

The Orchards Primary Academy

Where learning has no limits and personal growth is endless...

Our Approach to Reading

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1. The Research behind the Reading

“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 language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.” (DfE 2013)

“Reading for pleasure is the single best indicator of a child’s academic success.” (OECD)

“Let students have reading books that is at their instructional level and teach them through another that poses a distinct and unique challenge. The second might require more support, but it’s also critically important because a low reader in particular are often balkanized to reading only lower-level books. Fed on a diet of what’s accessible to them- but which is also often insufficient to prepare them for later education.” (Doug Lemov 2016)

<p>CONTROL THE GAME</p>  <p>Key idea: A system for engineering students’ oral reading to make it productive, accountable and efficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •build the culture •balance with other approaches •spot check for accountability 	<p>ACCOUNTABLE INDEPENDENT READING (AIR)</p>  <p>Key idea: There are varying levels of independent reading. Plan questions carefully to assess how much independence learners can manage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •set focus questions before reading •interactive reading •plan for gradual release to increase independence 	<p>VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION</p>  <p>Key idea: There are two types of vocabulary instruction -implicit and explicit. Teach it as knowledge rather than a skill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •word selection •carefully planned student-friendly definition •active practice
<p>KNOWLEDGE BUILDING</p>  <p>Key idea: Background knowledge when it is encoded in long-term memory is a key driver of reading comprehension.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •embedding non-fiction •retrieval practice (e.g. knowledge organisers) •embellishments/knowledge feeding •knowledge based questions •inside and outside the bull’s eye 	<p>WRITING FOR READING</p>  <p>Key idea: Writing and reading rely on one another. For maximum growth, learners must write as readers and read as writers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read-write-discuss-re-write •3 types of writing (formative, developmental, summative) •Frequent and formative •Sentence craft 	<p>CLOSE READING</p>  <p>Key idea: The methodical breaking down of the language and structure of a complex passage to establish and analyse its meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •layered reading •text dependent questions



Our reading approach is designed to enable all pupils to develop a love of reading through rich and lively reading experiences so that they become successful life-long readers. We strive to provide an engaging reading experience, which immerses the children in their learning and fosters a love for reading, a passion for discovery and confidence to explore the world around them. Success as a reader underpins learning in all areas of the curriculum and wider life and therefore is highly valued and prioritised in our school.

We use a range of texts:

- Archaic
- Non-linear
- Complexity of the narrator
- Complexity of Plot
- Resistant texts

Archaic Language

The vocabulary, usage, syntax and context for cultural reference of texts over 50 or 100 years old are vastly different and typically more complex than texts written today. Students need to be exposed to and develop proficiency with antiquated forms of expression to be able to hope to read James Madison, Frederick Douglass and Edmund Spenser when they get to college.

Non-Linear Time Sequences

In passages written exclusively for students—or more specifically for student assessments—time tends to unfold with consistency. A story is narrated in a given style with a given cadence and that cadence endures and remains consistent, but in the best books, books where every aspect of the narration is nuanced to create an exact image, time moves in fits and start. It doubles back. The only way to master such books is to have read them time and again and to be carefully introduced to them by a thoughtful teacher or parent.

Narratively Complex

Books are sometimes narrated by an unreliable narrator- Scout, for example, who doesn't understand and misperceives some of what happened to her. Or the narrator in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" who is a madman out of touch with reality. Other books have multiple narrators such as Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Others have non-human narrators such as the horse that tells the story in *Black Beauty*. Some books have multiple intertwined and apparently (for a time) unrelated plot lines. These are far harder to read than books with a single plot line and students need to experience these as well.

Figurative/Symbolic Text

Texts which happen on an allegorical or symbolic level. Not reflected in Lexiles; critical forms of text complexity that students must experience.

