

23rd September 2023

# Freshsteps Whole School Reading Policy



"Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him."  
Maya Angelou.

A CHILD

who READS will be an

ADULT

who

THINKS.



joy of  
mom

- Unknown

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Statement of Intent

- *The school is determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. All pupils including the weakest readers, make sufficient progress to meet or exceed age-related expectations. Leaders make reading a top priority. They know that if pupils cannot read with accuracy, automaticity and understanding, they will fall rapidly behind their peers and be incapable of accessing the curriculum.*
- Leaders instil a sense of urgency in teaching the lowest 20% of pupils to read, both at KS1, KS2 and KS3 and 4 including 6<sup>th</sup> Form
- Leaders do not settle for Phonic Screening Check (PSC) results that are in line with national average.

**1. Statement of Intent**

Freshsteps school understands the importance of reading in the process of developing pupils into independent learners. The school believes that reading plays an integral role in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. It inevitably impacts on pupils' ability to **know more, remember more and do more.**

Reading is central to our ability to comprehend, interpret and communicate with one another. Furthermore, pupils who read on a regular basis, in school and at home, have a higher chance of fulfilling their potential. Freshsteps whole school ethos recognises the importance of establishing interest in reading at an early age and stage.

*"If one cannot enjoy reading a book over and over again, there is no use in reading it at all." – Oscar Wilde*

This will positively impact pupils' ability to become adaptive thinkers, their ability to communicate effectively and reading also has a positive impact on pupils' emotional wellbeing in terms of their growth mind-set.

## 2. Policy Aims

- To ensure a whole school approach to addressing reading skills across the curriculum.
- To support all pupils to fulfil their potential in the skills of reading, writing, and spoken language; for pupils to be able to transfer and apply these skills to fully access learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- To encourage pupils to become confident, independent readers across all subjects in school.
- To encourage a culture of reading for pleasure.
- To reinforce that reading is the responsibility of all staff and recognise the central place of every class teacher being a teacher of reading.
- To create a shared accountability, with progress in reading that is carefully tracked to ensure that improvement is achieved, maintained, and maximized.
- To ensure that all teachers take a leading role in laying the foundations for appropriate literacy skills in reading, which are purposeful and clearly transferable across the curriculum.
- To ensure that all pupils, regardless of any special educational needs in reading or previous underachievement, are given appropriate and rigorous support to accelerate their reading progress and reading ability.

## 3. Rationale

Literacy is a key life skill that infuses pupils with positive social, educational, and economic outcomes. 'In broad terms, literacy is the ability to make and communicate meaning from and using a variety of socially contextual symbols. Within various levels of developmental ability, a literate pupil can derive and convey meaning, and use their knowledge to achieve a desired purpose or goal that requires the use of language skills, be they spoken or written. A literate pupil can mediate their world by deliberately and flexibly orchestrating meaning from one linguistic knowledge base and apply or connect it to another knowledge base. For example, knowing that letters symbolise sounds, and that those sounds form words to which the reader can attach meaning, is an example of the cognitive orchestration of knowledge, a literate person conducts.'

Reading is arguably the most crucial literacy skill for cross-curricular success in schools. The curriculum continues to be dominated by text, both in print and on screen, and our learners need to be able to read effectively to understand, make sense of and take meaning from the wide range of texts presented to them. For a significant number of learners who are in education with a reading age below their chronological age, the reading demands of the curriculum prove extremely challenging.

Pupils with a reading age lower than their chronological age have significant problems accessing the information they need to be successful learners. They have experienced years of falling further and further behind their peers; as a result, many readers at lower levels have low self-esteem and lack confidence in the classroom. Consequently, it is our responsibility as staff to ensure that we use available data on pupils' reading ability to make informed choices about appropriate texts and to plan appropriate support for our pupils in order that they can successfully access a wide range of texts.

Freshsteps will provide every pupil with reading skills that are portable and functional, ensuring that they have every chance to become engaged, motivated, and independent readers who enjoy their reading, are eager to access the curriculum and who go on to fulfil their potential and achieve economic wellbeing later in life. Pupils who are confident readers and writers are likely to have more choices open to them and make a positive contribution to society. A secure understanding of language enables individuals to understand their world and be in a better position to define their place within it. In this way, language and reading connects individuals to something culturally meaningful.

At Freshsteps we see that a child's literacy leads to functional reading and the ability to succeed in various situations, which then allows enjoyment and the engagement in reading for pleasure, not simply functionality.

