



PensMeadowSchool

Living, Growing, Learning

Reading Curriculum Policy

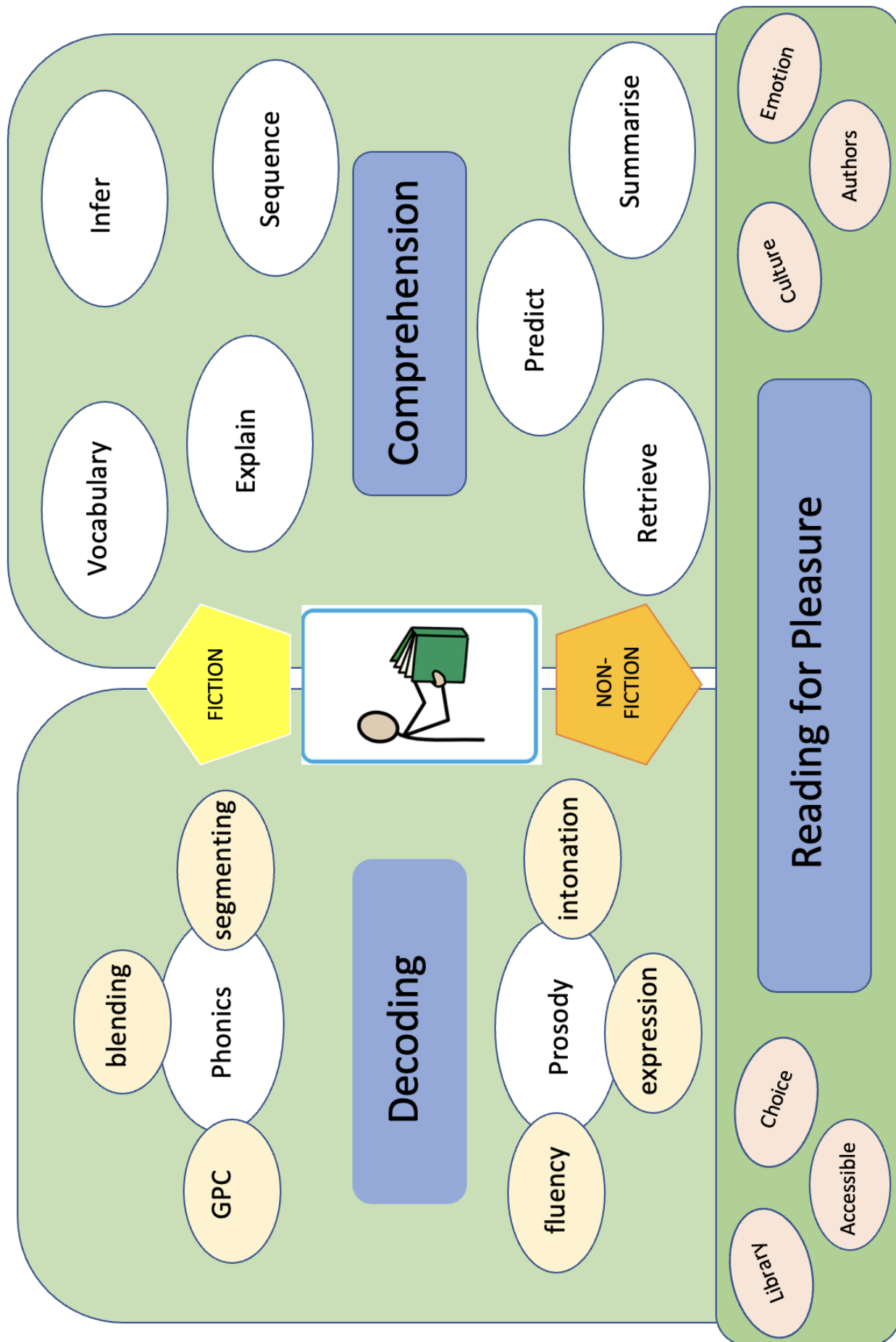
SEPTEMBER 2024

NEXT REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2025

AHT Core Subjects

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the phonics policy.

Intent

At Pens Meadow school, we aim to provide our students with lifelong reading skills to support them through the rest of their educational career and beyond. We strive to develop our student's reading and comprehension skills to improve their quality of life and give them the skills they need to make sense of the world and achieve to the best of their ability.

