The Gates
Primary School
Westhoughton

Reading Policy
September 2026
Miss L Fairhurst

Intent

At The Gates, English is central to our vision and is deeply embedded within our school curriculum. We aim to provide a high-quality English education that establishes a strong foundation for every child, preparing them with essential literacy skills for adult life. Our goal is to ensure that all children become proficiently literate and make progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

As a school, we believe that creating a culture of reading is a vital tool in ensuring our children are given the best life chances. Cultivating readers with a passion for a wide range of materials will ensure that children's love of reading will extend far beyond the classroom and allow them to build on their skills independently through a real curiosity and thirst for knowledge.

We believe that the ability to read and write is vital for our children's success. This skill set not only enables them to navigate the next stages of their education but also prepares them to flourish in the wider world. As a school, we are committed to fostering a lifelong passion for reading in all our children, achieved through engaging and high-quality learning experiences.

We aim to:

- To provide children with the skills to decode words in order to be able to read fluently with understanding of what they have read.
- To support children to achieve a good understanding of phonics and early reading so they can move on to become confident, independent readers.
- To develop a child's love of reading through widespread reading for enjoyment.
- To ensure pupils acquire a wealth of vocabulary through exposure to high-quality texts.
- To have a consistent reading approach throughout whole class reading and phonics sessions to ensure high outcomes.

Implementation

Curriculum:

From their very first moments in the school children take part in phonics sessions and are immersed more widely into a literacy-rich curriculum. In Nursery, the children learn about the early speaking and listening skills such as hearing and identifying the initial sounds, discriminating between environmental sounds and oral blending and segmenting that lay the foundations for Phase 2 phonics teaching.

From Reception, our children follow the Essential Letters and Sounds validated SSP programme through to Key Stage 1. Our curriculum aims to motivate and inspire children to become confident and enthusiastic learners by igniting a passion for literacy. It is carefully designed to embed and build upon prior knowledge and skills in a systematic way, ensuring rapid progression based on robust assessments. Skilled teaching enables children to become confident, fluent readers with a secure understanding, which lies at the heart of our curriculum.

From Year 2 to Year 6, Reading is taught daily for 45 minutes using a whole class reading model. Teachers aim to use a range of high-quality texts to expose children to a variety of genres and extend their knowledge of authors.

Where appropriate, books which exemplify key features of a genre or include writing elements that support the writing unit may be chosen.

Throughout their time at The Gates, children will be immersed and will experience a range of genres covering non-fiction, modern and classical poetry and fiction by a range of poets and authors from around the world. These genres will build as they move throughout the school, so that by the end of Year 6, the exposure will inspire them to become avid readers, fostering a genuine interest in literature and promoting reading for pleasure.

Within reading lessons, teachers carefully plan to ensure a consistent, skill-based approach to reading is evident. Each reading lesson focuses on specific VIPERS skills such as Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explain, Retrieve, and Sequencing and Summarising. This approach provides children with opportunities to engage in high-quality discussions, thereby developing their ability to explain their understanding of books and other reading materials.

Salford Sentence Reading and Comprehension Test

The Salford Sentence and Reading Comprehension Test (SSRT) is administered termly by assistant teachers in schools, providing regular checkpoints to assess students' reading and comprehension progress. This frequent testing enables consistent monitoring of individual development and ensures that any areas of need are identified and addressed promptly.

Fluency

Reading lessons not only develop children's comprehension skills but also place emphasis on supporting their reading fluency—the ability to read aloud with appropriate pace, expression and intonation. At the start of the year, initial SSRT assessments are completed to identify children who may require additional support with reading. These focus children are then targeted for intervention, with tailored strategies used to build their confidence and accuracy in reading aloud, supporting their overall progress throughout the year.

Cross-Curricular Links

Medium Term Plans have been created to ensure that a range of high-quality fiction, non-fiction, and poetry texts are accessed throughout the year. These plans specify the novels used and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. When opportunities arise, the class novel links to other curriculum areas such as Science, History, and Geography—enhancing children's learning and broadening their vocabulary. If cross-curricular links do not naturally provide opportunities to use rich and engaging texts, we select carefully chosen, high-quality literature that is appropriate for the age group to be the central focus.

Reading for Pleasure:

As part of our commitment to promoting Reading for Pleasure, a dedicated 'Mr D Storytime' session is timetabled for each class every week. During these sessions, classes have the autonomy to choose the book they wish to enjoy together, allowing pupils to take ownership of their reading journey. This time encourages a love of storytelling and allows pupils to explore new adventures, characters and experiences in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

In their free time, children are encouraged to engage with a wide range of high-quality texts carefully selected by our Reading Buddies. Our newly established reading cupboards, located in the pavilions outside, are restocked with a diverse and appealing selection of books. These inviting spaces provide pupils with easy access to literature that supports independent reading habits and reinforces a positive reading culture throughout the school.

Home Reading:

To promote and reinforce the importance of regular reading, a whole-school Home Reading Challenge is in place. Children are expected to read at least five times per week at home, with progress monitored using a traffic light system recorded in school. Pupils who read three or four times in a week are marked as 'yellow', while those reading fewer times are recorded as 'red'. Children who meet or exceed the expectation of five reads are awarded 'green' status and entered into a prize draw to win a book from our reading vending machine.

Class teachers collect and total this data weekly to calculate a class reading percentage. The class with the highest percentage is awarded a certificate and a badge which is proudly displayed on the whole-school awards board in the hall.

Families and children record their reading in individual reading records, helping to foster a strong home-school partnership in support of reading development.

To support both reading progress and a love of reading, children are provided with books that are closely matched to their reading ability, while also being encouraged to choose books for pleasure from school or home. This approach ensures that children access texts appropriate for their age and stage of development, while also fostering enjoyment and independence in reading.

