

## Reading Policy

### Rationale

At St Nicholas School, we are committed to creating a high quality education for children and young people with Cognition and Learning Difficulties. As part of this, we recognise that reading is a fundamental skill for accessing the curriculum and the wider world, however we also acknowledge that for our Profound and Complex Students learning to read will be beyond their level of cognition at any level and for these students we deliver superb reading experiences that are supported in a multisensory way and delivered by staff with expertise in this area.

For other students with Severe Learning disabilities reading is again complex and for many of our students we will acknowledge that they will be unable to become fluent readers. However there is much evidence that suggests that reading will strengthen these students' ability to master spoken language whilst also giving opportunities to explore the world and concepts through texts with a supportive reading partner. Many of these students will attain an ability to read at a level corresponding to their developmental stage, which will be enlightening, enjoyable and also a tool in which they can access the wider world and become more independent. For example, being able to read your own name on a letter, reading words from a simple menu and following signs to the toilet.

Other students at St Nicholas School will be able to read at a level that will not only bring them pleasure, the ability to access further academy but also employment and independence. To these ends we endeavour to deliver the highest quality teaching of reading possible

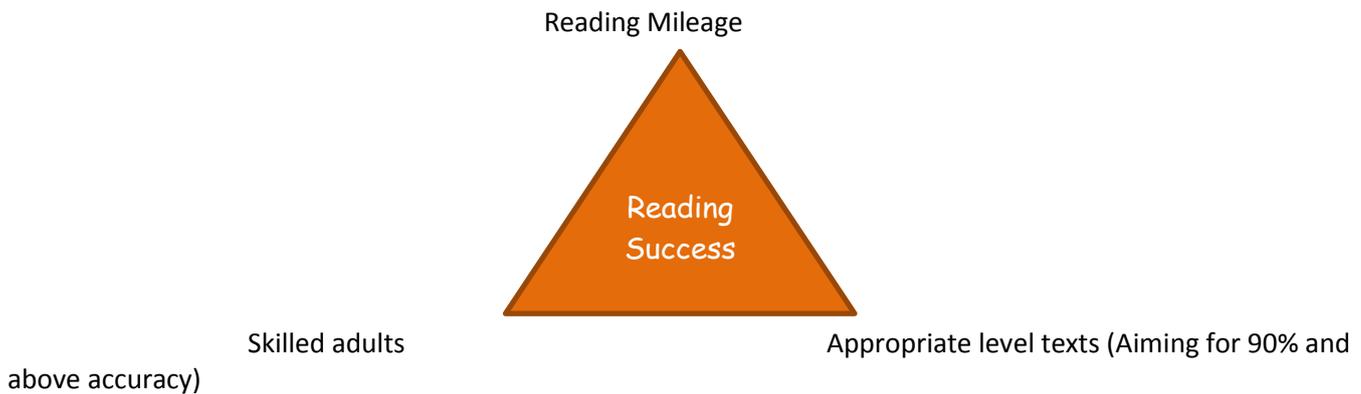
Reading instruction is considered to teach two fundamentals: mechanics and comprehension. While the underpinning for reading originates at birth, the focus of instruction from the early years is reading mechanics. It cannot be anticipated that a child with learning disabilities will control the mechanics of reading early on. Therefore, it is critical that appropriate reading instruction is obtainable throughout a child's school career. Reading mechanics and comprehension include various skill levels that are normally taught in a progressive approach. Skill levels involved in reading mechanics include pre-reading, decoding and fluency. Pre-reading skills build upon an individual's increasing range of experiences that develop awareness and appreciation of printed words.

For a student with learning disabilities, the development of learning to read can break down with reading mechanics or comprehension, and at any of the specific skill levels. Students with learning disabilities may not always acquire skills in the normal developmental sequence. If a student does not acquire adequate phonemic awareness during the pre-reading period, effective decoding may not be possible. Effective decoding influences the development of fluent reading and comprehension skills. Students with learning disabilities often come to the reading task with oral language comprehension problems which will translate into difficulties in the acquisition of reading comprehension and inference.

Teachers should be able to appropriately and systematically modify, combine methods, and utilize different methods, in order to meet an individual's changing needs. Students with learning disabilities should be provided with sound strategic approaches that empower them as readers, rather than be allowed to learn and internalize incorrect practices

Meek (1983) believes, 'Readers are made when they discover the activity is worth it'. At St Nicholas, reading is taught both as a skill in its own rights as well as a tool which permeates the entire curriculum. Our overall aim is to create and foster a culture of reading in which children read for enjoyment as they explore as wide and diverse a selection of texts as possible.

There are three key areas that can be considered to enable reading success:



### Reading Mileage

According to Arlington *et al* 2008, ‘Some researchers suggest beginning readers need to read 600-1000 words a week to become competent readers’. For students with learning difficulties the process may take much longer. At St Nicholas, every attempt is made to ensure that our students gain ‘reading mileage.’ This means ensuring that the students have opportunities to read wherever possible, both within Reading lessons and across the curriculum. A broad range of reading materials is available in each classroom, as well as well-resourced libraries which the students are encouraged to visit regularly. Throughout the school, all students are encouraged to choose books which they would like to read and are given the skills needed to choose books which are at an appropriate level. As well as this, there is a systematic and progressive reading scheme in place that the students work through as their reading improves.

### Appropriate Level Texts

According to Ofsted 2004, ‘the texts pupils read should match student’s proficiency so they are reading at 90% accuracy.’ At St Nicholas, we understand the importance of students enjoying the reading process and how this can be impeded if the students are faced with texts which are inaccessible. Therefore, staff will ensure that the texts that the students are reading are sufficiently accessible, so that at least 90% of the words are decodable.

