

Callands Community Primary School



Phonics and Early Reading Policy

October 2021

At Callands Primary School we are passionate about reading. Therefore, it is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible and inclusive to all pupils. Reading is an integral and essential part of a lifelong learning journey. At Callands we make it our mission to ensure that every child in our school is supported and equipped to become a fluent reader.

Each pupil at Callands embarks on their reading journey as they enter Reception. They navigate the reading journey by developing a bank of 'problem solving' skills. Children are equipped with these skills and taught how to apply these to become fluent, accurate, effective and successful readers. Children who see themselves as a reader, because they know that everyone encounters reading 'problems' sometimes and we all use a bank of problem solving skills to enable us to access and love a range of texts.

To develop skilled and enthusiastic readers we know that our primary approach to early reading must be a systematic synthetic programme.

Intent

At Callands Primary School we know that all our pupils can become engaged and fluent readers and maximise the reciprocity in writing. This is why we teach reading through the systematic, synthetic phonics approach using Floppy's Phonics. We begin teaching phonics in Reception as the primary method for teaching early reading skills which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code. Children are engaged in online, interactive resources and activities in addition to applying their knowledge in their own workbook. This enables pupils to master the alphabetic code and practise applying their skills for reading and writing as they learn. As a result, all our children are able to tackle both familiar and unfamiliar words as they read. They can use phonics to read real and nonsense 'alien' words.

We also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We understand the benefits of reciprocal reading and shared reading opportunities. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

As children transition from seeing themselves as early readers to confident and competent readers, we introduce elements of comprehension and inference to support them as they develop their own love of reading as they read themselves

for pleasure. We encourage our pupils to see themselves as readers; for both pleasure and purpose.

Because of our deep recognition of the fundamental importance of improving reading standards for the lifelong benefit of our pupils, we believe teaching every child to read is imperative. We have a Reading Recovery Accredited teacher leading our EYFS and KS1 phonics and early reading. As a school we fully endorse consistency and therefore have invested in whole school training for teaching staff in Floppy's Phonics. Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach phonics and early reading using this approach. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read, so that we lower children's cognitive load and maximise their problem solving capabilities. We ensure that children have a range of opportunities for word reading, including reading aloud, applying phonic knowledge and skills reading by blending and developing sight vocabulary for common exception words, reading with fluency, phrasing and expression- the all-important 'talking voice'.

Implementation

In Reception, we provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. We frequently share high-quality stories and poems. We promote a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes to support pupil's speaking and communication skills. We constantly promote opportunities that develop focused listening and attention. These including oral blending and attention to high-quality language.

Phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1 occur daily and sometimes twice daily depending on the learning needs and independent choices of pupils. These daily lessons ensure every child learns to read. Any child who needs additional practice has additional support, taught by a fully trained adult. This is especially important for children joining our school who have English as an additional language and have not used phonics as a primary reading strategy before. For these children the systematic synthetic structure of Floppy's Phonics is particularly effective and beneficial.

'Keep-up' lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning. All children complete all five Floppy's Phonics activity books so that they have opportunity to learn additional and alternative graphemes for the same phonemes.

In addition to this we timetable daily phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 or 3 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen.

In addition to using phonics to teach reading skills, we subscribe to Lexia and provide every Reception and Key Stage One child with a free subscription so that they can access a range of reading skill builder games, which focus on phonics, rhymes, letter recognition and spelling. We also provide this resource for any identified pupil from KS2 who has EAL or is a new starter to our school who has been identified as needing additional phonics support. Teachers monitor Lexia to fully understand areas for additional teaching and boost to learning interventions.

Guided reading is taught each day in small groups in KS1 and Year 3. Each reading session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload pupils' working memory, yet still train the pupils' metacognition skills. In Reception and Year One, these sessions are deeply rooted in applying phonics skills. Books are selected at the correct book band which is determined by the outcome of an analysed Running Record. The books follow the Floppy's Phonics scheme and are phonetically decodable to enhance the connections between word reading and reading books. Guided reading sessions focus on decoding, prosody and comprehension, while introducing the subjective element of inference. Children will read with the teacher at least once a week in these sessions. In addition to this they will read for pleasure using the attractive resources in the reading area, for which they have chosen the theme following their interests (this is different in each class). On the remaining days the children will be given a task that they can access independently. This is recorded in their guided reading books and provided a range of evidence to support teacher judgement using the content domains.

