MURDISHAW WEST PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

READING POLICY

Autumn 2026

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Written by	J Phillips
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At Murdishaw West Primary & Nursery School we work together to….. Collaborate, Achieve, Respect and Enjoy. At Murdishaw West, we CARE!

Intent

Reading is a vital skill that will support children's learning across the whole curriculum. At Murdishaw West Primary & Nursery School, we ensure that our children are taught to read with fluency, accuracy and understanding through a variety of discrete and cross-curricular learning opportunities. We want our children to become enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers and to establish a life-long love of reading.
At Murdishaw West, we have a clear, consistent, whole school approach to reading. We believe that it is important for children to develop a love of reading from an early age and we encourage this by providing up to date and varied reading materials, by modelling good reading habits and sharing books and stories with our children, and by providing different contexts for reading. We want every child to become an enthusiastic, independent and reflective reader.

We aim to:

- encourage the enjoyment of books and reading so that children develop a lifelong love of books.
- develop children's pre-reading skills so they are prepared and ready to read.
- develop every child's early reading skills by providing suitable activities and materials.
- provide every child with the skills and strategies necessary for decoding and understanding a range of texts.

We believe that children should:

- read with developing confidence, fluency and understanding.
- develop a range of strategies to support their independent reading including: phonic knowledge, grammatical knowledge, word recognition and graphic knowledge, contextual information.
- be encouraged, and given time to self-correct.
- have experiences of shared, guided and independent reading.
- have an interest in words and their meanings and be encouraged to develop a rich and varied vocabulary.
- have opportunities to read and share a range of genres – fiction, non-fiction, poetry and online reading materials.
- be encouraged to reflect on what they have read and show their understanding through discussion and questioning.
- develop an understanding of and use vocabulary linked to books.
- be interested in books and read with enjoyment.

The National Curriculum

The national curriculum for English, in relation to reading, aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading.
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.

The programmes of study for reading consist sof 2 dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words

(decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (ie. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world they live in, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.

It is essential that by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forth coming secondary education.

Implementation

EYFS

During the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop early reading skills. These include listening to and joining in with stories, poems and rhymes and being given opportunities to enjoy, handle and look at books independently. The teaching of Phonics, through the Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) programme (see appendices), and early reading skills provide the children with opportunities to focus on phonemes and graphemes in words, and words and simple sentences in books. By the end of Foundation Stage, most children will read and understand simple sentences. They will use phonic knowledge to decode regular and pseudo words and read them aloud accurately and also read some common irregular words. They will demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.
Storytime is timetabled daily and often lessons are centred around a story that helps to enhance a particular unit of work.
Children are heard to read regularly by the teacher or teaching assistant. We work closely with parents to encourage further reading at home and to promote a love of reading both in school and at home.
Children that are falling behind in their reading journey, will read to an adult at least 3 times a week as a minimum.

- At Murdishaw West, we teach children to read by following a phonics programme called 'Essential Letters and Sounds' (ELS). This programme ensures we follow a systematic and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across each year group.
- Children have access to fully decodable books that match their reading ability and follow the ELS programme of work
- Individual reading –Children move onto books as appropriate (all books in the early stages are linked to the child's individual phonics development). We send home the "harder to read words' to practise.
- Children that are falling behind in their reading journey, will read to an adult at least 3 times a week as a minimum.
- Children who have been identified as requiring more practice at reading, are highlighted in the reading folder and listened to more frequently.
- Grapheme cards are displayed as the children learn each sound.
- The reading area includes copies of books from different genres that are displayed and accessed in different ways.
- Opportunities for reading in all areas of the provision, inside and outside.
- Children are assessed according to the Essential Letters and Sounds programme of work and the EYFS Early Learning goals.

- Ideas for how parents/carers can support their child with reading games and books are given out at each stage of reading readiness. Reading books often have ideas at either the front/back for adults to follow. Comments in reading records from staff inform parents/carers as to 'next steps' for children to work on. Parents/carers are actively encouraged to record in their child's reading records. Parents are invited into school during the first term so teachers can support them with how Phonics is taught in school and later on through whole school events.

