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Middle School
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Hexham Middle School

Reading Strategy

July 2025

Next annual update: July 2026

Hexham Middle School

Reading Strategy

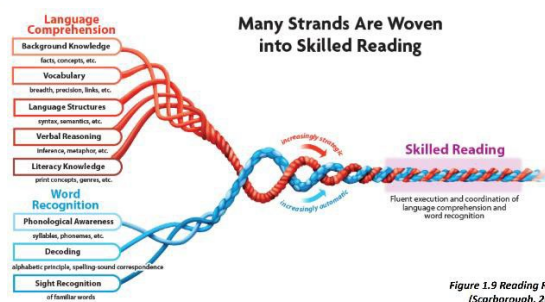
Last updated: July 2025

Reading Coordinator: Julie Ingledew, Assistant Headteacher

At Hexham Middle School, we strive to promote a lifelong love of reading and are proud of the reading culture we have within our school. We want to create curious, independent and fluent readers in order to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education and lives. The HMS library is at the heart of our school and each English class visits the library for a reading lesson regularly. In addition, our novel-based approach across years 5 to 8 ensures that a broad range of literature (fiction and non-fiction) is explored as pupils progress through the school. The literacy across the curriculum policy ensures that all staff are teachers of reading who promote a love of literature and who effectively engage pupils with reading material and language appropriate to their subject. Our curriculum is designed so that pupils are immersed in fiction, non-fiction and poetry which links directly to the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar and leads to high-quality, engaging and relevant writing outcomes across all year groups.

The aims of our Reading Strategy are:

- To provide structured opportunities for all, but especially the struggling readers, to develop their reading fluency and comprehension.
- To develop the pedagogical expertise surrounding reading, in relation to the 10 Elements of Great Teaching and to provide a consistent, curriculum-wide approach to developing reading skills, that supports all, but especially our struggling readers.
- To provide pupils with a range of resources and opportunities to stimulate their desire to read.



When designing the reading curriculum (both within English lessons and across other subjects) leaders and teachers have rooted their planning in educational research including the Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001). Leaders have built their thinking around the Department for Education's Reading Framework and the Education Endowment Foundations' [Improving Literacy in KS2](#) and [in Secondary Schools research](#). The following strategy outlines our strong purpose, how this is implemented across all year groups and how we ensure that our learners are confident readers with secure life-equipping literacy skills.

It is essential that our reading strategy is closely aligned with Queen Elizabeth High School to ensure that effective support is maintained where necessary. We have also worked as a Partnership of

Schools in Hexham to design a reading framework which establishes core principles from the early years and through the key stages. Whilst aligning practice entirely is challenging, we believe that by establishing core principles, we are providing a coherent educational journey for the children in our schools. This is particularly important when supporting children who are struggling to read fluently.

Ambition for all learners

Our ambition is to ensure that all learners, regardless of their starting point, understand the value of reading and the opportunities it brings. We want our pupils to love visiting the library and to love reading both with their peers in lessons, with family members or independently. We understand the importance of reading for future success and have a thorough approach to supporting struggling readers to develop their skills and confidence.

For pupils with additional learning needs (SEND), our staff team understand the needs of individual children and ensure that the curriculum is adapted to enable all pupils to succeed. Our library has a wide selection of dyslexia-friendly texts which have been adapted with specific font and page colours. Teachers have detailed information about all pupils' reading assessment and know how to target support particularly in line with a child's SEND profile.

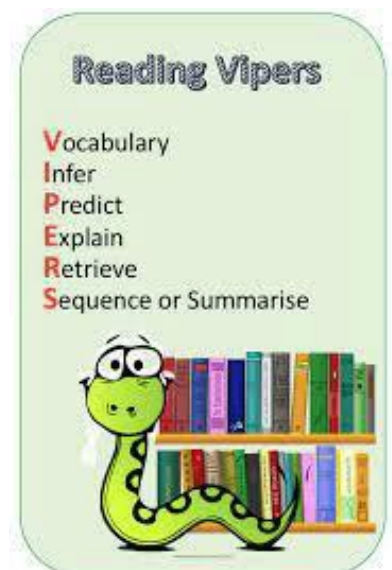
We want all children to read with phonic accuracy and automaticity – we know that these are essential components in developing fluency and reading confidence. Where children cannot read with such automaticity, we know that they will struggle to access texts across the curriculum and their learning will be hindered. To combat this, pupils read aloud regularly both in whole class reading sessions and during their library visits. Repeated oral reading is used throughout sessions to ensure that speed is increased and that pupils develop the confidence they need to face unfamiliar vocabulary.

