

Medeshamstede Academy Reading Strategy

Medeshamstede Academy is determined that every child will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. We aim that all children will make sufficient progress from their starting points, to develop the skills required, a positive attitude and confidence, as well as interest and a life-long love of literature. Our Curriculum for English covers the requirements of the National Curriculum in a way which is designed to meet the wide-ranging individual needs of our students, yet is ambitious. It aims to provide all students with the opportunity to develop their skills of communication, listening and understanding, speaking, reading and writing, according to their individual needs and stage of development.

Early Language Development

We believe that high quality interactions, with adults from the earliest possible age, will secure the language comprehension foundations needed for children to develop as fluent, skilled and attentive readers. We are determined to reduce the language gap with children from language rich homes and we ensure that these interactions are led by expert practitioners and are prioritised in the structured daily timetable, with daily Phonics sessions following the Read, Write, Inc programme.

From the outset, children are exposed to language rich environments, to develop and extend their vocabulary. High quality back and forth interactions involving adults using strategies such as thinking out loud, modelling language use and asking a wide range of open and closed questions to engage children in talking about the world around them. Children are further engaged through the validation of their responses, which are rephrased or extended where necessary.

Learning will focus strongly on the development of attention, focus, communication and interaction skills. Our aim is to motivate and equip all students to communicate effectively and through choice, using communication aids and assistive technology where appropriate. The curriculum will develop a core vocabulary linked to: their everyday lives; the theme studied and the core texts selected as part of the unit of work. Students are introduced to language in context and in a way which can be revisited and reinforced through carefully selected core texts and sensory stories.

The curriculum in EYFS prioritises language development, with deliberate planning for the teaching of vocabulary and opportunities to develop communication and language through talk, stories, poems, non-fiction, songs, rhymes and exploration that mirror the cohort. All adults support children to articulate their ideas by scaffolding, extending and developing their ideas. From the earliest age, children are also taught how and when to listen and to know what good listening looks like, through explicit adult modelling, reinforced through praise.

Staff pedagogy, across the school, supports children's language development through the use of a no hands-up approach, which establishes strong routines for responding to questions and encourages children to pay attention and focus.

As a result of the low attainment levels of children, when joining the school, diagnostic assessment of children takes place upon arrival, following our Read Write Inc scheme. This programme assesses the current level of attainment of our children and is used throughout Primary Phase. This method of learning is centred around letter sounds and phonics, blending them together to read and write words and using these learnt sounds in their reading and writing. For students without the functional use of verbal language we may focus

on whole word reading, using objects of reference to be able to read every-day signs and symbols.

Teaching of Reading (Primary and Middle)

Phonics – Word Reading

We faithfully follow the Read Write Inc scheme for phonics. The foundations for this are laid from starting the academy and continues until children are secure in phonics. In Primary Phase, children focus on developing the listening and attention skills needed as the foundations for phonics through, for example, Fred Talk games, alliteration, rhythm, rhyme and environmental sounds. Children follow Fast Track Tutoring within their phonics sessions, enabling intensive, targeted support and smaller steps. Children will be introduced to the mnemonics that go alongside the phonics sounds as a pre-cursor to more formal sound teaching which aims to lead children to be successful readers. Children receive daily phonics teaching until they have successfully completed the scheme and know all their sounds. This is the pre-cursor to developing reading fluency and comprehension.

Time for teaching phonics is ringfenced. In Primary, children start with 20 minute lessons daily, with students following Fast Track Tutoring, which moves into a 45 minute English lesson, as children's stamina improves. These lessons consist of a lively and vigorous teaching of phonics. Children, throughout Primary Phase, will learn the 44 common sounds in the English Language and how to sound-blend words for reading (decoding) at the same time as developing handwriting skills through mark-making and sensory exploration. Teachers break learning down into small achievable steps, which are suitable to the pace of the child. Within individual lessons, teachers adapt instructions to ensure appropriate time is given over to scaffolding and modelling, to allow children to make progress from their individual starting point.

For those children who were assessed via in the moment assessment in the lesson, as not grasping the sound of the session, catch up interventions will take place the same day, within their classrooms. Early intervention takes place for those children at risk of reading failure, with continuous focus on the Fast Track Tutoring programme, with a focus on the repetition of their sounds.

Our school Reading Leader and Phase supports are able to monitor and evaluate the impact of phonics, within each class group. They are able to provide timely coaching and mentoring for staff, where a need has been identified. Our Reading leader is supported by a Read Write Inc consultant and the school has access to Progress meetings and Development days. All adults have been trained to effectively deliver Read Write Inc sessions and the academy prioritises continuous professional development on Read Write Inc and phonics teaching. Children's home books are matched to the phonics sound being taught in their lessons, so that their continued development can be reinforced at home.

