EXPANSE
LEARNING

READING AT EXPANSE SCHOOL

Developing Reading Skills

DEVELOPING READING SKILLS.

Reading is arguably the most crucial literacy skill for cross-curricular success in secondary schools.

The curriculum continues to be dominated by text, both in print and on screen, and our learners need to be able to read effectively to understand, make sense of and take meaning from the wide range of texts presented to them.

For a significant number of learners who enter secondary schools with a reading age below their chronological age, the reading demands of the secondary curriculum prove extremely challenging. Pupils with a reading age lower than their chronological age have significant problems accessing the information they need to be successful learners.

Secondary school pupils who continue to have difficulty accessing text have already struggled with learning to read for up to seven years. They have experienced years of falling further and further behind their peer; as a result, many struggling readers have low self-esteem and lack confidence in the classroom. We need to assess how effectively the school is teaching reading to its weakest readers and to assess whether the pupils are equipped with the phonic strategies needed to tackle unfamiliar words.

Consequently, struggling readers are identified as soon as possible and are enrolled onto intervention programmes to improve their reading skills with immediate efafect.

An Intervention teacher is employed who has been trained using 'Soundswrite' and the school has also invested in:

- IDL Literacy Platform.
- BKSB assessment.
- Psychometric assessments.
- Phonic Books (www.phonicbooks.co.uk).
- Dedicated reading time.
- A dedicated library space.

Diagnostic assessments are shared with staff in a timely manner to help inform lesson planning and future intervention. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers use available data on pupils' reading levels to make informed choices about appropriate texts and to plan appropriate support for pupils in order that they can successfully access a wide range of texts.

By encouraging teachers across the curriculum to develop reading skills in their lessons we can develop reading confidence in our learners, enabling them to access new and unfamiliar texts.

Pupils who have effective reading skills can do the following:

- employ a range of strategies to access texts.
- vary their reading styles to suit different purposes.
- read fluently, accurately and with understanding.
- read independently.
- be critical readers and make informed and appropriate choices.

The role of the teacher in developing reading skills In order to support and enhance pupils' reading skills.

It is essential that teachers across the curriculum provide opportunities for learners to do the following:

- read and engage with a variety of different texts both in print and on screen
- learn how to sift and select information appropriate to the task
- follow up their interests and read texts of varying lengths
- question and challenge printed information and views
- Use reading to research and investigate.

READING ACTIVITIES

Pupils will have the opportunities to:

- Use reading to research the subject area
- Use the library and ICT to support subject learning
- Be as independent as possible through reading to learn
- Read for pleasure
- Read a range of non-fiction text types
- Read texts in different media e.g. web pages
- Read narratives of events
- To locate and retrieve information
- To select and make notes from a text
- To use a range of reading skills such as skimming, scanning, reading for meaning
- To read fiction texts which will support their learning in a subject area

APPROACHES TO READING

Teachers will aim to:

- Facilitate reading development through their subject
- Present reading tasks at a suitable level
- Draw pupils' attention to structure, layout, format, print and other signposts
- Help pupils to skim, scan or read intensively according to the task
- Teach pupils to select or note only what is relevant
- Help pupils to question, challenge and recognise bias in a range of texts
- Support pupils who are at the early stages of reading
- Teach pupils to read identified subject vocabulary
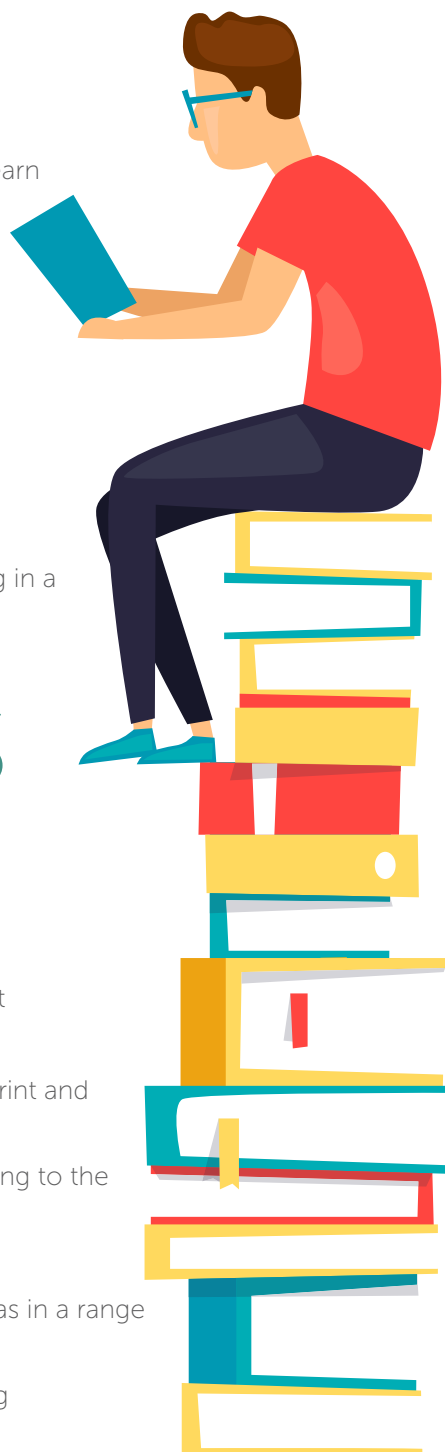
READING MATERIALS

Pupils will be provided with:

- A range of materials to support the subject topic
- Texts at appropriate readability levels which cater for the range of pupils' reading needs
- Materials reflecting a balance of culture and gender
- Materials which are up-to-date and attractive
- Resources / reference materials which enable all pupils to be independent readers.