Reading skill development: VIPERS

We know that to improve reading comprehension skills, teaching staff must model and teach effective strategies. Teaching staff at HMS incorporate well-planned VIPERS lessons to develop the following key areas/skills in all curriculum subjects:

- Vocabulary
- Inference
- Prediction
- Explanation
- Retrieval
- Summarising/ sequencing

During English lessons, pupils are explicitly taught the VIPERS skills; these are taught weekly in a variety of ways through the class novel and linked texts. This allows pupils to develop their skills using a familiar text and then apply these skills to unseen linked texts. The VIPERS skills may be taught individually or in groups. It is important that pupils are regularly practising and using these skills to develop comprehension and embed skills that they will use throughout their education and life outside the classroom. VIPERS are also embedded across the curriculum allowing the pupils to further develop these skills using a wider range of text types and encouraging successful subject-specific reading and vocabulary acquisition.



Reading in KS2

Pupils in KS2 are expected to read for 20 minutes per day and record their reading in their planner. Rewards are issued for pupils who adhere to this and tutors check planners weekly.

'Whole Class Reading' is used consistently across Years 5 and 6 to ensure a modelling of reading from high-quality texts. Pupils follow a sequential approach to the development of reading comprehension skills. The teacher leads regular, well-paced lessons focused on particular comprehension and fluency strategies. These lessons are built around the whole class text, for example, Letters from the Lighthouse in Year 6 or Holes in Year 5. Pupils read a wide range of texts throughout their time at HMS. Our teaching develops from the texts and the curriculum is designed to root learning in the text and to promote opportunities for writing development and creativity.

The 'Whole Class Reading' curriculum ensures that pupils access modelled reading through an immersive approach. The teacher will read the chosen texts with the class, asking well-planned questions throughout to develop comprehension, contextual understanding and an appreciation of vocabulary and language. Pupils are encouraged to re-read texts to develop their fluency. Pupils will work independently, with a partner or within groups to develop their comprehension.

Structure of Whole Class Reading:

On a weekly basis, KS2 classes will engage with a well-planned and sequenced reading curriculum linked to the whole class text. This immersive, little and often approach ensures that the essential reading skills are being continually developed.

1. **VIPERS comprehension based on a linked/unseen text** (a text in line with the themes/ context of the whole class text. For example, pupils may read extracts of war poetry whilst studying Letters from the Lighthouse, or may read advertising leaflets when studying Holes).
2. **Whole Class Reading** (a focus on shared reading, questioning and vocabulary) incorporating retrieval and retention activities.
3. **VIPERS comprehension based on the class text** (pupils focus on comprehension strategies to develop their comprehension of the class text being studied).
4. **Whole Class Reading** (a focus on shared reading, questioning, vocabulary) incorporating opportunities to predict, summarise and sequence.
5. **Library session** (a focus on developing a love of reading, sharing recommendations and reviews) incorporating word reading, spelling and vocabulary retention.
6. **Repeated oral reading:** repeated oral reading of texts ensures that learners develop their fluency and automaticity. Children read and re-read texts to ensure that unfamiliar vocabulary can be read fluently to develop their understanding of a wide range of texts.

Reading Speed

We know that, in order to read fluently, pupils need to read with speed and accuracy. As part of reading lessons, teachers use repeated oral reading as a teaching strategy to encourage reading aloud and building pupils' confidence in facing unfamiliar vocabulary. Teachers model the reading of a short piece of text and pupils repeat this modelled reading with a partner a number of times to develop their

fluency. Reading aloud develops confidence and allows teachers to continually assess pupils and target further support where required. Pupils who are struggling with reading speed and fluency will be asked to read aloud with adults on a regular basis (either 1:1 or in a small group). All children in KS2 also use Reading Plus to develop their pace, comprehension and reading stamina.