At Freshsteps, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils are exposed to a rich curriculum that encourages extensive reading of whole books and other types of texts. We believe that active encouragement of reading for pleasure is a core part of every pupil's educational entitlement, whatever their background or attainment because extensive reading and exposure to a broad range of texts contribute widely to each pupil's educational achievement. Staff at Freshsteps are required to be 'reading role models' for pupils, encouraging them to read widely through recommendations from their own reading; staff advertise, in rooms around the school, the books that they are currently reading. Further to this, World book day is widely celebrated at Freshsteps with pupils and staff dressing up as their favourite characters and enjoy reading text with a variety of teachers.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Intervention teachers are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of the Whole School Reading Policy,

in collaboration with the headteacher.

The Intervention Lead Miss Shomari is responsible for:

- Working collaboratively with teachers and delivery staff to promote, develop and embed the school's vision and ethos surrounding reading.
- Ensuring all teachers have familiarised themselves with the Whole-school Reading Policy, the Whole-school Literacy and Intervention policy.
- Supporting colleagues with any aspect of the Whole-school Reading Policy.
- When required, assist with the planning and selection of new resources.
- Inform staff of any updates to the Whole-school Reading Policy.
- Accept responsibility for guided reading resources and keeping colleagues informed of available resources.
- Review and scrutinise whole-school assessment data in order to track pupils' progress.
- Monitor reading planning, observing, and offering feedback on the teaching of reading.
- Work in collaboration with the school's SENCO.
- Support literacy interventions across the school. Ensure the whole school literacy policy is implemented in key stage 1 - 5.
- Monitor and support the implementation of reading across the school - key stages 1 - 5.
- Support teachers in the school with their implementation of the Whole-school Reading Policy.
- Ensure reading and phonics are consistently taught across primary classes in conjunction with the school's SENCO
- Work in conjunction with the school's speech and language therapists.
- Develop and grow the Power of Reading in the delivery of reading strategies across KS1 - KS5.

*"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." – Dr. Seuss*

## Parents Reading at Home

Freshsteps school believes that parental involvement and encouragement can play a crucial part in pupils' reading development and we promote a home-school reading partnership by:

- Communicating with parents and sharing information with them through parent meetings, newsletters, diaries, and curriculum evenings.
- Giving pupils a book to read at home where required to further the skills they have learned during guided reading.
- Encouraging parents to give feedback to the class teachers about reading undertaken at home.
- Bring a book to from home week.

Pupils are encouraged to read at home through the following methods:

- Daily communication with parents / guardians and carers via Lower School planner / communication books/Reading records
- Google Classroom / email / virtual communication methods
- Visits to the whole school library and taking books home
- Notifications in the pupils' planners informing the school of their child's progress in reading
- Accelerated Reader - links to books and comprehension activities

### 5. Reading Area

- The school's main reading area is part of the library and is furnished with cushioned chairs, beanbags, and large cushions suitable for the floor. Pupils are expected to sit quietly in the library to minimise distractions. Secondary has a small but quiet library area
- All classrooms have an identified reading area with a selection of reading materials that are subject relevant (in specialist rooms) and interest / age appropriate for form spaces.

### 6. Personal Reading

At Freshsteps pupils in:

- KS1 & KS2 will have specific daily reading times where pupils will be encouraged to read independently, in pairs and in small groups. Senior pupils will be encouraged to become Reading Buddies and work alongside teachers in the development of reading.

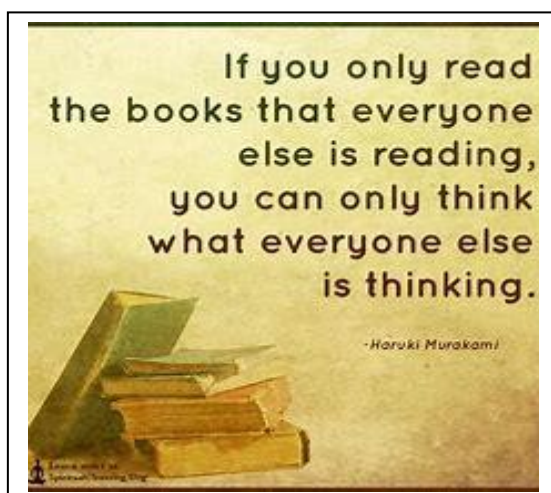
## Guided reading

KS3 will be exposed to reading focus activities in all areas of the curriculum.