In Year 3 they continue to focus on using Project X books which follow on from the decodable books used in KS1 and have been selected to particularly engage boys with reading. Sessions last for 20 minutes each day and the guided session with the teacher once a week will build the children's comprehension and inference skills to enable them to access comprehensions and activities linked to the texts read independently during their follow up sessions that week. There is still an emphasis on reading for pleasure alongside their home reading books (which are in the same style as their guided reading texts for consistency).

In Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6, there are 3 x 50 minute sessions per week in the Autumn Term following a new reading scheme adopted this academic year – Comprehension Express. This uses texts linked to the Project X range used prior to Year 4 and is similar to their home reading books for consistency. The sessions

have a focus on vocabulary and reading strategies. The sessions include the teaching of essential comprehension strategies based on research and breaks down questions into categories to build their responses in line with increased skills and confidence. There is teacher modelling included in each session and the children respond both verbally and through their varied written responses within their workbooks. In the Spring Term, there is an increased focus on application of the skills and strategies learnt in the Autumn Term to a range of comprehensions. Guided reading will then be 20 minute sessions daily. These are first modelled by the teacher and responded to as a whole class before the children apply their reading skills to a linked comprehension independently.

There remains a focus on reading for pleasure and KS2 have two 10 minute sessions per week where they can share a chosen class book together. In the Summer Term, guided reading sessions remain at 20 minutes daily for KS2 and they will have a vocabulary focus and children will also apply their inference skills.

To engage boys and some disadvantaged readers in reading we have invested in Project X books, which is effective according to pupil voice throughout school. Reading data will be used to confirm this following a period of introduction.

Home reading

Children use Lexia as their primary home reading resource. In addition to this, each week they have a visit from our Mobile Library, where they can choose a book that interests them (again using their individual interest) to motivate the pupils as readers and to develop and extend vocabulary in a range of topics.

In KS2, the children have access to a range of Project X staged home reading books which are similar in style to their Guided Reading texts. These have also been purchased to engage more boys with home reading. The children are able to choose their own book which interests them at their relevant stage to take home to read. Children are provided with a home reading record which parents or carers complete with comments about their child's reading fluency and expression and these are checked weekly by the class teacher to ensure a regular home-school communication is upheld.

Ensuring reading for pleasure

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.' (OECD 2002) 'The will influences the skill and vice versa.' (OECD 2010).

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy as we read to children and with the children every

day. We choose books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of quality texts from a range of authors, including books that reflect the children at Callands Primary School, our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

We facilitate visits to our local library to give our pupils the opportunity to experience reading for pleasure in a different environment and share the opportunity that a library brings to allow us all to enjoy a wide variety of books for free.

All teachers share their current reading for pleasure book with the children through a poster within their classroom to encourage and model a love of reading in our school.

Vocabulary

Throughout school we use Vocab Jars to engage children in new vocabulary, definitions, synonyms and the word in context. This engages our pupils as any time can become Vocab Time at the discretion of the reading ambassador. This supports overlearning of vocabulary across the curriculum. We complete drop-ins to review the children's learning of vocabulary and their fluency when reading.

Impact

How do we ensure children are knowing and remembering more?

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it. Where children are not making expected progress, running records are used as a tool to analyse the reading behaviours of the pupil. This focusses the teaching points and ensures that specific reading praise and prompts are used to share successful reading behaviours and teach neglected strategies.

Formative assessment in guided reading, shared reading and individual reading allows staff to navigate reading misconceptions and reinforce 'good' reading behaviours. We aim to expose our pupils to a range of vocabulary and develop their understanding of etymology through a range of high quality teaching and learning opportunities.

Summative assessment is used every half term to assess progress again using running records to assess using the school's nine point scale which is converted using an On Track Indicator specific to each year group at Callands Primary

School. This identifies gaps in learning that need to be addressed and identifies any children needing additional support.

Half termly phonics tracker assessments are also conducted in KS1, and where required for identified pupils in KS2, using a progressive tracker which links to the systematic introduction of sounds through Floppy's Phonics.

In Year One half termly phonics screener assessments are conducted to provide accountability for progress in phonics and also track the progress of pupils. This continues for pupils who do not pass the phonics screening check when they are in Year One. Children who are new to Year Two will also be assessed in this way. Any new children starting our school and any pupils with EAL will also complete an assessment to identify any additional phonics support required.