

READING AND PHONICS POLICY

Intent

At Bettridge we know that Reading is more than an academic skill; it is a tool that can unlock the world and afford meaning to our environments. We approach our teaching of reading holistically as we do all our learning. We want skills to be transferable and useful, to enable us to be the best we can be and achieve to our own highest ability. We recognise that reading aids communication; whether seeing meaning and recognising photos, TOBIs, symbols or words, we are developing our ability to understand and receive information. This in turn will enable pupils to form sentences and communicate. 'Reading' for our pupils happens in all our environments.

Beyond reading as a tool, our pupils are immersed into a love for stories throughout the curriculum, stories that are told with pictures, puppets, characters and drama, and stories that are framed with words that we can learn to recognise and match to story elements. We have daily ERIC (Everyone Reads In Class) with a range of stories which they enjoy. When motivated and engaged a desire to read is fostered. We also have daily phonics lessons following the Twinkl Phonics scheme, which works well with our pupils various levels of ability.

Implementation

At Bettridge school our English curriculum takes into consideration the different needs of our pupils of all ages. We have a Total Communication approach throughout the school which maximises the opportunities for our learners to make contextual links between print, marks they make and the spoken word

Pupils within our Blue Pathway (pre formal level) engage in reading by listening to stories, exploring sensory elements to stories and immersive experiences where objects are used to bring real world understanding into shared texts. Objects of reference are also used for understanding information around us and as a form of receptive language in our environment. Pupils will listen to different environmental sounds around them and anticipate rhymes and actions. Phonics in the blue pathway centres more on sound recognition, anticipation and early phonics skills covered in Level 1 of the phonics scheme, however if a student is ready to move onto letters and reading words, this will be done.

These experiences are built upon and extended in the yellow pathway (semi-formal level), where our pupils build skills for reading by accessing receptive language and structured elements of their day using their accessed communication level. Our Yellow Pathway also include more structured phonics

lessons where they begin to learn individual letter sounds and words, with some still working on elements of level 1. This could be using photos, TOBIs, symbols or words. They understand that these systems give information. This makes our reading for a real life purpose and meaningful. Of course, a love of stories, non-fiction texts and reading for pleasure is also nurtured. Pupils are encouraged to read in class, as a 'choose', as part of ERIC and also to share books with parents at home. Through the curriculum we listen to sounds in the environment around us; what information do they give? We also learn to listen for sounds in our words and start to write. Level 1 and 2 phonics aid both our reading and writing.

Our Green Pathway on the formal curriculum extend their ability to read by using reading as a skill to access other aspects of their lessons and curriculum. Reading scaffolds learning and is scaffolded itself with symbols where required. Reading informs their environment too and structures their day. It is meaningful and purposeful at appropriate levels. Pupils share books and stories as a class as a basis for comprehension, to take them to different environments and to find out about the world. Pupils are encouraged to read different genre such as newspapers, comics and posters.

Pupils borrow books from the library and have opportunities to relax with a book. A variety of reading schemes can support reading at different levels and reading out loud is encouraged.

As many of our learners may be on the same level in phonics for longer than those in a main stream setting, we have more than one reading scheme for learners to use which helps to keep them interested in reading and enjoy books. The pupils access the following reading schemes to support their progression in the Twinkl Phonics levels:

Primary:

- Rhino Readers - Twinkl Phonics and e-books
- Dandelion launchers

For KS3-KS5:

- Moon dogs, magic belt, Alba, Totem and Talisman series
- Rapid

For some of our older learners, we may also draw upon other approaches that may support their learning, for example sight reading and learning functional vocabulary.

Reading is promoted across the whole school with ERIC every day as well as specific days and events such as World Book Day, National Story Telling week and the Cheltenham Literature Festival. We have also made links with several authors who have come in to read their stories as well as set competitions linked to their characters.

Impact

The impact of reading throughout our school is that all of our pupils seek out information from their environment and find this in a form that is accessible to them all as individuals. Being able to find out information for ourselves is an empowering life skill that gives confidence and fosters independence. Pupils become investigative learners who demonstrate curiosity and understand that they can respond to their world in a variety of ways. For those that go on to love stories, whether shared with them or read by themselves, this also raises self-esteem.