



# Reading Strategy

## **Developing a Sustainable Reading Strategy**

***Improving attainment through fostering a strong reading culture***

***'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it' – (Proverbs 22:6)***

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### **Vision and Leadership**

*“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.” (EIH p87)*

At Crowcombe and Stogumber, we have a clear rationale for the teaching of reading. Reading has the highest priority in the school, and we have invested in Pearson’s Phonics Bug as our systematic synthetic phonics scheme and Accelerated Reader to continue the children’s reading journey.

All staff have high expectations for children’s outcomes in reading and understand the importance of reading to enable children to access the wider curriculum and the impact it has on an individual’s success beyond education.

Our reading curriculum begins with explicit teaching using the Phonics Bug scheme of progression and our school reading progression document. This ensures that staff are aware of expectations for each year group and expected progress, taking into consideration the start points of individual children.

We use a range of robust and reliable reading assessment to monitor children’s progress through the reading curriculum. This includes assessment for learning during phonics and reading lessons. At the early stages of reading and while progressing through the Phonics bug programme, children are assessed half-termly on decoding skills and word reading.

Once children have successfully completed the phonics bug programme, they are assessed using the Accelerated Reader scheme, which assesses word reading and comprehension skills. In addition to this, NGRT assessments are completed three times a year to ensure progression is monitored and appropriate support implemented as required.

Children are encouraged to read for pleasure, to develop children’s interest and excitement about books. Reading is celebrated and shared through daily opportunities to read and be read to. All classrooms have a library area with a range of texts available to the children. This includes access to quality texts including poems and rhymes. We inspire children to love reading, see beyond what they know, share in cultural experiences and develop the vocabulary they need to express themselves effectively.

Our English curriculum is led by members of the senior leadership team who are very experienced and have had enhanced training in early reading and phonics. Dedicated time is provided to work alongside the English Hub for personal professional development and to keep up to date with good practice and current research. This expertise is shared with staff on a regular basis to ensure that all staff delivering the phonics bug programme are kept up to date with good practice and current developments. This includes access to Phonics Bug online portal to support their own CPD. Coaching and regular progress meetings are in place. This ensures that when need is identified, support is given to specific children who are identified as being at risk of falling behind. There is a programme of CPD to ensure that all staff have regular and relevant training in evidence-based practice to ensure they are experts in the teaching of reading. This also provides opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge of authors, illustrators and poems, as well as knowledge of books that promote equality and diversity and can recommend these to pupils.

## **A. Early Language and Phonics**

*'Most children learn how to decode words in Reception and Key Stage 1. However, pupils are likely to continue to benefit from some phonics work in Key Stage 2 to consolidate their understanding of grapheme phoneme correspondences. There is strong evidence that systematic synthetic phonics is an effective approach for teaching pupils to decode, including older pupils struggling with decoding.'* (EEF, *Improving Literacy Skills at KS2*)

At Crowcombe and Stogumber, we have chosen to follow the Pearson Phonics Bug Club systematic synthetic phonics scheme to delivery high quality phonics. Bug Club Phonics is a comprehensive phonics teaching programme centred around an accessible and inclusive teaching approach. It is designed to build children's confidence and enjoyment of reading at the very start of their reading journey. It is designed to get children reading real books as soon as possible and feel empowered that reading is for them. The programme is a balanced approach, simultaneously teaching blending of reading, alongside the segmentation of words for spelling and develops phonemic awareness skills. All of our staff have received professional development training to ensure they have a strong understanding of how to use Bug Club Phonics to get the best outcomes for pupils from the start.

### **Phonics sessions:**

In Reception and Key Stage one we teach daily phonics lessons. Graphemes and corresponding phonemes are taught just before the introduction of words that contain these letters. To read these words, children are taught to pronounce the individual phonemes (sounds) associated with the graphemes (letters) they see, and then to blend them together (synthesise) to form the word. In our approach, both blending for reading and segmenting for spelling are fully scaffolded. We model for the children how to sound and blend words for reading, and model for the children how to segment for spelling and continue to scaffold the children through the process with each word they spell. This ensures that they identify each phoneme and choose the appropriate grapheme in turn, until the word is spelt. Decodable readers are introduced after just 2 weeks' teaching at the end of Unit 2. This enables children to apply the taught strategies and enjoy contextualised reading early on.