To celebrate the achievements of all our readers, children are encouraged to record the titles of all books they complete—whether from school, home or other sources. Milestone certificates are awarded to recognise their commitment and progress:

- Bronze for 10 books
- Silver for 25 books
- Gold for 50 books
- Platinum for 100 books

Planning:

Our English curriculum is planned in alignment with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Following our structured planning procedures, reading is taught both as a discrete subject and as a tool to support learning across other areas of the curriculum. Reading is planned across three phases: long-term, medium-term, and short-term, ensuring progression, coherence and coverage throughout the year.

Long Term Planning:

The National Curriculum outlines the units of work to be taught over the course of a year in each year group.

Medium Term Planning:

Our medium-term plans have been created to ensure a range of high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts are accessed throughout the year. These plans define the novels we use and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. Teachers are not restricted to these novels and have the flexibility to modify them according to the needs and interests of the children in their cohort. Writing opportunities are provided each half term; on some occasions, these may link to the class novels to create a holistic approach between Reading and Writing.

Short Term Planning:

Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives and outcomes for lessons and provides details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning and AT (Assistant Teacher) deployment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage:

Within quality first teaching, 'Essential Letters and Sounds' (ELS), our DfE validated, complete systematic synthetic phonics programme, is effectively delivered daily to whole classes by class teachers in Reception and Key Stage 1. Daily whole class phonics lessons in these year groups follow a consistent teaching sequence, which includes review, teach, practise, apply and review. To enable children to 'keep up' rather than require 'catch up', ELS interventions are delivered to targeted children within phonics lessons and outside of lessons. Half termly assessments are undertaken to identify gaps and monitor progress in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and where appropriate to meet needs, Key Stage 2. More information can be found in the school's Phonics Policy.

Assessment

Marking:
In daily lessons, teachers use short-term assessments to inform their teaching and adjust their plans as needed. These assessments are closely aligned with the teaching objectives and learning outcomes.

Teachers assess reading outcomes daily and work is marked to the learning objective. Each day, the learning objective is highlighted to assess children's learning for that day. Green – Learning objective met, Yellow – Learning Objective working towards and Pink – Learning Objective not met.

In EYFS, children's reading achievements are captured on Seesaw through video recordings and photographs which have comments and next steps where appropriate. Evidence of reading in phonics lessons is recorded in phonics books daily and marked in line with the school policy.

Medium-term assessments
Reading is assessed termly for Years 2 to 5 using NTS assessments, while Year 6 is assessed through end-of-key-stage assessments. Teachers administer the tests during assessment week and enter the data for analysis by the English Subject Lead. The reading papers are analysed to identify gaps in understanding, which then inform future planning.

Progress across classes is closely monitored by the subject leaders and the senior leadership team. Monitoring will include: book looks, lesson observations and pupil voice interviews. The findings of this monitoring will be used to inform next steps for the children and the implementation of reading across the school as a whole.

Inclusion

Teaching English to Children with Special Educational Needs:
At The Gates School, we teach Reading and Writing to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Teachers provide help with communication and English through:

- Using texts that children can read and understand
- Using visual and written materials in different formats
- Using ICT, other technological aids and recorded materials
- Using alternative communication such as signs and symbols

Equality of Opportunity:
All of our children have equal access to reading provision and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing adaptive opportunities for skills development. Children who need additional support are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. SEND pupils are catered for and progress is monitored.

Interventions:
Interventions are carefully thought out and purposefully planned to support targeted children across all classes. Children who require additional support with their reading are identified and interventions are tailored to meet their specific needs. These interventions may include additional phonics sessions, fluency development or structured activities aimed at targeting specific reading comprehension skills. Each intervention is designed to address individual needs students face, ensuring they receive the right support to make progress and improve their reading skills.

Enrichment:

As part of our whole-school commitment to fostering a love of reading, we have a team of dedicated Reading Leaders who help to champion reading throughout the school community. Our Reading Leaders play a key role in promoting a love of reading across the school. They support individual pupils with reading, lead half-termly reading challenges and celebrate reading achievements through a termly Reading Round-Up. Each week, they recognise reading challenge winners, who are rewarded with a book from our reading vending machine—an initiative also managed and restocked by the Reading Leaders to keep it engaging and diverse.

To further instil a love of reading, we celebrate different authors by regularly reviewing books, researching authors and illustrators and taking part in national book days such as World Book Day. Author visits are arranged where possible and children have the opportunity to ask questions to further ignite a passion for reading. Reading bingo competitions are regularly in place and entries receive a prize. School has strong links to the local library and children visit this regularly. Librarians also visit the school to read to the children and raise the profile of the library service.

Parental Involvement:

We actively encourage parents to be involved in their child's reading journey by offering opportunities such as reading stay-and-learn workshops, where parents can gain an understanding of what reading looks like across the school and participate in a reading lesson. Parents are also invited to attend class poetry recitals, celebrating their child's progress and achievements. Clear expectations for end-of-key-stage outcomes are shared with parents to ensure alignment and support. Additionally, we emphasise the importance of regular reading at home, reinforcing skills and fostering a love for language.

Impact

Our English curriculum is carefully designed with clear goals and a structured approach, ensuring all children develop a broad range of knowledge and skills.

Through this rich curriculum, children are equipped to become lifelong learners who appreciate and enjoy literature in all its forms. By mastering speaking, reading, and writing, pupils gain the essential tools to participate confidently and effectively in society, setting them up for future success.

The impact of our curriculum is evident as children progress from EYFS to Year 6, demonstrating consistent growth, sustained learning, and the development of transferable skills. We measure attainment through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 national assessments in reading as well as termly assessments. As children continue their education, we hope they carry forward their passion for English and high aspirations.