Resistant Texts

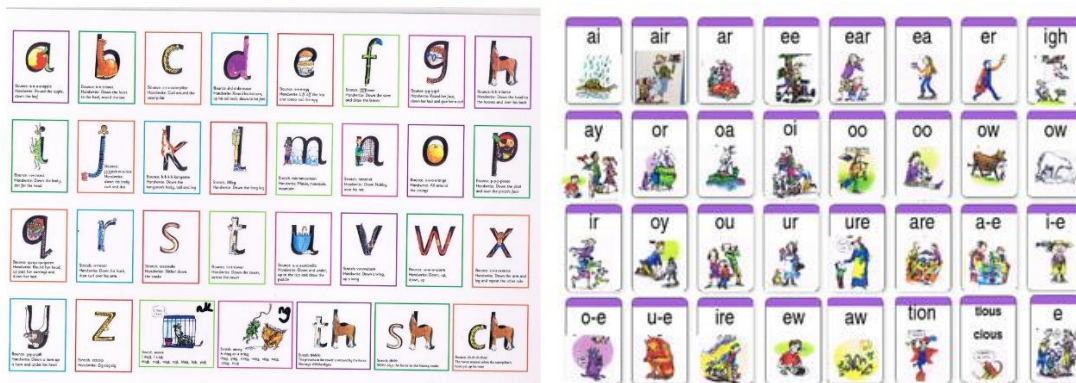
Texts written to deliberately resist easy meaning-making by readers. Perhaps half of the poems ever written fall into this category. You have to assemble meaning around nuances, hints, uncertainties and clues.

2. Early Reading and Phonics

At The Orchards Primary Academy, we aim for all our children to become fluent, confident readers who are passionate about reading through an accredited DfE supported programme. Children who read regularly or are read to regularly, have the opportunity to open the doors to so many different worlds! Reading will give your child the tools to become independent life-long learners. We can achieve this together through:

- **Read Write Inc, a programme to help your child master the mechanics of reading**
- **Encouraging children to develop a love of books by reading to them daily; at home and at school**
- **Giving children access to a wide range of books at school and at home**

We use Read Write Inc Phonics (RWI) in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to give our children the best possible start with their literacy. We incorporate Phonics into Key Stage 2 should children require. Miss Perkins is our Read Write Inc lead teacher, and due to coaching and live development is at the heart of our CPL. Read Write Inc (RWI) is a phonics programme which helps all children learn to read fluently and at speed so they can focus on developing their skills in comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. It also allows them to spell effortlessly so that they can put all their energy into composing what they write. The children are assessed by the RWI lead teacher and grouped according to their ability. Small group phonics lessons are taught daily by trained staff and there are consistent expectations across the range of abilities. At the end of each half term the children are assessed to check on their progress and regrouped.



3. Our 4-Phased Approach to the Teaching of Reading

Whole Class Reading Phase 1

Engage, Excite and Prepare

This phase is where we understand the context of our text; where we look at historical or cultural concepts that will aid our understanding; where we explore unfamiliar language; where we create and research before beginning to read the text.

Whole Class Reading Phase 2

Read, React and Respond

This phase is where we read our text; where we answer ongoing domain-based questions; where we react and respond to what we have; where we discuss our opinions and thoughts with our peers.

Whole Class Reading Phase 3

Review and Reflect

This phase is where we reflect on the book as a whole; where we discuss how characters and events have influenced the story plot; how characters have changed over time; how author technique and plot compares to others we have read.

Whole Class Reading Phase 4

Formal Domain Learning

This phase is where we answer a variety of questions around what we have read; where we demonstrate that we can answer domain-based questions competently using evidence from the text to justify.

Phase 1- Engage, Excite and Prepare

The first phase is called "Engage, Excite, and Prepare," and is a dynamic method designed to immerse learners in the learning process, particularly emphasising the importance of hinterland and contextual/conceptual learning. This phase is critical as it sets the stage for a deeper understanding and meaningful engagement with the text. To begin, the "Engage" component captures the learners' interest, sparking their curiosity and making them eager to learn. This could involve interactive activities, creating thought-provoking questions, or relatable scenarios that connect the content to the students' lives or current events. By drawing connections to the hinterland—the broader context and background of the text—pupils can develop understanding and be able to make links to experiences. This contextual grounding helps students appreciate not just the "what" but the "why" behind the subject matter.

