

Phonics and Reading Policy

September 2026



Review September 2028

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1. Intent

Our vision for reading

Our ultimate aim is for every child to leave Kirklevington Primary School able to read accurately, fluently and with understanding, while also seeing themselves as a reader and developing a genuine love of books.

We recognise that children learn to read at different rates and that some children require additional teaching, practice and support. We are committed to identifying barriers to reading early and providing appropriate support so that all children can experience success.

Reading for pleasure is central to our approach. We want children to experience the joy, comfort, knowledge, imagination and opportunities that reading can provide. Through high-quality texts, teacher read-aloud, independent reading, discussion and carefully planned reading experiences, we aim to nurture readers who choose to read because they want to, not simply because they have to.

Characteristic	What does this look like at Kirklevington Primary School?
Be Ready	• Be ready to read: We recognise reading as a key life skill and the foundation for success across the curriculum. We provide a high-quality, progressive English curriculum that enables every child to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to reach their potential. • Be ready to learn: We develop confident, competent readers through systematic phonics teaching using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, alongside carefully chosen, high-quality texts. • Be ready to engage: Our reading spines reflect children's interests and include a rich and diverse range of authors, poets, genres and experiences to inspire and motivate a love of reading. • Be ready to listen and discuss: Adults regularly share high-quality texts with children. We provide purposeful opportunities to listen, discuss, question and explore texts, developing vocabulary, comprehension and understanding. • Be ready to read widely: Children experience a language-rich environment and a wide range of texts throughout their time at Kirklevington Primary School, developing reading fluency, vocabulary and a lifelong enjoyment of books. • Be ready to persevere: We foster a Growth Mindset and 'Can Do!' attitude. Children are encouraged to tackle challenging texts, learn from mistakes and develop resilience as readers. • Be ready for the future: Through regular assessment and responsive teaching, we identify and support each child's next steps, ensuring that all children leave school as proficient, confident readers who read for both purpose and pleasure.
Be Respectful	• Be respectful of others: Children are taught to listen carefully, take turns and work respectfully with others, valuing different opinions, cultures, beliefs and choices. • Be respectful through reading: High-quality and diverse texts help children explore different cultures, experiences and perspectives, developing empathy and an understanding of respectful behaviours.

	• Be respectful of resources: Children are taught to care for books, reading materials and other resources, understanding the importance of looking after shared equipment. • Be respectful of every voice: Through discussion, debate and purposeful writing, children are encouraged to express their views clearly while listening to and respecting the views of others. • Be respectful citizens: Reading and English provide opportunities to explore children's rights, local and global issues, and what it means to be a responsible member of our community and wider world. • Be respectful of our environment: Children explore environmental issues through a range of texts and use their English skills to research, discuss and communicate ideas that encourage others to care for our environment. • Be respectful and responsible: RRSA is embedded throughout the curriculum, helping children understand their rights, responsibilities and the impact their words and actions can have on others.
Be Safe	• Be safe and confident: Children are supported to feel safe and confident when reading, knowing that it is okay to make mistakes and ask for help when they find reading challenging. • Be safe through reading: Children explore carefully chosen texts that help them understand safety, recognise risks and make safe choices in school, online and in the wider community. • Be safe through discussion: Reading provides opportunities for children to talk about characters, situations and problems, developing the language and confidence to express worries and seek help. • Be safe online: Children read and discuss texts about online safety, including online bullying, and learn how to use technology safely and responsibly when accessing digital texts and information. • Be safe and know who can help: Through reading and discussion, children learn to recognise when something may be unsafe and understand who they can talk to if they have a worry or concern. • Be safe and informed: Children develop the skills to read, understand and evaluate information, helping them make safe, informed choices in everyday life.

2. Statutory Framework and National Guidance

This policy has due regard to relevant statutory requirements and national guidance relating to the teaching of reading, including:

- Department for Education (DfE), *National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study – Key Stages 1 and 2*.
- Department for Education (DfE), *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers*.
- Department for Education (DfE), *The Reading Framework: Teaching the Foundations of Literacy*.
- Department for Education (DfE), *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years*.

- Equality Act 2010, where relevant to ensuring equitable access to learning.

The National Curriculum identifies **word reading** and **comprehension** as the two dimensions of reading. It requires pupils to develop accurate and fluent word reading alongside the ability to understand and respond to a wide range of texts.

The DfE *Reading Framework* provides evidence-informed guidance on systematic synthetic phonics, fluency, comprehension, assessment, supporting pupils who need additional help and developing a culture of reading for pleasure.

