

# 2023-2024

## Reading policy

### Reading at Highfield School

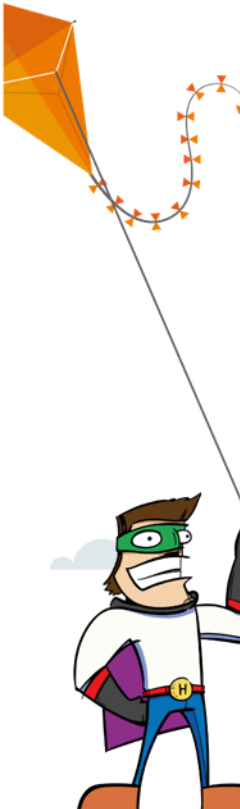
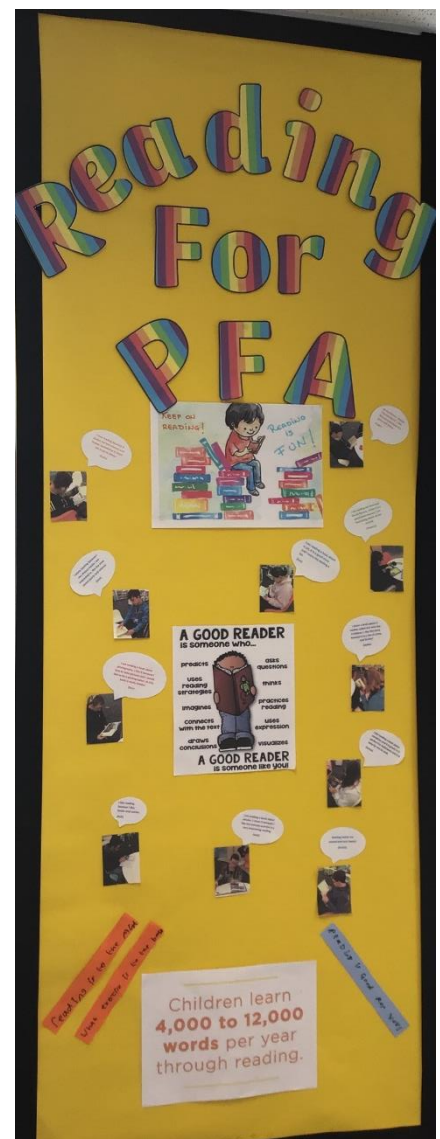
Reading is a fundamental part of life for many people. At Highfield, we want to ensure our learners develop a love of reading through being as proficient as they can be in reading and understanding text. We promote a love of reading and actively encourage this across school on a daily basis. Reading is shared or independent depending on the ages and need of the pupil.

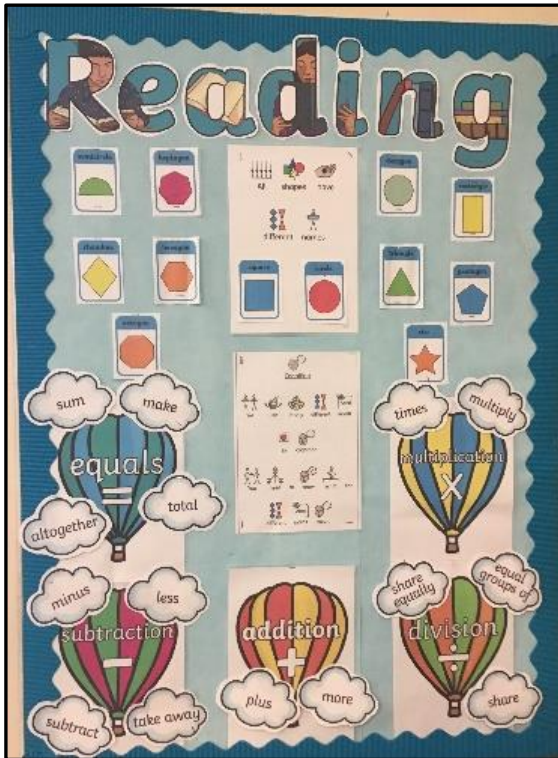
### Year 7 assessments and baselining

On entry to the school, pupils on the formal pathway are assessed for phonics, reading and spelling of high frequency words and for their receptive vocabulary. Where it is considered appropriate, they are also assessed for expressive vocabulary, dyslexia and Irlen Syndrome. Students on the semi-formal pathway are also assessed for reading where appropriate.

