

Phonics and Early Reading – Curriculum Design

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

Dr. Seuss

Purpose of Study

Early Years Foundation Stage: It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

National Curriculum: English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

What are the aims of the subject?

National Curriculum: The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Early Years Foundation Stage:

Comprehension -

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories 14 and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

Word Reading -

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Phonics and Early Reading at Rodbourne Cheney Primary School

At Rodbourne Cheney Primary and Nursery School, our primary aim in Phonics and Early Reading is to instil a lifelong love of reading in all children, regardless of their ability, background, or home life. We recognise that fostering this passion for reading is a key factor in their overall academic success, not just in English but across all subjects. By putting reading at the heart of the curriculum, we believe we can lay a strong foundation for children to excel in literacy, communication, and critical thinking, which are essential skills for lifelong learning. Our inclusive approach ensures that every child has the opportunity to develop their reading skills and feel confident in their ability to engage with texts, regardless of their starting point.

Teaching phonics in Early Years and Key Stage 1 is crucial for laying the foundation of strong reading and writing skills, this is why we pride ourselves in teaching phonics from Pre-school through Year 1 and providing continuous support throughout the rest of the school. Phonics helps children understand the relationship between sounds and letters, enabling them to decode words, build vocabulary, and improve their reading fluency. Mastering phonics in these early stages supports greater literacy development, boosting children's confidence and ability to engage with texts independently. Additionally, a strong phonics foundation promotes spelling, comprehension, and overall communication skills, which are essential for academic success across all subjects and for lifelong learning. Phonics is key to unlocking the world of reading.