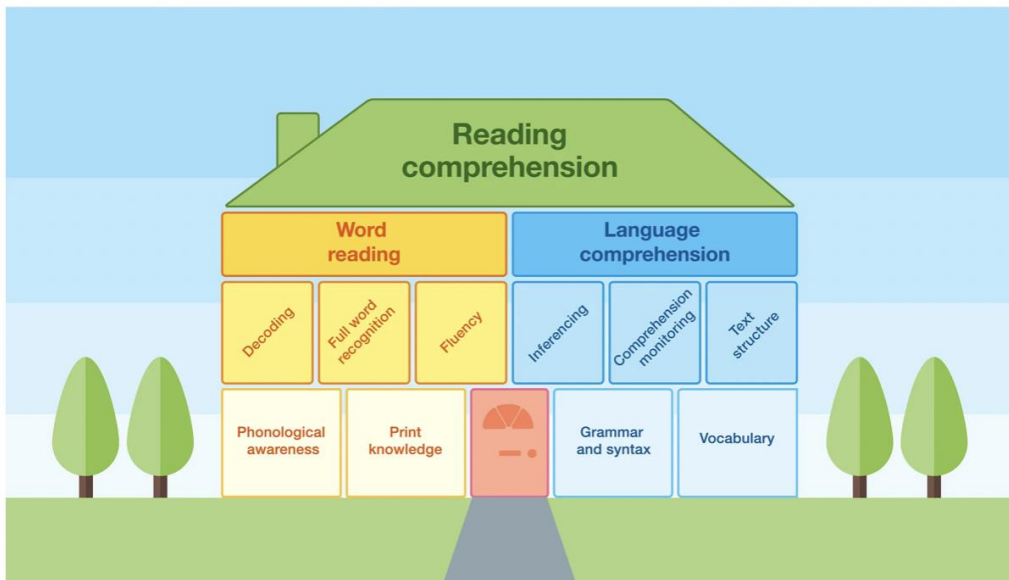
Our clear, consistent approach to teaching reading at Pens Meadow uses communication and language, drama and comprehension to develop student's background knowledge and vocabulary whilst ensuring they are familiar with the different formats of print which they are likely to see in the written world. This, alongside our phonics programme, Little Wandle Letters and Sounds, gives students the early reading skills to access quality texts as well as engaging in functional reading.

Our approach to reading encompasses a total communication environment giving students opportunities to gain meaning from text, symbols and the environment around them and incorporates all forms of communication into practice.

We understand that success in reading has a direct impact in other areas of the curriculum. Therefore, our whole curriculum has been developed to support students with connecting meaningful knowledge of the world whilst complimenting and supplementing other subjects through reading. Fiction and non-fiction books alongside functional reading supports this.

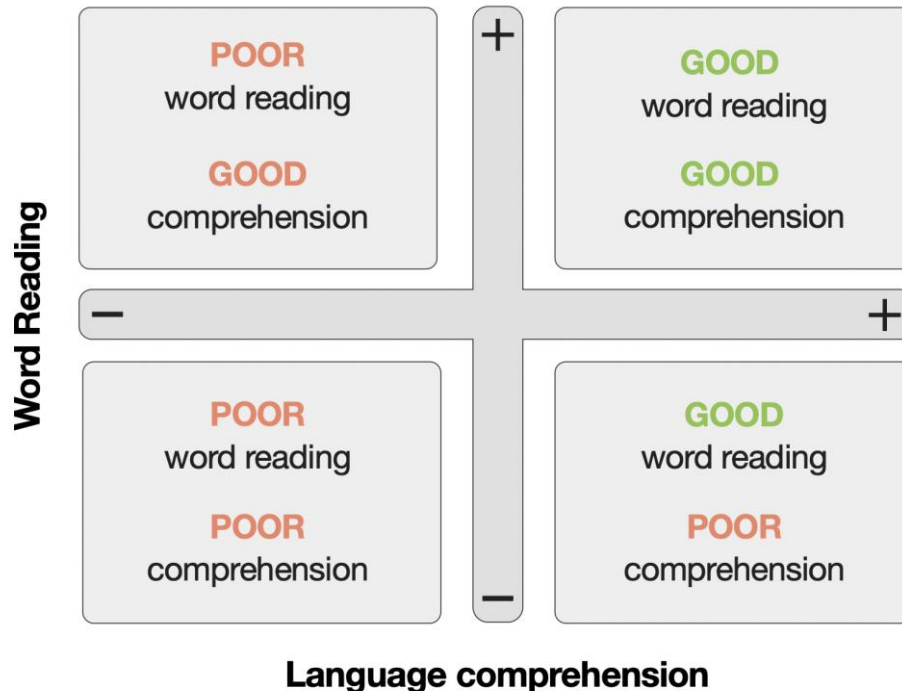
We have a strong Reading for Pleasure ethos across school and our library and reading spaces throughout both sites encourage students to read frequently, with enjoyment, using age appropriate as well as developmental levelled books. Our staff provide reading role models, encouraging students to read, share and enjoy recommended texts and celebrating literacy days such as poetry days and World Book Day.

