Literacy Policy

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Role	Assistant Headteacher
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AIMS

At Brackenfield we recognise that Literacy skills are essential tools to understand and navigate the world we live in. We believe in the importance of reading and writing as a functional skills for accessing information and making sense of the world around us, and for communicating thoughts and ideas in written form. This communication begins at objects of reference to pictures and symbols, through to phonemes, words and texts developing the foundations for a transferrable life skill. We aim to foster a functional and accessible language rich environment where children can develop skills to make sense of the world around them and to communicate by using print, signs or symbols to represent language. We aim to foster a love and enjoyment of listening to and reading stories and encourage our children to engage with a wide selection of books and texts.

We want our pupils:

- To be able to use language to communicate needs and opinions
- To develop a love of language and enjoy engaging with stories and other texts
- To functionally access the world around them
- To develop transferrable literacy skills
- To recognise and access purposeful and aspirational opportunities.

We recognise the important role that staff play in the development of communication and literacy skills, and as such the staff at Brackenfield are committed to the development of all pupils, in the belief that it will support their learning, increase and enhance opportunities and reduce vulnerabilities in adulthood.

Teaching staff will:

- Provide a language rich environment, in line with communication needs, and offer a wide range of opportunities to engage with signs, symbols, stories, rhymes and texts.
- Ensure reading materials available are appropriate to pupils' reading abilities, age and interests, and are interesting and engaging.
- Ensure observations and assessments are used appropriately to ensure pupils are sufficiently challenged in their language and reading development
- Provide opportunities to develop and transfer life skills in multiple contexts
- Recognise and promote success and achievements

Leaders ensure that staff fully understand their role in the development of communication, language and literacy skills and ensure that staff have access to relevant CPD in order to support this (see appendix 3).

We understand that the acquisition of literacy skills is a process and that our learners are all at different stages on this journey. For our cohort their stage is defined by their specific communication and cognition needs rather than by their age. Pupils are all baselined to give a developmental stage against the national curriculum to support how their

learning opportunities can best be planned and sequenced to support the development of communication and literacy skills. (See appendix 1)

CURRICULUM

When planning literacy instruction, and carrying out assessments as detailed in appendix 1, reference is also made to The Simple View of Reading (Gough and Tunmer 1986) to ensure that skills are developed in both word recognition and language comprehension, in order to develop fluency, accuracy and understanding.

Gough and Tunmer 1986
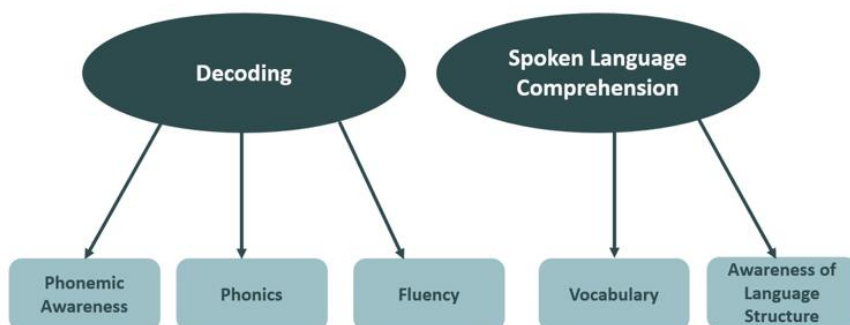
Assessments of children's current strengths and weaknesses are made, and the graph below is used to plan the appropriate reading instruction.
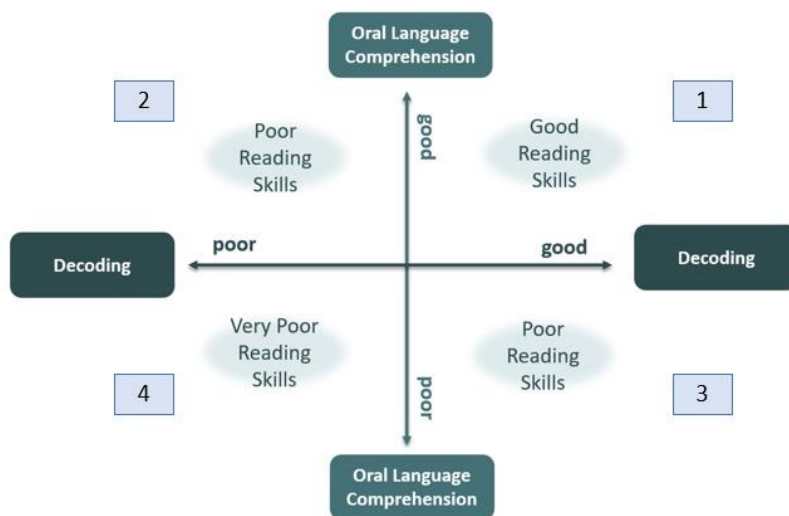
Those pupils who are assessed as being in quadrant 1 - who have good oral language skills and good decoding skills – we categorise as **functional readers** (These pupils will be at B-Level 18 or above – see appendix 1) and they will access learning opportunities to continue to develop their reading comprehension and understanding of more challenging vocabulary to enable them to continue to develop their functional reading skills and enriching life opportunities through reading for pleasure. Those in quadrant 3 – who have good decoding skills but poor oral language comprehension - are also categorised as **functional readers** (B-Level 15 – 18). However, it is recognised that their reading instruction will need to be focused on the development of their comprehension skills to ensure functional understanding is gained. Those pupils in quadrant 2 – who have good oral language comprehension but poor decoding skills – we categorise as **emergent readers** (B Level 8-15). They will access phonics teaching to support the development of both decoding and comprehension skills in order to develop fluency, accuracy and understanding. These pupils in quadrant 4 – who have poor oral language comprehension and poor decoding skills – we categorise as **pre-readers** (below B-Level 8). Learning opportunities for them focus on development of understanding of

