



Riversdale Primary School

"A nurturing, ambitious and values led school."

Reading Policy

Date: 20th September 2025

Review Date: 19th September 2028



“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”
Dr. Seuss

Article 28:
You have the right to education.

Article 29:
You have the right to education which develops your personality, respect for other’s rights and the environment.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2013) National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study
- DfE (2023) The Reading Framework: Teaching the Foundations of Literacy
- DfE (2017) Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

INTENT

At Riversdale Primary School, reading is a priority because it unlocks access to a broad and balanced curriculum. We aim for every pupil, regardless of background or starting point, to leave as a fluent, confident reader who reads with enjoyment and purpose across a wide range of subjects and genres.

Through a structured approach, including systematic synthetic phonics and reciprocal whole-class reading, we equip pupils to:

- Read for pleasure and with stamina.
- Apply strong comprehension strategies with independence.
- Acquire a rich vocabulary that supports learning across the curriculum.
- Read with accuracy, fluency, and expressive prosody, including performance reading.
- Transition to secondary education and beyond as curious, confident communicators.

Our intent is not only that pupils learn to read, but that they develop a lifelong love of reading. We foster a strong reading culture through exposure to high-quality texts - modern and classic pupils’ literature, non-fiction, and poetry - alongside daily reading practice, regular opportunities for reading for pleasure, library visits, and purposeful, rich book talk.

IMPLEMENTATION

Early Reading/Phonics

In Nursery, pupils are introduced to phonics through the Foundations for Phonics scheme developed by Little Wandle. The scheme incorporates the latest research about early language and literacy development to ensure that pupils develop the foundational skills necessary for future phonics learning.

From Reception to Year 2, pupils are explicitly taught through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic synthetic phonics scheme. Through this, pupils are taught the full range of grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a carefully sequenced progression. Daily lessons build secure phonic knowledge and skills in blending for reading and segmenting for spelling, ensuring rapid and sustained progress. Pupils apply their knowledge through fully decodable texts matched to their phonic stage, enabling them to develop accuracy, fluency, and automaticity. Alongside this, the programme provides systematic teaching of common exception words and spelling patterns, establishing the foundations for confident, fluent reading and writing across the curriculum.

In line with EEF guidance, we recognise that shared book reading between parents/carers and pupils has a significant impact on language development, vocabulary acquisition, and positive attitudes towards reading. To strengthen this partnership, pupils regularly take home a shared reading book, in addition to a decodable carefully matched to their phonics stage of development. These provide families with the opportunity to enjoy stories together, engage in meaningful discussion, and foster a love of reading beyond the classroom.

Pupils requiring additional support with early reading access the Little Wandle Rapid Catch-Up Programme.

Please see the school's Phonics Policy for full detail regarding Early Reading.

Reading After Phonics Lessons

From Spring Term Year 2 upwards, pupils engage in daily 30-minute reading lessons using the Literacy Counts' **Ready, Steady, Read Together** programme. The curriculum is deliberately designed as a spiral model where each unit of learning addresses the National Curriculum expectations for its year group while providing opportunities for pupils to revisit and apply previously taught skills in new contexts. This approach enables pupils to consolidate their understanding, deepen their knowledge, and make sustained progress over time.

The texts used in reading lessons are carefully selected to be age-appropriate, engaging, and challenging, providing rich language experiences that support vocabulary development and comprehension. As pupils move through the school, texts increase in complexity, offering more challenging vocabulary, structure, and themes. This progression helps pupils build confidence, stamina, and critical thinking skills, preparing them for more advanced learning across subjects.

Lessons explicitly teach comprehension and fluency, moving pupils from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." In each unit, lessons 1 - 4 follow a clear sequence of **Explore, Teach, and Practise & Apply**. This is designed to enable pupils to activate prior knowledge, and then practise & apply comprehension skills/knowledge, following explicit teaching from the trained practitioner. Lessons use strategies including echo reading, choral reading, text marking, vocabulary exploration, and performance reading.