Strong links with parents and families is key to supporting our student's reading development. We aim to increase parental engagement through a range of activities including workshops, our website, social media, and invitations into school.



Reading comprehension-the sum of many parts
Adapted from Hogan, Bridges, Justice, and Cain (2011)

It is important that pupils at Pens Meadow are given opportunities to build strong foundations in the key reading areas; phonological awareness, print knowledge, grammar and syntax and vocabulary to ensure that they have formed schemas for early reading before developing their reading skills further.



Education Endowment Foundation

The simple view of reading supports identification and assessment across school to support staff to identify pupils who fall into all four quadrants. This is used to identify provision for groups and individuals.

Implementation

Reading Curriculum

Students at Pens Meadow are taught reading through four curriculum pathways:

- Holistic Pathway – Pre English
- Early Development Pathway
- Sensory Pathway
- Semi-formal Pathway

Pupils working on the holistic pathway are working well below key stage standards and need specific targeted Pre-English teaching to support their developing attention and responses to stimuli including sounds, rhymes and books.

The early development curriculum follows the EYFS standards and is based on the Birth to Five Matters scheme. Pupils following this pathway are in **Green or Pink** class and are in Reception, Year One **or Two**.

Our curriculum for the sensory and semi-formal pathways is based upon our reading development document and enables students to be immersed in on-going, multi-sensory experiences which foster emergent reading skills through quality reading experiences and daily routines. At Post 14 pupils build upon the skills developed and we continue to engage students in the exploration and comprehension of quality texts.

Holistic Pathway

The definition of 'read' is to look at and comprehend the meaning of (written or printed matter) by interpreting the characters or symbols of which it is composed. *Oxford Languages Dictionary*

For students at very early stages of development, our reading curriculum enables them to have opportunities to build positive interactive relationships with others whilst proactively exploring the world around them and gaining an enjoyment of sounds, rhythms and words through songs, rhymes, and story.

For students following the holistic pathway, our aims are for pupils to:

- Have a 'voice' and make meaning from their environment and people around them to be as independent and confident as possible.
- To get their needs known and met.
- Make meaning from people, objects, pictures, symbols, words, sounds and the environment.
- Develop the ability to attend, anticipate, respond, and interact to their environment.
- Use their sensory needs as channels for receptive learning through adaptation of the presentation of the provision to meet physical and sensory challenges.

Pupils following the holistic pathway at the Ridge Hill Site focus on two quality texts, chosen for their context and sensory content each half term.

Pupils in year ten and above on the holistic pathway study books that have been selected as texts that are contextually age appropriate with opportunities to develop sensory learning through intensive interaction and a range of personalised strategies.

For studied texts please see the Pens Meadow Reading Spine.

Early Development Approach

Language comprehension starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books they read with them, and when they enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. *Development Matters EYFS Curriculum*.

The Early Development Approach encompasses students in **green and pink classes** (4-7 years old). Our aims for these pupils are:

- To develop a life-long love of reading and sharing stories.
- Have a 'voice' and make meaning from their environment and people around them to become as independent and confident as possible.
- To get their needs known and met.
- Make meaning from people, objects, pictures, symbols, words, sounds and the environment.