- KS4&5 will have one 30-minute lesson each week given to reading and the skills around literacy. They will be encouraged to read texts - both written and visual - and to explore literature that they would not necessarily access. For pupils with limited literacy, a shared approach of written texts and moving image text to support understanding will be used. All pupils will be encouraged to read at any opportunity that presents itself.

In personal reading time, pupils and staff should be encouraged to engage in reading. Engagement could be through independent or group-based activities. Activities could be taken from the list of suggested strategies below:

- **Accountable Independent Reading (AIR Time):** Silent independent reading to take place for no more than 15 minutes. Following periods of AIR time, teachers must check comprehension through written/oral checks for the remainder of the reading period. Pupils could be asked to summarise the passage that they have read and to explain the most significant plot moment in the passage. During AIR time, the class teacher should model reading with the pupils making their own reading visible to the pupils. The teacher may wish to discuss the book with pupils and recommend other books by the same author/of the same genre.
- **Pre-reading feedback:** A member of staff may set a piece of reading prior to the reading time. Pupils may then spend the reading time presenting their thoughts and findings on the text. In order to make this effective, teachers will need to scaffold questions carefully to elicit meaningful responses from the class. Additionally, pupils may be provided with a list of potential questions that the teacher might pose to them, in advance of the reading time.
- **4X4 Sessions:** Four pupils will present for one minute on the books that they are currently reading with presenters offering recommendations/critiques/criticisms of the book that they are reading to others in the class.





High expectations should be set from the start in regards the quality of the presentation: eyes scanning around the room; mature body language; appropriate use of language and ambitious vocabulary; voice projection for the benefit of all listeners; intonation and fluency to be achieved; notes to be used as prompts; no reading verbatim from the screen/handout.

- **Teachers may read to the class;** this book should be one listed on the subject reading list for the key stage thus providing pupils with a taster of what the book is like.
- **Teachers may undertake shared/group reading of a wider reading academic/journalistic article to stretch and challenge pupils.** The reading time will be spent initially discussing any challenging vocabulary within the text (etymology + morphology) ensuring that pupils really understand the terminology before reading and then discussing the article in depth.
- **Comparison:** Where a book has been adapted into a film, teachers could play the first 5 minutes of the film, then compare to a copy of the opening paragraphs and discuss similarities and differences between the two media.

## 7. Literacy week

Once a half term, departments will provide subject specific wider reading material to KS3-5 pupils during the reading period. Subject leads within department areas must direct staff as to which articles/sources/texts to read with pupils as part of this initiative. The themes for the reading week will fall under the umbrella of one of the following categories:

- Academic reading week.
- Journalistic reading week.
- Literary reading week.

The purpose of these reading weeks is to enrich the curriculum experience of our pupils by exposing them to the work of scholars, latest scientific findings, economic analysis, geographical / environmental findings etc. Teaching staff are required to reinforce why we undertake these reading weeks with pupils so they can also understand and articulate the benefits of them.

Best practice is found when staff pre-read articles and highlight key vocabulary that might be an issue. Use of the 'Word of the Week' template may also be used to assist pupils in achieving a real understanding of the problematic word and its uses.

## 8. Reading Aloud

At Freshsteps, we believe that reading aloud is a skill that all pupils should develop. In the teaching of reading some have opined over the years that pupils should not be asked to read aloud in class because they might have difficulty, and that would shame them or cause them to dislike reading.

Reading aloud makes reading what it is supposed to be: something shared, social, expressive, and dramatic.

Reading aloud should be an integral part of any successful reading program in order to:

- expose pupils to texts and ideas significantly above their reading level.
- model fluent reading for pupils.
- instil a love of reading and of literature.

Hearing texts read aloud strengthens speaking, listening, writing, reading and comprehension skills. Reading aloud has been proven to:

- increase vocabulary.
- help pupils to appreciate the beauty and rhythm of language.
- enhance imagination and observation skills.
- improve critical and creative thinking skills.
- expand a pupil's general knowledge and understanding.
- develop positive attitudes towards books as a source of pleasure and information.
- help create life-long readers.

On both sides of the achievement gap, the older a child gets, the less that child is read to - both at home and in the classroom. It is therefore critical that reading aloud be a central part of our reading instruction across all year groups.

As teachers of reading at FreshSteps, we replace any fear of reading aloud with the normality of it.