Next, the "Excite" builds on this engagement by stimulating pupils' enthusiasm and motivation. This can be achieved through multimedia resources, storytelling, or hands-on experiences that bring the content to life. The goal is to create an emotional connection to the material, making it more memorable and impactful. For instance, in a history lesson, this might involve exploring the personal stories of people from the past, thereby humanising historical events and making them more relatable. This approach leverages the power of narrative and empathy to deepen understanding and retention.

Finally, the "Prepare" ensures that our learners are equipped with the necessary tools, knowledge and mindset for effective learning. This involves providing them with an overview of what to expect, setting clear learning objectives, and introducing key concepts and vocabulary. By front-loading this information in advance of the reading, students can approach the reading with a sense of direction and purpose, which aids in comprehension and critical thinking. Moreover, this element encourages our learners to activate their prior knowledge and make predictions, fostering a proactive rather than passive reading experience.

Incorporating hinterland and contextual learning throughout these phases enriches the educational experience by providing a broader framework within which our children can situate their learning. For example, understanding the



cultural, political, and economic background of a historical period allows students to grasp the interconnectedness of events and the complexities within the text. This approach not only enhances comprehension but also cultivates a more nuanced and critical perspective.

In essence, the "Engage, Excite, and Prepare" phase transforms the reading process into a holistic educational journey. By engaging students' interests, exciting their imaginations, and preparing them with the necessary context and tools, this method fosters a deeper, more meaningful engagement with the text. It encourages students to become active participants in their learning, capable of making connections, asking questions, and applying their knowledge in diverse contexts. This approach not only improves reading comprehension but also nurtures a lifelong love of learning, equipping students with the skills and mindset to navigate and make sense of the world around them.

Phase 2- Read, React and Respond

The Phase 2 of the reading approach, is to "Read, React, and Respond," is a structured method designed to enhance students' engagement with the text and foster a deeper understanding through active participation. This approach begins with the "Read" element, where students are encouraged to immerse themselves fully in the material. This involves a careful and attentive reading process, where learners focus on comprehending the text's core message, themes, and details. Effective reading strategies, such as annotating, highlighting key points, and noting unfamiliar vocabulary, are emphasised to ensure a thorough grasp of the content. By setting a foundation of understanding, students are better prepared to engage critically with the material.

Following the initial reading, the "React" phase encourages children to reflect on their emotional and intellectual responses to the text. This phase is crucial as it allows students to connect personally with the material, forming opinions and interpretations based on their own perspectives and experiences (from phase 1). Students might be prompted to consider questions such as: How does this text make me feel? What surprised or intrigued me? What connections can I make to my own life or other knowledge I possess? These reactions can be recorded in books, shared in small group discussions, or expressed through creative projects, fostering a sense of ownership and personal investment in the learning process.

The final element in this phase is, "Respond," involves engaging students in discussions, debates, and activities that challenge them to articulate their understanding and perspectives. This phase encourages a dynamic exchange of ideas, where students can compare interpretations, challenge assumptions, and build on each other's insights. Teachers might facilitate this through structured debates, Socratic seminars, or collaborative group projects. Responding to the text in this way helps students to develop critical thinking and communication skills, as they learn to support their arguments with evidence from the text and consider multiple viewpoints. It also provides an opportunity for formative assessment, where teachers can gauge students' comprehension and analytical abilities.

Incorporating the "Read, React, and Respond" phase ensures that reading becomes an active, interactive, and reflective process. This method not only enhances pupils' comprehension and retention of the material but also cultivates a deeper engagement with the text. By encouraging students to react emotionally and intellectually, and then respond through discussion and debate, this approach fosters a classroom environment where learning is dynamic and participatory. Students become not just passive recipients of information but active contributors to their own and each other's learning, developing a richer and more nuanced understanding of the material. This holistic approach ultimately aims to create a more vibrant and intellectually stimulating educational experience, preparing students to think critically and communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.



Phase 3- Review and Reflect

In the third phase of the reading process, "Review and Reflect," children delve deeper into their reading experience by examining how the events and plot developments have influenced the characters and their responses. This phase is crucial for developing critical thinking and comprehension skills, as it encourages children to go beyond surface-level understanding and consider the nuances of character development and story dynamics.