ORGANISATION OF READING
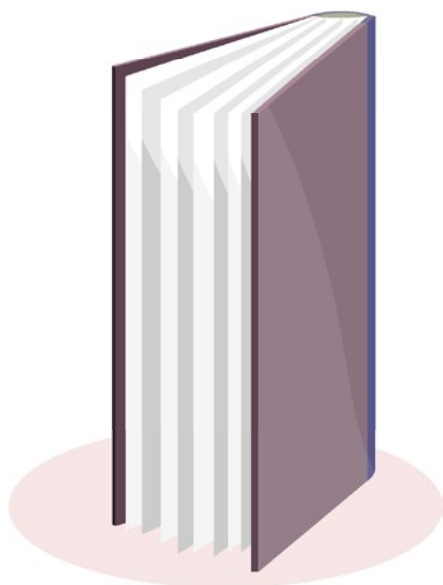
Lessons will provide:

- Opportunities to facilitate the assessment of reading either formally or informally
- Activities which focus on reading and reading skills
- Opportunities to understand and use specialist vocabulary (key words)
- Homework activities which require reading

PROGRESSION IN READING

- Pupils move from using texts selected by teacher to finding their own texts
- Pupils identify and select own texts rather than using texts selected by the teacher
- Pupils select texts which demand higher order reading skills rather than simple reading texts which require limited reading skills
- Pupils use many relevant sources rather than using one source
- Teacher develops the reading habits of pupils to encompass new authors and challenging texts

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING READING IN THE CLASSROOM

Pre-read the selected text: This is essential in enabling you to spot any problems that your pupils may have accessing the text. Is the text suitable for all your pupils? What are the issues? (Vocabulary, layout, density of text, etc.)

Give regular reminders:

During any reading activities, remind your pupils about the reading prompts and strategies they can use to access the text.

Create a context:

When we read any new text, we use our prior knowledge from the texts we have already read and the world around us to help us to make sense of the information.

By creating a context using group discussion, diagrams, charts and summaries you help to support learners with limited prior knowledge and experience of reading a wide range of texts.

Model reading skills:

This is a crucial strategy and helps to make the skills of effective readers explicit. Modelling reading demystifies the reading process. When modelling reading, share with your pupils what you are doing and thinking as you read.
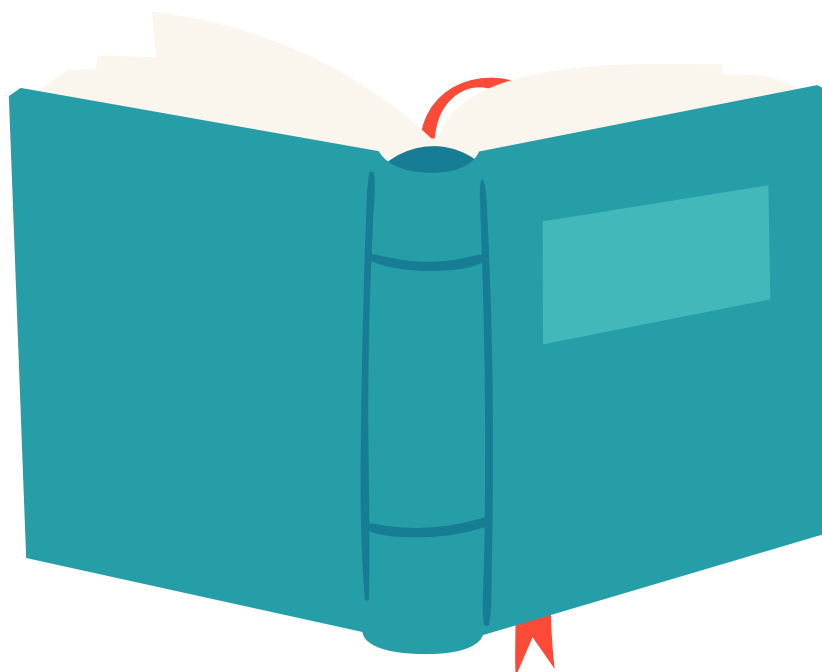
Explore the key features of the text.

What do you notice about the text?
Is it written in a particular style?
What kind of text is it? (Instructional, descriptive, evaluative, etc.)

