



St. Nicholas School Canterbury

READING CURRICULUM



Literacy for Life

Including all children

Every child with a disability has the right to lead a full and decent life with dignity and as far as possible, and to play an active part in the community.

(Article 23 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

At St Nicholas School we strive to give all our pupils the opportunity to develop ‘Literacy for Life’ skills so that they can be as independent as possible and have successful pathways into adulthood. We believe that the teaching of reading is integral to a child’s understanding and appreciation of the world around them; a platform that allows our children to see beyond what they know, share cultural experiences and develop the vocabulary they need to effectively express themselves and support their well-being.

We understand how important reading and language and communication development is for pupils’ success in all areas of the curriculum and in their everyday lives; to help build friendships, engagement with community activities and pleasure.

St Nicholas School endeavour to instil a love of books, opening the doors to imagination, as well as providing sources of information.

Reading plays an intrinsic part of the plans of each of our curriculum pathways. The Curriculum details the reading *intention*, how reading is *implemented* within each pathway and the *impact* on pupils. Pathway termly plans reflect language and communication needs and identify texts to be explored. These may change dependent on the cohort of pupils and individual needs including their interests and motivators.

Reading is delivered in different, creative ways, taking into account the needs of the individual pupil. Consideration is given to the following areas as outlined in the ‘Reading Framework’ (Dfe Jan 22):

- Language comprehension
- Word reading

Understanding language development is vital in supporting pupils develop these skills. Reference to the communication chain helps guide staff to understand the building blocks of language.

The Communication Chain



Language Comprehension

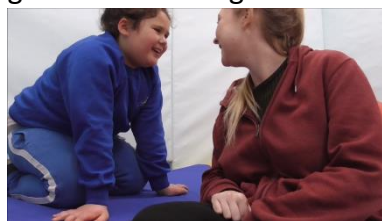
The first stage of language acquisition is being able to look and attend.

Looking helps to focus our attention on the speaker, it provides information about non-verbal communication (NVC). This includes all body movements, expressions, gestures, positions, as well as the use of the voice. Many of our pupils are at the earliest stage of language acquisition. They are still learning the basic non-verbal communication skills.

We support this through:

Intensive Interaction

We use this intervention at St Nicholas School to help promote communication by interacting in a practical way. It works on early interaction abilities – how to enjoy being with people – to relate, interact, know, understand and practice communication routines. It teaches and develops the ‘fundamentals of communication’ – developing eye contact, facial expressions, vocalisations leading to speech, taking turns in exchanges in conversation and the structure of conversation.



Attention Autism

Attention Autism is an intervention approach by Speech and Language Therapist Gina Davies which aims to work on the early fundamentals of language including awareness of others, attention, listening, shared attention, switching attention and turn-taking.

Classes do ‘Bucket Time’ sessions to help develop these crucial skills, following the 4 stages.



The Curiosity Programme is used for individual children who may not be ready for the Attention Autism stages. This programme has 4 elements, getting connected, signature songs, creating curiosity and playing together. It is a practical way in engaging children and promote communication skills.

Language rich environment

'Children's back and forth interaction with adults...form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial'.

(Dfe Reading Framework Jan 22)

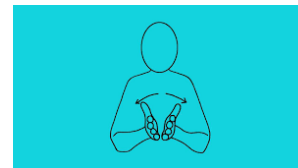
We recognise how talking helps children and young people make sense of the world, ask for what they need and to develop social interaction.

How do we do that at St Nicholas?

We promote a language rich environment in our whole school community, prioritising speech and language development through providing a 'total communication system' to include Augmented Assisted Communication (AAC) ie the use of sign, symbol, objects of reference and technology including eye gaze.

Sign- Makaton

All staff have training in Makaton to support language development and understanding. It provides a visual way to develop communication skills, which helps stimulate sounds and words. The visual way of communicating helps language development such as putting words together. Makaton helps understanding by giving an extra visual cue to communication.



Symbol



Many pupils who are pre-verbal or non-verbal, who are able to recognise and understand symbolic representation, learn to read photos or symbols. This allows them to make choices, read stories and enjoy books and text.

Every classroom uses symbols in the environment, timetables and communication boards so all children can access their learning.