### Reading

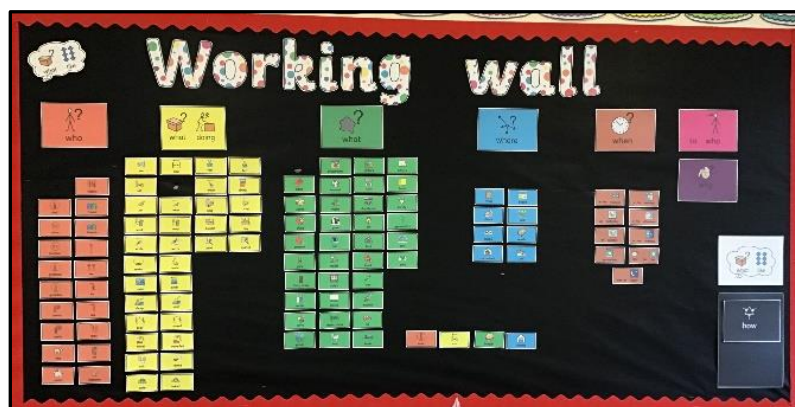
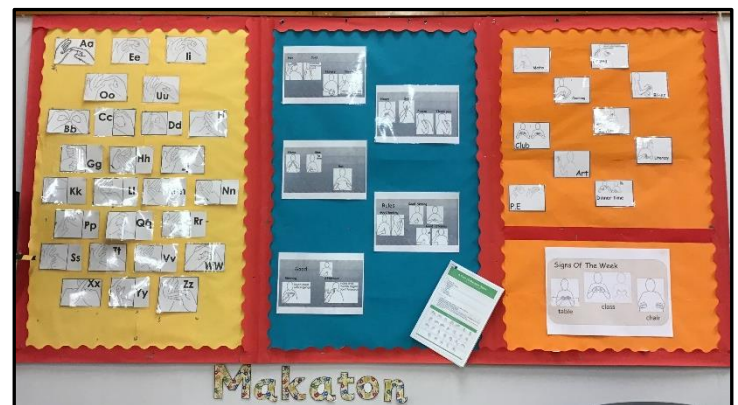
Reading is prioritised throughout school across all subject areas. Every teaching room has a reading display appropriate to the age and stage of the pupils and the nature of the room.