Share the reading strategies you are using.
What do you do when something doesn't make sense, or you meet a new word or phrase?

Check pupils' understanding through questioning:
It is essential to check that all your pupils understand what they are reading. Try to use a range of questions to check the level of comprehension.
What is the text about?
What do we learn from reading the text?
How can we relate the information in this text to others we have previously read?

Never underestimate the power of talk:
Effective collaboration/talk and questioning are essential strategies to help pupils engage with texts.

Give pupils opportunities to talk to each other about what they have read.

Provide a range of reading opportunities:
To widen the reading repertoire, it is essential that we provide opportunities for pupils to read a variety of different texts both in print and on screen.

Use reconstruction and analysis activities: DARTs (Directed Activities Related to Texts) are group and individual activities that encourage pupils to read actively by engaging in reconstruction and analysis activities.

Check the presentation of your own resources:

This is particularly important for struggling readers and pupils with dyslexia.
Consider the following when presenting text:

- Use short sentences where possible.
- Do not use elaborate fonts.
- Select font size 12 or 14.
- Leave spaces between lines.
- Bulleted or numbered points are easier to interpret
- Use headings and sub-headings.
- Use bold font to highlight words (italics and underlining can make words run together). ï Print on pastel-coloured paper, e.g. cream.
- Avoid light text on dark backgrounds. (Additional information on supporting pupils with dyslexia can be found on the British Dyslexia Association website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

Provide glossaries/displays:

Glossaries and displays provide useful support for unfamiliar vocabulary and key words.

Try to include a visual representation alongside the selected word definition and provide a context for using the word, e.g. within a sentence.

Using reading prompts:

Reading prompts are strategies that pupils learn to use in order to help them read and make sense of words that are challenging or unfamiliar. For successful readers these prompts become second nature and an integral part of their reading skills toolkit. Less successful readers need encouragement to use reading prompts whenever they read. By reinforcing the importance of the reading prompts, we can help readers to feel more confident an ultimately more independent when accessing a text.

Reading prompts

- Sounding out words (using the sounds the letters make in that word)
- Finding smaller words inside longer ones (es-cape)
- Using the rest of the sentence to help with a difficult word (to find the meaning)
- Using other clues on the page to help them read accurately (including graphics and pictures)
- Re-reading the preceding words when stuck (this might mean a word or two, or part of a paragraph)
- Breaking down longer words (cha-rac-ter)
- Knowing that sometimes it doesn't matter (if the unknown word does not hinder understanding, you can move on and deal with it another time)

By explicitly referring to the techniques you use as a successful reader and the strategies and reading prompts that your pupils need to use in order to access a text, you are modelling and reinforcing reading skills.

Reading Skills

Predicting You can make informed guesses about a text by predicting: What the text is going to be about? What will happen next?

Skimming You can read quickly through a text to get a gist of what the text is about

Scanning You can search a text for a specific word, phrase or number.

Close reading When you pay close attention to the words, phrases and sentences you can build up your understanding of the meaning of a text.

Questioning You can ask questions about a text to clarify your ideas.

Empathising By putting yourself in someone else's shoes you can begin to empathise and feel what they feel Visualising Building a picture in your mind can help you to gain a better understanding of the text.

Inferring By reading 'between the lines' you can find meanings that are not initially obvious.

DARTs (Directed Activities Related to Text) DARTs activities are individual and group tasks that encourage pupils to actively engage with texts. The effectiveness of DARTs activities depends on how carefully the activity is matched to the learning needs of the reader(s) and the desired learning outcome of the reading task.

DARTs activities include: Text completion: Pupils add missing words, phrases and sentences that have been deleted from the text to reconstruct the meaning of the text. Pupils could also be asked to improve the vocabulary, style, etc. of the text.

Sequencing and grouping: Pupils arrange scrambled segments of text into a logical sequence or group segments of text related to a given category or theme.

Diagram completion: Pupils add labels to diagrams in order to reconstruct the meaning. Prediction: Pupils predict the next step or event in the text using the information they have been given.

Text marking: Pupils locate and underline parts of a text representing a certain meaning or piece of information.

Table construction: Pupils decide on column and row headings most appropriate for the information provided.

Other useful reading activities include: Give the answers: Pupils have to predict the questions asked.

Matching information: Pupils are given a range of cards containing information. Pupils then have to categorise the information selecting their own headings.

Information gap: Pupils are given a range of information, but not everything that they need in order to make sense of the text. Groups of pupils have to work together to build up the whole text.

Summative statements: Pupils are given a range of summative statements and have to decide which statement matches the text.

Summary: Pupils are asked to summarise a text. This could be a textual summary or one presented through the use of images, drama, etc.

Pupil-generated questions: Pupils compile a list of questions they would like answered before reading a text or questions to test other pupils' understanding post-reading.

Text transformation: Pupils are asked to change the way the text is presented. This could include a change of layout, first to third person, genre, etc.

Enjoyment of Reading
All pupils are also encouraged to read for enjoyment which will help to develop good reading skills.