Bringing a multi-sensory element to the teaching of phonics is widely recognised to be hugely beneficial to its effectiveness. Bug Club Phonics recommends the use of magnetic letters and boards to consolidate children's blending and segmenting abilities during the initial stages of the programme. Bug Club Phonics is delivered through teacher modelling and rehearsal with the whole class, supported with visual resources for guided independent work. It follows a repeated teaching sequence to build familiarity to support all learners. Every session begins with revision to reinforce previous learning, followed by resources to practise and apply blending and segmenting skills and adaptive teaching approaches to support all learners.

### **Reading sessions:**

Bug Club Phonics is supported by decodable readers, which match the order of phoneme introduction. When the children have completed the first two units of Bug Club Phonics, they will have acquired a sufficient number of grapheme-phoneme correspondences to start reading their own books. This should be a motivating and enjoyable experience for them. There are books to match each unit of the teaching programme and these help children to practise and consolidate their learning at each stage. Specific reading taught sessions take place in small groups three times per week. These sessions follow a 3 session teaching structure, which focuses on word reading skills, develops fluency and prosody and incorporates comprehension and language development using decodable reading books matched to the Bug Club Phonics Scheme. In addition to these reading session children take home an individual decodable reader to consolidate their learning.

### **Language sessions:**

Language Sessions occur at the end of each unit. These sessions combine the teaching of irregular words with using words in the context of captions and sentences. The acquisition of skills for reading single words is only part of the reading process. To read with fluency and comprehension, children need to apply and develop the skills taught.

**Writing:**

In writing, children are taught to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably, being taught explicitly how to form lower-case letters in the correct direction. As taught in the Bug Club phonics scheme, children can write letters in response to hearing a sound, can spell words by identifying the sounds and then write the sound with letters, alongside being able to spell common exception words, eventually leading to writing simple dictated sentences from memory. Children are taught to write sentences by saying aloud what they are going to write about and re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense.

**Parental support and engagement:**

We engage parents through information sessions and workshops, equipping them with strategies to support their child's learning of sounds and words at home, reinforcing our commitment to every student's success in reading and writing.

**Assessment:**

Frequent assessment opportunities ensure all children's needs are identified and evidenced at an early stage and additional support put in place to reinforce, practice and consolidate their learning. These sessions are part of the targeted catch-up support within the Bug Club Phonics scheme.

Our senior leadership team are experienced in teaching phonics and regularly meets with teachers and support staff to discuss the impact of sessions and interventions on pupils' progress, particularly the lowest 20%. The senior leadership team can confidently deliver practise sessions for staff and coaches staff who may need extra support during phonics sessions, and those who support pupils who have fallen behind, if the need arises. All staff have attended Phonics Bug Club training sessions and are involved in development days, and teachers and TAs are supported in the daily teaching of phonics by the senior leadership team.

In order to support the lowest 20% of pupils, the leadership team ensures that phonics lessons are taught to a high standard to reduce the number of pupils who need extra support. Ongoing teacher assessment, alongside half-termly assessments are used to identify pupils falling behind and extra daily practice is organised for these pupils. The leadership team plays a crucial role in creating detailed profiles for pupils needing extra support. Additionally, the leadership implements strategies for quickly integrating late-entry pupils to align with their peers, is dedicated to enhancing attendance among the bottom 20% of students, and actively involves parents in the support process where suitable.

**B. Fluency and Confidence**

*'Fluent readers can read accurately, at an appropriate speed without great effort (automaticity), and with appropriate stress and intonation (prosody). A fluent reading style can support comprehension because pupils' limited cognitive resources are freed from focusing on word recognition and can be redirected towards comprehending the text. Fluency is sometimes described as a bridge from word recognition to comprehension. There are no quick ways to develop reading fluency and most pupils will benefit from being explicitly taught and being encouraged to practise.'* (EEF, *Improving Literacy Skills at KS2*)

Using our chosen phonics scheme of Phonics Bug Club children are taught the skills needed to decode and then read fluently. Children are encouraged to read their home decodable book a minimum of three times to develop fluency and master the book. This is recording in the children's individual reading record book.

Reading workshops for parents take place at the start of the academic year to explain the importance of reading a book more than once. Additional support and advice is provided to parents throughout the year as appropriate. All children have access to a decodable phonics book and an additional sharing book that the child chooses.

As a school, we subscribe to Somerset Library Services, which means we have access to a wide range of texts to support the delivery of the wider curriculum. Children are able to access these independently and have them for "sharing books" as well as used in lessons to support the delivery of the curriculum.

Once the children have successfully completed the phonics bug reading scheme they move onto Accelerated Reader to continue their reading journey. Assessment aligns their reading ability with suitable texts and they complete comprehension quizzes following reading a text.