Poetry and non-fiction (in English)

It is important that pupils are immersed in all text types and, although lessons are planned around whole class texts, poetry and non-fiction are interweaved using linked texts. VIPERS skills are developed using these text types. Pupils at HMS are encouraged to appreciate a variety of texts to allow them to develop as readers and enjoy reading for pleasure. Pupils can then transfer their knowledge of these text types to their own writing during writing lessons.

Reading in KS3

Pupils in KS3 are expected to read for at least 20 minutes per day. In lessons, pupils will study a range of classic, modern, fiction and non-fictional texts. The year 7 curriculum starts with the modern classic *War Horse* and incorporates the study of propaganda through war poetry. In year 8, pupils begin with Gothic fiction, studying a range of extracts, poetry and short stories within and in the style of the genre. Children in KS3 also study Shakespeare; *Romeo and Juliet* in year 7 followed by *Julius Caesar* in year 8. Both afford our learners a fantastic opportunity to understand the rich cultural and historical context of the times in which Shakespeare lived and wrote. Pupils will be encouraged to read aloud and even perform parts of each text, and teachers will ensure that whole-class reading is the central focus. Developing their love of reading and enjoyment of diverse texts paves the way for KS4. In the summer term, pupils will be able to track how times and customs have changed as they will then focus on Detective Fiction in year 7 (with a focus on Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales) and the modern novel *Bone Talk* in year 8, broadening our horizons by immersing ourselves in a culture and era completely different to our own. We are keen to teach the pupils that text and context are symbiotic: if they have a secure understanding of the literary period, they may well find that it is easier to understand the text itself. Reading for fluency, for understanding and for enjoyment continue, throughout Key Stage 3, to be a central part of the pupils' learning experience at HMS.




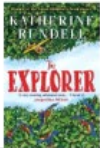
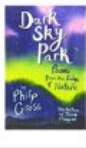
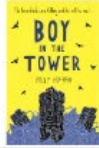

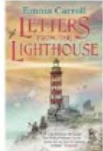


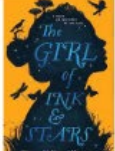
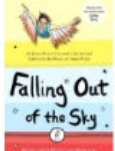






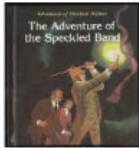




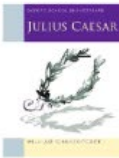


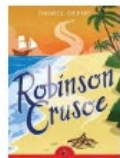
Poetry and Non-fiction (in English)

We also ensure that pupils are able to enjoy a broad range of literary genres and styles at KS3 and this is built into our planning of the curriculum. In Year 8 pupils will look at poetry from the 19th century, including writing by Edgar Allan Poe and make comparative comments linked to their study of detective fiction in year 7. This serves as excellent preparation for the demands of KS4 and is designed to boost pupils' confidence in terms of understanding and analysing the impact of poetry on the reader.

We also ensure that the pupils are able to read and discuss a range of non-fiction texts and constantly remind them that no text can be understood in isolation. (Reading of non-fiction is a central focus at KS4 and this is prioritised in our planning.) Pupils will look at articles written during the Industrial Revolution and will link this to their study of 19th century texts in year 7. They will discuss themes such as suffering and exploitation and use these texts to develop their own oracy skills. Additionally, Year 7 pupils will study a selection of war poetry and read accounts of life on the Western Front (linked to '*War Horse*' in the autumn term.) They will develop their understanding and appreciation of first-hand

experience of combat and compare and contrast it with fictionalised accounts of war.

Our reading spine:

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 5	 	  	 
Year 6	  	 	
Year 7	  	 	 
Year 8	  	 	 

Cultural Capital and Personal Development

Our choice of texts studied in English lessons is informed by our ambition to promote cultural capital and diversity through reading. We know that stories and reading are a powerful gateway to experiences – these may be cultural or real-life matters which highlight diversity and raise powerful discussions on themes, morals and messages. We try to choose our texts to promote powerful learning and personal development. Each text has a wide range of themes which build towards pupils progressing to the next stage of their education. The curriculum incorporates a wide range of genres and styles from classical and seminal literature to modern-day fiction. We also try to select texts which lend themselves to cultural opportunities such as theatre visits, historical learning and visits out of school.