Key Stage 1

During Year 1, teachers should build on work from the Early Years Foundation Stage, making sure that pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar printed words quickly and accurately using the phonic knowledge and skills that they have already learnt through ELS. Teachers should also ensure that pupils continue to learn new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and revise and consolidate those learnt earlier. The understanding that the letter(s) on the page represent the sounds in spoken words should underpin pupils' reading and spelling of all words.

Alongside this knowledge of GPCs, pupils need to develop the skill of blending the sounds into words for reading and establish the habit of applying this skill whenever they encounter new words. This will be supported by practice in reading books consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and skill and their knowledge of harder to read and spell words. At the same time, they will need to hear, share and discuss a wide range of high-quality books to develop a love of reading and broaden their vocabulary. Pupils should be helped to read words without overt sounding and blending after a few encounters. Those who are slow to develop this skill should have extra practice.

By the beginning of Year 2, pupils should be able to read all common graphemes. They should be able to read unfamiliar words containing these graphemes, accurately and without undue hesitation, by sounding them out in books that are matched closely to each pupil's level of word-reading knowledge. Pupils will increase their fluency by being able to read these words easily and automatically. During Year 2, teachers should continue to focus on establishing pupils' accurate word-reading skills. They should also make sure that pupils listen to and discuss a wide range of stories, poems, plays and information books; this should include whole books. The sooner that pupils can read well and do so frequently, the sooner they will be able to increase their vocabulary, comprehension and their knowledge across the wider curriculum. Children will complete whole class and small group reading sessions as well as reading independently with an adult.

Children that are falling behind in their reading journey, will read to an adult at least 3 times a week as a minimum.

In addition to many of the examples of good practice in EYFS;

- We use 'Essential Letters and Sounds' (ELS) for the teaching of phonics and early reading.
- Children have access to fully decodable books that match their reading ability and follow the ELS programme of work
- Whole class guided reading groups are identified and planned into weekly reading time.
- Individual readers heard by either teachers or teaching assistants, with targeted children highlighted in the reading folder and listened to more frequently.
- Cross curricular reading in topic time
- Children listen to stories, poems and rhymes in story time and the class have focus books for whole class reading.
- Reading assessments inform planning, groups and individual reader's targets
- Use of ICT – stories, multimedia
- Designated reading area in the classroom
- Guidance for parents/carers in relation to supporting children read at different stages of reading.

For further details on the teaching of phonics and early reading please refer to the schools Phonics and Early Reading statement.

Lower Key Stage 2

By the beginning of Year 3, pupils should be able to read books written at an age-appropriate interest level. They should be able to read them accurately and at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on understanding what they read rather than on decoding individual words. They should be able to attempt to decode most new words outside their spoken vocabulary, making a good approximation to the word's pronunciation. As their decoding skills become increasingly secure, teaching should be directed more towards developing their vocabulary and the breadth and depth of their reading, making sure that they become independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and frequently. They should be developing their understanding and enjoyments of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction, and learning to read silently. They should also be developing their knowledge and skills in reading non-fiction about a wide range of subjects. They should be learning to justify their views about what they have read: with support at the start of Year 3 and increasingly independently by the end of Year 4.

Upper Key Stage 2

By the beginning of Year 5, pupils should be able to read aloud a wider range of poetry and books written at an age-appropriate interest level with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace. They should be able to read most words effortlessly and to work out how to pronounce unfamiliar written words with increasing automaticity. If the pronunciation sounds unfamiliar, they should ask for help in determining both the meaning of the word and how to pronounce it correctly. They should be able to prepare readings, with appropriate intonation to show their understanding, and should be able to summarise and present a familiar story in their own words. They should be reading widely and frequently, outside as well as in school, for pleasure and information. They should be able to read silently, with good understanding, inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words, and then discuss what they have read.

Children that are falling behind in their reading journey, will read to an adult at least 3 times a week as a minimum. We differentiate, extend and match according to reading readiness, learning objectives, style of teaching, classroom organisation and resources. This ensures that all children have access to reading opportunities that meet their needs and enable them to make progress alongside their peers. This ensures equal opportunities for all children.