In addition to this, we explicitly teach reading fluency to those identified as requiring additional support using the HfL Reading Fluency intervention. Pupils are assessed using the YARC standardised assessment and then provided with a block of evidence based intervention. A member of the senior leadership team has received training to oversee and deliver this intervention alongside a member of support staff.

### **C. Comprehension and Quality Texts**

*'Pupils are taught a range of techniques which enable them to comprehend the meaning of what they read. Successful reading comprehension approaches allow activities to be carefully tailored to pupils' reading capabilities, and involve activities and texts that provide an effective, but not overwhelming, challenge.'* (EEF, 2018)

Comprehension is covered across all areas of the curriculum with access to quality narrative and non-narrative texts available to support and develop children's vocabulary and knowledge in a chosen subject area.

For younger children accessing Phonics Bug Club, comprehension is taught using the strategies of the programme. This includes explicit teaching using a guided group reading approach, which supports fluency, prosody and comprehension.

Once they have successfully completed the phonics programme, the children access Accelerated Reader, which aligns their reading ability with suitable texts and they complete comprehension quizzes following reading a text.

In addition to this in year 2 (for pupils who have completed phonics bug) reading comprehension is explicitly taught using high quality texts supported through 'Literacy Leaves' from The Literacy Tree Scheme. In KS2, reading is explicitly taught everyday using text extracts or high quality texts linked to wider curriculum units. When teaching comprehension, teachers explicitly teach how to answer retrieval questions using: skimming & scanning; how to develop understanding through reading around words in sentences and looking for key words, and how to support their understanding

through activating prior knowledge and responding to texts through summarising. There are then explicit teaching regarding inference. As children progress through KS2, they will learn that successful readers do not use these strategies in isolation but will use a combination to develop deeper understanding. Children are given a range of opportunities to develop these core comprehension skills and can answer questions through a range of forms, both more casually and formally.

#### **D. Vocabulary and Wider Curriculum**

*“Every teacher communicates their subject through academic language, and reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing and doing Science, Art, History, and every other subject in secondary school.” EEF, Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*

At Crowcombe and Stogumber, we recognise the importance of vocabulary for the success of all pupils and there is exposure to a language-rich environment across the curriculum. New vocabulary is taught explicitly and repeatedly in context, following a clear structure across spoken language, reading and writing. Children are exposed to new vocabulary, and are able to learn the meaning of the vocabulary and apply it in different contexts.

Spoken language underpins our whole English curriculum. Opportunities are given to develop speaking and listening skills, to engage in class and group discussions as they work and explain what they have learnt to a range of audiences. We value role-play and drama as excellent ways to develop speaking and listening skills such as ‘hot-seating’ and ‘speaking in role’.

When planning lessons, teachers explicitly state their Tier 3 vocabulary, using words banks, particularly across the wider curriculum. Tier 2 words are taught frequently and will be specified alongside the accompanying texts on the curriculum plan, with teachers pre-teaching and discussing these new words to support reading comprehension.

On a wider scale, teachers explicitly teach pupils to follow clear expectations during partner, class and group discussions and can help pupils to articulate their ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences through a variety of techniques including questioning, modelling how they think aloud and building sentences orally. Staff daily model new vocabulary by using words and phrases relevant to the area of learning.

#### **E. Reading Culture and Love of Reading**

*“We know that reading for pleasure has a dramatic impact on life outcomes – and this is as much about confidence and wellbeing as it is about educational achievements. Quite simply, children who read for pleasure are happier, healthier and do better in life than those who don’t.” (Diana Gerald CEO Book Trust)*

To foster a love for reading and enhance comprehension skills, our school has implemented a strategic reading approach. Each day we dedicate time to share quality texts, creating a routine that students eagerly anticipate. The carefully selected high quality texts ensure a diverse selection of quality stories ensuring a rich exposure to both traditional tales and contemporary narratives every half term, which links to their wider writing and curriculum learning. Teachers bring each story to life, using expressive voices and engaging mannerisms to clarify meaning and demonstrate their own enjoyment. By regularly reading aloud, re-reading, and discussing stories, we build familiarity and

deepen understanding. Furthermore, we introduce new vocabulary within the story's context, allowing students to grasp complex words in a memorable and meaningful way. For those children identified with delayed language acquisition, additional small-group story time opportunities are provided.

Through parent workshops, we provide parents with the tools to help their child succeed in reading, focussing on how to read aloud and talk about books with their children. As well as their dedicated phonics books, children can choose from a variety of quality fiction and non-fiction texts to take home and read with their parents.