Reading across the curriculum

It is the role of all teaching staff to develop pupils' reading skills across the curriculum subjects. We plan opportunities for pupils to engage with and read high-quality texts across the curriculum and to practise skills learned in English lessons (such as repeated oral reading, choral reading and readers' theatre). This is extremely important so that pupils in all year groups develop their repertoire of texts, ensuring that they encounter a wide range of styles, genres and vocabulary (including subject-specific vocabulary). We ask teachers in all subjects to incorporate academic texts into the curriculum. We know that some pupils may find this challenging, and teachers therefore ensure that teaching strategies and resources are adapted to suit the needs of all learners, regardless of reading age/ability.

In all subjects, pupils will read on a regular basis. Teachers work hard to plan subject-specific texts into the curriculum. Teachers will incorporate VIPERS tasks to check for pupil understanding, and to




encourage a development of reading skills whilst incorporating subject-specific knowledge and disciplinary literacy. All teachers focus on vocabulary 'Buzzwords' to teach tier 2 and 3 disciplinary vocabulary and this focus on word reading and understanding takes place across the curriculum. Pupils at HMS encounter new vocabulary as they move across subjects on a day-to-day basis.

Approaches to reading across the curriculum:

- VIPERS
- Buzzwords
- Reading academic texts
- Book Talk in form time

We are also beginning to explore pre-reading, particularly in KS3, so that pupils have the confidence to engage in subject-specific texts, building their confidence, knowledge and resilience ahead of their in-class learning. This is a key developmental life skill.

Book Talk

Year 5	 October	 The Lion above the door
Year 6	 Saffiyah's war	 Children of the Quicksands
Year 7	 The Breadwinner	 Where the World turns Wild
Year 8	 We are all made of molecules	 The final Year

During form time, at least once a week, classes engage in Book Talk. Teachers read a novel aloud to their group and spend time discussing and focusing on key events, characters and challenging themes/issues faced in the novels. Each of the Book Talk novels has been selected to promote diversity and/or inclusion, two key themes which we want our pupils to respect and engage with.

HMS Library and celebrating reading



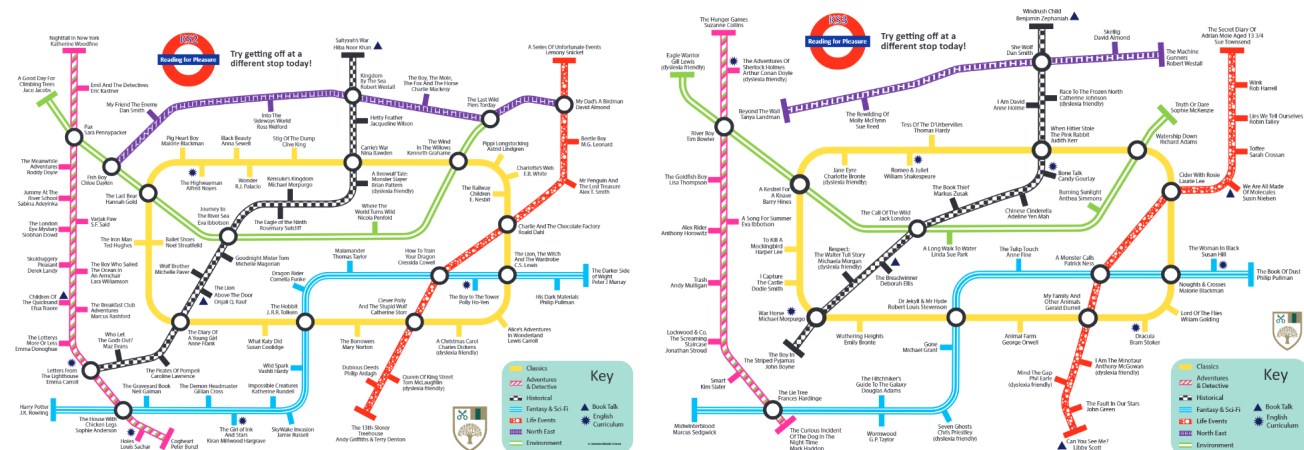
Our library is at the heart of our school and is accessible to pupils throughout the school day. It is well-stocked with constantly updated texts. Our librarian, Mrs Hayler, and her team of dedicated volunteers ensure that a positive environment is maintained and make sure that children can enjoy the space in their social time during the day. Pupils visit the library for reading sessions as part of their English curriculum and are encouraged to take out new reading material for reading in their own time.

