



Reading Policy

Summer 2025

1. Introduction

At Haydon Abbey School and Pre-School, we recognise the significant importance that reading holds for children's lives; their educational journey and beyond. We believe that developing effective reading skills will enable our pupils to acquire improved literary skills, understanding of the world, gain an extensive vocabulary to draw upon, greater concentration, higher levels of creativity and imagination, and the ability to think critically, sharing ideas and opinions. Reading is fundamental to the pupil's development as independent learners. For children to succeed across the curriculum they need to read with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment. We have a strong focus on language for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Our overarching aim for Reading is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. Our reading provision is also informed by the Department for Education's **Reading Framework**.

At Haydon Abbey, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a curriculum team dedicated to Reading, composed of; an Assistant Headteacher, a KS2 Reading Leader and Reading Champion, who drive the early reading programme and beyond in our school. They are highly skilled at leading phonics and reading, and they regularly monitor and support our reading team, so that everyone teaches with fidelity to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. The Little Wandle approach has been established throughout the school and is used to support all children to succeed in reading. We start teaching Little Wandle Foundations in our Preschool and then, from Reception, we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school. As a result, our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read.

At Haydon Abbey, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

2. Intent

Reading is a fundamental skill that unlocks a world of knowledge, imagination, and empathy for children. It's more than just decoding words on a page; it's about making connections, understanding diverse perspectives, and building a strong sense of self.

Books act as mirrors, reflecting children's own experiences and emotions back to them. When children see themselves represented in stories, it validates their feelings, helps them understand their place in the world, and is crucial for developing a strong sense of self and identity.

Beyond self-reflection, books also serve as windows, offering glimpses into the lives of others. They allow children to step outside their own reality, gaining insights into different cultures, beliefs, perspectives, and ways of life. This exposure fosters empathy, broadens their understanding of the world, and prepares them to navigate a diverse society.

This policy aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Develop a strong foundation in phonics, enabling them to decode words accurately and confidently.
- Become fluent and expressive readers, able to read with understanding and prosody.
- Develop a rich vocabulary and a deep understanding of texts across a range of genres.
- Cultivate a lifelong love of reading for pleasure and for information and to develop the habit of reading widely and often.
- Are exposed to a wide variety of high-quality texts and authors.
- Are supported effectively, regardless of their starting points or specific learning needs.
- Develop an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading and spoken language.
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Are competent in the art of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in discussions and debates.

The Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: Framework Document (2014).

3. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents, and volunteers involved in the teaching and promotion of reading at Haydon Abbey School and Pre-School.

4. Principles of Reading

Our reading provision is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Systematic Synthetic Phonics:** We deliver a rigorous and sequential phonics programme, Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, to ensure all children acquire the essential decoding skills.
- **High Expectations:** We maintain consistently high expectations for all children's reading progress and attainment.
- **Reading for Pleasure:** We actively promote and encourage reading for enjoyment through a rich and varied selection of books and engaging initiatives.
- **Whole School Approach:** Reading is prioritised across the curriculum, with all staff recognising their role in developing reading skills.
- **Parental Partnership:** We recognise the crucial role parents play in their child's reading journey and actively seek to build strong home-school links.

5. Implementation of the Reading Curriculum

5.1 Early Reading (Preschool, Reception and Key Stage 1)

Preschool Provision: We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and Language' and 'Literacy'. These include:

- Sharing high-quality stories and poems.
- Learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes. Research tells us that nursery rhymes can support children to develop their language, their awareness of sounds within words and even their later reading (Bryant et al. 1989). We use the Little Wandle phonological awareness planning to complement and reinforce our Phase 1 teaching.
- Activities that develop focused listening and attention, pre-phonics skills with the aim of enabling children to orally blend. In Preschool, children follow a pre-phonics approach to help them tune into sounds and be ready to learn the alphabetical code systematically when they transition to Reception.
- Attention to high-quality language.
- **Developing a Love of Poetry and Storytelling:** In Preschool, children are immersed in rich language experiences through the use of a **poetry basket** and **Helicopter Stories**. These engaging approaches foster a deep love of poetry, oral storytelling, and imaginative play, providing a strong foundation for future reading success. We ensure Preschool children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.
- **Encouraging Home Reading and Book Engagement:** Preschool children are encouraged to take home library books to share with their families. Furthermore, we operate a dedicated **toy and book library** every Tuesday, from which children can borrow items. This initiative, alongside many other activities explicitly based around books, further cultivates a love for reading and stories from an early age.