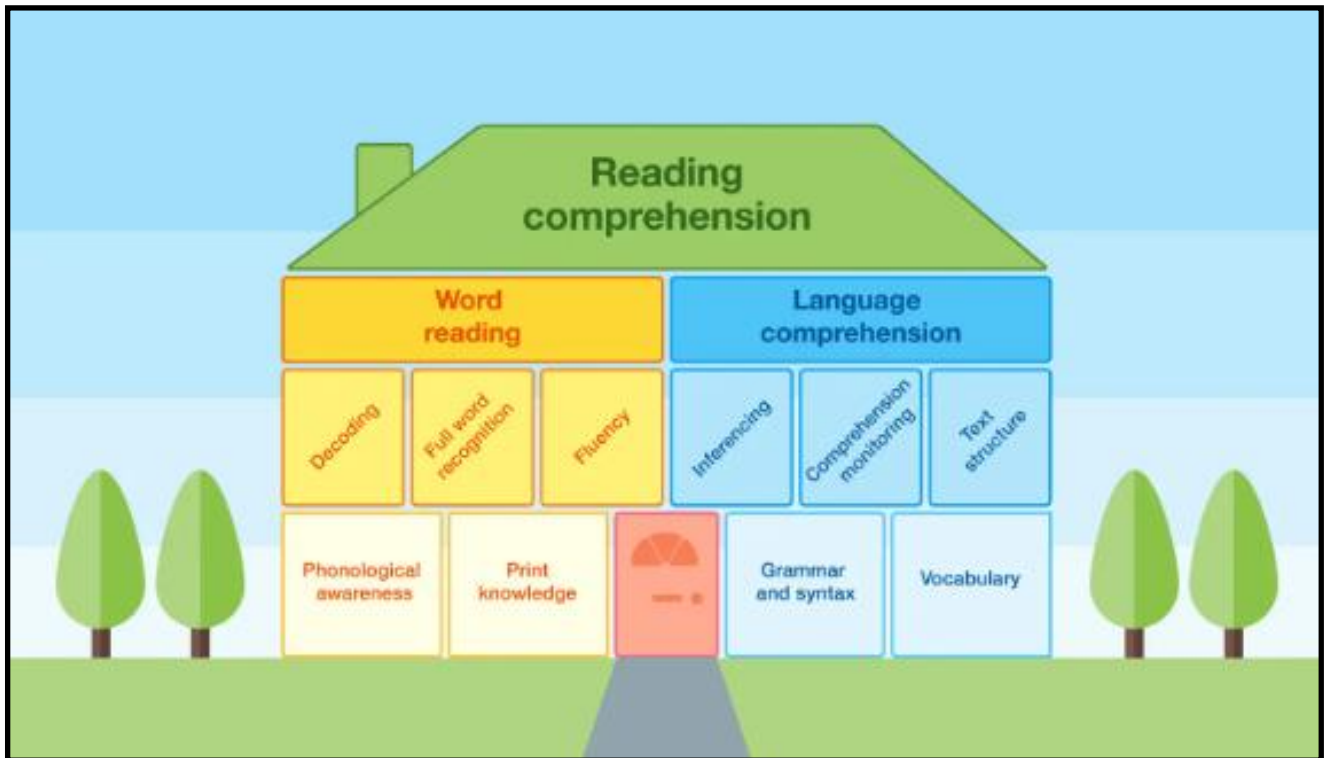
### Total Communication

We are a Total Communication School and use to a range of strategies including Matkaton signs and symbols; Communicate in Print and Colourful Semantics to support the written word.





## The Reading House



*Reading comprehension—the sum of many parts. Adapted from Hogan, Bridges, Justice and Cairn (2011)*

Reading is a complex process requiring much more than decoding or word recognition.

Before they can understand a text, readers need to:

- be able to manipulate sounds (phonological knowledge);
- understand the features of print – identifying letters and words, tracking etc (print knowledge);
- understand basic English grammar (grammar and syntax);
- have the vocabulary to understand the text and talk about it.

Without being secure in these and the other components of the Reading House, comprehension and fluency can't be achieved.

We use Blanks Level Questions in speaking and listening lessons, but also to encourage students to talk about what they are reading or listening to. The main aim of Blanks Levels of Questioning is to develop children's verbal reasoning and abstract language capabilities through levelled questions:

- Level 1 – naming
- Level 2 – describing
- Level 3 – retelling and predicting
- Level 4 – reasoning and justifying.



## Phonics and word reading

At Highfield phonics is used in Years 7 and 8, where appropriate, and occasionally, further up the school if it is proving to be a successful strategy in developing a student's reading and spelling skills. This may involve teaching a whole class, a small group or an individual for either a structured approach or an isolated element to address a specific need.

We use Phonics International for the delivery of phonics, choosing the elements relevant to a group or an individual student. Phonics International can be used in a structured way, but places a lot of emphasis on incidental learning. To capitalise on this, Phonics International is being introduced across the school to ensure a consistency of language and approach when staff are supporting reading in all lessons / subjects. Phonics is delivered in a student-centred way.