Pupils in **green and pink classes** develop their reading skills through themes identified in the Pens Meadow Early Development Long Term Plan. Planning recognises the importance of adults talking to children to develop language comprehension, word reading skills and a lifelong love of reading.

Sensory and Semi-formal pathways

For students following the sensory and semi-formal pathways our aims are for students to:

- Make meaning from people, objects, pictures, symbols, words, sounds and the environment.
- Develop and use functional communication skills.
- Use written information in a range of media to gain practical information and extend their knowledge.
- Develop understanding of picture books and multisensory stories through drama and pre-teaching of tier one, two- and three-words including concepts.
- Read and share a wide variety of challenging texts for information and for pleasure including a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and media and websites and social media to learn about the world.

In lower, middle and upper phases English lessons follow a three-week rolling programme using a quality text developing pupil's speaking, listening, and reading skills to support purposeful writing. In Key Stage 4 and 5 texts are differentiated to meet pupil's pathways and development levels. Mostly, pupils study a quality text over a term although occasionally they may study shorter books for half a term. Pupils at Pensnet follow the same programme as the other phases, however their planned lesson focus is adapted to fit their bespoke timetables.

Learning questions for lessons are set from the appropriate planning document and are personalised to support pupils to reach their agreed end points for each half term. (See assessment and tracking progress.)

For students in year ten and above the following aims build on the aims above for this pathway. These are for pupils to:

- Develop and use reading skills to support them for the rest of their educational career and beyond.
- Read and share a wide variety of age appropriate, challenging books developing comprehension skills.
- Build on decoding skills to read key words through symbol support and a total communication environment.

Phonics

At Pens Meadow, we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds systematic phonics programme. Each week pupils are timetabled for four phonics sessions a week which include two opportunities to read matched decodable books.

For all students on our Ridge Hill site, half termly assessments allow focused pupils to be grouped appropriately to plan for appropriate next steps in sound recognition and blending. Pupils then follow a range of pathways, pre-phonics, foundation for phonics and the SEN pathway.

Students who transitioned to our Pensnet site after September 2023 continue to be assessed and follow the Little Wandle phonics scheme where appropriate. All other pupils are supported to develop decoding and comprehension skills through English and instructional reading strategies.

Across school all students are supported with a range of ICT, signs, and symbols to support their communication.

Timings

Pupils at Ridge Hill Site have four English lessons a week which are run on a three weekly rolling programme with a book focus. They have additional phonics lessons four times a week as well as daily handwriting and shared reading at the end of the day.

Pupils in Key Stage 4-5 have three lessons of English a week. They also continue to build upon skills they have learnt through their work related learning experiences and preparation for adulthood sessions. Pupils who have transitioned from Ridge Hill to Post 14 who have not completed the Little Wandle phonics scheme continue to have this provision on their timetables.

Texts

Set texts for each phase have been chosen through research and in consultation with teachers, based on pupil age, ability, and interest. These books can be seen on the Pens Meadow Reading spine. Careful consideration has been given to ensuring texts increase in contextual complexity across school and cover a range of themes including historical, cultural, and traditional.

All phase reading spines follow a rolling programme. If any pupils repeat a cycle, they will encounter the books with a deeper understanding and have an opportunity to review and revisit their emerging skills to develop higher-level outcomes.

Total Communication and personalised learning

All students	Semi-formal Approach Students will be supported by all student strategies plus:	Sensory Approach Students will be supported by all student and semi-formal strategies plus:
<p>Makaton signs and symbols to support understanding of print and text</p> <p>InPrint is used to translate text into symbol form to support early reading skills</p> <p>Books are enlarged and adapted to meet individual needs</p> <p>Sensory stories, story sacks and communication bags are used to provide a range of tactile resources and sensory experiences</p> <p>Audio books</p>	<p>Action songs and rhymes/ musical instruments</p> <p>Songs related to topics</p> <p>Personalised books/ independent exploration of books</p> <p>ALDs/ and or other AAC</p> <p>Use of symbols for transitions and schedules</p> <p>Environmental print and symbols</p>	<p>Personalised books differentiated to learning development levels</p> <p>Objects related to stories</p> <p>A range of related sensory experiences</p> <p>Communication aids/ controlled devices</p> <p>Story Massage</p> <p>Intensive Interaction</p> <p>Sensology</p> <p>Use of switches and Big Macs</p> <p>Scaffolding</p> <p>Positive Looking boards</p> <p>TAC PACs</p>



Students following the Early Development Approach will be supported with the above strategies as appropriate to their developmental and learning needs.