### Reading Aloud Protocols.

All teachers will:

- ❖ introduce any new/complex vocabulary that will be seen in the section being read.
- ❖ model good reading habits, reading aloud with expression and enthusiasm.
- ❖ set the expectation from the start of the academic year that all pupils will be encouraged and given the opportunity to read aloud.
- ❖ Ensure pupils have opportunity to rehearse before reading aloud at length or where the text is challenging. No pupil will be singled out without time to prepare prior to the reading activity and will be given the opportunity to decline.
- ❖ reinforce to pupils that they are in an environment where it is acceptable to make mistakes.
- ❖ ask pupils to read aloud with expression and pleasure, capturing character traits and appropriate emotion in their voices.
- ❖ ask pupils to choose important words to emphasize as they go.
- ❖ ask pupils to use a ruler to follow the text.
- ❖ encourage pupils to sound out syllables, digraphs and trigraphs when they encounter tricky words.
- ❖ raise pupils for self-correcting.

- ❖ choose appropriate lengths of texts to read aloud based on the individual pupil's reading ability.
- ❖ create 'space' in lessons for reading; by setting up the training of pupils to read out loud effectively in lessons - including unpredictability and expressive, non-robotic reading; by strongly emphasising a culture of accountable reading.
- ❖ devote reading time in each lesson, where pupils know that they will be reading out loud.
- ❖ focus on 'training' pupils in effective reading - including reading out loud - so that it is meaningful and pupils are reminded of the importance of pauses, emphasising certain words, tone etc.
- ❖ where possible, listening to audiobook clips or online videos of texts being read aloud will be incorporated into lessons to demonstrate good, expressive reading.
- ❖ get pupils to take home an article and practise it at home, ready to read out loud to the class in the next lesson. This forms a type of flipped learning and aids pupils' confidence.
- ❖ read texts out loud to their classes in different tones or styles to help with comprehension and consideration of different interpretations.

## 9. PRIMARY PHASE

### **A - Staff foster a love of reading**

#### **Evaluation criterion**

*Stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction are chosen for reading to develop pupils' vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading. Pupils are familiar with and enjoy listening to a wide range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction.*

- Leaders ensure that the school has a breadth of non-fiction books that support the school curriculum and a range of high-quality literature that pupils will want to read and listen to.
- Teachers' deep knowledge of children's literature helps them guide children's independent reading choices, resulting in children's enthusiasm for reading.
- All teachers in primary timetable daily story times. They read aloud with confidence and enjoyment and encourage pupils to talk about the story.

### **B - The content and sequence of the phonics programme supports pupils' progress.**

#### **Evaluation criterion**

*The school's phonics programme matches or exceeds the expectations of the English national curriculum and early reading goals. The school has clear expectations of pupils' phonics progress term-by-term, from their starting points.*

- Leaders adopt one systemic synthetic phonics programme that they teach with fidelity, consistency and continuity. They have clear expectations about pupils' progress term-by-term.
- Sufficient time is given for the teaching of phonics, reading and writing every day. Pupils have time to apply what they know.
- Teachers understand that, when reading for themselves, pupils - at whatever age - can only access the meaning of a text if they can read it accurately and speedily.

### **C. Reading books match the sounds that children know.**

#### **Evaluation criterion**

*The sequence of reading books shows a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge that is matched closely to the school's phonic programme. Teachers give pupils sufficient practice in reading and re-reading books that match the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they know, both at school and at home.*

- The Freshsteps organises 'decodable' reading books in the given sequence of their phonic programme; the reading books build letter sound correspondences cumulatively.
- Teachers continue to give pupils' practice in reading sounds and 'decodable' books beyond the PSC until they can read familiar words effortlessly and work out new words speedily.
- There are different purposes to the books used by beginner readers. They will either be used to help pupils practise 'decoding' or to be read aloud by an adult for pupils to enjoy and develop that 'language comprehension'. 'Decoding' and 'language comprehension' require not only different teaching but also different reading materials.
- The PSC assesses accuracy but not whether they can read fluently or speedily. Both accuracy and automaticity are important for pupils to get beyond phonics teaching.

### **D - Children are taught phonics from the start of Primary.**

#### **Evaluation criterion**

*Reading, including the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics, is taught from the beginning of Primary this is the stage we accept pupils into Freshsteps school.*

- Leaders set clear expectations about the teaching of phonics from the beginning of Reception.
- Phonics is taught daily and directly, with the whole class or in groups, in a settled environment where distractions are kept to a minimum.
- Children write sounds, words, captions and dictated sentences that help them practise spelling and letter formation they have been taught in their phonics lessons.