For some of our students, phonics is not the gateway to reading. For these students, we need to consider alternative approaches and work with sight vocabulary.

Staff employ a range of multi-sensory strategies when teaching word reading and spelling. Our aim, is always to find an approach that motivates and engages students and enables them to progress towards becoming functional and social readers.



### Pre-Reading Skills

It is vital to develop the pre-reading skills of our learners and those pupils with complex learning needs. The emphasis within our semi-formal pathway classes with our more complex learners is in developing communication, language attention & understanding through a range of activities, including; intensive interaction, shared attention and shared interaction. Pupils regularly take part in sensory stories, book exploration, songs, playing and therapies.

### Social and functional reading

For those pupils who find accessing reading a challenge for a variety of reasons, we support them to read social cues which are also functional and will support them in their everyday lives and to be as independent as possible. This can include recognising bus stop signs, their names in different formats, places of interest and places such as the doctors, shop signs, supermarkets and food labels.





## Reading in Semi-Formal

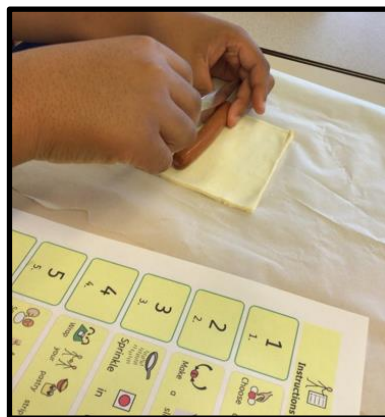
The Semi Formal pathway promotes reading through the sharing of stories, both traditional and novel. We use our spoken voice to share our stories and learn to communicate through narrative.

Blanks' Level questioning is an established strategy within Semi-formal to support students critical understanding of our reading and storytelling material. Students are questioned at their appropriate level to scaffold and support their comprehension.



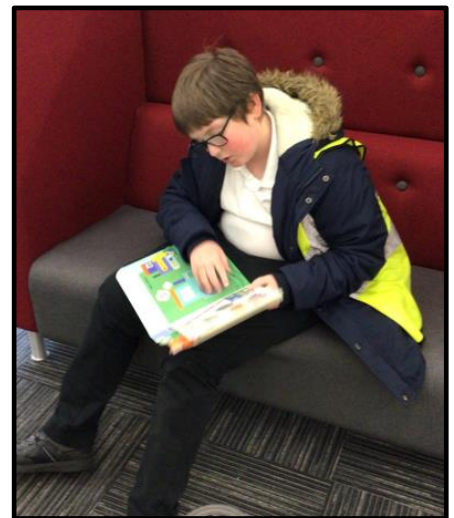
Colourful Semantics are used in class to help students create their own stories, structure their writing and find the right words to decode a picture.

Semi-formal focuses on functional reading during our time out in the community where we might find signs, symbols or instructions to help us grow in independence and solve problems.