Individual Needs

Personalised learning is embedded within Pens Meadow school. Pupil's individual learning styles and strategies are identified to ensure that all pupils have maximised learning opportunities. These include regulation breaks and behaviour support plans and are all identified on pupil's All About Me clipboards alongside their IEP targets. All pupils learn in their own way and at their own pace and individuals may need identified, specialised interventions to support their learning.

Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

Pupils who experience profound and multiple learning difficulties must experience and retain a series of pre-requisites for learning to move on and develop recognised skills in literacy. These pre-requisites include self-awareness, a sense of rhythm, pattern, order, and communication skills. For most of our PMLD pupils gaining these prerequisites will be a continuous process throughout their time in school.

Assessment and tracking progress

Holistic Pathway

Pupils on the holistic pathway are assessed using the Engagement Model which is used to assess pupil's engagement in exploratory and sensory activities related to reading. These pupils have a half termly book skills observation to support their assessments.

Reading experiences and learning opportunities are planned to support pupils to work towards the outcomes through very small, broken-down steps. For more information about how we use the Engagement Model for assessment see Marking and Assessment Policies.

Sensory and Semi-formal Approach

Summative Assessment

Alongside half termly phonics assessments pupils complete termly reading assessments. For pupils working on pre-phonics stages 1-5 a book skills observation is completed to build a picture of the developing skills and understanding.

Once a pupil reaches pre-phonics stages 6-7 or the first two sets of phase 2 phonics questions across the Blank Levels are used to assess pupils understanding.

Pupils who are assessed as being able to confidently recognise a determined number of GPCs and blend simple identified words at phase 2 to phase 5 complete a miscue analysis and rubric assessment of fluency for matched GPC reading books.

Pupils who have completed the phonics scheme also complete a miscue analysis and rubric assessment of fluency using the Big Cat fluency books which assess pupils at the speed of words they read in a minute.

Staff also assess progress against the steps on the Pens Meadow development document on a half termly basis. This progress is discussed in pupil progress meetings.

Formative assessment

Verbal, adaptive questioning and feedback takes place throughout all reading lessons and is supported with signs, symbols and ALDs. All pupils receive feedback, related to their efforts, as part of the plenary. Staff record pupils progress on their 1:1 reading sheets, phonics group reading sheets or instructional reading sheets dependent on their development level and school site.

For more information about assessment please see the assessment policy.

Accreditation

Pupils on holistic pathway in year 14 work towards OCR Life and Living Skills Engaging in Early Reading (B03). Pupils on the sensory and semi-formal pathways work towards OCR Life and Living Skills Developing Reading Skills (B08).

Opportunities for Reading

Books to Read (Ridge Hill Site)

To support the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds phonics programme, guided, and 1:1 reading takes place using the Big Cat phonics books. Pupils use reading books matched to their most recent phonics assessment. These books are practised 1:1 with staff and in small groups as appropriate within phonics, and throughout the week as appropriate.

Books to Read (Pensnett Site)

Instructional reading sessions take place for pupils who are not following the phonics programme at Pensnett and use the Big Cat phonics books. These books are then practised 1:1 with staff across the week as appropriate.

Books to share (Post 14 site)

A selection of books from a range of reading schemes have been levelled appropriately using the book bands. These books are labelled and form our 'books to share'. We recognise that although identified pupils may be able to read some words within the appropriate book band there may be words within these books which rely on picture clues and phonic GPCs that have not yet been taught. Staff and parents will need to support pupils with reading these books in a collaborative manner for our pupils to experience success.

Reading for Pleasure

Pupils, at both sites, also have access to a wide range of quality texts in the libraries, classrooms and reading areas around school. This promotes a love of reading and encourages children to read, share and listen to books for their own pleasure. We encourage families to share these books together with children for their own enjoyment. All classes across school have a dedicated daily session for Reading for Pleasure

Author of the Month/ Recommendations

At Ridge Hill there are two authors of the month, one for Lower and Complex Needs phase and one for Middle and Upper Phase. Pupils read a selection of books by the author over the month changing them weekly in assembly. The first assembly of the month celebrates the author and tells the pupils about them. Each classroom has a label on their door and in the classroom displaying their author of the month which is also displayed on the corridor display.