The current EYFS statutory framework applies to children from birth to five and sets standards for children's learning, development and care. The current framework came into force on 1 September 2026.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Writing Policy;
- Curriculum Policy;
- SEND/Inclusion Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; and
- Complaints Procedures Policy.

3. Leadership and responsibilities

Effective leadership and shared responsibility are central to the successful implementation of the school's reading policy. The Head of School and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will provide strategic oversight, ensuring that reading remains a whole-school priority and that high standards are maintained.

The English Lead will have responsibility for leading and developing the school's reading provision, supporting staff and monitoring its impact.

Class teachers will be responsible for the day-to-day teaching of reading, ensuring that provision meets the needs of all pupils and that assessment is used effectively to identify progress and inform future teaching.

Teaching assistants will support the teaching and development of reading through targeted interventions, guided practice and classroom support, as appropriate and under the instruction of the class teacher.

Governors will monitor and evaluate the school's approach to reading through regular review and challenge, ensuring that leaders are held accountable for pupil outcomes.

All staff will have access to appropriate training and professional development to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in delivering high-quality reading provision.

4. Reading in the Early Years and Year 1

4.1 Nursery

Reading begins in Nursery through the development of the foundations required for successful reading.

The Nursery curriculum places a strong emphasis on Phase 1 phonics, developing children's phonological awareness, listening and attention skills, oral language, vocabulary, rhyme, rhythm and the ability to hear and distinguish sounds.

Children are immersed in a language-rich environment where they:

- listen to and enjoy stories, rhymes and poems;
- develop their ability to listen attentively;
- join in with rhymes and repeated refrains;
- develop vocabulary through high-quality interactions;
- explore environmental and instrumental sounds;
- develop awareness of rhythm and rhyme;
- orally rehearse and repeat words and phrases;
- develop their understanding of the structure and sequence of stories; and
- encounter high-quality books and texts every day.

Children in Nursery may encounter graphemes, phonemes and early oral blending through appropriate experiences; however, the primary focus remains on developing language, communication, listening, attention and phonological awareness.

4.2 Reception and Year 1 – Learning to Read

Children in Reception and Year 1 follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic synthetic phonics programme.

Phonics is taught explicitly, systematically and consistently. Children learn the relationships between graphemes and phonemes and are taught to blend sounds to read words accurately.

The National Curriculum states that phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading and that pupils should use their phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words.

Children are given regular opportunities to apply their developing phonics knowledge through reading books that are closely matched to their secure phonic knowledge.

Little Wandle recommends that reading practice books are matched to children's current phonic knowledge so that children can read successfully, develop fluency and build confidence.

Where appropriate, children reread texts to develop:

- accurate decoding;
- automatic recognition of words;

- fluency;
- expression and prosody;
- vocabulary; and
- comprehension.

Children are also exposed to high-quality texts that are beyond their independent reading level through teacher-led story time, discussion and shared reading. This ensures that children continue to develop language and comprehension while their decoding skills are developing.

5. Year 2–6 – Developing Fluency and Comprehension

By Year 2, many children will have developed a secure foundation in phonics and will increasingly use their phonic knowledge automatically when encountering unfamiliar words. Children who have not yet secured the required knowledge and skills will continue to receive systematic phonics teaching alongside appropriate opportunities to develop language comprehension, fluency and reading for pleasure.

From Year 2 onwards, the emphasis increasingly moves towards developing:

- reading fluency;
- vocabulary;
- comprehension;
- reading stamina;
- background knowledge; and
- a breadth of reading experience.

Children will:

- read a wide range of high-quality texts;
- develop reading fluency;
- read aloud regularly;
- develop expression, intonation and prosody;
- encounter and discuss ambitious vocabulary;
- develop their ability to retrieve information;
- make inferences and justify their ideas;
- predict what might happen;
- explain their thinking;
- summarise and sequence information;

- discuss themes, characters, settings and author's choices;
- compare texts;
- develop their ability to read independently;
- read for different purposes; and
- develop a positive attitude towards reading.

The explicit teaching of reading continues after children have finished the phonics scheme to develop fluency and comprehension.

As pupils progress through KS2, they are taught to use knowledge of root words, prefixes, suffixes, morphology and etymology to decode and understand unfamiliar vocabulary

6. Explicit Teaching of Reading and VIPERS

Reading is explicitly taught across Kirklevington Primary School. We recognise that children do not automatically acquire the skills needed to read fluently and comprehend increasingly complex texts simply through exposure to books. Reading skills are therefore carefully modelled, explicitly taught, practised and revisited.