language and where appropriate of print alongside development of listening and sound discrimination skills. (see appendix 2 for further information)

Pre-Reading/Writing Intent

Pupils are learning to notice and use language at a pace appropriate to their level of cognition. They are learning to notice and recognise print, symbols, pictures, and words in the environment. They are learning to explore stories, rhymes, and texts. They are learning that print has meaning and how to handle books and other texts.

Emerging Reading/Writing Intent

Pupils are learning to understand the alphabetic code, so that they can recognise a growing number of phonemes and the graphemes that represent them. They are learning to blend sounds to read a growing number of words and apply this to reading texts in different contexts, with increasing accuracy, fluency and understanding. They are learning to segment sounds to write a growing number of words, phrases, and sentences in order to help them begin to communicate thoughts and ideas using print.

Functional Reading/Writing Intent

Pupils are learning to apply their reading skills in different contexts to read different types of texts and texts they enjoy. They are learning to apply their reading skills in different contexts to find information, acquire knowledge and answer questions. They are learning to use technology to help them read texts. They are learning to apply their writing skills meaningfully in different contexts. They are learning to write to communicate their thoughts and ideas and to support their independence. Pupils are learning to use technology to support their writing.

Pre-Reading/Writing

Our pre-readers/writers are learning to navigate the world and to communicate by using print, signs or symbols to represent language. They are developing their understanding of how language can:

- give us information
- be used to tell narratives
- entertain through stories, poems, and rhymes
- make us laugh through word play, such as jokes and puns

Typical daily delivery of literacy sessions for children at this stage may include opportunities to:

- listen to songs, stories, and rhymes
- develop preferences for particular songs, stories and rhymes through repetition
- be encouraged to join in with familiar words and phrases
- be encouraged to notice signs and symbols in the environment
- handle, play with and investigate books
- develop fine motor skills through appropriate activities to develop grip and dexterity such as stacking, sorting and using a range of tools in play (e.g. play dough, scissors, tweezers) and mark making in a range of
- engage in early mark making activities using a range of tools and materials including sensory materials, and art/writing materials (e.g. in sand, foam, on iPads, finger painting).

For children who are ready for further development of their understanding of printed media, literacy sessions will also include opportunities to:

- engage in shared reading of, and talking about books
- learn to handle books correctly, orient them the right way and turn the pages in order
- develop preferences for particular books and stories
- be encouraged to point to words to demonstrate understanding the print carries meaning
- continue to engage in early mark making and writing activities and be encouraged to demonstrate their intention to communicate meaning (e.g. writing lists, writing their name, writing labels, mark making in play/ imaginative play, and writing).

Children at this further stage of early language development will also have access to discrete, carefully planned activities to develop their phonological and phonemic awareness in preparation for future phonic instruction. These activities are designed to develop their speaking and listening skills in readiness for the development of oral blending and segmenting skills. These activities are planned using guidance from phase 1 of Letters and Sounds and cover 7 aspects.

The 7 aspects are:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion
- Rhythm and rhyme in speech and song
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting

These aspects are divided into strands which include:

- Tuning in (auditory discrimination)
- Listening and remembering (auditory memory and sequencing)
- Talking about (developing vocabulary and language comprehension)

 (see appendix 3 for further information)

Emerging Reading/Writing

Our emergent readers are continuing to learn how communication and signs, symbols and print can help them to navigate the world, however they are showing more awareness of the meaning that print carries and have sufficiently developed phonological and phonemic awareness and so the focus is shifted to looking more closely at specific reading and writing skills. Literacy sessions for children at this stage will continue to include opportunities to develop language comprehension through exposure to books and stories and opportunities for shared reading and discussion of these. In addition, they will be offered opportunities to develop their decoding skills to be able to read at word, sentence and text level.