Teachers have creating engaging class libraries for their children, and each classroom has an inviting environment that clearly fosters a love of reading. In and around the school, social reading environments are appealing and include book recommendations from staff and children alongside well-displayed quality texts. Pupils are motivated to read and are given the opportunity to talk about their books with both staff and peers. In addition, we have strong links with our local public library and pupils have the opportunity to visit the library to listen to stories, rhymes and poems and browse the books available. We have also trained junior librarians in Key Stage 2 with the support of the English Hub Librarian.

As part of our reading culture, we place a high value on quality texts within our wider curriculum. This includes using non-fiction texts to extend their knowledge of the world and illustrate key knowledge within each subject discipline. Children are encouraged to read a diverse range of books, particularly as they get older, including non-fiction books that will extend their knowledge of the world and support a current topic.

We celebrate and promote reading through enrichment opportunities such as World Book day, World Poetry Day and opportunities to engage with stories through drama, workshops and performance opportunities.

#### **F. Assessment and Progress**

*'The ongoing assessment of pupils' ... progress is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify any pupil who is falling behind... If they do fall behind, targeted support is given immediately.'* (SIH p87: 293)

At Crowcombe and Stogumber, we have an annual assessment calendar and robust monitoring and assessment processes to monitor progress and identify pupils who need further support. These include an early language comprehension assessment for all pupils as they transition to school.

Teacher monitoring and assessment for early reading is in line with Phonics Bug programme and ensures that the programme is continued until pupils can read fluently. For those requiring continued phonics teaching, daily practice is in place.

For children who have completed the Bug Club phonics scheme, NGRT and assessments linked to Accelerated Reader are used to establish progress and identify areas of need and form part of teacher assessment.

Senior leaders are trained to use and interpret diagnostic assessments. The results are used to support professional judgements about a pupil's current capabilities and inform next steps in learning.

For those who are in need of additional support with reading, timetabled evidence based interventions are in place. These interventions are timely and delivered by trained members of staff. Class teachers, alongside the senior leadership team, will regularly assess the progress being made in interventions and they are adjusted to provide the level of support necessary.

Where necessary, diagnostic assessments, such as Sound Linkage, York Assessment for Reading Comprehension (YARC) and Dyslexia Screener are used to understand the specific nature of the pupils' reading barriers and staff interpret these assessments to inform next steps in learning. The senior leadership team plays an active role in assessment throughout the school and coordinates the interpretation of these results, supporting staff where necessary.

Parents play an active role in supporting their children with reading and are supported through regular guided sessions on how they can best do this. Our teachers and leadership team also have a very open channel of communication with the parents and can provide additional support where necessary. Any late-entry pupils joining the school are assessed appropriately and are supported to meet any specific needs that they may have.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

### **Accelerated Reader**

#### **Overview of Accelerated Reader (AR) Programme**

1. **Student Assessment:**
  - **STAR Reading Test:** Students begin by taking the STAR Reading Test, a computer-adaptive assessment that determines their reading level, known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This helps identify the range of book levels most appropriate for each student.
2. **Book Selection:**
  - **Book Levels:** Books in the school library are labelled with AR levels and points. Students select books within their ZPD range to ensure they are reading at a level that is challenging but not frustrating.
  - **Interest Matching:** Encourage students to choose books that interest them within their reading level range to foster a love for reading.
3. **Reading and Quizzing:**
  - **Reading Books:** Students read their chosen books at their own pace.
  - **Taking Quizzes:** After finishing a book, students take an online AR quiz on the book's content. These quizzes assess comprehension and recall, with questions designed to be appropriate for the book's reading level.
4. **Monitoring Progress:**
  - **Quiz Scores:** Teachers receive immediate feedback on quiz results, which includes data on students' comprehension and engagement.
  - **Reading Logs:** Students maintain reading logs where they record the books they have read and their quiz scores, helping track their progress over time.
5. **Goal Setting and Motivation:**
  - **Individual Goals:** Teachers set personalized reading goals for each student based on their reading level and progress, including targets for the number of books or points to achieve within a specific period.
  - **Rewards and Recognition:** Schools often incorporate incentives and rewards to motivate students, such as certificates, badges, or recognition in assemblies for achieving their reading goals.
6. **Data Analysis and Intervention:**

- **Reports:** The AR programme generates detailed reports on individual and class reading performance, helping teachers identify trends, strengths, and areas needing improvement.
- **Targeted Support:** Teachers can use the data to provide targeted interventions for students who may be struggling or to challenge advanced readers with more complex materials.