During the review stage, children revisit the book to recall significant events and plot points. This involves identifying key moments that drove the story forward and understanding how these moments impacted the characters. By summarising the plot and outlining the sequence of events, children reinforce their memory of the narrative structure and gain a clearer picture of how the story unfolded. This review process can be facilitated through discussions, written summaries, or visual aids such as story maps and timelines.

Reflecting on the book requires children to engage in a deeper analysis of the characters' journeys. They consider questions like: How did the characters change from the beginning to the end of the story? What challenges did they face, and how did they respond to them? Were their responses consistent with their personalities, or did the events lead to significant growth or transformation? By answering these questions, children begin to appreciate the complexity of character development and the factors that drive it.

An important aspect of reflection is understanding the motivations behind characters' actions and how these actions contribute to the overall theme of the story. Children analyse whether characters acted out of fear, love, curiosity, or another emotion, and how these motivations influenced the plot. This introspective process helps children to empathise with the characters and understand their perspectives, fostering a deeper emotional connection to the story.

In addition to character analysis, children reflect on their personal responses to the book. They consider how the story made them feel and why. Did certain events evoke strong emotions or memories? Were there moments when they disagreed with a character's decision? This personal reflection allows children to connect their own experiences with the narrative, enhancing their overall engagement and enjoyment of reading.

Encouraging children to share their reflections with peers or in a group setting further enrich this phase. Discussions enable children to hear different viewpoints and interpretations, broadening their understanding and appreciation of the book. By articulating their thoughts and listening to others, they develop valuable communication skills and learn to respect diverse perspectives. In conclusion, the "Review and Reflect" phase is a vital part of the reading journey. It transforms reading from a passive activity into an active, thoughtful process. By reviewing and reflecting on the events and characters in a book, children not only deepen their comprehension but also develop critical thinking, empathy, and a lifelong love for reading.

Phase 4- Formal Domain Learning (test-style)

Phase 4, "Formal Reading Domain Learning," is designed to provide children with a structured approach to mastering various reading domains, essential for comprehensive literacy development. This phase utilises the Twinkl Reading Dogs as a unique and engaging tool to teach these critical reading skills. Each Twinkl Reading Dog represents a specific reading domain, helping children to focus on different aspects of reading comprehension and analysis in a relatable and fun manner.

The Twinkl Reading Dogs serve as mascots for the following domains:



1. Retrieval: This domain focuses on locating and recalling information directly from the text. The Retrieval Dog (Rex) helps children practice finding specific details and facts, enhancing their ability to answer questions that require them to go back to the text for information.
2. Inference: The Inference Dog (Iggy) teaches children to read between the lines and understand meanings that are not explicitly stated. This domain is crucial for developing critical thinking and understanding character motivations and themes.
3. Vocabulary: The Vocabulary Dog (Victor) emphasises the importance of understanding and using new words correctly. This domain enhances a child's language skills and helps them to comprehend more complex texts.
4. Sequence: The Sequence Dog (Suki) guides children in understanding the order of events in a story. Recognising the sequence helps in grasping the plot and the logical flow of the narrative.
5. Prediction: The Prediction Dog (Pip) encourages children to anticipate what might happen next in a story. This domain fosters imagination and helps children to engage more deeply with the text by thinking ahead.
6. Summarisation: The Summarisation Dog (Sheba) assists children in condensing the text into its main points. This skill is vital for understanding the gist of a story and for retaining key information.
7. Author Intent: The Author Intent Dog (Arlo) helps children articulate their understanding of why the author has chosen deliberately to do what he/she has done ensuring that children understand that events happen deliberately to make the reader feel something- whether that be a positive or negative opinion.
8. Commentating: The Commentating Dog (Cassie) helps the children to express opinions and feelings about the story, the characters or the plot. It gives them an opportunity to give opinions but most critically, hear the viewpoints of peers or broaden their thinking.

Key Stage 1 Appropriate Dogs:

Predicting Pip, Sequencing Suki, Inference Iggy, Vocabulary Victor and Rex Retriever.

Key Stage 2 Appropriate Dogs:

Predicting Pip, Sequencing Suki, Inference Iggy, Vocabulary Victor, Rex Retriever, Commentator Cassie, Arlo Author, Summarising Sheba.

