



Parkside Primary School

Reading at Parkside

Reviewed September 2026

Our aim:

At Parkside, it is our aim to embed a love for reading in every pupil enabling them to become confident, independent and lifelong readers. We believe that a pupil's ability to read fluently enables them to access and progress through all areas of the curriculum and beyond. Reading is a developmental process and we allow the children to self-regulate their learning progress. We support this by encouraging and praising the children at every stage.

National Curriculum

In order to make our pupils competent and confident readers there are two skills they need to practise and master noted in the National Curriculum:

- Word reading- The ability to decode words.
- Comprehension- The ability to understand what has been read.

Both elements to reading are equally as essential to reading success and at Parkside we support the acquisition of both skills through various methods. We recognise that both areas are clearly linked to the other aspect of English learning including: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary.

Reading at Parkside

A variety of reading strategies are used to develop and extend the English learning at Parkside:

- Delivery of reading lessons from Year 1-6 with a specific focus on reading skills using the Complete Comprehension series.
- High quality texts used in English lessons from Nursery – Year 6 as a stimulus for writing.
- Children read to by an adult at least once a week
- Paired reading with peers and adults
- Promoting phonological awareness/phonics teaching (Read Write Inc).
- Modelling the use of reading skills across the curriculum including but not exclusive to: skimming and scanning, inference, retrieval and summarising.
- Shared reading with big books and the use of the visualiser to enlarge texts.
- A class reader is chosen by the teacher for their class to be read during storytelling sessions. Storytelling is promoted as an approach to support vocabulary extension and comprehension.

Phonics at Parkside

At Parkside, phonics has been placed at the heart of the curriculum in EYFS and Year 1 to ensure that all of our children are able to become fluent and confident readers which in turn allows them to unlock all areas of the curriculum. At Parkside all pupils, staff, parents and governors understand the importance of phonics to a child's reading development and all stakeholders take an active role at ensuring that the importance of early reading and phonics has a high profile in our school.

At Parkside, we deliver our phonics teaching using the Read Write Inc (RWI) programme written by Ruth Miskin. Phonics lessons are delivered from Nursery to Year 2. Beginning to deliver the RWI programme in Nursery allows all pupils to become exposed to the pre-reading skills as well as some of the initial sounds allowing them to be ready to fully commence the programme in reception.

The programme begins with the teaching of individual sounds, moving on to sound blending and then to the introduction of multi letter sounds. From here, children learn to read words and sentences fluently. As the children progress through the scheme they begin to link their reading and their writing and can begin to use their knowledge the phoneme –grapheme correspondence as well as alternative spellings to decode, blend, segment and spell words and begin to write simple sentences.

We have successfully shaped the RWI programme to meet the needs of our pupils in our school by delivering discrete RWI phonics lessons for 40 minutes each day. RWI is taught discretely in tailored groups and at each new assessment stage the children can be moved from one group to another. Each RWI group ensures the accelerated progress of acquiring new phonic sounds. All children new to the school in EYFS, year 1 and 2 are assessed on entry and grouped according to their phonic ability to ensure progress.

The pupils also have an additional daily English lesson where the pupils are exposed to high quality texts which they may not have been able to access independently but with tasks that allow the pupils to transfer and apply the skills and new knowledge they have learned in their phonics session.

To prepare for more complex and challenging texts, pupils across the programme are regularly exposed to pseudo-words (or alien words) to ensure that they are able to use their knowledge of sounds to successfully decode and blend unknown words. In turn, this practise supports the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1.

At Parkside, we believe that the important aspects of RWI Phonics learning (such as blending, segmenting for spelling and 'hold-a-sentence') should not simply be forgotten as the children progress into KS2. Each KS2 classroom has a complex speed sound chart which teachers refer whilst teaching to provide the children with regular opportunities to use and apply their phonics skills for accurate reading and spelling.

What makes a proficient reader?

Becoming a proficient reader is a journey that begins with the acquisition of fundamental skills and progresses through exposure, practice, and comprehension.

According to the Scarborough Reading Rope, an influential model in English development, the process involves two key dimensions: word recognition and language comprehension. Word recognition encompasses decoding skills, fluency, and vocabulary, while language comprehension involves understanding syntax, semantics, and inference. Through systematic phonics instruction, children learn to decode words, building the foundation for fluent reading. Additionally, exposure to rich language experiences, including vocabulary instruction and comprehension strategies, enhances their comprehension abilities.