In these lessons, comprehension is taught through eight strategies:

- **Look Around:** Check what the question is asking OR scanning the text for vocabulary.
- **Main Point:** Summarise the main idea in the text.
- **Paint the Picture:** Visualising and bringing the text to life.
- **Question the Text:** Ask questions about the information in the text to deepen understanding.
- **Find and Take:** Retrieve information directly from the text.
- **Read Between the Lines:** Infer meaning from the clues in the text.
- **Sequence It:** Put the events in the right order.
- **What Next?:** Predict what might happen next, using clues from the text.

The ability to apply comprehensions skills through the taught strategies above is an important and essential element of the teaching sequenced. As such, the fifth lesson of each unit incorporates a range of questions for the pupils to answer independently.

In response to the needs of the pupils, particularly in earlier year groups, some units may be taught over two weeks, to allow for more in-depth discussions.

Ready Steady Read Together: Go

Any child who is identified as requiring additional support will receive immediate intervention through the Ready Steady Read Together: Go sessions. These are in addition to their Ready Steady Read Together lesson.

The sessions are 15 mins long and are between 3-5 times per week. They use the same procedures, resources and materials as Ready Steady Read Together but with more repetition and scaffolding with a fully trained adult. Children with common and specific difficulties are taught in small groups/1:1 using the Ready Steady Read Together: Go materials.

VOCABULARY

Research consistently shows that a well-developed vocabulary is one of the strongest predictors of academic success, yet disadvantaged pupils are more likely to begin school with a language gap. The EEF's Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2 report highlights the importance of targeted vocabulary instruction to close this gap and enable equitable access to the curriculum. At Riversdale, we prioritise explicit vocabulary teaching through high-quality texts, structured talk, and systematic revisiting of key words across the curriculum, such as through unit of learning knowledge organisers. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils acquire the breadth and depth of vocabulary needed to access complex texts, articulate their understanding with precision, and fully participate in learning.

HOME READING AND READING RECORDS

Pupils are expected to read at home every day, either independently or with an adult, as daily reading is central to developing fluency, comprehension, and enjoyment. Reading records must be brought to school each day and serve as an important link between home and school. Pupils are encouraged to write reflective comments after each reading session, focusing on aspects such as character, setting, or new vocabulary, in order to develop thoughtful and engaged responses to texts.

Teachers and teaching assistants provide weekly guidance through stickers linked to Literacy Counts strategies (e.g. "Tell me the main point of your reading today"), which scaffold purposeful reflection and comprehension. This system ensures ongoing communication with families, supports teacher assessment of pupils' reading development, and strengthens the partnership between school and home in fostering a culture of reading.

READING FOR PLEASURE

Libraries

Every classroom contains a well-stocked reading area, designed as a "mini bookshop" rather than a decorative display. Books are clearly labelled, front-facing, and refreshed regularly in line with DfE recommendations to sustain excitement and variety. Decodable phonics texts are stored separately, so that the reading area remains a dedicated space for reading for pleasure. The texts selected are high-quality and age-appropriate, including books read aloud in class, so that pupils can revisit favourites, explore new titles, and borrow books to share at home.

In addition, pupils enjoy weekly sessions in the school library, supported by their teachers, where they can browse a wider selection of carefully chosen texts. To broaden horizons further, each class also makes half-termly visits to the local library. These visits are valued as special opportunities to encounter new authors, genres, and ideas, reinforcing the joy of reading and fostering lifelong habits of library use.

Modelling Reading

Teachers read aloud to pupils every day, modelling fluency, expression, and enjoyment, and exposing pupils to a wide range of genres and authors. This practice, supported by research, helps pupils to develop listening comprehension, build vocabulary, and see reading as a valued and pleasurable activity. Weekly reading assemblies further enrich this culture: in EYFS and KS1, picture books are shared and linked explicitly to school values, while in KS2, ongoing chapter books are used to model stamina and deeper engagement. Regular opportunities such as Rainbow Reading sessions provide protected time for independent reading, nurturing both choice and autonomy.

