



Whitstable Junior School

Reading Policy

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Reading policy

Whitstable Junior School Reading Vision

At Whitstable Junior School, our reading policy is guided by the belief that learning today shapes the leaders of tomorrow. We strive to cultivate a love for reading that not only enhances academic skills but also fosters personal growth and lifelong learning.

Our vision includes:

- **Be Kind:** Encouraging empathy and understanding through diverse and inclusive literature that reflects a variety of perspectives and experiences.
- **Be Safe:** Creating a safe and supportive reading environment where students feel comfortable exploring new ideas and expressing their thoughts.
- **Be Responsible:** Instilling a sense of responsibility in students to engage with texts critically and thoughtfully, making connections to the world around them.

Our reading program is designed to equip our pupils with the skills they need to navigate and contribute to the world, ensuring they are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

Rational

Reading is fundamental to all learning and essential for a successful and fulfilling life. Therefore, we prioritise reading to ensure that all children are working at an age-appropriate level, and for those who are not, we implement interventions that support rapid progress. Throughout the curriculum, children have opportunities to read and engage with books, frequently enjoying library visits and enrichment activities based on new and exciting texts.

Our curriculum and reading initiatives stem from a commitment to fostering a love of reading rather than simply viewing it as a requirement. The curriculum has been meticulously designed to ensure a progression of texts that increase in complexity of language and ideas. Texts are rich and regularly reviewed to guarantee that children have the best opportunities to engage with a vast array of literature. At Whitstable Juniors, we ensure that all children have access to both modern and classic literature, as well as a diverse range of poetry and writing from the UK and around the world. Ultimately, our goal is for our students to leave with a lasting joy of reading, prepared for secondary education and beyond.

Learning to read

There are four key elements involved in reading, and each is allocated significant time in our curriculum.

- 1) **Phonics** – which gives children the ability to decode words.
- 2) **Vocabulary** – which helps understanding.
- 3) **Fluency** – developing tone and intonation to help form understanding.
- 4) **Comprehension** – the understanding of what has been read.

Phonics

Most children entering our Junior School have completed their phonics curriculum and are proficient at decoding. However, this is not true for all students, so we conduct thorough assessments and provide interventions for those who need additional support. Children are assessed upon joining in year 3, and if they require more phonic instruction, we use the Read Write Inc. program during intervention periods. Ensuring that all children can master decoding, blending, and segmenting is a priority to help them meet the demands of the reading curriculum.

Vocabulary

We strive to expand our children's vocabulary across the curriculum. Using principles from Vocabulary Ninja, we encourage broadening vocabulary in all lessons, especially English. Our children learn precise synonyms and appropriate language use, supported by carefully chosen texts, including classic and modern literature. Vocabulary is discussed and explored during book talk sessions as well as the wider curriculum.

Book Talk

An essential component of our weekly programme for all children, in addition to their primary English lessons, is the dedicated reading session. During this session, the entire class reads a text together. Typically, each child will have an individual book or share with a peer to fully engage with the story and provide opportunities for everyone to read aloud.

In these sessions, children concentrate on decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers read to the students, pose questions, listen to children read, and engage in whole-class activities such as choral reading, echo reading, and repeated reading. These sessions are structured around ongoing discussions of the text, guided by our progressive reading curriculum.

To ensure full engagement and assess understanding, children complete up to three questions at the end of each book talk session in their reading journals. These journals serve as records of their comprehension activities and allow children to note down their favourite

authors and stories, maintaining a personal literary record. We also discuss beloved books and authors during book talk sessions and when recording Buster Book data once a week. (Buster Book tracks the duration children read on Wednesdays, with results shared in assembly for each class).

Our reading framework aligns with National Curriculum requirements, ensuring comprehensive coverage and skill progression in comprehension development.

Reading Books

Our intent is to cultivate a passion for reading. Children learning phonics have access to a variety of fully decodable books matched to their skill level, as well as a wide selection of shared reading texts they can enjoy with their teachers and parents.

All children have ample opportunities to select books from our well-stocked reading corners and library. We have recently moved to a genre-based organisation system which allows the children to find books they will enjoy easily and quickly. We also encourage children to read their own books from home if they prefer and love learning about the books our children enjoy reading for pleasure. When helping your child select a book to read at home, we encourage the 5 finger test: open the book on a random page and ask the child to read, if they make 5 mistakes on that page, the book is probably too difficult to read independently. For appropriate book ideas, we recommend <https://www.thereaderteacher.com/>

We believe this home and school partnership helps children become confident, fluent readers. In fact, it is a school-wide expectation for parents and guardians to listen to their children read aloud as well as discussing the books they are reading, even for just a short time each evening. We also love to promote reading to children at all year groups – this can be a wonderful way of allowing children to access books that really interest them but may stretch their reading skill level.

Assessment

In the initial weeks of term, all children undergo an assessment to determine their reading age. This enables teachers to decide whether a child should take home a reading scheme book or if they are prepared to choose their own stories (with guidance) as a free reader. Children with a reading age below 11 years are re-assessed every other term to monitor progress.

Formative assessment is conducted continuously through English lessons, Book Talk, and one-on-one reading sessions with adults. For summative assessment, formal assessments focusing on comprehension skills are administered to all children three times a year. The results are thoroughly analysed for gaps, and teachers address areas needing additional

support in English and Book Talk. Children not meeting age-related expectations receive targeted intervention time and additional phonics support as needed, assessed using the Read Write Inc phonics assessment three times a year.

For children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), such as dyslexia, we offer various interventions and support methods, including Toe by Toe and Sounds Progress. Additionally, we have invested in an extensive collection of Barrington Stoke books, specifically designed to assist dyslexic readers in accessing age-appropriate stories with slightly lower reading levels.

The 'Lowest 20% Trackers' system identifies students who are not meeting age-based expectations. These students receive appropriate, targeted support detailed on class provision maps, which may include phonics intervention, one-on-one reading, or comprehension interventions. Their progress is continuously monitored, and the support provided is adjusted as necessary throughout the year. Students not making progress are discussed with the senior leadership team during Pupil Progress Meetings, and additional support measures are implemented.