We believe in celebrating the success of our pupils. To raise the profile of reading and further embed it within the school's culture, pupils enjoy a wide range of reading events throughout the year. These include:

- Visiting author events/ workshops
- Book signings
- Drama workshops
- Theatre visits
- World Book Day
- Book swap-shop events
- Book fairs
- Access to the library at break times and lunch times daily
- Books as prizes

HMS Reading Rails

In 2024 we published our updated recommended reads in the form of tube map-style Reading Rails for each key stage. These are an ambitious collection of texts, grouped by genre, which are available in our school library and which we recommend that our pupils read and enjoy throughout their time with us. Reading Rails posters appear in every English classroom and are on display in the corridors. Pupils have copies of the Reading Rails in their home-school planners, including space to record which of the texts they've read. During library lessons, teachers promote Reading Rails by engaging pupils in motivational activities to encourage them to engage with the texts. We want the texts to represent the broad genres available in our library and to particularly address modern-day issues and matters which support pupils' personal development.



Supporting struggling readers

At HMS, we have a comprehensive approach to identifying pupils who are struggling to read accurately and fluently, or struggling to comprehend what they have read. When pupils join our school, comprehensive assessment of reading and literacy skills take place to give teachers and staff members a holistic overview of a child's current security of learning. From the diagnosis, action is taken based on three pathways (detail below).

1. Pupils join year 5 (or any year group through in-year transfer) and sit the GL English baseline (SAS, stanine and predictors received)
2. Pupils sit the NTS (reading age and detailed report received)
3. Should a low reading age be identified (2 years or more behind chronological age) a NARA reading assessment will be conducted.
4. Data is reviewed and pupils are identified as needing one of three reading pathways

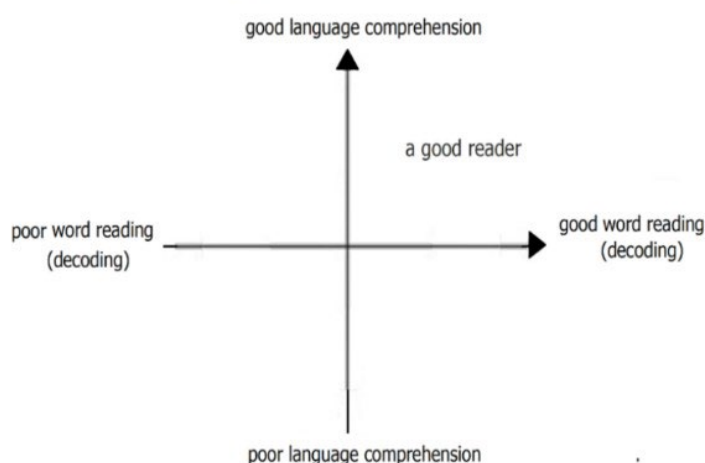
Pathway	A	B	C
Focus	Developing phonics knowledge so that pupils can decode and read fluently.	Developing fluency and comprehension skills.	Developing wider reading confidence, fluency and comprehension including subject-specific reading.
Who	Pupils with significantly low reading ages (2 years or more behind chronological) or who have low stanine (1-2) and SAS. Children who struggle to decode text.	Pupils who are between 1 and 2 years behind their chronological age and have a lower stanine (3-4) score and/or SAS.	All other pupils with average or above average SAS and stanine and chronological or above reading age.
Targeted approach	Daily reading for enjoyment in lessons. Fresh Start phonics programme (3 times a week) – KS2. Literacy group – structured reading development. through the Whole Class Reading model. Guided reading group during form time. Reading book band identified; pupils read aloud in library sessions 1:1.	Reading Plus (online intervention to support fluency and comprehension) Reading comprehension (VIPERS) support group to accelerate the development of key skills Regular reading aloud in library sessions. Guided reading group during form time.	Whole Class Reading (weekly structure in class and form time) Wider reading in all subjects. Reading Plus (online intervention to support fluency and comprehension).