Book talk is embedded across the school. Pupils recommend titles to one another, staff share their own favourites, and discussions foster a sense of community around reading. Enrichment opportunities strengthen this culture still further, including participation in the Battle of the Books competition, engagement with the Summer Reading Challenge, visits from authors and storytellers, and cross-age reading partnerships where older pupils share books with younger children. Reading also extends into Bailey's After School Club, where staff read with pupils and continue to promote reading for pleasure in informal settings.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment in reading is continuous and multi-layered. At the start of each academic year, pupils complete a Literacy Counts baseline assessment to identify strengths and areas for development. Progress is tracked through termly Literacy Counts assessments, complemented by ongoing teacher assessment during lessons, through reading records, book talk, and one to one conferencing (where applicable).

Vocabulary knowledge is monitored through knowledge organisers and targeted teacher questioning, ensuring that pupils are secure in the language required to access texts.

In Year 6, statutory assessment outcomes from the Key Stage 2 SATs are reported and used alongside internal measures. All assessment information is used diagnostically to inform next steps, guide planning, and identify pupils who require targeted support or intervention.

INCLUSION

Reading is accessible to all pupils, including those taught within our specialist bases. Teachers in our specialist provision adapt Literacy Counts materials to meet the needs of mixed-age and mixed-ability groups, ensuring progression is maintained. For pupils who are newly verbal, the Little Wandle SEND Phonics programme is implemented to provide a carefully structured pathway into reading, enabling them to develop the foundational skills to access texts at a pace appropriate to their individual needs.

Pupils outside of the specialist provision with SEND or EAL are supported through a range of strategies, including smaller group reading practice, pre-teaching of vocabulary, scaffolded texts with visual supports, and targeted adult guidance during reading lessons. Rapid intervention is implemented where gaps are identified, so that no pupil is left behind.

All adaptations are made in line with the school's Equal Opportunities, SEND, and EAL policies, ensuring equity, access, and high expectations for every learner.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Pupils will be taught to stay safe in all reading contexts, including:

- Safe movement around the school when visiting the library.
- Behaviour expectations during off-site visits (e.g. local library, Battle of the Books).

- Respectful use of shared spaces (school library, book corners).
- Online safety when reading texts on interactive whiteboards or iPads, in line with the school's Online Safety Policy.
- Listening to and respecting visiting authors and storytellers.

IMPACT

Pupils leave Riversdale as fluent, confident readers who enjoy reading and are able to access the full curriculum. Progress in reading is demonstrated through assessment data, reading records, book talk, and high-quality classroom practice. Pupils develop rich vocabularies that enhance their writing and support learning across all subjects. Reading for pleasure is a visible and vibrant part of school life, celebrated through daily practice, assemblies, and enrichment opportunities. As the DfE Reading Framework (2023) states, "reading is the gateway to the curriculum." At Riversdale, pupils are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and love of reading they need to succeed in education and in life.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors

- Ensure a broad and balanced reading curriculum is implemented.
- Ensure the reading curriculum is accessible to all pupils.

Deputy / Head Teacher

- Overall responsibility for implementation of this policy.
- Ensure resources are allocated to reading.
- Ensure all pupils are appropriately supported.
- Appoint a subject leader for reading.

Subject Leader

- Prepare policy documents, curriculum plans and schemes of work.
- Review national changes (e.g. DfE Reading Framework) and advise staff.
- Monitor learning and teaching of reading, supporting staff where necessary.
- Lead staff meetings and training on reading.
- Organise and audit reading resources (books, library, classroom stock).
- Monitor progress in reading and report to SLT and governors.

Teacher

- Implement this policy in daily practice.
- Deliver daily phonics (EYFS/KS1) and Reading Practice lessons (KS1/KS2).
- Maintain reading records and guide home reading through stickers and comments.
- Promote a love of reading through book talk, library visits and reading corners.
- Assess pupils' reading and act swiftly to address gaps.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is monitored and reviewed by the reading subject leader, supported by SLT.

Monitoring includes lesson visits, planning scrutiny, pupil voice and assessment analysis.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if national guidance changes.