Objects of reference

To help support pupil understanding, students are given objects of reference to help them make sense of what is happening and enable them to make choices. Examples include, a plate for dinner, a towel or swimming costume for hydro/swimming. We have a set of generic objects used across the school, but for some children these need to be more individualised that mean something to them.

Technology

Some children access language through the use of technology. Eye Gaze is used to create stories, enable choices and develop conversation. Other devices such as Voice Output Aids (VOCA) are used, switches and tablets/ipads.



These devices are useful for visual learning, reading, drawing, and watching videos. They can help students with motor impairments improve their coordination and those with reading disabilities comprehend written information via text-to-speech apps.

Sensory Cues

Our sensory system plays a significant role in understanding the world around us and for some children with sensory impairment, it is important they are given opportunities to learn about communication through sensory cues. Some pupils have 'sensory profiles' which enable staff to understand their sensory needs, sensory seeking behaviours and sensory avoiding. This helps with planning and ensuring pupils are receiving the most appropriate sensory input to support their understanding.

BLANK

Pupils are assessed using the BLANK system. It is crucial to understand their level of understanding so that language used is appropriate and support given to develop this, targeted at the appropriate level. There are 4 levels:

Level one – responds to simple commands which involve matching what they see to what they hear. Types of question – Point to an object, find a matching object, name an object.

Level two – beginning to focus more selectively on materials. Pupils are introduced to concepts both concrete and abstract which enable them to describe objects and determine how things are different. Descriptive language helps a child to understand simple stories or describe pictures. Types of question – function, sentence completion, things that go together, sorting and categorising, linguistic concepts, describing a scene, showing a picture or giving information and asking who, what and where?

Level three – using language to restructure and reorder perceptions and experiences. Pupils will have an understanding of language itself and be required to use language to talk about language. Types of question – follow a set of directions, give another example, but listen to extra conditions, narrative and retelling events, sequencing, summarising, predicting, what characters say and how they feel and defining words.

BLANK LANGUAGE SCHEME QUESTIONNAIRE



Level four – Justifying. Solving complex and abstract verbal problems. Types of question – justifying a prediction, identifying cause, solving a problem, solving problems from another’s perspective make an inference from observation, explain why something cannot be done, selecting a means to a goal and explaining the logic of compound words.

The BLANK scheme is valuable in assessing the understanding of question types in an additional language and the level of support needed.

Developing a love of reading

Pupils will enjoy story sharing and story-telling. This is delivered in all pathways in appropriate ways to meet the needs of the pupils.



Sensory Stories

Sensory stories convey simple narratives using a mixture of text and complimentary sensory experiences. Each section of the story (normally just a short sentence or two in length) is accompanied by a sensory experience to help bring the story to life. When telling sensory stories, teachers incorporate all the senses where appropriate so touch, smell, sounds, taste and visual stimuli to help engage pupils and develop their understanding of vocabulary, story language and basic concepts.

Frequent repetition of familiar stories gives pupils time to understand and increase their participation. They learn to anticipate, initiate, realise, persist and explore (as per the Engagement Model), joining in with familiar words/phrases, sometimes verbally, through facial expression, by using AAC’s or sensory exploration.



Story Massage



The story massage programme offers a fun and fully inclusive way of combining the creativity of story, song and rhyme with the benefits of positive touch. Each line of the story is accompanied by a specific massage move.

Drama and role play

Encouraging participation through creativity allows pupils to engage in a shared activity which can be a vehicle for developing trust, understanding and communication. Pupils are able to develop this creativity from the very early stages of developing pretend play in the Early Years, to performing at the local theatre.



Pupils will be given opportunities to role play and participate in drama activities. They will listen to and join in with story-telling told by teachers or visiting story tellers. These activities help bring stories to life, an opportunity to explore new language and concepts and to rehearse and consolidate learning across the curriculum. Pupils can work towards 'Arts Awards' accreditation. These creative experiences not only support language development but support emotional well-being and builds confidence to converse with a wider audience.

Word Reading and Phonics

READING

For many children, the first steps to understanding words, is to be able to distinguish between sounds. Phonological awareness is the conscious sensitivity to the sound structure of language. It is both a prerequisite for, and a consequence of, learning to read.