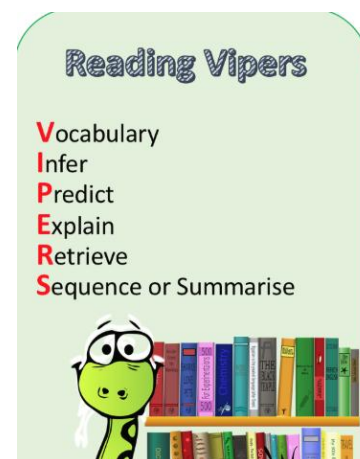
From Year 2 onwards, VIPERS lessons are taught whole class and form an important part of our explicit teaching of reading comprehension.

Teachers use a range of approaches to develop successful readers, including:

- modelling fluent and expressive reading;
- providing regular opportunities for children to read aloud;
- explicitly teaching vocabulary and exploring the meaning and use of words and phrases;
- modelling how proficient readers think about and respond to a text;
- teaching children how to locate and retrieve information;
- explicitly teaching inference and encouraging children to use evidence from the text;
- teaching prediction and encouraging children to use evidence to support their ideas;
- teaching children to explain their thinking and justify their responses;
- teaching children how to summarise and sequence information;
- providing opportunities for children to discuss and respond to texts;
- encouraging children to ask and answer questions;
- developing children's reading fluency, expression and prosody; and
- providing opportunities for children to apply reading skills independently.

6.1 VIPERS

VIPERS provides a consistent language and framework for explicitly teaching and discussing key reading comprehension skills:



V – Vocabulary: understanding and exploring the meaning and use of words and phrases.

I – Inference: using clues from the text and prior knowledge to work out meaning that is not directly stated.

P – Prediction: anticipating what might happen using evidence from the text.

E – Explanation: explaining ideas, events, characters, vocabulary and author's choices using evidence.

R – Retrieval: locating and selecting information directly from the text.

S – Summarising/Sequencing: identifying key points, summarising information and understanding the sequence of events.

VIPERS provides a useful framework for organising and discussing aspects of comprehension, but it does not represent the entirety of the National Curriculum for reading. Teachers also explicitly teach vocabulary, background knowledge, fluency, text structure, authorial choices, themes, literary response, reading strategies and reading for pleasure.

VIPERS lessons are taught whole class, ensuring that all children have access to the same high-quality texts, ambitious vocabulary, teacher modelling and rich discussion. Teachers adapt questioning, scaffolding, resources and the level of support provided to meet the needs of individual pupils within the whole-class lesson.

Children are given regular opportunities to discuss their ideas, explain their thinking and justify their responses using evidence from the text. Teachers model appropriate responses and gradually develop children's independence in applying reading strategies.

VIPERS skills are revisited throughout the school and become increasingly sophisticated as children progress. The same skill may therefore be taught at different points in a child's education, with increasing expectations for the depth and quality of their responses.

VIPERS complements rather than replaces high-quality reading discussion. Children are encouraged to develop their own interpretations and opinions, engage in meaningful conversations about books and texts, and respond critically and thoughtfully to what they have read.

Through explicit teaching, teacher modelling, whole-class VIPERS lessons, regular opportunities to read aloud and exposure to high-quality texts, we aim to develop children who can read fluently, confidently and with genuine understanding.

7. Reading aloud and Oracy

Children across the school have regular opportunities to read aloud to an adult and to their peers.

Reading aloud supports children in developing:

- accuracy;
- fluency;

- confidence;
- expression;
- prosody;
- vocabulary;
- comprehension; and
- communication skills.

Teachers model fluent and expressive reading and provide opportunities for children to rehearse and perform texts.

Children should be encouraged to read aloud in a supportive environment where mistakes are treated as part of learning.

Particular attention is given to prosody, including appropriate pace, phrasing, stress, volume and intonation.

8. High-Quality Texts and the Reading Spine

At Kirklevington Primary School, we place a strong emphasis on the quality, breadth and diversity of the texts that children encounter throughout their time at school.

Each year group has access to a carefully selected reading spine that supports the development of reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, knowledge and, importantly, a love of reading.

Our reading spine is reviewed and adapted each year to reflect the needs, interests and experiences of the children in each cohort. This ensures that the texts children encounter are engaging, relevant and purposeful, while also providing appropriate challenge and broadening their experiences beyond their own lives.