At Pensnett the pupils in each class choose a that they recommend, and this is displayed in their classrooms and on the classroom door. This book is shared in assembly for other pupils to learn about.

Bingo books

As part of our Reading for Pleasure ethos, each classroom has a Bingo Book Basket which contain a range of books chosen to appeal to pupil's interests. Each pupil has a Bingo Book which is changed weekly. For every book at they read pupils earn a mark on their Bingo board. Prizes are given for the completion of each row and a larger prize for the completion of the board.

Home Reading

All pupils take home a book bag with either a Big Cat phonics book and/ or a Reading for Pleasure book of their choice. Parents are supported with leaflets about how to help their child practice reading skills at home and ALDs to support book choice for non-verbal pupils. Pupils are given reading certificates in assembly to celebrate how many books they have read or shared.

Experiences

At Pens Meadow we believe that experiencing real world contexts is vitally important to support pupil's comprehension, use functional literacy skills and extend their thinking and understanding. Weekly opportunities for community visits and engagement give all pupils opportunities to develop their reading skills in a range of real-life contexts.

Environment

At Pens Meadow we aim to provide a reading rich ethos across school by providing an environment which promotes reading both for functional skills and for pleasure.

Our total communication environment at Pens Meadow supports and engages students with print in the environment. Strategies include Makaton, PECS, Communication aids, photographs, symbol support, Objects of Reference, iPad apps and eye gaze tools.

In October 2022, we refurbished our libraries and created designated reading spaces throughout our school environment. Students can select high quality texts which are varied and engaging. Every class has a dedicated library time across the week.

A yearly audit of books ensures that books are in good condition and that the books that pupils access are the most current and cover relevant themes.

Classrooms

Our classrooms are set up to meet the individual needs and ages of the pupils whilst reflecting the importance of reading across school. All labels are supported with InPrint symbols and key words to support developing reading skills and understanding.

Every classroom has a reading nook, den, or corner with a range of high-quality books and reading material including different genres. Where appropriate sensory resources are used to support understanding of texts selected.

Reading for pleasure

Reading for pleasure refers to **reading that we do of our own free will anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading**. It also refers to reading that having begun at someone else's request we continue because we are interested in it.

At Pens Meadow we aim to foster a love of reading and a desire to read for pleasure in all our students by:

- Ensuring our teachers are knowledgeable about children's literature.
- Developing an ethos and environment across both sites that excites, enthuses, inspires and values and which creates a community of readers who, where developmentally appropriate, share responses and opinions.
- Encouraging appreciation of different types of text e.g. comics, graphic novels etc.
- Providing high quality texts with depth and interest in story, character, illustration, vocabulary, structure, and subject matter.

- Enhancing stories with total communication systems and sensory experiences.
- Developing a daily read aloud programme and planning for talking about books and stories.
- Focusing on an 'Author of the Month' across the year for students up to year ten.
- Celebrating a love of literature through termly poetry focus weeks and celebration days such as World Poetry Day and World Book Day.
- At least termly visits to the local library for every class.
- Reading challenges both in school and at home.
- Teachers visiting different classes to read their favourite texts.
- Raising parental engagement
-

Both our sites have a library with carefully audited, high quality texts including fiction, non-fiction, poetry and rhymes. All classrooms, including forest school, have book nooks and engaging book spaces that are adapted to the needs of the students. These are safe spaces to explore a range of texts, select books and make choices independently and with staff support.

Our libraries are tidied, audited and book recommendations are created by pupils from Pensnet during their work-related learning sessions.

Sharing stories

Sharing stories is an integral part of fostering communication and reading skills at any stage of development. At Pens Meadow we ensure that all our pupils are immersed in books from an early developmental level. Stories are shared on a 1:1 basis, in small groups, or classes. We do this in several ways:

Sensory stories – these stories are planned to meet the needs of individual groups of pupils. They incorporate all five senses to create an interactive, engaging story which involves real-life experiences.