Decoding skills are developed through teaching principles from the **Phonics for Pupils with SEN programme**, a complete systematic, synthetic linguistic phonics programme. Designed specifically for pupils with special educational needs, it includes activities that support and develop children's ability to hear and recognise phonemes (referred to as sounds) and know the graphemes (referred to as sound spellings) that represent them. The scheme avoids technical language and focuses on developing knowledge of the 'alphabetic code', including variations in

sound spellings, through opportunities for overlearning. Through detailed training, designed to skill and empower teachers, it offers a range of strategies for identifying, analysing and dealing with a range of difficulties that children may experience when learning to decode.

The scheme provides formative assessment from which teachers can plan a child's next steps in reading. Teachers use resources from the scheme to plan daily reading/phonics lessons which may be delivered 1:1 or in very small groups as appropriate for individual needs, and which will be planned for a length of time appropriate to individual needs: lessons may be as short as 5 minutes or as long as 20-30 minutes. These lessons are structured using information and resources from the scheme's core books and provide a framework for ensuring skills are developed and embedded through opportunities for overlearning using multisensory approaches. Following the scheme in this way ensures a steady progression of slowly building on prior knowledge whilst constantly revisiting prior learning to ensure consolidation of skills.

Activities include opportunities to both decode for reading and to encode for writing. These skills are introduced together so that reading and writing skills are developed alongside each other through the development of phonemic and phonological skills. Children are encouraged use phonic skills to build words, and from the very beginning are taught about correct letter formation for each 'sound symbol'. Although mark making through exploration of a range of materials is encouraged in the pre-reading and writing stage, at this stage, where possible, this is developed through encouraging the use of writing implements on paper for letter formation, and where possible legible handwriting with correctly formed, sized and oriented letters is developed as children work through the scheme. For children whose individual needs mean that this is not possible, writing can be encouraged though alternative word building activities and the use of technology.

Right from the beginning, children are encouraged to apply their phonics skills to decodable texts matched to the scheme to enable them to practice words in context. Decodable readers mean that students experience success in reading from the start, by only presenting them with words that they can decode. Pupils are encouraged to re-read these texts often to develop confidence and fluency.

The ability to decode texts requires enough understanding of vocabulary to be able to give meaning to words that are decoded. As reading skills develop, the ability to decode allows access to a wider range of texts which increase the reader's understanding of vocabulary and language structures. However, in the early stages of reading, the number of words a child can read is too limited to be able to broaden their vocabulary, so alongside phonic instruction, teachers also offer opportunities for speaking and listening activities and opportunities for shared reading of and listening to texts that they cannot decode themselves. These opportunities come from both dedicated literacy activities and through cross curricular links.

Functional Reading/Writing

These readers are developing their functional reading skills. They are learning to, or have 'cracked' the code and can decode at least enough words to read some texts fluently and accurately. These skills are built on through opportunities to continue to further develop their understanding of language and comprehension skills to help them navigate the world.

For some pupils at this stage, their decoding ability and language comprehension are not equal, therefore, it is important reading is embedded appropriately to promote meaningful language acquisition. Reading is often planned in different formats across the curriculum. This is pitched to ensure it is accessible to the pupil's decoding and comprehension skills. Regular opportunities to read out loud with adults or peers promote the importance of reading and supports reading confidence in different contexts. Decoding skills are given the repetition they require to develop accuracy and fluency, and comprehension is promoted through discussion, highlighting errors, corrections, and exploration of language.

Embedding Across the Curriculum

All classes have a well-stocked reading area and reading materials are selected and organised so as to be appropriate to the reading level of pupils in that class. Information about literacy activities will be detailed on each class rationale.

For pre-readers, appropriate books will provide opportunities to explore and engage with books and texts and to share these with adults through shared reading and story times, in order to develop understanding that print and symbols carry meaning.

Emergent readers will have access to decodable texts matched to their current phonic ability and will also have access to a range of texts: fiction books, non-fiction books, online activities etc that they can engage with and share with adults and peers to develop language comprehension and awareness of language structures.

In order to continue their reading development and accuracy, functional readers will have access to decodable texts and other instructional texts which are linked to their B-levels. They will also continue to have access to a range of texts: fiction books, non-fiction books, online activities, news articles appropriate to their level of understanding and interests, both for independent reading and sharing with adults and peers to develop language comprehension and awareness of language structures. They will also have opportunities to read appropriate texts across the curriculum to encourage application of literacy skills.