Wider approach	1. Whole Class Reading model (structured throughout the week) 2. VIPERS across the curriculum	1. Whole Class Reading model implemented across the week – skills focused 2. VIPERS across the curriculum	1. Whole Class Reading model implemented across the week – skills focused 2. VIPERS across the curriculum
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	Weekly library visit	Weekly library visit	Weekly library visit
Assessment	Baseline GL Biannual reading age test Fresh Start ongoing phonics assessment Comprehension assessment (VIPERS) Reading aloud (weekly)	Baseline GL Biannual reading age test Comprehension assessment (VIPERS) and test papers Ongoing teacher assessment Reading Plus assessment	Baseline GL Comprehension assessment (VIPERS) and test papers Ongoing teacher assessment
Parental Engagement	Fresh Start overview and support sessions Parent/carer meeting to discuss reading support Reading record	Reading Plus overview and support sessions Parent session to support reading at home Reading record	Wider supporting reading at home guidance Reading record Sharing assessment information including at SATs Information Evening
Library	Pupils read 1:1 with staff Pupils choose books from the appropriate book band with teacher guidance.	Pupils read 1:1 with staff Pupils choose books from the appropriate book band with teacher guidance.	Pupils are free readers Pupils read aloud in Whole Class Reading sessions. Pupils can choose from the range of texts.
Reading across the curriculum	VIPERS sessions tailored to ensure that all pupils can access reading across the curriculum. Targeted support by all teachers to scaffold reading.	VIPERS sessions Subject-specific reading (support provided).	VIPERS sessions Subject-specific reading across the curriculum.

When identifying pupils who require additional support, teachers will consider the particular aspects of reading the child needs to focus on based on the model in figure 1.

Figure 1: The knowledge of a good reader



Reading book bands

For readers identified as needing additional support, teachers will guide their choice of texts from the school's library to ensure that they are choosing appropriate texts. This will enable them to develop their skills and confidence in line with their developing reading skills. For those pupils struggling with decoding text, their phonics support will link directly to structured text choices to ensure that their grasp of phonics is secure at each stage.

The books in our library have been banded. Each book has a coloured sticker indicating the reading age it is suitable for. At the beginning of year 5 and, if identified as a struggling reader, throughout their time at HMS, pupils complete a reading age test; the results of these assessments enable teaching staff to direct them to the correct band colour for their reading age.

Reading Plus

Reading Plus is an online platform which supports pupils with their reading fluency, comprehension and stamina. Pupils in Key Stage have access to Reading Plus and are given login details to access their profile on the site when they join the school. They sit a baseline comprehension assessment then, following this, they are assigned reading tasks comprising of reading and answering 10 questions on a text studied. When reading, a 'guided window' supports the child to read at a speed suitable for their ability and keeps them focused on the task in hand. Over time, the speed of the reading window increases as the child's fluency and reading ability improves. Each quiz is marked instantly and children receive prizes and certificates in school for advancing up the levels and for achieving 100% in assessments. Reading Plus is primarily focused on non-fiction texts, proving popular with the pupils and teaching them about the wider world as they read!



Phonics: accelerated support

For pupils who struggle to read accurately and fluently, the Fresh Start programme will be implemented. This is for pupils who may have difficulty with the fundamentals of reading including decoding and blending words. The programme is delivered in 'little and often' sessions three times per week with regular assessment of a child's security of learning. Pupils are identified through regular assessment of reading

including reading aloud, reading comprehension assessment and reading age testing. Diagnosis of pupils' starting points allows the programme to be suitably tailored to accelerate progress.



Throughout the programme, pupils are taught the English alphabetic code – the 150+ graphemes that represent the 44 speech sounds – in three sets of Speed Sounds lessons. Simple mnemonics help pupils to read and write the letter-sound correspondence quickly, especially those who are at risk of making slower progress or those who are new to learning English. The aim is that pupils develop automaticity in their reading. High frequency words that are not phonically regular are taught as 'tricky' words – these are called Red Words – and are practised regularly.

The sessions are focused on lively, age-appropriate stories and texts are closely matched to pupils'

increasing knowledge of phonics and 'tricky' words. Pupils read the story three times: on the first read, pupils focus on accurate word reading; the second on developing fluency; and the third on comprehension.