The reading spine includes a broad range of:

- fiction;
- non-fiction;
- poetry;
- traditional tales and fairy tales;
- picture books;
- contemporary literature;
- classic texts;
- texts representing different cultures, backgrounds, experiences and perspectives;
- texts linked to the wider curriculum;
- texts selected for their rich and ambitious vocabulary; and

- texts chosen specifically to promote reading for pleasure.

Texts are selected carefully to ensure that children encounter a rich and varied range of authors, poets, genres, themes and experiences throughout their time at Kirklevington Primary School.

The reading spine supports teachers in ensuring progression in children's reading experiences. It provides opportunities for children to revisit familiar authors, genres and themes while also introducing them to new and increasingly challenging vocabulary.

9. Reading for Pleasure

Reading for pleasure is a deliberate and purposeful part of school life.

We recognise that becoming a successful reader is not simply about acquiring technical reading skills. Children need to develop positive attitudes towards reading and see themselves as readers.

Reading for pleasure is therefore built purposefully into the school day.

Children have opportunities to:

- listen to adults read high-quality books;
- choose books for themselves;
- recommend books to friends;
- talk about authors, characters and stories;
- share books with peers;
- revisit favourite books;
- explore different genres;
- read independently;
- read in comfortable and inviting spaces;
- encounter books beyond their independent reading level through adult read-aloud;
- access the school library and classroom book collections; and
- celebrate reading as a valued and enjoyable activity.

Teachers act as reading role models and regularly share their own enthusiasm for books.

Children are encouraged to develop their own reading identities by discussing what they enjoy, recommending books and making choices about what they read.

Reading for pleasure is not treated as an additional reward or activity that only happens when other work is completed. It is an important part of the school's reading curriculum.

The DfE *Reading Framework* recognises the importance of developing a reading-for-pleasure culture and supporting pupils to develop a love of reading.

10. Independent Reading and Home Reading

10.1 Reception – Year 5

Children in reception – Year 5 are provided with a reading book selected by the teacher to match their current reading level.

The purpose of the matched reading book is to provide children with an appropriate level of challenge while enabling them to practise reading successfully and develop fluency and confidence.

Children take their reading book home and are encouraged to read regularly with an adult.

Children should aim to read at least three times per week with an adult at home.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- listen to their child read;
- discuss the book;
- ask questions about what has been read;
- discuss unfamiliar vocabulary;
- encourage children to make predictions and inferences;
- praise effort and progress; and
- develop positive reading routines at home.

Home reading should be a positive experience. The aim is to develop confident, fluent readers and foster a lifelong love of books rather than make reading feel like a test.

10.2 Increasing Independence in Book Choice

As pupils develop greater reading fluency and independence, they are increasingly supported to select books for themselves.

Where appropriate, children are given greater independence in selecting books that interest them and are encouraged to read a broad range of age-appropriate texts.

Moving children towards independence when choosing books to read aims to:

- promote independence;
- strengthen children's reading identity;
- support self-esteem and confidence;
- encourage personal choice;
- develop reading stamina; and
- promote a genuine love of reading.

Teachers continue to guide and support children's choices and monitor their reading to ensure that children are accessing texts that provide appropriate levels of challenge and interest.

Having independence when choosing books does not mean that children are left without support. Teachers continue to recommend books, discuss reading choices and monitor reading habits.

11. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of reading provision at Kirklevington Primary School. It is used to identify what children know and can do, identify gaps or misconceptions, monitor progress and inform future teaching and intervention.

Assessment is used formatively throughout reading lessons. Teachers continually assess children's decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and ability to discuss and respond to texts through questioning, observation, reading aloud, discussion and independent work.

Summative assessment is also used at key points throughout the year to provide a consistent measure of children's progress and attainment.

11.1 Phonics Assessment – Reception and Year 1

Children in Reception and Year 1 are assessed at the end of each five-week block of phonics teaching. These assessments are used to identify the phonemes, graphemes, words and skills that children have secured and those that require further teaching and practice.

Assessment information is used by teachers to:

- identify children who have not yet secured the phonics knowledge expected for their stage of the programme;
- identify specific gaps in phonics knowledge;
- inform subsequent teaching and keep-up provision;
- ensure children are given appropriate opportunities for additional practice;
- monitor children's progress through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme; and
- identify children who may require additional support or intervention.

Assessment is not used simply to record attainment. Teachers use the information gathered to adapt teaching and provide timely support so that children are able to keep up with the expected progression through the phonics programme.

Children who require additional support receive appropriate keep-up teaching and further opportunities to practise and apply their phonics knowledge.

