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| **Person responsible for policy:** | Andrée Barnard |
| **Date approved:** | September 2022 |
| **Review date:** | September 2023 |

**Intent**

Rights Respecting School: Every child has the right to a good quality education – Article 28

**Aims:**

* To establish an entitlement for all pupils;
* To establish expectations for staff;
* To promote continuity and coherence across the school;
* To state the school’s approaches to reading in order to promote public, and particularly parents’ and carers’, understanding of the curriculum.

At Park Lane School we value reading and developing reading skills for all of our learners and strongly hold the belief that every child is a reader. Due to the varied abilities of our learners, it is important we offer a range of activities and approaches to ensure the best outcomes for our students as they travel through school, and prepare for adulthood.

Each of our students is on one of four reading pathways and this is decided on an individual basis. Each learner is continually assessed and is able to progress through the reading pathways, where appropriate. There is a whole school tracking system which clearly identifies which pathway each student is taking.

In each class, there is information that outlines which reading pathway each of our students are taking and time is taken each day to work on each students reading targets.

**Implementation - Park Lane Pathways**

All students in our two EYFS classes have access to a combination of the pathway approaches, making sure that each student has developed firm foundations in prerequisite skills to learning, and early reading skills, as outlined through the EYFS aims. Then in KS1, Phase 1 phonics is introduced in a systematic way and Phase 2 phonics is also introduced where appropriate. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, our most able students, will have already begun to use and progress through our synthetic phonics programme and for all other students it will then be decided which pathway would suit the individual learners needs the best.

**Pre- requisite curriculum skills (Pathway 1)**

Pre- requisite skills are the very simple skills everyone needs to succeed in learning. Through our own experiences of teaching children with profound, multiple or severe learning difficulties and supported by works from researchers such as Flo Longhorn we have identified key areas and tools for learning, which once acquired, enable the students to progress in their education and life.

These prerequisites cover the following learning skills:

* Wanting to respond to learning situations
* Increasing attention span
* Awareness of self, of others and of the environment
* Interaction with others and the environment
* Beginning to play
* Beginning to communicate – in any way
* Beginning to have fun
* Increasing sensory awareness and co-ordination
* Responding to rewards or sanctions
* Removing barriers to learning

Students working at this stage are at the very early stages of understanding and usually have fragmented learning. Their rates of progress are typically very slow and over a long period of time. Some children may stay at this level as they develop into adults, however environments for learning will change, as will the experiences and materials offered.

Students will follow the Park Lane Progression of Skills for non-subject specific learners which has been developed in consideration of the Northern Ireland Q curriculum.

Students on this pathway will develop early reading skills through numerous approaches and sessions, examples include,

-Eye contact- through Intensive Interaction sessions

-Tracking, engagement and attention- through attention sessions such as attention autism, eye gaze, Sensology and taking part in tracking games and activities.

-Rhythm, rhyme and interest in sounds- through music and music therapy sessions.

**Early Reading skills/ Vocabulary Progression /Phase 1 phonics (Pathway 2)**

Learners in this pathway spend time working on early reading skills that are essential to be able to start reading words and books. This covers skills such as responding to and engaging with books, looking at pictures, helping to turn pages, starting to recognise characters and having favourite books and words. They will also start to notice how words can rhyme and understand that print holds meaning, that words are read from left to right and will start to recognise some print in their environment.

Students will also be introduced to symbols and words and will start to progress through the vocabulary progression document, devised by our SaLT team. This will further help support acquisition of reading skills and associating print and pictures with meaning. It will also help students, particularly those who are non-verbal to communicate their needs.

Students will continue to have access to sessions which may include Intensive Interaction, Music Therapy, Attention Autism and Level 1 Twinkl Phonics, which support the development of speech sounds and phonological awareness, needed to access the Level 2 Phonics Programme.

**See and Learn Programme (Pathway 3)**

Students on Pathway 3, are predominantly taught through the See and Learn approach, as well as having opportunities to work on Level 2 Phonics skills, through the delivery of the programme.

See and Learn is a programme designed for pupils who have difficulties in initially learning to read phonetically. This was originally developed by the Down Syndrome Foundation for students with Down Syndrome but has since been successfully rolled out to other students who struggle with auditory processing and developmental delay. Before deciding on this sight reading approach we have spoken to another local special school who have successfully implemented aspects of the See and Learn programme and have seen fantastic improvements in their students reading since implementation.