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised (Reception and KS1):

- All children in Reception and Key Stage 1 receive daily, discrete phonics lessons following the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. These sessions are taught whole-class, ensuring all children are exposed to the same sounds and high expectations, which significantly aids their success.
- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception. We follow the Little Wandle expectations of progress:
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
 - Children in Year 1 review Phases 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.
- Lessons are structured to be paced, engaging, and highly interactive, building upon prior knowledge systematically.

Reading Squads (Reception and KS1):

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children.
- These groups are carefully organised based on children's current secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments, ensuring targeted and effective teaching.
- They are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group.
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
 - **Session 1: Decoding:** Focuses on applying phonic knowledge to accurately decode words in the chosen text.
 - **Session 2: Prosody:** Concentrates on reading with expression, intonation, and fluency, teaching children to read with understanding and expression.
 - **Session 3: Comprehension:** Develops understanding of the text, including vocabulary, characters, plot, and themes.
- At the end of the Reading Squad sessions, children take the decodable reading book home to consolidate their learning and share their progress with parents/carers.

5.2 Reading Fluency and Comprehension (Year 2 and KS2 and Secure Phonics Learners)

Transition to Fluency:

- Once children are secure in their phonic knowledge and have demonstrated a consistent ability to decode and read fluently, they transition from the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme to the Little Wandle Fluency programme. This typically occurs in Year 2 or Year 3, based on individual progress.

- The Little Wandle Fluency programme builds on the established systematic approach, focusing on developing confident and comprehending readers.

Little Wandle Fluency Programme Delivery:

- The delivery of the Little Wandle Fluency programme follows a similar structure to the familiar Reading Squads, ensuring a smooth transition for the children.
- Children independently read their chosen chapter books, which are carefully selected to match their reading level and interests, using assessments that identify their reading speed and accuracy.
- Children are assessed at least once per term on their reading fluency (In addition to the book banded assessments)
- Fluency levels 1-5 are decodable and levels 6-10 are not fully decodable.
- These independent reading sessions are followed by structured lesson plans that cover:
 - **Decoding/Word Recognition:** Continued development of strategies for unfamiliar words.
 - **Fluency:** Practice reading with speed, accuracy, and expression.
 - **Comprehension:** In-depth exploration of the text, including inferential and deductive reasoning, summarising, and critical analysis.

Key Stage 2 - Reading Approaches: Children in Key Stage

Daily Guided Reading and VIPERS Instruction:

We have daily guided reading sessions where teachers plan reading lessons based around the **VIPERS framework**. These sessions explicitly teach the skills children need to read well with understanding and critical thinking. Teachers will systematically cover each VIPERS skill, drawing upon evidence-informed pedagogical approaches such as Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and WALKTHRU strategies to enhance engagement and ensure deep understanding.

The VIPERS lessons are linked to content domains that build across the week, which ensure pupils understand the specific skills of language comprehension and are confident in the rigour, pace, and expectations of the end-of-year group assessments.

- **V - Vocabulary:** Children are explicitly taught new vocabulary from the text, using strategies such as contextual clues, etymology, and dictionary skills. Lessons focus on understanding word meanings and their impact on the text. This involves pre-teaching difficult words, exploring synonyms and antonyms, and using vocabulary in new contexts.
- **I - Inference:** Pupils are guided to read between the lines, using clues from the text and their own background knowledge to infer characters' feelings, motives, and unspoken details. This skill involves asking 'why' questions, exploring character thoughts, and interpreting implied meanings. Think Pair Share and Cold Calling are

strategies used to ensure all pupils are ready to articulate their inferences, promoting active participation from every child, not just volunteers.

- **P - Predict:** Children learn to use existing textual evidence (e.g., plot developments, character actions, genre conventions) to make informed predictions about what might happen next, justifying their reasoning. This encourages active reading and critical thinking about narrative progression. Teachers will encourage Think-Pair-Share to foster collaborative prediction building and justification.
- **E - Explain:** This skill focuses on explaining their understanding of events, characters' actions, themes, and the author's choices, drawing directly on textual evidence. This involves articulating connections, clarifying concepts, and discussing the purpose of specific language or structural choices. Cold Calling is employed here to check for understanding across the class and encourage precise explanations.
- **R - Retrieve:** Children practice locating specific information and key details within the text quickly and accurately. This includes identifying facts, dates, names, and explicit statements. This is a foundational skill that is frequently revisited.
- **S - Summarise/Sequence:** Pupils develop the ability to condense information into concise summaries and to order events chronologically or causally. This promotes understanding of main ideas and narrative structure. Structured approaches, often reinforced through guided practice, will be used.