In addition to many of the examples of good practice in KS1;

- Interventions for children still needing phonics support
- Children have 2 reading books at a time – 1 from their Lexile levelled Accelerated Reader shelf and 1 book of their choosing from the class library
- For children that are not on track in their reading ability, an adult listens to them read at least once a week on an individual basis.
- Whole class reading at least 4 times a week using The Pathways to Read programme.
- English lessons use high-quality texts as a stimulus for writing, taken from the Pathways to Write programme
- Cross curricular reading in topic time
- Silent independent reading time using Accelerated Reader.
- Class book that is read by the class teacher
- Reading assessments inform planning, groups and individual reader's targets
- Reading areas and books in classrooms

Working in partnership with parents

The teaching of reading is greatly helped if there is strong communication and support between home and school. Reading support information is provided for parents on the school website and on the class overviews for each half term. Parents are invited into school to attend meetings about how early reading is taught and the implementation of the Phonics Screen Test. Reading records provide important dialogue opportunities in relation to reading between home and school. The school actively encourages parents to hear their child read and promotes reading at home through reading challenges which are set every term.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Regular informal and formative assessments in reading are made by teachers. Foundation Stage assessments include weekly reading by teachers, phonics checks, and end of Autumn, Spring and Summer term assessments using Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals.

Termly phonics assessments in Year 1, and for Year 2 children who have not met the Expected Standard at the end of Year 1, ensure progress in phonics is rigorously monitored and tracked so that interventions are timely and effective.

Children in Year 2 upwards are assessed in reading within the first two weeks of the school year, and then towards the end of every two terms. The data is put into Accelerated Reader and Insight, and children's progress is monitored by the headteacher and English Subject Lead. Reading analysis is discussed with the headteacher at Pupil Progress Meetings and feeds into the provision provided for individuals and groups of children. Reading tracking across school ensures children not making progress are identified early and their needs are targeted.

Impact

At Murdishaw West Primary & Nursery School, we have a clear, consistent whole school approach to the teaching of reading. Every child will have developed a love of reading from an early age. They are provided with varied reading materials that excite and encourage a lifelong love of reading. Children are enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers who are well prepared for their next stage in education.

Appendices

1. Individual Reading
2. Essential Letters & Sounds
3. Accelerated Reader
4. Pathways to Read

1. Individual Reading

What is Individual Reading?
A child reading to an adult where the reading material is matched to the child's ability.
The text should be decodable at a child's level of phonetic ability, informed through teacher assessments. In any page there may be a couple of words which provide challenge. If the text provides no challenge a child will become bored, if the text has too much challenge a child will be discouraged and not want to read.

Who listens to Individual Readers?
Teachers, teaching assistants, parents/carers, student teachers and volunteers all listen to readers over every term.

Where is Individual Reading carried out?
Any available space within school! We encourage children to read in any space where they feel comfortable and confident.

When does Individual Reading happen?
This is dependent upon the level of support offered to each class. Teachers tend to hear children read during assemblies, breaks and lunchtimes. Classroom assistants and parent/carer helpers sometimes take individual children for reading during class time. This is carefully planned to ensure the child does not miss taught sessions which they would need to rely upon to complete later work.
Our aim is for each child to individually read with a teacher or an established teaching assistant at least three times a week. Children who have been identified as needing support to improve their reading are targeted for additional reading.
Parent/carers are encouraged to hear their child read every day. We ask them to write in the reading record to let us know about their child's reading journey at home. Reading target stickers are placed in reading records so that parents are aware of their child's targets for reading development.

How is Individual Reading carried out?
- Every child has a reading record and an individual scheme reading book.
- In Key Stage 1, the class teacher and teaching assistant will always remind the children of their current target and reading targets will be worked on if possible/appropriate to the text.
- Within the reading diary each adult records the title of the present book, the pages read and the date.
- All adults encourage the children to decipher unknown text for themselves, using the phonetic decoding strategies taught in class. If children are struggling to decode, sound buttons will be used as support. Where possible, a whiteboard will be used to write the word using sound buttons, to further encourage understanding from the children.
- Children are then questioned about the text that they have read, in order to check for levels of comprehension.
- A constructive/positive comment is then made by the adult in the reading diary, sometimes with targets for development.
- The children in Foundation Stage may start their reading journey by reading letter/phoneme correspondence, word cards and captions.

Record Keeping for Individual Reading
Each class has a reading record for each week, which shows if a child has read at school and at home. It will also be noted if a child is absent and if they have not brought their reading book to school. When an individual reading book has been changed for a child, this will be highlighted on

the record sheet.

