



Nor⁺thbourne
CE Primary School
Nurturing Excellence.

Phonics & Reading

Long Term Plan

Being a Reader at Northbourne

At Northbourne, we believe that learning to read – and then reading to learn – unlocks success across all subjects and beyond. Our aim is for every child to leave Northbourne as a competent, fluent, and enthusiastic reader.

Our English curriculum is carefully designed to provide pupils with breadth, depth, and challenge. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of high-quality texts, including stories, poetry, non-fiction, traditional tales, classic literature, and modern texts. These texts are chosen to:

- develop pupils' vocabulary and language comprehension
- introduce new ideas, perspectives and experiences
- reflect and support the wider curriculum (e.g. *Hidden Figures* in upper Key Stage 2; texts linked to changes in transport in Key Stage 1)
- foster a lifelong love of reading

Living Our Values Through Reading

Our reading curriculum actively promotes our core values of Courage, Compassion and Community.

Pupils show **courage** when they tackle challenging texts and develop new reading skills.

They develop **compassion** by exploring diverse perspectives and experiences through literature.

A sense of **community** is fostered through shared reading, discussion and a whole-school reading culture.

Structure and Progression

We recognise that to become confident readers, pupils must:

- decode accurately and fluently
- develop strong language comprehension
- understand and respond to texts using key reading skills such as retrieval and inference
- read widely and for pleasure

Reading is taught through a carefully sequenced approach, ensuring that pupils build knowledge and skills progressively across the school.



Reading for Pleasure

At Northbourne, we recognise the importance in developing lifelong readers and the value of reading for pleasure.

We promote a rich reading culture through:

- well-stocked classroom book corners
- Book Buddies, pairing older and younger pupils to read together
- Book Bingo competitions
- World Book Day celebrations
- Book, Biscuit and Brew events
- Visits to Didcot Library
- Recommended reads shared with families

These opportunities ensure that reading is celebrated and embedded both within school and at home.

Our School Library

Our school library is a welcoming and engaging space designed to encourage children to read widely and often. It provides a cosy, inviting environment where pupils can explore a broad range of texts.

The library offers:

- fiction, non-fiction and poetry
- newspapers, magazines and graphic novels
- classic and contemporary texts
- opportunities for independent reading and exploration

The library is supported by a team of pupil librarians, who help to organise and maintain the space, support their peers in selecting books and promote a love of reading across the school.

Pupils are encouraged to borrow books regularly, supporting both reading for pleasure and wider reading across the curriculum.

Phonics

The government strongly recommends the use of synthetic phonics when teaching early literacy skills. Synthetic phonics is the process of converting letters and groups of letters into sounds, which are then blended together to read words.

At Northbourne Primary School, we use the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme to give children a strong start in reading. RWI is a structured approach to learning that is based on letter sounds and phonics. From Nursery through to Reception and Key Stage 1, we follow the RWI programme to teach phonics and early reading skills.

Fred Talk and Pure Sounds

In Read Write Inc., Fred Frog plays an important role. Fred can only speak in sounds, not whole words. We call this “Fred Talk”. During lessons, children hear Fred speaking in sounds, for example, h-o-p, and are encouraged to blend the sounds together to identify the word.

Children first practise blending oral sounds together with Fred before progressing to reading written letters and blending them to read words independently.

We pronounce sounds clearly using pure sounds (for example, ‘m’ not ‘muh’ and ‘s’ not ‘suh’) so that children can blend sounds together more easily when reading.

The Order of Teaching Sounds

Set 1 Speed Sounds

Set 1 sounds are the initial letter sounds and are taught in the following order:

m, a, s, d, t, i, n, p, g, o, c, k, u, b, f, e, l, h, sh, r, j, v, y, w, th, z, ch, qu, x, ng, nk

Set 2 Speed Sounds

Set 2 sounds include 12 “speed sounds” made up of two or three letters that represent one sound, for example ay in play and igh in high.

Set 3 Speed Sounds

In Set 3, children learn that the same sound can be represented in different ways, for example ee in tree and ea in tea.

Using the RWI approach, children first learn one way of reading and writing each sound before exploring alternative spellings.

Alongside learning sounds, children are taught to blend sounds together to read words, for example s-a-t → sat.

Nonsense/Alien Words

Children are encouraged to apply their phonics knowledge and decoding skills to read unfamiliar words, including both real and nonsense (“alien”) words.

During phonics lessons, children regularly practise reading these words to demonstrate that they are decoding rather than relying on memory or recognition of familiar vocabulary. This is an important skill and forms part of the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, which all Year 1 pupils complete in the summer term.

Word Time

Once children have learned a number of initial sounds, they begin blending sounds together to read simple words.

During Word Time sessions, children practise blending familiar sounds to read words. Initially, this is completed using Fred Talk before progressing to “Fred in your head” (silent or whisper blending) and finally reading the whole word aloud fluently.

Storybook Lessons

Once children are confidently reading whole sentences, they progress to reading RWI storybooks. These books are closely matched to each child’s phonic knowledge and reading ability.

The storybooks contain:

- Green words linked to the sounds children have been learning
- Red words, which are not fully decodable
- Challenge words to extend vocabulary development

Children read these books in school with their reading teacher and peers before taking them home for further practice and consolidation.

