching of reading skills.

We aim for all children to develop secure knowledge of systematic synthetic phonics as the foundation of early reading. Children are taught to decode words accurately and efficiently, enabling them to read unfamiliar words with confidence. Alongside this, we prioritise the development of reading fluency so that pupils can read with increasing pace, accuracy and expression. As children progress, they are taught to understand what they read through carefully structured comprehension teaching, while their vocabulary knowledge is continuously developed to support both decoding and understanding.

Children begin their reading journey with the systematic phonics programme Read Write Inc. This provides a consistent and structured approach to early reading, ensuring that all pupils gain the knowledge of how sounds link to letters and how this can be applied when reading. We prioritise early reading so that all children,

regardless of their starting point, can develop the skills needed to become successful readers as quickly as possible.

Implementation

In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, children learn to read through daily Read Write Inc. phonics sessions. These sessions explicitly teach grapheme–phoneme correspondences and support children in blending sounds to read words and segmenting sounds for spelling. Children are also taught to recognise common exception words and are encouraged to apply phonics as their first strategy when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. Teaching is carefully structured and closely matched to children's current stage, with pupils grouped according to their phonics knowledge to ensure they receive precise and targeted instruction. Regular assessment enables teachers to move children on swiftly as they secure each stage of learning.

As children move into Key Stage 2, they begin each day with a focused reading session. During this time, pupils continue to develop the core skills of reading, including fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. These sessions provide structured opportunities for children to improve their reading accuracy and expression, deepen their understanding of texts and explicitly identify and learn new vocabulary within context. In addition, termly fluency assessments are carried out to ensure that pupils are making expected progress. These assessments allow staff to identify children who are not achieving age-related milestones so that timely and targeted support can be put in place.

As children develop their decoding skills, there is a continued and explicit focus on building reading fluency. Children are taught to read with increasing automaticity so that word recognition becomes effortless, allowing them to focus on meaning. Teaching also supports pupils to develop expression, phrasing and appropriate intonation. This is achieved through repeated reading of carefully matched, fully

decodable texts and through structured group reading sessions.

Alongside decoding and fluency, children are explicitly taught the skills required for reading comprehension. From the earliest stages, teachers model how to think about what is being read, using questioning and discussion to develop understanding. Pupils are taught to identify and retrieve key information, make inferences using evidence from the text, predict what may happen next and summarise main ideas. As pupils move through the school, they are supported to explain their understanding in greater depth, including discussing vocabulary, author choices and the structure of texts.

Vocabulary development is a key component of reading across the school. Teachers explicitly introduce new words, model their meaning in context and provide opportunities for children to use this vocabulary in discussion. A strong emphasis is placed on spoken language as a foundation for reading comprehension, ensuring pupils can articulate their understanding clearly.

Assessment is ongoing and informs all teaching. Teachers use daily assessment within lessons to identify misconceptions and adapt teaching accordingly. Formal assessment through the Read Write Inc. programme ensures that progress in phonics and early reading is carefully tracked. Children who require additional support are quickly identified as Spotlight Readers and receive additional targeted support from adults as well as trained Year 6 Reading Leaders. This ensures that pupils are given frequent opportunities to practise reading, build confidence and develop their fluency and comprehension. Interventions are closely matched to individual needs, ensuring that all pupils are supported to keep up with their peers.

Impact

As a result of this structured and systematic approach, children at Holy Name Primary School develop secure and embedded reading skills. Pupils are able to

decode unfamiliar words accurately and independently, applying their phonics knowledge with confidence. They read with increasing fluency, demonstrating appropriate pace, accuracy and expression, which supports their overall understanding of texts.

Children show a clear ability to comprehend what they read, drawing on a range of strategies to retrieve information, make inferences and explain their thinking. Their growing vocabulary supports both their reading and their wider communication. Over time, pupils make strong progress from their starting points and develop the skills necessary to access the full curriculum.

The impact of our approach is evident in pupils' increasing independence as readers, their ability to engage with a wide range of texts and their readiness for the next stage of education.