

READING

Introduction

The importance of reading to the curriculum

The ability to read is fundamental to pupils' development as independent learners. In order to read across the curriculum with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment pupils need to orchestrate the range of strategies, depicted in the National Literacy Strategy as a series of searchlights: drawing on knowledge of context and grammatical knowledge; applying phonic knowledge and skills; applying graphic knowledge and developing word recognition.

Reading development is closely related to that of writing, for it is by reflecting upon and talking about the texts they encounter that pupils come to understand how writers write and the special relationship which exists between author and reader. It is through their critical and imaginative engagement with texts that pupils' reading of fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts enables them to make sense of the world and their place in it.

Strategy for implementation

Entitlement and curriculum provision

The National Literacy Strategy Framework provides a detailed basis for implementing the statutory requirements for reading. Much of the Programme of Study needs to be taught through the Literacy Hour. However, additional time is provided on a regular or modular basis for reading at other times. There are many opportunities for pupils to read around the school, to undertake environmental reading, in the context of learning in other subjects.

Teaching and Learning

The role of the teacher is:

- to follow the school's policy with the aim of helping pupils to become independent readers;
- to model the act of reading through shared reading and to provide focused support through guided reading;
- to assess the pupil's progress as a reader and provide explicit guidance for their development;
- to use reading as a means of locating information that pupils need to learn;
- to foster a love of reading as an enjoyable, stimulating and worthwhile activity;
- to create a supportive environment for reading.

Continuity and Progression

Foundation Stage

At the end of the Foundation Stage the pupils will have experienced shared, guided and independent reading and learned the routines and responsibilities which enable the class to operate efficiently and effectively.

Building on what pupils already know about reading and stories, the teacher helps develop early reading behaviours through shared reading, e.g. holding a book the right way up and following the text from left to right, knowing that print carries meaning, identifying the protagonists in a story, recognising signs and symbols in environmental print.

The pupils develop curiosity and enthusiasm about print. They are able to select, read and talk about a range of fiction, poetry and non-fiction. They have many stories told and read to them and they have opportunities to retell narratives themselves. The focus, particularly at the early stage, is on developing understanding and conveying meaning of the texts they read rather than on reading words accurately.

The pupils' phonological awareness and phonic knowledge develop as they follow the steps in the Progression in Phonics programme. The focus at first is on pupils' ability to discriminate between sounds through the use of rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. They then are taught to recognise phonemes in "CVC" words. They have opportunities to apply their developing phonic knowledge and skills in the context of shared reading and writing and, subsequently, in guided reading. In addition, they learn to read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently.

Key Stage 1

At Key Stage 1 the emphasis is on developing pupils' interest and pleasure as they learn to read independently and with confidence. They focus on words and sentences and how they are put together to form texts. They bring meaning to the texts they read and say what they like or dislike about them.

Enlarged texts, selected from the appropriate range of texts – fiction and non-fiction - from the National Literacy Strategy Framework, are used for shared reading at Key Stage 1. Teachers model a range of reading strategies, including the identification of sentence structure and the function of punctuation marks, and give pupils opportunities to practise phonic skills and word recognition in context.

In guided reading teachers support the reading of groups of pupils of similar reading ability as they apply the range of reading strategies taught in shared time, thus providing them with the necessary help to read the text independently.

The pupils have many opportunities to read and select books independently. There are some opportunities for the teacher, other adults or older pupils to share books with individuals, but the majority of the teaching of reading occurs during shared and guided reading.

For individual reading the pupils make guided choices from the school's graded reading programme, or carefully selected books from a range of reading scheme and non-scheme texts. They also choose books from the Library.

Key Stage 2

At Key Stage 2 pupils meet a wider range of texts in fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Teaching focuses on developing pupils' reading skills, e.g. generalising and making inferences by drawing on evidence from the text. Enlarged texts continue to be used with the focus on the writer's intentions and on one or more of the teaching objectives set down in the National Literacy Strategy Framework. There continues to be a high level of interaction between teacher and pupils with teachers inviting pupils' individual responses and interpretations rather than narrowly focused comprehension.