Reading Books Sent Home

Reception children who are learning the first 44 sounds and are not yet blending fluently will bring home sound books for practice.

Once children can blend fluently and recognise the first 44 sounds, they will bring home a red Ditty book. Children working at Green level and above will bring home an RWI reading book in their book bags.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

1. Read through the speed sounds page
2. Practise the green and red words
3. Discuss the vocabulary check page
4. Read the storybook together

By the time books are sent home, children will usually have read them several times in school and should be able to read them with increasing fluency, expression, and understanding.

At the back of each book are “Find it” and “Prove it” comprehension questions for parents and carers to complete with their child.

Assessment

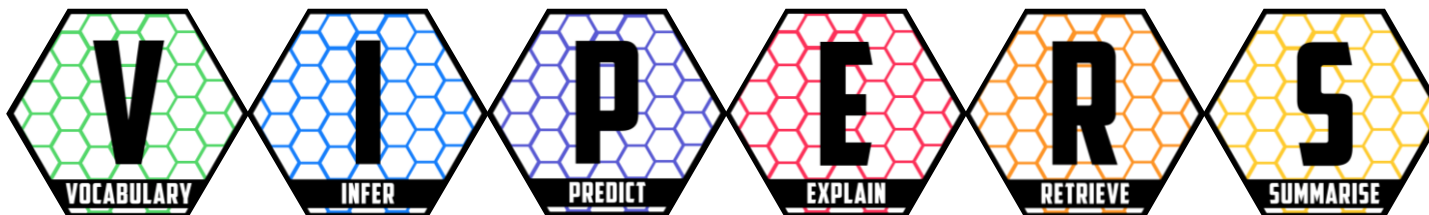
All children are assessed at the end of each half term to monitor progress and identify gaps in learning.

Following assessment, children may move groups to ensure teaching is closely matched to their needs. Children who are not meeting expected standards are identified promptly and supported through targeted RWI intervention.

Reading in Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, pupils build on their early reading foundations to become fluent, confident and thoughtful readers. Teaching focuses on developing both fluency and comprehension, ensuring that pupils can read with accuracy, expression and understanding.

Comprehension is taught explicitly through the use of VIPERS, which ensures a clear and structured approach to reading skills:



Teaching follows a consistent structure in line with the Northbourne teaching principles. Lessons include explicit modelling, shared practice and independent application, enabling pupils to understand how skilled readers think. Teachers model their thinking aloud, making the reading process visible—for example, how to infer meaning, clarify vocabulary or justify an opinion using evidence from the text. Pupils are then supported to practise these skills before applying them independently.

Alongside comprehension, there is an increasing focus on the development of reading fluency. Pupils are supported to read with greater accuracy, pace and expression through opportunities such as repeated reading, echo reading and choral reading. These approaches draw on effective practice from the *Read Write Inc.* programme, helping to build consistency in reading pedagogy from early reading into Key Stage 2.

Developing fluency supports pupils in reading more smoothly and confidently, enabling them to focus more fully on understanding the text and engaging with meaning.

Across Key Stage 2, pupils read a wide range of increasingly challenging texts, building their vocabulary, background knowledge and reading stamina. They are encouraged to discuss texts, justify their ideas and make connections, developing as confident and reflective readers.

Inclusion and Excellence for all

We are committed to ensuring that every child becomes a competent reader. Staff quickly identify pupils who need additional support or are at risk of falling behind.

Targeted support is provided through:

- structured interventions
- 1:1 and small group support
- close monitoring of progress

All adults working with pupils use consistent approaches to support reading development. This ensures that pupils, including those with SEND and those who are vulnerable, are supported to build secure knowledge and catch up where needed.

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Think Like a... Reader

To support the development of confident, independent readers, every classroom displays our "Think Like a... Reader" prompts. These provide a shared language for reading across the school and help pupils to internalise the strategies and behaviours used by successful readers.

The prompts have been carefully selected to reflect the key processes involved in effective reading. They encourage pupils to actively engage with texts by decoding unfamiliar words, reading fluently, considering vocabulary, retrieving information, making inferences, predicting, summarising and responding critically to what they have read. By making these reading behaviours explicit, pupils are supported to understand not only what good readers do, but how they do it.

The posters are intended to promote metacognition and independence. Rather than acting as a checklist to be completed, they encourage pupils to reflect on their thinking as they read and select appropriate strategies when they encounter challenge. Teachers use the prompts consistently when modelling reading, discussing texts and providing feedback, ensuring a common approach to reading is embedded throughout the school.

As pupils become increasingly familiar with these habits of effective readers, they develop greater confidence, fluency and understanding. Over time, the prompts help pupils to move beyond simply decoding words on a page and towards reading with purpose, comprehension and enjoyment. Ultimately, they support our aim of developing thoughtful, reflective readers who can access, understand and respond critically to a wide range of texts throughout their education and beyond.



Think like a... **Reader!**

Read unfamiliar words using phonics and word knowledge.

Read fluently with expression and understanding.

Work out new words using clues from the text.

Find important information and evidence in a text.

Use clues to understand hidden meanings and ideas.

Predict what might happen using evidence from the text.

Identify and explain the main ideas in a text.

Think critically and share opinions about a text.