11.2 Year 1 Statutory Phonics Screening Check

All eligible children in Year 1 take the statutory Phonics Screening Check in accordance with national requirements.

The Phonics Screening Check is designed to confirm whether children have learned phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. It assesses children's ability to apply their phonics knowledge when reading words, including pseudo-words.

The results of the check are used alongside the school's ongoing assessment information to identify children who require continued support with phonics and decoding.

Children who do not meet the required standard continue to receive appropriate phonics teaching and support. They will retake the Phonics Screening Check in Year 2, in accordance with statutory requirements.

11.3 Reading Comprehension Assessment – Year 1

In addition to ongoing formative assessment and phonics assessment, children in Year 1 complete one summative reading comprehension assessment during the summer term.

The assessment provides an additional measure of children's developing comprehension skills and is used alongside teacher assessment and other reading evidence.

Teachers consider children's performance in areas including:

- retrieval of information;
- vocabulary;
- inference;
- prediction;
- explanation; and
- understanding and responding to texts.

The assessment information is used to identify strengths and areas for development and to inform the teaching and support provided as children move into Year 2.

11.4 Reading Comprehension Assessment – Years 2–6

Children in Years 2–6 complete three summative reading comprehension assessments across the academic year.

These assessments provide opportunities to monitor children's progress in reading comprehension and to identify areas where further teaching, practice or intervention may be required.

The assessments reflect the skills explicitly taught through the school's reading curriculum and VIPERS framework, including:

- Vocabulary;
- Inference;
- Prediction;
- Explanation;
- Retrieval; and
- Summarising and Sequencing.

Assessment results are considered alongside children's everyday reading, classwork, reading discussions, teacher observations and reading fluency. No single assessment is used in isolation to determine a child's overall reading attainment.

Teachers use assessment information to:

- identify strengths and gaps in comprehension;
- plan future reading lessons;
- adapt teaching and questioning;
- provide additional support or intervention where required;
- monitor progress over time; and
- identify children who may require further assessment or support.

11.5 Using Assessment to Support Progress

Assessment information is reviewed regularly by teachers and school leaders to ensure that reading provision remains responsive to the needs of all children.

Where assessment identifies a gap in knowledge or a barrier to progress, teachers provide appropriate additional teaching, practice or intervention. This may include additional phonics teaching, fluency practice, vocabulary development, targeted comprehension work or supported reading.

Assessment information is also used to identify children who are making strong progress and may benefit from increased challenge, greater independence or exposure to more complex texts.

The purpose of assessment is therefore to support teaching and learning and ensure that every child makes progress towards becoming an accurate, fluent and confident reader who understands and enjoys what they read.

12. Supporting children who may need additional help and those with SEND

Kirklevington primary School is committed to ensuring that every child develops the knowledge, skills and confidence to become a successful reader. Early identification and timely intervention are central to our approach. Teachers use ongoing formative assessment, phonics assessments, reading assessments and their knowledge of individual pupils to identify children who are at risk of falling behind and to ensure that support is put in place promptly. In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, children who require additional support with phonics receive Keep-up sessions in line with the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme, enabling gaps in phonics knowledge to be addressed systematically and preventing them from becoming embedded. Children identified as requiring additional support with reading will also have additional reading practice in school, which may include individual or small-group reading, phonics reinforcement, decoding practice, fluency development, vocabulary work and comprehension support.

Teaching and intervention are underpinned by adaptive practice and a graduated approach, with staff using assessment information to respond to individual pupil need. Teachers and support staff adapt modelling, explanations, questioning, scaffolding, resources, pace, repetition and level of challenge to enable pupils to access learning while maintaining high expectations. Intervention is carefully targeted, regularly reviewed and adjusted according to pupil progress, with a focus on keep-up rather than catch-up. Where pupils have not secured the expected phonics knowledge by the end of Year 1, additional provision will be prioritised and monitored closely. Appropriate adaptations and targeted support will be provided for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and

pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), recognising that individual barriers to reading may vary. The impact of additional support will be evaluated through ongoing assessment and monitoring of pupil progress, ensuring that intervention is effective and that pupils return to, or maintain, the expected curriculum pathway as soon as possible.

13. Reading across the curriculum

Reading is developed across the curriculum and is not confined to English lessons. Teachers explicitly teach pupils how to access, interpret and evaluate subject-specific texts, vocabulary and information. Pupils encounter a range of texts in subjects including science, history, geography and other areas of the curriculum. Teachers identify and explicitly teach subject-specific vocabulary and support pupils in developing the knowledge and reading strategies needed to access increasingly complex curriculum materials.