Pupils are taught:

Reading

- Accuracy
 - To read new sounds and review previously taught sounds
 - To sound out the names of characters and unfamiliar words
 - To understand the meanings of new words
 - To read the story (first read)
- Fluency
 - To read the words in the story speedily
 - To track the story, 'jumping in' when the teacher hesitates
 - To read the story with increased speed (second read)
- Comprehension
 - To predict the outcome, after listening to a story introduction
 - To discuss and compare key moments in the story
 - To read the story with a storyteller's voice (third read)
 - To answer questions about the story

Assessing reading (end points)

Year	Reading comprehension	Reading fluency
5	Baseline GL Ongoing summative and formative assessment End of Year GL	NGRT NARA – targeted pupils – 2x per year Regular repeated oral reading
6	Ongoing summative and formative assessment KS2 SATs (including regular checkpoints)	NGRT – targeted pupils twice a year Regular repeated oral reading
7	ART reading test twice a year Ongoing summative and formative assessment	NARA – targeted pupils – twice a year Regular repeated oral reading
8	ART reading test twice a year Ongoing summative and formative assessment End of Year GL	NARA – targeted pupils – twice a year Regular repeated oral reading

By the end of Year 4, pupils should be able to:

- Read aloud a wider range of poetry and books written at an age-appropriate interest level with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace.
- Read most words effortlessly.
- Work out how to pronounce unfamiliar words with increasing automaticity.
- Prepare readings with appropriate intonation to show their understanding.

- Summarise and present familiar stories in their own words.
- Read widely and frequently both in school and at home for pleasure and information.
- Read silently with inference and discuss what they have read.

By the end of Year 5, pupils should be able to:

Maintain positive attitudes to reading and an understanding of what they read by:

- continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
- reading books that are structured in different ways and reading for a range of purposes
- increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions
- recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices
- identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- making comparisons within and across books
- learning a wider range of poetry by heart
- preparing poems and plays to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience

Understand what they read by:

- applying their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes
- checking that the book makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context
- asking questions to improve their understanding
- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
- predicting what might happen from details stated and implied
- summarising the main ideas drawn from more than 1 paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas
- identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- discussing and evaluating how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader
- distinguishing between statements of fact and opinion
- retrieving, record and present information from non-fiction
- participating in discussions about books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously
- explaining and discussing their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary
- providing reasoned justifications.

By the end of Year 6, pupils should be able to:

- Enjoy and understand language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and evaluate the impact of an author's use of language.
- Distinguish between fact and opinion.
- Retrieve, record and present information from non-fiction.

- Understand the new words they meet by applying their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes.
- Draw inferences such as character feelings, thoughts and motives for their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence.
- Predicting what might happen from details stated and implied.
- Summarizing the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph.
- Identify how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning.
- Read fluently so that they can access the full curriculum as they progress into Year 7.
- Read a wide range of texts structured in different ways and reading for a range of purposes.
- Recommend books they have read to their peers.
- Identify and discuss themes and conventions.
- Make comparisons within and across books.
- Recall poetry from memory.
- Prepare poems and plays to read aloud and to perform.

By the end of Year 7 and Year 8, pupils should be able to:

- Comment on the relationship between text and context (understand what is meant by a 'symbiotic' relationship)
- Identify, select and retrieve apt supporting evidence to support own argument
- Understand some of the key aspects of writers' craft and purpose
- Understand some of the key conventions of different literary genres
- Make links between a range of fiction and non-fiction texts
- Comment on how meanings have been shaped
- Comment, with increasing confidence, on how characters and themes are developed/presented
- Identify what political/ social points the writer might make in their work
- Develop their own reading skills, including learning for retention and skim reading
- Develop their oracy skills by discussing what they have read in small groups/ to their peers
- Have greater confidence analysing and understanding unseen extracts
- Develop inference and deduction skills

Impact

It is important that, when responding to literature in any lesson, teachers assess formatively (or summatively, as appropriate). To do this, we use the acronym VIPERS to assess pupils' understanding of: Vocabulary (Buzzwords), Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Summarising or Sequencing. Where formative assessment shows a misconception or lack of understanding, teachers then work with pupils on closing gaps in knowledge to accelerate progress.