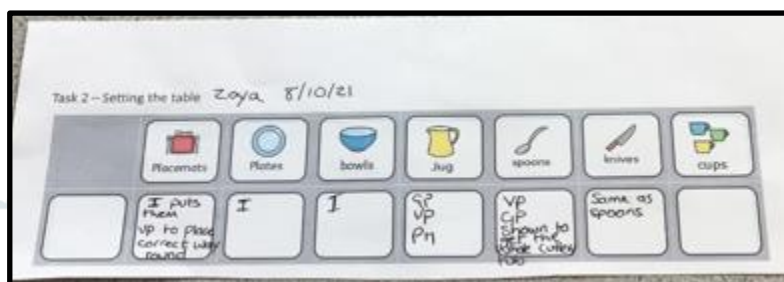


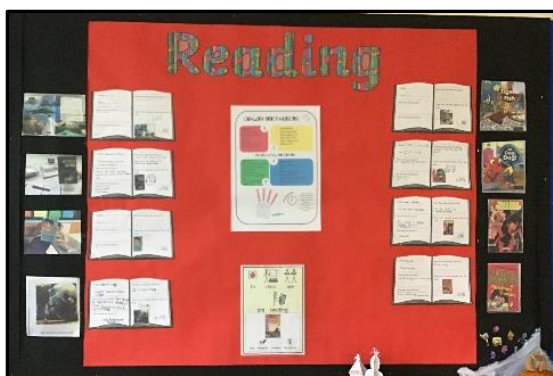
Non-fiction reading is nurtured through our students' many personal interests and our 'World About Me' subject strand. We might find a book in the library to answer our many questions or use our digital literacy to learn more.

Most of all we love stories and books. Communication is at the heart of everything we do and reading is a part of this vital strand.



We scaffold our love of reading using multiple strategies including: Makaton, Symbols, Communicate In Print, Objects Of Reference, story sacks and AAC.



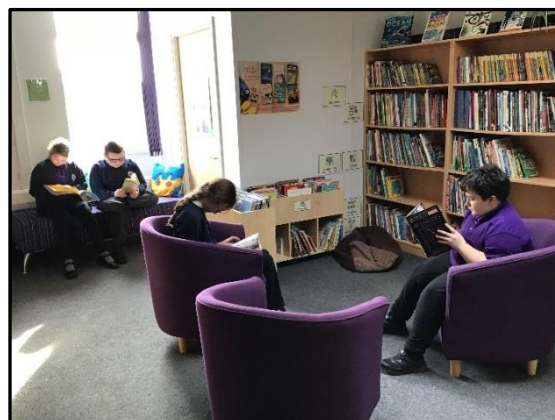


## Reading for pleasure and learning

Throughout school, students are exposed to texts that may be above their reading level by means of shared reading and teacher led sessions. This way, they can be exposed to a greater range of texts such as; non-fiction, poetry and a range of fiction, including Shakespeare.

## The Library

The school is fortunate to have a recently refurbished library. Teachers are encouraged to use these teaching spaces and a booking scheme is in operation, although classes can “drop-in” whenever the room is available. The library is divided into two zones – a “work zone” where reading scheme books are kept and where a table gives the opportunity for group work and a “reading zone” with comfy seating and cushions to encourage students to read.



Additional reading books (fiction and non-fiction) have been purchased with money from a sponsored read and a grant from the Foyle Foundation. This money was divided up to provide higher level non-fiction books, large print books, books on diversity and real-life issues, graphic novels and super heroes (very popular with many of our students) and books to support vocational teaching.



Every class has access to the library on a regular basis. These sessions may be used for group reading activities, 1-1 reading with an adult, individual reading or shared story time depending on the group and their needs. In addition to their reading scheme book, students borrow library books to read in their classrooms.

## School's Library Service

Some of the books in the library are on long-term loan from the School's Library Service. These are changed every two or three years, providing students with a wider range of texts.

In addition, class teachers can request class sets of books or topic boxes from the School's Library Service to use in English and topic lessons. These are borrowed for a term at a time.





