

How we teach Reading at Ferham Primary School

Here at Ferham we – staff and pupils – are passionate about reading. We know that precise Systematic and Synthetic Phonics (SSP) and practice leads to rapid mastery of the reading code and we complement this with comprehension development.

The result?

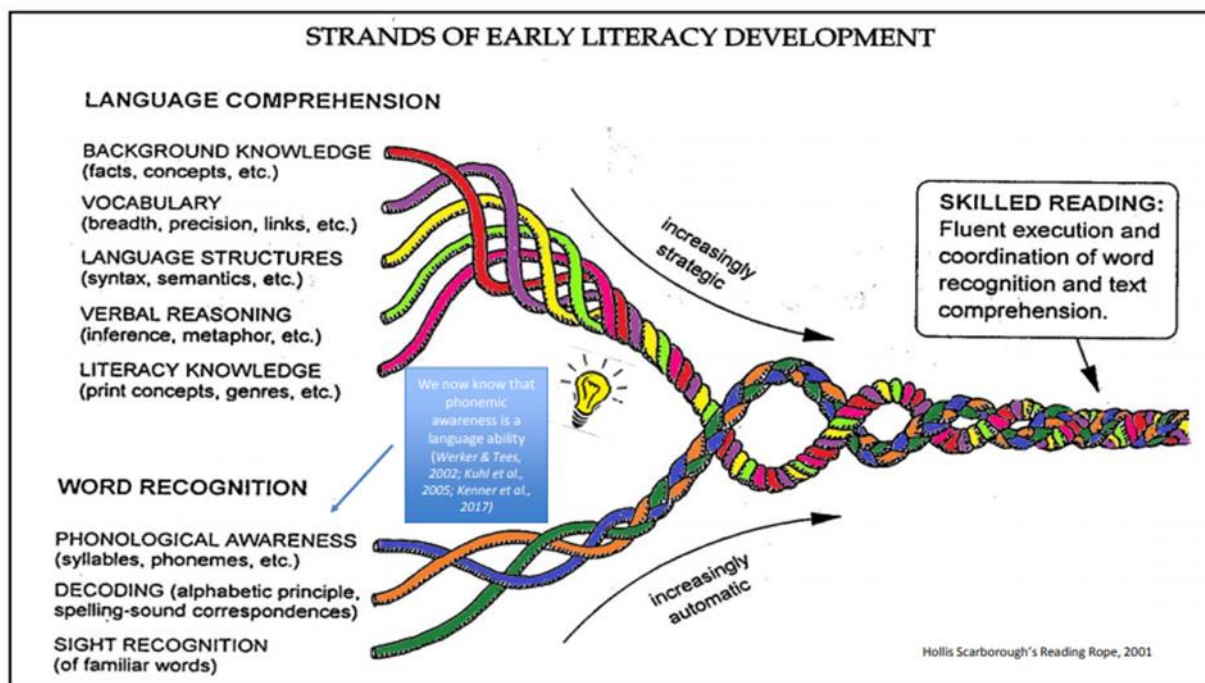
Pupils and staff who love the magic of books and revel in pupils' increasing decoding abilities, comprehension and, perhaps most important of all, love for books and reading.

Curriculum Intent

We have recently changed our approach from Success For All (SFA) to discrete instruction in Phonics, Reading and Writing and Speaking & Listening.

Learning to read using Phonics begins in Daycare and continues until pupils have cracked the phonics code and attained an appropriate level of fluency. We teach phonics using Read Write Inc; more details can be found about Read Write Inc via our Phonics link.

Once pupils have cracked the phonics code, daily SSP is replaced with Whole Class Reading (WCR). Whole class reading combines the elements of the Scarborough Reading Rope in daily lessons.



Each strand of the rope above is explained in more detail below.