In order to support pupils with visual impairment, Braille is useful but not essential, especially as - for some pupils - their level of cognition means they are unable to access learning in Braille. Often talking devices and narrative from adults are more useful to meet a pupil's needs and resources available to support this include talking pens and magnifying domes. Where appropriate, teachers have access to the Hands on Braille reading scheme, as well as Monty and Oxychem devices to be able to make Braille resources for reading. Staff are aware that fatigue is high for VI students, meaning that learning using a 'little and often' approach is best.

Navigation around the school environment

Pupil facing school signage and displays have both symbols and words. Words have dots and dashes, which match to the phonics scheme, to indicate sound spellings to aid pupils with decoding them, to ensure literacy life skills are embedded across the school environment.

For pupils with visual impairment, door signs in Braille are available.

Parental involvement at activities at home

Parents can request books to read and share with their children at home to compliment what is being delivered in school. Parents will be advised to promote a love of reading at home through exposure to different types of texts and real-life, functional contexts; shopping lists, road signs, recipes etc. Parental workshops will be held yearly to inform parents of how reading is taught and aid them in supporting their child's reading outside of school, copies of reading materials (decodable texts) are available for parents on request.

For more information about how we support children's language development, see the total communication approach policy.

APPENDICES

Assessment

All pupils have 'at the moment' statements written against the subject intent and are baselined on the B-Levels for communication, reading and writing. These baseline judgements are used to inform embedded literacy through personalised learning intentions. B-levels judgements are used to categorise pupils into groups as below:

B-Level Assessment of Literacy Skills
• Below B8 (0 – 3yrs) – Pre Reader • B8 – B18 (2- 6yrs) – Emergent Reader • B18 (6 yrs) and above - Functional Reader

Pre Literacy B0 (0yrs old)- B7 (2-3yrs)		Emerging Literacy B8 (2-3yrs) -B18 (6yrs)	Functional Literacy B18+ (6yrs+)
Pre-skills	Phase 1	Phonics for SEND	Reading and Writing for meaning

B-Level Standardised Equivalents

		School Year	EYFS Development Matters 2012	EYFS Development Matters 2020	Pre and Key Stage Standards	National Qualifications Framework
Pre-formal / Informal	B1		0 – 11 months	Birth to 3 Years		
	B2		0 – 11 months			
	B3		8 – 20 months			
	B4		8 – 20 months			
	B5		16 – 26 months			
	B6		16 – 26 months			
	B7		22- 36 months			
Semi-Formal /Informal	B8		22 – 36 months	3 – 4 Years	Standard 1 Writing Standard 1 Maths	Vocational Pathway Qualifications (Entry 1 Continuum)
	B9		30 – 50 months			
	B10		30 – 50 months		Standard 1 Reading	
	B11		30 – 50 months		Standard 2 Maths	
	B12		40 – 60 months	Reception	Standard 2 Reading Standard 2 Writing	
	B13	Reception	40 – 60 months		Standard 3 Writing Standard 3 Maths	
	B14	Reception	40 – 60 months			
	B15	Reception	Early Learning Goal		Standard 3 Reading Standard 4 Writing	
Formal	B16	1			Standard 4 Reading Standard 4 Maths	Entry Level 1
	B17	1				
	B18	1			Standard 5 Writing	
	B19	2			Standard 5 Maths Standard 5 Reading	
	B20	2				
	B21	2			End of Key Stage 1 Standard 6	
	B22	3				Entry Level 2
	B23	3				
	B24	3				
	B25	4				
	B26	4				
	B27	4				
	B28	5				Entry Level 3
	B29	5				
	B30	5				
	B31	6				
	B32	6				
	B33	6			End of Key Stage 2	

From here, pupils who are identified as emerging or functional readers are then selected for standardised testing using the Salford Sentence Reading Comprehension Test.

Data is triangulated; age, B-level, standardised test, and this information informs the curriculum offer and classroom approaches.

Evidence of learning is tracked through functional application of the literacy skills in order to see holistic, generalised and maintained progress. This is done through BOOP, where different skills are tagged in posts.

Areas of functional application are:

Applied Literacy
Decoding
Purpose of different texts
Writing for purpose/ to communicate
Reading for information
Reading for pleasure
Finding information
Answering questions
Presenting information
Asking questions

For more information on the use of assessment to inform teaching and track progress, see the Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Policy.

Staff CPD

New staff have a thorough induction covering all aspects of the school curriculum, including literacy approaches.