### **E - Pupils who fall behind are supported to catch up quickly.**

## Evaluation criterion

*The ongoing assessment of pupils' phonics progress is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify any pupil who is falling behind the programme's pace, and targeted support is given immediately.*

Best practice:

- Few pupils require additional support due to the high standard of phonics teaching.
- Ongoing assessments identify all pupils who need additional support to help them keep up. This assessment identifies precise gaps in pupils' learning.
- Intensive, additional support is targeted to address specific gaps in pupils' learning. It is timetabled and prioritised to avoid any cancellation. It follows an approach which is compatible with the school's phonics programme. Elements are broken down into smaller steps and repeated frequently.

**F - All teaching staff are experts in early reading.**

## Evaluation criterion

*The school has developed sufficient expertise in the teaching of phonics and reading.*

- Training gives all staff a thorough understanding of the school's chosen phonics programme.
- The phonics/reading leader has expertise and experience in teaching phonics and is given dedicated time to fulfil their role.
- Training makes sure that all staff (including those in KS2) know how to teach pupils to read, particularly those who struggle, and including pupils with SEND.

## 10. Reading in secondary

**G** Secondary reading has three dimensions:

- Reading independently and for pleasure
- Support for struggling readers
- Reading in subjects

= Reading fluency

**Components of reading fluency**

- There are different elements to reading fluency:
  - **accuracy** (in decoding)
  - **automaticity** (speed)
  - **prosody** (expression, emphasis, pause, tone)
- Fluency enables skilled reading and comprehension.
- Different elements may be emphasized at different stages of reading. For example, more emphasis on the latter aspect in secondary.

### Assessing reading (1)

- Reading-age assessments do not identify specific gaps or diagnose missing components in reading.
- Checks on how well pupils read pseudo words identifies whether decoding is embedded:
  - 'flipsknus'
  - 'ridapnorsty'
  - 'dringlition'

### Assessing reading (2)

- A suite of assessments might be needed.
- Sometimes reading weaknesses are seen only through the lens of vocabulary and not through other aspects, such as fluency.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils who cannot decode are supported in developing automatically through careful direction and practice.

### Pupils who cannot decode automatically Need:

1. A systematic phonics programme
2. Leaders to know and how to incorporate the programme
3. Trained experts to deliver the programme
4. Books matched to sounds.

### Pupils with SEN

- The curriculum and the end goal are the same for all pupils.
- All pupils need knowledge of the alphabetic code, not only to read, but to spell.
- Teachers need expertise in understanding pupils' needs.
- Finding the right route will help pupils secure more knowledge.
- Different pedagogies may be required.

### Ensuring additional support is effective.

**X** - Stand-alone practice of comprehension skills will not help pupils get better at reading

**Yes** - A curriculum that includes these elements will:

- progressive fluency/fluency for the stage
- background knowledge/content knowledge
- knowledge about genres/literary devices

- grammatical and syntax knowledge
- deep vocabulary knowledge.

### **Benefits of reading independently and for pleasure**

By independently reading full novels, pupils:

- discover the powerful effects of fiction upon the reader
- build their imagination and vocabulary store
- become attentive to stylistic devices/literary use of language and grammar
- build their knowledge of the diverse array of cultures, people, ideas and places in the world now and in the past
- discover writers they prefer
- gain the stamina to persevere willingly with challenging texts.

### **The reading lesson: 'The poor get poorer'**

- Pupils that struggle to read often pretend.
- Books chosen by struggling readers can be random - they may not enable the teacher to draw attention to:
  - complex and unfamiliar vocabulary
  - spelling patterns
  - the way the text is structured.

### **Online reading programmes -Reading eggs**

- Research is mixed on the benefits of online reading programmes.
- They often use books in stock and band them.
- Sometimes, the questions encourage performative approach; they can be answered without deep reading.
- Motivation is not related to joy of reading but other aspects, like getting a high score.
- The alphabetic code needs to be cracked first and books need to match pupils' phonic knowledge.

### **Reading in subjects**

- Consideration will be given to increasing the provision of non-fiction texts, as research suggests that these are often more popular than fiction, particularly with male readers.

- Research has found that where leaders have established a whole-school/cross-subject strategy to promote literacy, students' fluency and facility in reading improve. Leaders might like to consider the following:
  - setting out curriculum expectations regarding the quantity and types of reading in subjects
  - agreeing the subject-specific direction as to how texts link with the curricular goals (endpoints) and any prior knowledge/key vocabulary requires
  - allocated department/CPD time for teachers to read/research around their subject to find the 'Goldilocks' text.

### **Content area literacy (study skills)**

- Mapping connections between concepts
- Highlighting key points
- Strategies for chunking information
- Techniques, such as repetition and mnemonics.