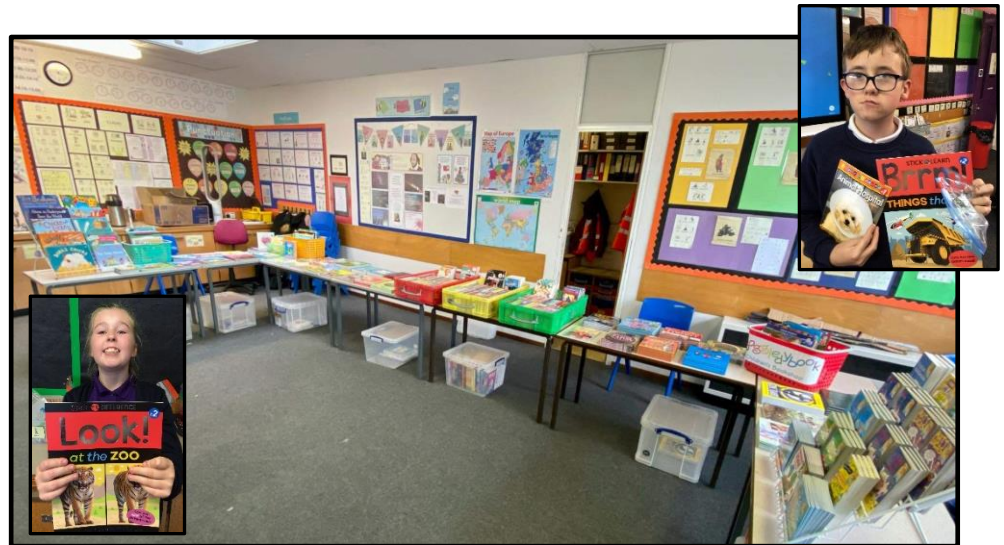


### Developing a love of reading

Developing a love of reading is central to all reading activities. In addition to reading lessons and access to the library and books, we organise a number of events to support this.

**Visiting story tellers and poets:** Over recent years we have had visits from both Conrad Burdekin and Craig Bradley. Both have worked across the school providing fun and engaging workshops for our students. Class teachers frequently follow up these sessions with class-based activities.

**Book Fairs:** Twice yearly book fairs from Boggledybook Children's bookshop. All classes get an opportunity to visit these and purchase new books at significantly reduced prices.



**World Book Day:** Students receive World Book Day vouchers. Some take these home, older pupils can use them to "buy" books in Community Education Lessons. All students are encouraged to dress up as their favourite book character for World Book Day.

**World Book Arts Week:** New for 2022, this will become an annual event for the week of World Book Day. Each class focuses on a book of their choice and explore it using art, music, dance and drama. The week ends with a showcase of student's work.

### Public Library

Some Semi-formal and Post 16 classes visit the local public library on a regular basis. It is planned to extend this to other classes in Community Education in the near future.



## Assessment and accreditation

In order to meet the needs of a range of pupils with complex needs, there are a number of assessment systems in place to monitor and analyse pupil progress from their individual starting points.

These are our Highfield reading trackers, reading records, IEP targets and PLGs (personal learning goals) which are on our assessment system (Evidence for Learning), and accreditation/qualification course tracking.

All students on both the formal and semi-formal pathways have at least one Communication target. For some, this is based on reading, but even where their IEP target is not reading based, staff are always endeavouring to enhance reading skills and develop a love of reading and books.

Assessment data is used to inform future planning and to indicate necessary interventions for those pupils who may not have made expected progress.


Students in formal classes in Years 10 and 11 work towards the Pearson-Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in English. Those who aren't quite ready for this may be entered for one or more elements (Speaking Listening and Communicating; Reading; Writing), of the NOCN Suite of Entry Level Functional Skills Qualifications in English. A small number, particularly those heading to college at the end of Year 11, may also sit a Functional Skills English qualification at an appropriate level. Pupils in Post 16 continue working towards Functional Skills Qualifications in English.

## Reading in Post 16

Students in Post 16 continue with the same reading journey and have the same opportunity as pupils in Years 7-11. There is an emphasis on functional reading to prepare students for college and work opportunities and reading in real-life situations – shops, leisure opportunities etc. Alongside this, students are still encouraged to enjoy reading and regularly visit the school and public libraries as well as participating in school-based enrichment activities.

## Parental Involvement

Support from parents is vital in ensuring consistency of learning within literacy. Parents are informed of their child's progress in reading through Parent's Evenings, as well as being given updates to targets through the PLGs being sent home and through the annual EHCP review process. Students are also encouraged to take reading books home to share with parents.



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March 2023