Language Comprehension:

- **Background Knowledge** -This refers to the knowledge a reader already has about the information being read which needs to be applied in order to make sense of this new information. The knowledge about the world which children possess is, it seems, fairly crucial to them reading effectively.
- **Vocabulary** – This refers to the breadth of a reader’s vocabulary. Obviously the more words a reader knows in a text, the more fluent his/her reading of that text is likely to be.
- **Language Structures** – A reader needs at least an implicit understanding of how language is structured, that is, grammar. The debate has been about whether that knowledge needs to be explicit. Most children (and adults) sense when a sentence is not grammatically correct without being able to explain what the problem is.
- **Verbal Reasoning** – Readers need to be able to make inferences and construct meanings from the text: that is, they need to be able to THINK logically about what they read in they are to understand it, and its implications.
- **Literacy Knowledge** – It sounds obvious, but it is clearly important for child readers to understand concepts of print such as reading from left to right and top to bottom, how to hold a book, and that full stops complete one sentence (unit of meaning) before the text moves on. These things do not work in the same way in other languages, so they probably need to be taught somehow to English-speaking (and reading) children.

Word Recognition:

- **Phonological Awareness** – This refers to the awareness a reader has of the sound systems in language, including knowledge of syllables, and sentence intonation (a rise in voice when asking a question, for example). Knowledge and experience of rhymes seems especially important in developing this awareness.
- **Decoding**– This includes an understanding of the alphabetic principle, that is that a letter of the alphabet represents a sound, and that these letters/sounds can be blended together to make words. This is somewhat trickier in English than in some other languages. English has about 44 sounds (phonemes) but only 26 letters in the alphabet. Thus the relationship between letters and sounds cannot be one to one.
- **Sight Recognition** – Some words are recognised when reading without the reader needing to decode them: you just know them. Research tells us that, in fact, most adult reading is like this. It is quite rare for us to have to read words we have never seen before, and thus do not know. Children need to build up their repertoires of sight words and the more they can read by sight, the more efficient their reading becomes.

We choose texts which relate to topic where possible – usually History, Geography, Science, RE or PSHE. To prepare our children for the rigour of statutory testing and to prepare them for the next stage in their education, we also include Doug Lemov’s Five Plagues of Reading.

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.

Curriculum Implementation

Daily Whole Class Reading is carefully structured to ensure pupils rapidly become skilled and fluent readers. To ensure pupils benefit from a balanced and varied reading curriculum, texts vary on a three-week cycle:

1. Narrative texts – these include picture books and text extracts.
2. Non-fiction texts – these include text books, recipes, newspaper recounts etc.
3. Verses & Voices – these include poetry, songs, graphic novels and adverts etc.

Note that pupils enjoy reading full texts in daily story time in every year group. EYFS and KS1 vote for their choice of two books each day. KS2 select a book as part of Book World Cup.

The five sessions of WCR each week follow the structure below.

Monday	Vocabulary Before reading, we expose children to new/unfamiliar vocabulary within the upcoming text. This extends their vocabulary and improves fluency when reading.
Tuesday	Read and Immersion The class reads the text, enjoys Book Blether and immerse themselves into the text with Drama.
Wednesday	Re-Read and Skill Development Two sessions to re-read the text and hone skills in particular assessment domains through modelling, shared and paired Q & A.
Thursday	
Friday	Skill Show A short comprehension including – but not limited to - the skills practiced this week. We include a short second text and questions so that reading and answering independently is part of their routine.

Curriculum Impact

By the time children leave Ferham Primary School in Y6, we are determined that our pupils will be competent readers who can recommend books to their peers, have a thirst for reading a range of genres including poetry, and participate in discussions about books.

They will know how to choose the books they read for pleasure using their extensive knowledge of authors, poets and typical plots as well as using back-page synopsis and book reviewing sites.

They will read books to enhance their knowledge and understanding of all subjects on the curriculum and which match their out of school interests and hobbies.

They will meet Age Related Expectations (ARE) or be very close to achieving this. Termly nationally standardised tests will allow us to target support for pupils to achieve this and we believe such testing, while low-stakes, equips our pupils for a future in academia at secondary school and beyond.