Exposing children to these reading domains through the Twinkl Reading Dogs has several significant benefits. Firstly, it breaks down the complex process of reading into manageable, focused areas, making it easier for children to develop specific skills. Each domain addresses different aspects of comprehension, ensuring a well-rounded reading ability. Moreover, familiarising our children with test-style questions is crucial for their academic development. Test-style questions are often designed to assess understanding of these reading domains, and regular practice with such questions prepares children for formal assessments. It also helps them become comfortable with the format and expectations of standardised tests, reducing anxiety and improving performance.

Furthermore, incorporating test-style questions in daily learning routines ensures that children are not only passively reading but actively engaging with the text. This engagement promotes deeper comprehension and retention of

information. It also helps educators identify areas where a child might need additional support or practice, allowing for our targeted interventions to take place.

In conclusion, Phase 4's structured approach to Formal Reading Domain Learning, aided by the Twinkl Reading Dogs, provides a comprehensive and engaging way for children to master essential reading skills. The focus on specific domains, combined with regular exposure to test-style questions, equips children with the tools they need for academic success and fosters a deeper, more analytical engagement with reading.

The Rationale Behind our Reading Spine

At The Orchards Primary Academy, we teach children to learn but most importantly, we teach children to read to learn, giving them skills that enable them to be future academics who can stand up against the 'best'. Learning to read focuses primarily on phonics, teaching the mechanics of reading.

Foundation Stage Reading Spine

Within the reading spine, particularly in Foundation Stage, we ensure that children have the time to revisit and repeat. Repetition is crucial for our children in the Early Years so that they can deepen their familiarity with a story and increase their emotional engagement. Re-reading allows our children to hear new vocabulary over again, which helps them commit the meaning of new words to long-term memory. Children also have the chance to connect with characters and their feelings and relive the excitement and emotion of stories.

Children in Reception re-read their class reader books 3 times over the course of the six-week half-term to enable them to explore language, emotions and events more deeply, giving them mastery and confidence.



Reading Spine: Years 1-6



As a school, we have researched many different reading spines and compared to the latest research, particularly that of 'Reading Reconsidered' by Doug Lemov as mentioned above. We have taken most of our inspiration from Mrs H who considers key principles in her recommendations: https://twitter.com/Edu_MrsH.

Each year group has a spine. These are displayed in the classroom environments and also in this 'Approach to Reading' document. Within the reading spine, there are 3 shelves.

Shelf 1	Inspiring texts used in writing lessons.
Shelf 2	Our whole class reading book for the term.
Shelf 3	The book selected for the teacher to read aloud daily to the class.

Our 'read aloud' text is timetabled for teachers to read to their class for at least 10 minutes a day. Towards the end of year 6, there is a section titled '1000 extracts'. These are 6 books (1 per half-term) which have a lexile count of 1000 or more. Extracts have been taken from each book (1 per week) for Year 6 to study in one of their shared reading sessions per week. The 1000+ extract work includes: a key focus on vocabulary; an extract to read; and subsequent comprehension questions to answer in test-style. These texts are chosen due to their rich nature and also their links to previous topics learned about in the wider curriculum.



Reading Spine Progression

A reading spine progression has been created to show the progression across the school. We are an Accelerated Reader school so as a result, we have matched every book to an ATOS. ATOS, in simple terms, means 'a measure of readability'. In other words, a readability formula designed to guide students to appropriate-level books. ATOS takes into account the most important predictors of text complexity- average sentence length, average word length, and word difficulty level. The results are provided in a 'grade-level' scale that is easy to use and understand. For example, a book with an ATOS



scale of 6.0 would be understandable to children with reading comprehension skills typical of student entering year 7 (ATOS was originally American and Grade 6 is equivalent to UK Year 7).