Staff will use running records to establish how well the student can access the reading material. The table below shows the percentage accuracy against the level of difficulty:

Accuracy Rate:	Difficulty:
95-100%	The reader is reading a text which is <b>EASY</b> . A high level of success will be experienced. Texts that children read independently of adult support should be of this level.
90-94%	The reader is reading a text which is <b>INSTRUCTIONAL</b> . At this level, children will require adult support in order to decode at a rate which does not impede comprehension. This level of text could be (is) appropriate for guided reading or reading with an adult.
50-89%	The reader is reading a text which is <b>HARD</b> . The rate of reading will be too slow for the children to comprehend what they have read. A child found to be reading a text of this level should be encouraged to change their book. This might be to a book at a lower level or an easier book at the same level. The adult also might decide to read the book to the child first, share-read the book or ‘introduce’ the story and characters first – this might shift the book from hard to instructional level and enable the child to carry on with texts at this level .

### Skilled Adults

At St Nicholas, much time has been invested into the training of teaching staff and support staff so that they are equipped and confident to deliver the teaching of reading. All Higher level Teaching Assistants have been trained as Better Reading Partners; the Literacy Leader has undergone frequent professional development in the provision of reading which is then cascaded to the rest of the staff. Every effort is made in ensuring that all adults who work with our students have the relevant training required in order to best support the development of reading.

### The strategies taught to be a successful reader

At St Nicholas, we recognise that reading is a personal and highly complicated process. Every effort is made to give our students every chance of being successful readers. Following are the skills that we actively teach our students:

Reading conventions (direction of text, direction to turn pages)

Decoding and blending & knowledge of the alphabetic code

Self-monitoring and self-correction

Rereading

Phrasing and fluency

Retrieval

Inference and deduction

Authorial awareness (point of view, linguistic choices, structural choices, context of text)

### Early Reading and phonics

At St Nicholas, children from Nursery are taught phonics through a systemised synthetic phonics program. The program that is used currently is Letters and Sounds. Letters and Sounds takes place daily and is delivered in a multi-sensory way.

### Assessment

Given the importance and value placed upon reading at St Nicholas, it is considered essential that assessment is regular and accurate. Running records are also used to determine the accuracy rate at which the students read and whether their reading book is suitable. Running records are also used as a useful tool to illuminate the problems that struggling readers might be facing and are used as formative assessment in order to teacher next steps. The Literacy Team supports class teachers with this close observation of reading behaviours wherever appropriate.

### Parental Involvement

We acknowledge that it is the job of school staff to teach a student how to read and to develop as a reader. However, we know that the best readers will also be reading within the home environment. Parents are encouraged to listen to their child read at home to build reading mileage. Students take books home regularly both from the reading schemes and free choice selections. Parents are asked to note comments relating to their child's reading in a two-way contact book. Parents are supplied with guidance from school about how to best support their child in reading, for instance, examples of questions that they can ask and how to praise specific elements such as intonation and fluency. Where parents are unable to support their child with building a reading mileage children are supported in school.

### Aims for Reading

At St Nicholas School we aim to ensure that according to the individual's stage of development the student should be taught:

- Students are able to recognise and interpret photographs / pictures / signs and symbols.
- Students are encouraged to share books and 'read', or be read to for enjoyment.
- Students experiencing handling a variety of books.
- Students are taught to value books and reading materials, including computer-based programs and the internet.
- Students develop as readers in a stimulating, multisensory environment.
- Students are involved in choosing from a selection of reading materials.
- Students are encouraged to develop their reading skills through speaking and listening with a focus on developing understanding.
- ICT is used as a means of enabling students to access the curriculum and to reinforce and extend their skills and learning.

- There is access to a wide range of high quality reading resources.
- Structured individual reading objectives are used to inform the daily teaching of literacy at individual and group levels.
- Sufficient daily time is allowed for developing and extending reading skills and comprehension.
- Students have experience of a range and balance of teaching approaches.
- Students reading skills develop alongside writing, and may be used to support the development of writing.
- Opportunities are provided for students to functionally apply their reading in a variety of contexts including the development of study and research skills.
- The student's level of achievement is regularly assessed and individual needs recognised and used in planning.
- Progress in acquiring reading skills, including the development of comprehension, are continually monitored to support the generalisation of these across learning experiences.
- Parents are encouraged to support their students' reading development.
- Students and parents are encouraged to take part in the home-school reading programme.
- There is continuous staff development in relation to the teaching of reading.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored on a yearly basis by the Curriculum Co-ordinator to keep up to date with any adjustments to statutory legislation or curriculum and any changes will go via the Governing Body when necessary.

## EQUALITY, SAFEGUARDING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

St Nicholas School, in all policies and procedures, will promote equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds and ensure freedom from discrimination on the basis of membership of any group, including gender, sexual orientation, family circumstances, ethnic or national origin, disability (physical or mental), religious or political beliefs.

St Nicholas School aims to:

- Provide equal opportunity for all
- To foster good relations, and create effective partnership with all sections of the community
- To take no action which discriminates unlawfully in service delivery, commissioning and employment
- To provide an environment free from fear and discrimination, where diversity, respect and dignity are valued.

All aspects of Safeguarding will be embedded into the life of the school and be adhered to and be the responsibility of all staff.

## LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Teaching and Learning  
 All curriculum policies  
 Safeguarding  
 Multi-sensory  
 Communication  
 Behaviour  
 ASD  
 Community Cohesion  
 Monitoring and Evaluation

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