Talk is a fundamental aspect of assessment in all subjects and teachers will question and observe interactions in lessons. As a result of any assessment, pupils are supported and challenged where required and teachers amend their planning and approaches to ensure that any gaps in learning are covered. In addition, we commit to regular author visits, literature quizzes, engagement with the Hexham Book Festival's wide variety of events and offer a multitude of trips and experiences to our pupils- which link to texts studied – and add to the pupils' enjoyment and appreciation of literature.

Throughout the school, pupils complete regular:

- Reading assessments (these will look different as the children progress through the school)
- Reading age testing
- VIPERS (comprehension/ skills) activities

Staff development

The responsibility for the teaching of reading lies with all staff, not just the English team. For that reason, Hexham Middle School has a Literacy Across the Curriculum Lead whose responsibility it is to share effective reading strategies with the wider staff and to support staff when delivering reading tasks in any subject. Regular staff training on reading strategies occurs and the use of a consistent comprehension structure (VIPERS) ensures structure and regularity across departments. Our staff are also acutely aware of individual pupils whose reading ages are significantly lower than their chronological ages and employ a range of differentiation and techniques to ensure these pupils are supported and can achieve across the curriculum.

It is essential that, as a middle school, our teachers and support staff are regularly trained in early reading and phonics. The Academic Support Coordinator and her team are trained in the implementation of the Fresh Start Phonics programme. To upskill, teaching staff visit Partnership first schools to observe the phonics teaching so that they stay up-to-date with the latest pedagogy and practices. The Reading Coordinator shares relevant professional development with all teachers, both within KS2 and across the whole school, to further develop reading teaching in all subjects.

All teachers value the opinions and ideas of all pupils by involving pupils in the progress of their literacy through meaningful marking and regular feedback. They inform pupils of the purpose behind any reading, writing or communication task they're asked to complete and make texts in all subjects accessible to all pupils. Having high ambitions for all learners, including those with SEND, means we offer frameworks and extra support, as needed, to support reading tasks. Across the curriculum, pupils are introduced explicitly to subject specific terminology through the use of 'Buzzwords'.

All staff strive to encourage reading through:

- Encouraging pupils to read for information and understanding, as well as eliciting pupils' existing knowledge about a topic beforehand
- Providing a range of strategies for pupils to gain meaning from a text, eg: annotation, summarising, skimming and scanning
- Providing opportunities for reading and response using the VIPERS question stems, where appropriate
- Providing reading tasks as homework (including pre-reading) where appropriate
- Encouraging pupils to think critically about texts which are studied across the curriculum
- Providing a wide range of reading material relevant to the subject area which is varied, relevant and up-to-date
- Displaying subject-specific vocabulary (Buzzwords) in classrooms
- Valuing reading as an enjoyable activity
- Supporting those who have difficulties with reading, through: provision of word banks, guided group tasks, opportunities to read aloud in small group or 1-2-1 situations.

Our Literacy Across the Curriculum Policy gives more details on the how the teaching of reading is

supported in every classroom.

Parent/Carer Engagement with reading

At the beginning of each academic year, we host a 'Welcome Evening' for parents/carers which gives a detailed overview of the curriculum for each Key Stage and focuses on sharing strategies for supporting learning, including reading, at home. Parents have access to a comprehensive section of our school's website which gives details and information about the various ways in which parents can support their child's reading development.

<https://www.hexhammiddleschool.co.uk/index.php/reading-2/>

<https://www.hexhammiddleschool.co.uk/index.php/supporting-learning-at-home/>

It is expected that pupils read every day, for at least 20 minutes, whether this be with a novel, a tablet, online using Reading Plus or with a newspaper, magazine or other non-fiction text. In Key Stage 2, pupils are expected to record their daily reading in a Reading Record which is checked weekly by their form teacher.

Reading comprehension questions prompts, recommended reading lists and other relevant resources are available to our parents/carers on our website.

We maintain regular contact with parents/carers where their children need additional support with reading. We have positive conversations and sessions in school where strategies used in school can be mirrored at home. We are also keen to ensure that all homes have reading material for children to enjoy and we work with parents/carers to provide suitable texts.

