

Reading Policy

A reading journey for all our students

The curriculum at Oaktree School supports the vision of enjoyment of reading by giving students the opportunity to learn and develop in a supportive and creative environment. There is a focus on recognising achievement and supporting progression along with ensuring all students feel safe and are happy.

Oaktree School are ambitious and aspirational in supporting students to derive enjoyment from their reading experiences and to reach their full potential in pre-reading and reading skills. This includes developing comprehension skills to match reading fluency. The students' achievements along their reading pathways will support them in their preparation for adulthood. Because reading is fundamental it is not the exclusive domain of English lessons. 1:1 reading takes place daily during registration sessions and is recorded in each student's reading record book.

Intent	Implementation	Impact
For each student to experience and participate in a wide variety of reading activities to support their enjoyment and development of pre-reading / reading skills.	Our four reading pathways use a number of strategies including objects of reference, photos and symbols, sensory stories, songs, reading schemes, sight words/vocabulary and phonics. Despite the variety of needs within our school we recognise the importance of phonics in the development of reading. All students will follow it or be exposed to it alongside a focus on other pathways. We have been purchasing books that reflect the diversity of our student population. These should not only be used in dedicated weeks but throughout the year.	Each student has been given increased opportunity and access which has enhanced enjoyment and furthered pre-reading / reading skills.

Our Reading Pathways

Total Communication			
Referential (Multi-sensory)	Functional (Social Sight Vocab.)	Sight (See & Learn)	Phonics (RWI)
<p>The Referential approach seeks to formulate meaning by establishing the interdependence between words and the things or concepts they represent. Stories should be brought to life and made fun!</p> <p><u>Implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Sensory cues (tactile, sound / music, visual, olfactory, object) ☺ Objects of Reference ☺ Body signing + Makaton ☺ Sensory Stories 	<p>The Functional approach is for those individuals who are not yet ready for a formal reading programme. Students on this pathway will have functional literacy embedded within daily activities.</p> <p><u>Implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Objects of Reference, photos and symbols ☺ PECS ☺ Makaton ☺ Social sight vocabulary (signs and symbols in the community) 	<p>The Sight approach has been found to be beneficial for many students with Downs syndrome and those on the Autistic spectrum.</p> <p><u>Implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ 'See & Learn' scheme ☺ Social sight vocabulary ☺ 100 High Frequency Words ☺ Makaton 	<p>The phonics approach is a method of teaching students to read by linking sounds (phonemes) and the symbols that represent them (graphemes, or letter groups).</p> <p><u>Implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Phonological awareness of blending and segmenting ☺ RWI structured programme of delivery and staff training

Cross-curricular links

Reading skills should be furthered and used across all subjects, wherever possible and appropriate. This will ensure emergent, supported, fluent and independent readers alike develop their engagement with reading in a variety of contexts, thus consolidating this important life skill.

Referential Pathway (Multi-sensory)

For our very early readers teaching focuses on helping them to make sense of their world through the use of sensory cues, body signing, objects of reference, photos/pictures, and sensory stories.

Sensory Cues

Students at a very early stage of development, particularly those with sensory impairments, are likely to need to start with 'sensory cues'. Students need to be given a consistent routine to help them begin to learn to distinguish activities and people so eventually they can begin to learn to anticipate what is going to happen next. For example, lifting children's arms before lifting them from chairs or floor. Music and music cues should be used in the classroom for transitions, sensory integration, and more. Music cues help to understand transitions and what is coming next. From these sensory cues, students can begin to increase a number of cues for the different activities about to take place. These can be the objects that are part of the activity, eg an object that is a cue for a drink should be the cup that the student usually uses.

Objects of Reference

Some students may make symbolic use of objects of reference where the object used is representative of the activity. For example being shown (or feeling) a small red cup but actually using a larger blue cup for drinking. Some students at this stage might be able to understand and use a few words or even recognise a few pictures (eg: of themselves or their family / classmates).

Body signing and Makaton

To encourage the understanding of language. Body signing brings the adult close to the student, makes adult's language slower, simpler and clearer, compensating for visual aspects of non-verbal communication. It focuses the students on listening, providing tactile cues to the meaning of words. It encourages expressive communication and the development of spoken language. Makaton is a language programme using signs to help people to communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs are used with speech, in spoken word order. Makaton signs are highly visual, concrete and very iconic (at the early stages). This makes them more motivating for students to look at and sometimes easier to understand than spoken words alone. Makaton signing can help to develop attention and listening skills, as well as encouraging engagement at all levels.

Sensory stories

A sensory story is a short story of a few lines (or a longer story which has been pared down to a few short statements) brought to life through a selection of meaningful sensory experiences. A sensory story represents an ideal way of engaging early readers with books and reading. We have a selection of multisensory bag books that can be used, as well as props that go with certain titles.



Reading Policy

Functional Pathway (Social Sight Vocabulary)

The Functional Pathway supports our students to develop an understanding of words through the use of objects of reference, followed by photos and then symbols. The use of Total Communication is extremely important for this pathway, similarly to the Referential Pathway. Objects, photos and symbols are used to support students to make choices and communicate (PECS may be useful for some of them, in articulation with the Speech & Language team), to help them understand the school day and simple sequences of activities (now, next, then). Objects, photos and symbols are also used to help students (re)tell a story, to identify and describe characters, and to answer questions about the story. Symbols are used in common areas of the school to identify areas and to support students with hygiene etc. Students on this pathway have an individual folder with school areas and social sight vocabulary to facilitate understanding of their environment whilst at school and in their local community.

Sight Pathway (See & Learn)

The sight pathway introduces our students to the sight reading approach to learning words and phrases. This method teaches students to read words as whole units, rather than breaking the word down into individual letters or groups of letters. Students are repeatedly read the word while being shown the printed word, at times accompanied by a picture or within a meaningful context. Eventually students learn to 'sight read' the word, identifying it through pattern recognition without any conscious attempt to break the word down into its parts. Over time students build up a larger and larger vocabulary of whole words which they can recognise. Students would then be able to for example recognise 'elephant' from a choice of two words, to match words 1:1 or to match words to pictures. This method is supported by the adoption of the 'See & Learn' scheme. Students on this pathway have an individual folder with school areas and social sight vocabulary to facilitate understanding of their environment whilst at school and in their local community.

Phonics Pathway (Read Write Inc)

Reading - the students learn 44 sounds and the corresponding letters/letter groups using simple picture prompts; learn to read words using Fred talk and sound blending; read from a range of storybooks and non-fiction books matched to their phonic knowledge; work well with partners; develop comprehension skills in stories by answering 'find it' and 'prove it' discussion questions. Writing - the students learn to write and form the letters/letter groups which represent the 44 sounds with the help of fun phrases; learn to write words by using Fred Talk; learn to build sentences by practising sentences out loud before they write. Our students will find the phonics pathway ideal to understand how words are formed. It will be used throughout the school to teach and cement phoneme-grapheme correspondences and be made more age appropriate by the use of RWI Fresh Start. At this stage many students will be reading longer and less familiar texts with little direct support and with increasing fluency. The shift from learning to read to reading to learn takes place and students read for information and for pleasure.