Differentiated VIPERS Lessons:

Teachers skilfully adapt VIPERS lessons to cater for the range of abilities within the classroom, ensuring all children are appropriately challenged and supported. This differentiation is achieved through:

- **Assessment for Learning:** Using the data, each class has whole-class targets based on the reading domains that they are assessed on. These are updated termly.
- **Varying Question Complexity:** Teachers pose a range of questions, from literal recall for developing readers to more complex inferential and evaluative questions for those ready for deeper analysis, allowing all children to access and engage with the text at their level.
- **Tiered Support:** Struggling readers receive additional scaffolding, such as pre-teaching key vocabulary, providing sentence stems for answers, offering graphic organisers, offering partially completed tasks, or engaging in small group guided reading sessions to reinforce specific skills. Teachers may provide sentence starters, visual aids, or break down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps.
- **Extension Activities:** More able readers are challenged with higher-order thinking tasks, opportunities for independent research related to the text, deeper textual analysis, and creative responses to the text (e.g., writing from a different character's perspective, debating a theme).
- **Flexible Grouping:** Children may work in mixed-ability groups for collaborative discussions, encouraging peer-to-peer learning, or be grouped by specific skill needs for targeted teaching and explicit instruction on a particular VIPERS element.
- **Modelling and Scaffolding:** Teachers explicitly model effective reading strategies for each VIPERS skill (e.g., thinking aloud while inferring, demonstrating how to summarise) and gradually reduce support as children become more proficient and

confident in applying the skills independently. This aligns with Rosenshine's Principle of Modelling and Scaffolding.

Cross-Curricular Text Immersion:

The class text used for reading lessons is often integrated into the children's literacy lessons. This cross-curricular approach allows children to become deeply immersed in the text, enabling a richer and more profound understanding of its themes, characters, and language. This repeated exposure and varied engagement foster a deeper connection with the material and reinforce comprehension skills, as children explore the text through writing, drama, and discussion.

5.3 Literacy Curriculum Based Around Books

Our broader English curriculum is deeply rooted in high-quality texts. Whole-class teaching of literacy is frequently based around core books, allowing children to immerse themselves in rich narratives and expand their vocabulary and understanding of different writing styles and genres.

6. Assessment

- **Assessment for Learning:** Used daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support and weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative Assessment for Reception and KS1:** Used every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need. This data is scrutinised by the Reading Team through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and ensure additional support for teachers. The school also uses **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** to monitor overall reading progress and identify areas for strategic development.
- **Fluency Assessments:** These measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They are used:
 - With children following the Rapid Catch-up programme in Years 2 to 6, when they are reading the Phase 5 set 3, 4 and 5 books.
 - To assess when children are ready to exit their programme. For KS1 children, this is when they read the final fluency assessment at 60–70+ words per minute. Older children can exit the Rapid Catch-up programme when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute. At these levels, children should have sufficient fluency to tackle any book at age-related expectations. After exiting their programme, children do not need to read any more fully decodable books.

- **Placement Assessment:** Used with any child new to the school in Reception and KS1 to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan and provide appropriate extra teaching.
- **Statutory Assessment:** Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics screening check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.
- **Ongoing Assessment for Rapid Catch-up in Years 2 to 6:** Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through:
 - The Rapid Catch-up initial assessment to quickly identify any gaps in their phonic knowledge and plan appropriate teaching.
 - The Rapid Catch-up summative assessments to assess progress and inform teaching.
 - These fluency assessments measure children's accuracy and reading speed in short one-minute assessments. They also assess when children are ready to exit the Rapid Catch-up programme, which is when they read the final fluency assessment at 90+ words per minute.

7. Intervention and Support

- **Keep Up Sessions (Early Reading):** Any child who needs additional practice has Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- **Rapid Catch Up Sessions (Fluency):** We timetable phonics lessons for any child in Year 2 (after the Autumn Term) and above who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics screening check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the Rapid Catch-up assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach to these using the Rapid Catch-up resources, at pace. These short lessons last 15-20 minutes daily and have been designed to ensure children quickly catch up to age-related expectations in reading.
- **Reading Champion Support:** Our dedicated Reading Champion works with specific groups of children who have larger gaps in their knowledge. This includes pupils who may have recently moved schools, children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), or those who have arrived from overseas with no prior schooling. The Reading Champion provides highly individualised and intensive support to close these gaps effectively.