Children need to be able to recognise speech sounds as distinct from other environmental sounds, so that they can understand the difference between words and sounds and develop an understanding of the alphabetic code. We use the Phonological Awareness Programme which incorporates the 6 stages of development:

- Speech Detection
- Syllable Awareness
- Onset and Rime
- Rhyme Detection
- Initial Sounds
- Rhyme Production



Once children develop this awareness, they access the Phonics programme 'Twinkl'. By using this fun interactive resource, pupils will be better able to understand and enjoy learning about the basic rules of letters and sounds. It is a way of teaching children to read by linking phonemes and the symbols they represent, which are called graphemes or letter groups. Twinkl phonics has mnemonics which support the teaching of sounds and digraphs. Phonics sessions are taught daily and opportunities to reinforce phonics across the curriculum is promoted. For some children, the 'whole word approach' is used alongside phonics as they see the word as a picture rather than individual sounds. We understand that being able to decode is important for unfamiliar words.

Pupils are continually teacher assessed; some children are able to access the phonic screening tests. Many have reading targets within their EHCP targets and successes are illustrated on EARWIG.

READING SCHEMES

St Nicholas use the PM Reading Programme, a collection of carefully levelled fiction and non-fiction texts, organised by series strand and by colour band. The books are ideal for shared, guided and independent reading. It is a balanced scheme that support phonological development, fluency and phrasing, and comprehension.

Rhino Readers Reading Scheme is also used and easily accessible for parents/carers to use at home via the Twinkl website. The books are fun and engaging for all.

St Nicholas use decodable books to support the phonics programme. Children are given opportunities to choose books to read as well as using the reading schemes. Resources also include phonic bags, where children can explore their phonics learning in a multi-sensory way.

Pupils have timetabled reading daily. This may be whole class story time, individual reading, shared and guided reading, 'book time' which is child led, and during other curriculum areas where books are brought to life with a sensory element, drama and highly enthusiastic modelling by adults. We aim to instil the love of books and show what enjoyment it can bring.

The Language rich environment of St Nicholas school gives pupils the opportunities to develop their literacy for life and comprehension in many ways;

- Social and environmental signage in the school and wider community
- Use of technology eg email, social media (in line with on-line safety policy)
- Shopping activities – reading and creating lists
- Travel related to reading such as timetables, travel training, planning trips
- Recipes and instructional texts
- Reading for information, such as newspapers and magazines
- Reading for leisure and trips to the local library

Reading corners

These are evident in classrooms at St Nicholas school. They contain a range of reading materials and formats appropriate to the level of develop and interest of the children in the class group. A range of texts are available based on diversity and inclusivity for all our pupils whatever stage of reading they may be at.

There are several reading areas within the school, a Primary Library, Secondary Library and access to books in 'chill out' areas. There are a range of genres, including both non-fiction and fiction, Big Books, DVD's, audio books and sensory boxes.

Pupils create their own Newspaper which is posted on the school website and shared with the wider school community.

Pupils have access to accreditation in Literacy Units in OCR Life and Living skills and City and Guilds Functional Literacy Skills.

Further reading support

Some children are supported with the Better Reading Programme, a reading recovery approach to develop further reading skills. The programmes help to develop independent reading and comprehension skills.

Engagement with families

Parents/carers are sent home a 'Supporting Children with Reading' booklet to encourage and help support reading at home. Reading diaries contain a guide for parents/carers when reading. They are encouraged to write in the reading diaries. For EAL families, sending home reading in the home language helps support engagement.

Children's work is shared on the IT platform EARWIG and some classes use the class Dojo system.

Rhino Readers is available on the school website – giving parents access to ebooks. This supports parents/carers in reading with their children and support parents with EAL.

Reading into writing

St Nicholas recognise that the reading journey is important in developing writing. Children will explore the genre by reading lots of different examples, look at grammar and punctuation and spelling all linked to writing and teach them to learn to plan, draft and edit their work.

Related documents

St Nicholas School Reading Policy

St Nicholas School Reading Map

Pathway curriculum plans

Dfe Reading Framework

Phonological Awareness Programme

EAL Resource pack