Drawing from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance, effective reading instruction is characterised by structured phonics teaching, explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, and fostering a love for reading through access to diverse and engaging texts. Recent educational research reports, such as the National Reading Panel's findings and the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), underscore the importance of evidence-based practices in reading instruction, emphasising the need for a balanced approach that integrates decoding and comprehension skills.

Vocabulary Extension

Throughout primary school, children are expected to grow their vocabulary, justify their answers, give well-structured descriptions and participate actively in conversations. At Parkside, we believe a strong vocabulary basis can bring success to the understanding of the whole curriculum. In all year groups we follow the vocabulary 'tier' approach.

Vocabulary can be divided into 3 tiers:

- Tier 1: common words used in spoken language
- Tier 2: high frequency language that appears across a variety of domains and can have different meanings
- Tier 3: subject specific, academic language

At Parkside, we specifically focus on the application of 'tier 2' vocabulary. Opportunities are provided throughout the school day for the children to acquire, experiment with and understand the meaning of new vocabulary.

Home Reading

During the school day, all pupils have many opportunities to engage in reading, choosing from a wide range of texts. We believe it is vital that this opportunity to read continues at home. At the beginning of each year, we ask all pupils and parents to sign the 'Home Reading Agreement'. This agreement outlines the expectations of all parties including teachers, parents and pupils. The agreement states that all children should be reading with a parent/carer at home as often as they can and parents are asked to sign the reading record or reading journal to acknowledge they have read with their child.

Reading records

Reading records are used in KS1 as a communication tool between parents and staff regarding a child's reading progress. This tool allows parents and staff to have an open dialogue regarding a child's reading learning journey.

Reading journals

Reading journals are issued to KS2 children to log a more independent reading journal an individual child has. Reading journals are child led, they can be personalised by the pupils in any way they wish. Pupils are encouraged to complete at least one of the reading journal challenges a week. Parents are also encouraged to sign the reading journal to acknowledge that they have read with their child. A member of staff will check the reading journals at least once a week.

RWI Book Bag Books

At Parkside we use the RWI Book Bag Books programme for Reception and Year 1 and Year 2 home reading. This scheme has a range of engaging texts, both fiction and non-fiction. These books are uniquely matched to the phonics programme we use in school and are in line with the pupil's current phonics understanding. This scheme links home reading and phonics teaching in school helping pupils make rapid progress in their reading. Every child changes their book regularly (at least once a week) and when they have finished they are able to move onto the next book in the band.

Accelerated Reader

At Parkside we use 'Accelerated Reader' as our home reading provision from year 2 onwards. Accelerated Reader gives teachers the information they need to monitor the children's reading practice. Comprehensive reports reveal how much a student has been reading, at what level of complexity and how well they have understood what they have read. Vocabulary growth and English skills development are also measured, giving teachers insight into how well the children have responded to reading schemes and class instruction.

Regular 'Star Reading' assessments determine each child's current reading level. The reading assessment reports the range of book levels within which the student should be reading to make the greatest progress. Using individual targets, teachers can personalise each child's reading practice based on the quantity and complexity of the books they read. The 'Star Reading' assessment also provides teachers with individual reading ages for each child.

Class teachers can monitor the data of an individual or class and can be filtered by student characteristics, such as SEN or Pupil Premium. This ensures all children are successful on the programme and their progress in reading is accelerated. Successful Accelerated Reader users are more likely to:

- Enjoy the overall reading experience
- Have a favourite book and to be able to discuss this

- Agree that reading is beneficial for their learning
- Read regularly outside class ultimately becoming life-long readers
- Think positively about reading and realise the importance that 'understanding' has on their reading

The children on the Accelerated Reader scheme can independently change their book as regularly as they would like using the book corners in their classrooms freely.

Reading for pleasure

At Parkside, it is our aim is to embed a love of reading in our pupils, enabling them to become lifelong readers. Our goal is to create a reading for pleasure culture in our school where reading is celebrated. Around the school we have a range of stimulating reading environments to encourage reading for pleasure including book corners, reading areas, sharing libraries and our library bus.

Our library bus is a fantastic resource available to all pupils at Parkside. The library gives all pupils the opportunity to develop their browsing skills with over 3,000 books in stock. None of the titles in the library are assigned with a reading level but instead they have been sorted into categories and genres to allow children to choose books that spark their interests. All pupils have the opportunity to take home a reading for pleasure book alongside their reading book each week during their library session. The library bus is also open at lunchtimes for children to browse and read a range of books.

Throughout the year, we also ensure to celebrate reading through whole school events including: reading café, book fairs and World Book Day.

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