8. Home Reading and Parental Engagement

- **Home Reading:** A fully decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family. Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children. We share the research behind the importance and impact of sharing quality children's books with parents through parent information presentations.
- **Home Reading Incentives:** We actively encourage and celebrate home reading through a variety of engaging incentives, motivating children to read regularly outside of school hours.
- **Parent Reading Workshops:** We host workshops for parents to provide them with strategies and resources to support their child's reading journey at home. Parents come into the classroom and watch a short phonics lesson, followed by activities that promote reading and writing, which empowers parents and equips them with knowledge about how their child is being taught to read and write.
- **Fairy Tale Fridays (Reception):** In Reception, we invite parents to participate in "Fairy Tale Fridays," where they come into school to read with the children, fostering a shared love of stories and strengthening the home-school connection.

9. Enrichment and Inspiration

- **Reading for Pleasure:** At Haydon Abbey School and Pre-School, we place great importance on the children being read to by an adult, just for pleasure, for at least 10 minutes per day, in a time that is protected and valued. Teachers are supported to select high quality texts to expose the children to using the schools' reading spine and recommendations. The school has a purpose-built library, which is cherished by all. Each year group has a timetabled slot per week to visit the school library and take a book of their choosing home with them to share with their family. Children have access to class libraries, where they can choose books and spend time reading for pleasure. This resource (along with library books) can be used at any time that the Teacher indicates that it is time to Drop Everything and Read (DEAR Time). This encourages children to become immersed in a book, or other reading material, of their choice and demonstrates to the children the importance and value that we place on reading.
- **Author Visits:** We regularly invite authors and storytellers to visit the school, inspiring children and bringing the world of books and writing to life.
- **World Book Day/Reading Events:** World Book Day is celebrated each year to inspire children to read and emphasise the importance of reading for enjoyment. Throughout the year the children across the school engage with many visitors and visits based around reading such as authors, storytellers and local community library visits.
- **Book Fairs, Sponsored Reads and Holiday Reading Challenges:** Throughout the year, the children take part in events, which raise the profile of reading. The events encourage children to cherish books and read for pleasure. The junior leadership team help to run the book fair; promoting it, inviting the classes to view the books

and selling the books after school. The proceeds to each event, help to fund the stocking of our book vending machine.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** Responsible for the overall strategic direction and implementation of the reading policy.
- **Assistant Headteacher (AHT) and Reading Champion:** Jointly oversee the Early Reading provision across the school, working closely with teaching teams to ensure high standards.
- **Reading Lead:**
 - Leads the implementation of the Little Wandle programmes.
 - Monitors all phonics lessons and reading groups closely.
 - Provides regular coaching and feedback to staff on their teaching practice, on a two-week cycle, to ensure consistent high-quality delivery.
 - Analyses assessment data to identify trends and areas for development.
 - Ensures resources are up-to-date and accessible.
 - Regularly monitors and observes teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning, supporting Teachers to identify their cohort's needs and address them.
- **Class Teachers:**
 - Deliver daily phonics lessons and reading sessions with fidelity to the programmes.
 - Accurately assess pupil progress and identify children needing additional support.
 - Communicate with parents regarding reading progress and provide guidance for home reading.
 - Promote reading for pleasure in the classroom.
 - All teachers in our school have been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load. Lesson templates, Prompt cards and 'How to' videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- **Support Staff (LSAs):**
 - Deliver targeted 'Keep Up' and 'Rapid Catch Up' interventions as directed.
 - Support phonics and reading lessons in the classroom.
 - Work under the guidance of the class teacher and Reading Lead.
 - Adapt the teaching in lessons, for those with larger gaps, to ensure that all children can make progress.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be continually monitored by the Reading Lead (Assistant Headteacher) and Reading Champion through:

- Learning walks and lesson observations.
- Pupil progress meetings.

- Analysis of assessment data.
- Book looks and pupil voice.
- Regular feedback and coaching cycles for staff.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Reading Lead, Assistant Headteacher, and Headteacher, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, school context, or new educational research.

Date Adopted: Autumn 2022

Date of Last Review: Summer 2025

Date of Next Review: Summer 2026

13. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in Literacy according to their individual abilities. We identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. More able children are identified and suitable learning challenges provided. Children who are identified as having additional needs with reading, receive extra support from teachers and LSAs.

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

14. Governance of English at Haydon Abbey

The Governing Body at Haydon Abbey maintains close oversight of the school's progress. They frequently visit, participating in learning observations, discussions, and tours with the Reading Team. This direct engagement, combined with regular feedback and reports on the Reading Team's focus and action plans, enables the Governors to effectively challenge the school and ensure reading continues to be a top priority.