Staff are taken through how to baseline pupils for literacy, using standardised testing, at the moment statements and b-level data. Staff are shown how to write literacy targets taking into account pupil skillset and trajectory. These targets are added to BOOP. All pupils have embedded literacy tagged. Staff are shown how to do this as part of their induction.

Literacy refresher sessions are voluntary and held through the staff CPD calendar. STLAs have additional CPD to support assessment and intervention delivery.

Teachers have access to training and the full suite of training materials from Phonics for Pupils with SEN to ensure they have a thorough understanding of how the scheme supports the development of the necessary skills and concepts that children need to learn in order to crack the alphabetic code. Training also provides an overview of how the sessions should be delivered and appropriately differentiated for pupils.

For standardised testing, staff attend training first and are then guided through the stages to ensure standardised testing is completed accurately and in a timely manner. Staff are taken through the results, how to convert to age equivalencies and how this relates to the EHCP outcomes of pupils, where appropriate.

Teachers and STLAs can be assigned as mentors to support performance of new or under-performing staff in literacy delivery. This is written into performance management documentation and tracked through the quality assurance cycle

Phase 1 phonics

What is Phase 1 phonics?
Phase 1 is the first stage of phonics, and lays the foundation for future phonics learning.
The aim of Phase 1 phonics is to develop pupils' phonological and phonemic awareness, by developing speaking and listening skills to enable children to become ready for developing oral blending and segmenting skills.
Phonological awareness is a critical early literacy skill that helps pupils recognise and work with the sounds of spoken language.
Phonological awareness is made up of a group of skills. Examples include being able to identify words that rhyme, counting the number of syllables in a name, recognizing alliteration, segmenting a sentence into words, and identifying the syllables in a word. **The most sophisticated — and last to develop — is called phonemic awareness.**
Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. Manipulating the sounds in words includes blending, stretching, or otherwise changing words. Children might demonstrate phonemic awareness in several ways, for example:

- recognizing which words in a set of words begin with the same sound
("*Bell*, *bike*, and *boy* all have /b/ at the beginning.")
- isolating and saying the first or last sound in a word
("The beginning sound of *dog* is /d/." "The ending sound of *sit* is /t/.")
- combining, or blending the separate sounds in a word to say the word
("/m/, /a/, /p/ – *map*.")
- breaking, or segmenting a word into its separate sounds
("*up* – /u/, /p/.")

The importance of phonemic awareness cannot be underestimated. Research has shown that children who have good phonemic awareness perform than those who do not. In fact, research shows that children without phonemic awareness struggle to develop literacy skills.

So how does Phase 1 phonics help to develop these skills?
The first step towards developing phonemic awareness is to teach children to listen carefully to the way words are spoken by adults and other children. Children need to observe the way people speak so that they can make sense of the sounds in words. As they become aware of the sounds in words, they will start to notice patterns which help them to link the sounds together to form meaningful words. Well planned phase 1 activities will help children to develop the ability to hone in on sounds and develop their speaking and listening skills in order to lay the foundations for early reading and writing.
Phase 1 phonics is split into 7 aspects, though there is considerable overlap between these aspects and they are best introduced and practised in a carefully planned, non-linear manner so children are continually reintroduced to all the essential skills that make up the foundation of phonics learning.

The 7 aspects are:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion
- Rhythm and rhyme in speech and song
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds

- Oral blending and segmenting

These aspects are divided into strands which include:
- Tuning in (auditory discrimination)
- Listening and remembering (auditory memory and sequencing)
- Talking about (developing vocabulary and <u>language</u> comprehension)

Activities involving music through the use of song and instruments are a key part of phase 1 activities. This is because songs, rhythm and rhyme help to create neural links and pathways and help to cement learning. Nursery Rhymes are not just entertaining for children, they provide children opportunities to develop an awareness of sounds. The patterns of sound that exist in a familiar rhyme help early years children with the segmenting of sounds.

Planning for Phase 1 Phonics

As stated above, there is considerable overlap between the 7 aspects of phase 1. However, when considering that phonemic awareness is the final stage of phonological awareness, it makes sense that the first stage is developing children's ability to tune into and discriminate between sounds and so, oral blending and segmenting the sounds in words will form activities in the later stages of Phase One.

Planning should follow the outline of phonics sessions at all stages of phonics learning: beginning with revisiting previous knowledge, teaching new skills and then offering opportunities to practise and apply these.

Activities from the seven aspects can build upon each other to develop the necessary skills that children need to develop phonological awareness.

Assessment

Sessions are recorded on Boop with detail about activities, including which aspects and strands have been covered, along with appropriate tags.