Developing Fluency

Once children have reached the standard of the Phonics Screening Check (first taken in Year 1) they move onto reading lessons focused on developing fluency. These sessions will use the strategies of echo reading and paired reading with suitably levelled texts.

Assessment

Children are assessed every half term to review their progress. The Read Write Inc scheme aims to record progress of children, however small these may be. The assessment for Phonics will be tailored to an individual child's needs. Assessments 1 and 2 are used for children who are verbal and 'Assessing Pupils who are non-verbal' Assessment 1 and 2 are used for any children who are non-verbal. Childrens sound knowledge is recorded in the Assessment Tracker or Individual Small Steps tracker. Alongside this, children are assessed daily within their phonics lessons and any updates on progress are recorded on the 'sounds analysis grid.'

Fresh Start

Fresh start is a progression programme from the Read Write Inc scheme. It underpins the strategies used within the phonics scheme and is used both within the Middle and Upper Phase of the academy, for students who are not yet reading age appropriately, may have missed schooling or are new to the UK education system.

Within their ringfenced daily 25 minute Reading and Comprehension sessions, children will learn new letter sounds and review previous sounds and words. Children will then apply what they have been taught by reading words containing sounds they know in age-appropriate stories and non-fiction texts, closely matched to their phonics knowledge.

Developing fluency

In Middle and Upper Phases a stage appropriate text will be chosen for reading lessons. These lessons will focus on the developing of reading fluency and comprehension and teachers will choose from a range of strategies including echo reading, paired reading, text marking and performance reading.

All students have access to story sessions using high quality texts. We want all our students to learn to enjoy the experience of being read to and to value the experience. Our curriculum aims to ensure that as many students as possible will learn to read fluently, with good understanding, widely and often, for both pleasure and information. Units of English are constructed to help students be clear about the audience and purpose of a text, through modelling and exploiting the link between reading and writing. Students develop their vocabulary and their understanding of grammar and punctuation in context, to help create writing which is clear, accurate and coherent.

Assessment

Childrens phonics knowledge is assessed prior to the start of the programme and then every half term. The Fresh Start scheme aims to record progress of children, however small these may be. The assessment for Fresh Start will be tailored to an individual child's needs. Childrens sound knowledge is recorded on the 'School Assessment Record' and this is used to inform the Individual Progress Record which highlights the sounds, words and module, which is appropriate for the child. Within Fresh Start there is an 'exit passage' which children must be able to read with accuracy in under 40 seconds.

Love of Reading

Reading for pleasure is an entitlement of every child, as we recognise that having the opportunity to read regularly and widely enhances their life chances, helping them to thrive, whatever their background.

We promote a genuine love of reading by carefully selecting books to ensure that children have the opportunity to inhabit the lives of those who are like them, as well as learning about the lives of those whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own. The Academy uses its own stocked library, reading corners, themed days and in school promotion to help develop a life-long love of literature.

As an Academy, we make a commitment that every child will hear an adult read at least once a day, as we recognise that children's enjoyment of literature is intrinsically linked to the passion of the adults working with them. Adults will make reading an integral aspect of all subjects taught, wherever possible. Alongside this, we are constantly broadening adults' knowledge of children's literature, ranging from the classics to more modern books.

Parents are an integral part of a child's reading journey and, as such, detailed information regarding Read Write Inc and Fresh Start can be found on our website and key information on sounds learnt are shared via Class Dojo.

Book Corners

Our book corners are at the heart of our classrooms, each one a mini-library of curated, well-chosen books, which capture children's imagination, these books are replaced and rotated regularly to ensure children have access to a variety of genres. Book corners contain a number of books that the teacher has read to the children, so they can both read and enjoy in the classroom and borrow to read and share at home, as well as a wide variety of age appropriate texts.

Reading at Home

Every child in Primary Phase will take home a levelled book linked to the sound they are learning in phonics or their reading level. Within Middle and Upper Phases, they will have the option to also take home a reading for pleasure book, that they can choose from their classroom or the school library.

Reading through the curriculum

Children read widely across the curriculum and are developing the ability to use reading for the acquisition of new content, in a given discipline. Adults will link prior and new knowledge and words within lessons, and across the curriculum, and use this to support knowledge acquisition.

Furthermore, a variety of texts will be used to support the writing curriculum, the library has a stock of key non-fiction texts, which will be used to support children's reading across different subjects and also give the opportunity to engage with high quality information texts.

Outside agencies

Children with an EHCP may need additional support from outside agencies such as Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) and Occupational Therapists. The Academy are committed to ensuring all children who need access to these agencies, to support their development, will be able to access this, whether it is via the NHS or through our private SaLT and OT support.