The texts chosen offer challenge to all pupils in the class. While judicious use of extracts and short stories occurs, fiction objectives relate frequently to a novel read 'outside' the Literacy Hour. There may well be links to work in other curriculum areas, e.g. history and personal, social and health education but the focus within the hour is on the text and the chosen objectives.

Work at sentence and word level is closely linked to texts met during shared and guided reading.

During the independent part of the Literacy Hour the pupils often undertake tasks related to the shared text. Sometimes these work best before the reading of the text (e.g. raising prior knowledge, making predictions on the basis of title and illustration, whetting the reader's appetite), sometimes during (e.g. giving advice to a character at a point of crisis or decision, noting personal response in an on-going reading journal), sometimes after (providing opportunities for reflection on the whole text, mapping a character's literal or emotional journey). The intention is to illuminate text and keep the pupils focused on their personal response and critical interpretation, not to provide holding activities.

In their independent reading pupils should increase their ability to read challenging and lengthy texts, but the emphasis should be on reading a wide range of material that enables the pupils to reach informed decisions about personal reading choices. Teachers have particular responsibilities to monitor and provide guidance to pupils about their independent reading by setting clear goals, targets and ensuring that a wide range of genre is read.

Inclusion

The National Literacy Strategy is for all pupils and the expectation is that the principles of inclusion pertain, although special circumstances may arise whereby individual pupils miss occasional Literacy Hour lessons or parts of lessons, e.g. through involvement in a Reading Recovery or speech therapy programme.

Individual programmes for teaching and support are drawn up as appropriate by teachers in conjunction with the SEN co-ordinator. Care is exercised to ensure that parents and carers are involved appropriately and kept fully informed.

The learning environment

All classrooms have well-stocked book areas with fiction and non-fiction titles, supplemented by titles from the school library and loan collections from Schools Library Service. Classroom collections are changed at regular intervals throughout the year.

The school's library is a key resource. Pupils should have ample opportunities to browse and make personal selections, in addition to learning how to locate and use all the book and media resources.

Care is taken to ensure that a wide range of texts is available in terms of content, form and genre, e.g. texts which are accessible and challenging, texts which show cultural diversity and avoid stereotyping of race, gender and class. The Schools Library Service will assist the school and teachers in evaluating provision.

Homework

Reading is regarded as a regular homework activity. Parents and pupils are encouraged to respond to books pupils read by using reading diaries and reading journals.

The role of parents and carers

The school informs parents and carers about the school's approach to reading through the familiarisation programme for pupils starting school. Reading diaries provide a means of communication between home and school.

Assessment and recording

Assessment is used to inform the planning and the teaching of reading. This takes various forms:

Key learning objectives for reading are identified from the National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching and are translated into learning outcomes. Pupils' progress is usually assessed during guided reading, supplemented by observations made by teaching assistants in shared reading and occasionally through individual assessments, e.g. completing a diagnostic running record.

Phonic assessments are carried out based on the developmental Progression in Phonics programme. Games are used to assess appropriate starting points for pupils in Reception/Year One and those older pupils whose phonic skills, knowledge and understanding are not yet secure.

Teachers are responsible for assessing the progress of all pupils in their class. At Key Stage 1 and for those pupils at Key Stage 2 whose reading is not secure, progress is assessed against the tiered criteria given in the school's reading programme. When the pupils have achieved a level of fluency and independence (i.e. reading securely at National Curriculum level 3), it is the teachers' task to ensure that a range of reading is then tackled, including texts which provide challenge and extend pupils' reading.

The contribution of reading to other aspects of the curriculum

Other areas of the curriculum offer many opportunities for pupils to apply their reading skills, particularly reading for information.

ICT

Pupils explore moving image texts in both key stages, e.g. a video of a film or television adaptation of a literacy text; the use of words, images and sounds to convey meaning and create effect in advertisements.

Pupils have opportunities to use the internet for research purposes and to learn how to use the organisational features in CD-ROMs and web pages.