All Individual Reading Scheme books are kept in levelled colour coded baskets on our reading book shelves in the infant corridor. Foundation Stage have their own access to a set of appropriately levelled books.

Children are also encouraged to select a reading for pleasure book from our library, which is changed on a weekly basis. This can be a fiction or non-fiction book and is designed to be read by parents/carers to the children, to secure a passion and enthusiasm for reading.

2. Essential Letters & Sounds

Why do we use ELS at Murdishaw West?
An SSP is a Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme which is designed to teach children how to read through the act of **decoding** and **blending**.

An SSP teaches children the link between the sounds of our language (**phonemes**) and the written representation of these sounds (**graphemes**), or the spellings of the sounds contained within the English language. Essential Letters and Sounds is a complete, DFE Approved Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme (SSP).
Essential Letters and Sounds teaches children how to read, quickly!

It does this through consistent lesson structure, resources and language. Minimising cognitive load and increasing children's success.

Essential Letters and Sounds provides you with everything you need to teach phonics, improve children's vocabulary and ensures all learners 'keep up' with the pace of the programme – whilst giving children the knowledge and skills to read.

All teaching staff across all year groups/phases have been trained in the effective delivery of the Essential Letters and Sounds programme.

3. Accelerated Reader

Why we use Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader provides a balance of independent reading practice with nonfiction reading and close-reading skills practice. We use this program to track pupils' comprehension of books read independently and grade-level instructional reading practice. Accelerated Reader provides many benefits for pupils and teachers alike:

- Easy accessibility
- Instant results
- Comprehensive progress monitoring
- Tools to match students with appropriate texts
- Literacy skills, vocabulary, and instructional components
- Goal setting for personalised practice
- Research-based guidelines for encouraging growth in general reading achievement.

Accelerated Reader instantly scores each completed quiz and generates comprehensive data summaries, which helps teachers guide children to appropriate reading material, monitor reading practice, and target instruction.

This immediate feedback helps children and teachers together evaluate whether reading is adequately matched to the child's skills and makes students aware of their thought processes. Research suggests that instant feedback provided by the program facilitates greater improvement in reading comprehension than delayed feedback, which is associated with traditional book reports. Similarly, the anticipation of quick feedback leads to better performance, and positive feedback, in particular, is thought to foster feelings of competence, enhance intrinsic motivation, and improve.

Our aim with the programme is to improve each of our children's reading ability and get them reading books that are right for their reading age.

All staff have been trained in the effective delivery of the Accelerated Reader programme.

The programme makes sure that every child has a reading book appropriate to their ability. Whole class reading sessions have been implemented to ensure that time is given to improving reading skills and there is structured targeted intervention for those that are struggling to make progress.

We have each child's reading age on our tracking programme (Insight) so that every teacher can plan their resources and lessons accordingly. All staff have received training on the reading ages of various texts to help with this, and they have all received phonics training to help them intervene effectively with weak readers.

Teachers will talk with any child they feel are not doing as well as they should be, and also talk to children who are progressing well. We also use the results from the STAR Reading assessment to identify the children we feel would benefit from intervention work or further challen

4. Pathways to Read

At Murdishaw West Primary & Nursery School, we follow a Mastery approach to the teaching of reading through the *Pathways to Read* programme of work. Units of work are delivered using high quality texts and children in all year groups are given varied opportunities for reading. Skills are built up through repetition within the units, and children apply these skills in the reading activities provided.

We deliver four whole class shared reading lessons per week from years 3-6, with bespoke grouped reading for every pupil at least once a week, as well as individual reading. For pupils in Key stage 1, we provide whole class, small group and individual reading sessions as appropriate for the children and their current assessment of needs. For pupils still needing support with phonics, from years 2-6, we continue to use the Essential Letters and Sounds programme of work to complement the KS2 reading programme of work. For all children in our shared and grouped reads, there is a clear teaching focus with the opportunity to master key reading skills in each session. These follow-on reading tasks enable pupils to evidence the skills they have mastered independently.

Many opportunities for widening children's vocabulary are given through the *Pathways to Read* approach and this builds on the extensive work we do in school to provide our children with a rich and varied vocabulary.

We also use *Pathways to Write* to drive our writing curriculum. This aligns with *Pathways to Read,* ensuring meaningful links for our pupils with texts and topics that are used across the curriculum.