Story sack and props - the use of sensory props engages pupils in interactive storytelling, developing communication and drama skills alongside understanding, comprehension and vocabulary.

Story videos – every half term classes share at least one video of a member of staff telling a story. This is often one of the focus stories for that term. This models strategies for supporting reading at home as well as giving parents/ carers an accessible story to share.

Songs and rhymes – these form part of our daily routines and are used to cue pupils into transition times. Songs and rhymes are used to explore rhythm, sound and rhyme and have a very strong focus within the Early Development and Lower Phase provision.

Wider Curriculum

Following an audit of quality fiction and non-fiction books to enhance and supplement our wider curriculum; we have a wide range of different texts and media both in classrooms and in our school libraries.

Reading and comprehension skills are developed through access to the texts within the wider curriculum developing knowledge, vocabulary and functional life skills. Students are supported with strategies identified within the main reading curriculum ensuring personalised learning and consistency within learning approaches across all subjects.

Parents and carers

“Parents, carers and other family members need to be empowered with the confidence, skills and knowledge to help their child develop a solid foundation in early language and literacy, and to build and sustain a positive home literacy environment throughout their childhoods.” *Read On Get On Strategy*

Parents and the home environment are essential to the early teaching of reading and fostering a love of reading; children are more likely to continue to be readers in homes where books and reading are valued (*Clark and Rumbold, 2006*).

Information sent home

Parents and carers receive a half termly reading newsletter which informs them of the focus English books for the half term, the authors of the month or class book recommendations and any upcoming events as well as a recommendation from a member of staff.

Parents and carers receive information about reading events including workshops, competitions, celebrations, and explanations about how to support with reading at home.

Facebook and Instagram are used for the school and individual classes to raise the profile and celebrate reading experiences with pupil’s families.

Workshops

Workshops are built into the school calendar to promote reading and develop parent and carers understanding about how to support pupil’s effectively at home.

Parent’s evenings and annual reviews

Parent’s and carers are invited into school for parents evening and annual Education, Health and Care Plan reviews. Progress towards reading is discussed at these meeting and advice given to parents and carers as appropriate.

School Website

Our website has been developed to support parents with a range of ways to support their young people. Information includes:

- Links to Little Wandle phonics support for parents
- Overview of the reading curriculum including links within curriculum mapping
- Reading information
- Information about reading events including our Author of the Month
- Recordings of parent workshops

Parental Questionnaire

- Questionnaires are sent out annually to gain parent and carer views to express their opinions of our reading offer.

Impact

At Pens Meadow we regularly review our reading curriculum and progress towards personalised end points for each pupil.

Steps for 2023-24

- *Continue to develop opportunities to read at home using Bingo books and reading certificates.*

Reading certificates were introduced followed by Bingo Books. This has helped increase the reading engagement at home. However, on reflection we have decided to continue with Bingo books to streamline the systems for parents and staff. Reading culture in school has increase as evidenced through observations comments and parent, pupil and staff views.

- *Continue to improve phonics teaching through the role of the reading lead.*

Over the year there is a steady pattern of movement from step 1 moving to step 4 at pre-phonics stages. There may be some pupils who plateau at their current level due to their cognitive difficulties and therefore it will be important to monitor this and ensure that they are able to broaden their experiences in these areas rather than progressing along the continuum of development.

For pupils on the phonics programme, again there is a steady pattern of progression along the phonics phases.

- *Review curriculum to increase opportunities for reading throughout all subjects in the curriculum.*

As the new curriculum is being developed medium term planning demonstrates an increase in stories and non-fiction books related to the topics signposted in the plans. Further investment in non-fiction books in the library has further strengthened this step.

- *Improve the quality of reading teaching at Post 14 through development of guided and individual reading.*

Instructional reading has been introduced at our Pensnet site and is timetabled throughout the week. 1:1 reading is monitored weekly to ensure all pupils are heard read 1:1. Staff are more consistent in their assessments which have been linked to blank level questions improving the pitch of the reading teaching across the site.

Next steps for 2024- 2025

- All planning highlights opportunities to develop reading skills throughout the curriculum.
- All teachers plan effective quality reading opportunities demonstrating awareness of individual pupil's phonics levels and development band steps
- Effective use of strategies to support reading are embedded in all reading sessions.