To determine the ATOS level of a text, the whole text is analysed, and the following elements are considered in order to provide an accurate level:

- Average word length
- Average word grade level
- Average sentence length
- Book length

In comparison, the Lexile* formula specifically considers the following:

- Word frequency
- Average sentence length

To ensure progression in reading, we have calculated the average ATOS level for each year group's reading spine across the school. See below:

Year Group	Average ATOS level of books read in the whole class reading across the year.
Year 1	2.8
Year 2	3.6
Year 3	4.9
Year 4	5.5
Year 5	5.9
Year 6	6.8

ATOS stands for:

'A' stands for Advantage, because the formula was created in the 1990's, when Renaissance was known as Advantage Learning Systems.

'T' stands for TASA (now Questar Assessment), the group that Renaissance partnered with in the original development of ATOS, specifically for their experience in vocabulary and their graded vocabulary list.

'O' and 'S' stand for Open Standard, which means that rather than a propriety and monetised reading formula.

4. Fluency and Accuracy

Fluency and accuracy is a vital skill to ensure that children can read at speed meaning that larger texts can be accessed more quickly for enjoyment and engagement with the reading. We assess pupils' average words per minute of an age-appropriate text (WPM). We repeat this process termly, during assessment weeks and monitor speed and accuracy.



5. Encouraging a Love for Reading: Enrichment, Reading for Pleasure and Accelerated Reader

Promoting a reading for pleasure ethos in our school is a key part of our curriculum offer. We believe that fostering a love of reading is crucial not just for academic success but also for personal growth and lifelong learning. To achieve this, we integrate reading into the fabric of our school culture, making it a shared and celebrated activity among our children, staff, and parents.

We begin by creating a rich, literary environment that encourages students to engage with books both inside and outside the classroom. Our library is a hub of activity, stocked with a diverse range of books that cater to all interests and reading levels. Regular book fairs, and reading competitions are organised to stimulate excitement around reading. Classrooms are also designed to be reading-friendly spaces, with reading corners and displays that showcase a variety of genres and authors, and our all-important approach to the teaching of reading. Teachers model reading for pleasure by sharing their own reading experiences and discussing books with our children. This approach helps to establish reading as a communal activity, where our children feel inspired to explore new books and share their reading journeys with peers.

To enrich other areas of the curriculum, we integrate reading across subjects, ensuring that it supports and enhances learning in all disciplines. For example, in history, our children read historical extracts or biographies to deepen their understanding of the period being studied. In science, they might explore non-fiction texts that explain complex concepts in an engaging way. This cross-curricular approach not only reinforces subject knowledge but also helps students develop a broader appreciation for different types of texts, while understanding that reading opens the entire curriculum.

We also offer experience days and trips that connect reading with real-world experiences. These activities are designed to bring books to life and help students see the relevance of reading in various contexts. For example, after reading a longer novel set in a particular historical period, our pupils might visit a museum or historical site related to that era. For example: Year 2 read about the Great Fire of London and then visit the Birmingham History Museum for an experience day. Year 5 studied Space and read a variety of non-fiction texts about this topic- they then visited the Planetarium at the Space Centre to take part in a star gazing and solar system exploration show. These experiences not only make reading more engaging but also help students make meaningful connections between what they read and the world around them.

A key component of our reading approach is our use of “Accelerated Reader,” a powerful tool that personalises reading practice and tracks our children’s progress. Accelerated Reader (AR) is an individualised reading program that assesses each child’s reading level and suggests books that are appropriately challenging. At the heart of AR is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the range of book difficulty that will challenge our children without causing stress because it is too complex. By selecting books within their ZPD, children can progress at their own pace while still being stretched to develop their reading skills.

To ensure that children are always reading books that are well-matched to their abilities, we administer STAR Reading tests each term during assessment week. These tests provide detailed insights into each of our children’s reading level, allowing us to adjust their ZPD as they grow and improve. The results of these tests help our teachers guide children in selecting books that will help them make steady progress while maintaining their interest and motivation.

In summary, promoting a reading for pleasure ethos in our school involves creating an environment where reading is celebrated and integrated into all aspects of learning. By using tools like Accelerated Reader, we can tailor reading experiences to individual child’s needs, ensuring that every child is supported in their journey to becoming a confident, lifelong reader. Through cross-curricular integration, experience days, and trips, we enrich the curriculum and demonstrate the importance of reading in all areas of life.