We have also incorporated some further principals from the Down Syndrome Research Foundation- Canada- which highlights the importance of ‘errorless learning’, supporting a child with their reading by making necessary adaptations which will give them the framework and confidence to learn and want to continue learning. This approach is aimed at fostering a love of reading, despite the challenges faced by the pupil and the length of time they may take to acquire reading knowledge.

Students on this pathway have access to regular sessions to work on the See and Learn approach to reading, as well as working on other reading skills throughout other sessions. Progress in sessions is tracked and recorded on individual assessment sheets.

**Synthetic Phonics (Pathway 4)**

Every student who is accessing phonics sessions receive regular, small group or 1:1 intervention sessions. These sessions follow the Twinkl Phonics scheme which is a systematic and synthetic programme, based on the letter and sounds scheme. Sessions are delivered through, multi-sensory, engaging games and activities. There are also opportunities to work on reading and reading skills, through the delivery of the wider curriculum. Progress in reading sessions is tracked and recorded on individual assessment sheets.

**Promoting reading through the curriculum and further opportunities**

At Park Lane we want to encourage all students to have a love of reading, we therefore offer a wide range of texts and delivery, to inspire every child. We use sensory stories, massage stories and bag books, as well as traditional reading books. All books try to cover a diverse range of topics and by a range of authors. We also promote reading through whole school events such as celebrating World Book Day and National Poetry Day. We have held events such as a ‘meet the author’ session, where a group of students were able to meet the author of a book they have been reading, finding out more about what being an author entails and had the opportunity to ask some fantastic questions.

We also highly regard non- fiction texts and these are promoted through our weekly delivery of the children’s newspaper ‘First News’. This makes reading newspapers more accessible for our students and allows them the opportunity to engage in adapted texts. In preparing our pupils for adulthood, we also regularly give pupils opportunities to follow recipes, use thesauruses, dictionaries and promote researching new topics by through looking at texts, brochures or researching on computers or tablets. Life skills such as, reading shopping lists, reading signs in the environment and online food shopping are worked on through our post-16 curriculum.

Our English curriculum, for all those learners who are taught in a subject specific way, offers the breadth and depth of coverage that is expected of the National Curriculum. Long term planning ensures that a range of texts are covered both fiction and non-fiction.

**Parental engagement with reading**

Each student at Park Lane School has a reading folder, which has a reading book or associated reading activity in for parents to work on with their child at home.

To further support parents with reading at home, we have developed our school website so that it now has a designated reading section. This contains all the information that every parent needs to be able to help their child progress with their reading at home, whichever pathway they may be on. 1:1 phone calls with the English Co-ordinator were offered to all parents, to support any parent with home reading instead of the workshop.

Our good practice and achievements in reading across the school are also shared with parents through our website and social media pages.

**Impact**

Across all pathways formative assessment of pupil progress is recorded in a variety of ways. For example, in Pathway One, pupils responses and actions are recorded on specific recording sheets each time they participate in a reading activity.

Staff discuss pupils’ achievements and engagement in reading activities in team meetings and teachers monitor progress over time, assessing if/when pupils are ready to move onto the next pathway.

Staff regularly record achievements against the Engagement Steps and the school’s own assessment system, the lanes. They use the Evidence for Learning app to do this. Teachers moderate this evidence to ensure the evidence is standardised and moderation of reading evidence has recently taken place.

The subject Leader for English meets with teachers to discuss pupil progress in reading and scrutinise work and senior leaders meet termly with teachers to discuss pupil progress.

**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the English subject lead.

**Supporting Information**

**Research and understanding**

Whilst we aim for all of our learners to progress through our synthetic phonics programme we know through both research and our own experiences and understanding of our students, that for some this is not the most effective way to develop reading.

In most cases, this is due to issues with auditory processing or having severe development delay. Research conducted by van Leeuwen, T., Been, P., et al. (2008), suggests students with learning difficulties struggle with phonetic strategies because of neurological differences from their mainstream peers and therefore they can struggle with categorising sounds and connecting sounds to meaning.

The Down Syndrome Research Foundation have suggested that learners with Down Syndrome and other developmental delay are best to start their reading journey learning some high meaning sight words, due to their issues around auditory processing and short term and auditory memory, which all contribute to difficulties in phonological awareness. When a student has a word bank of 50-100 words, phonics should then be introduced starting with initial sound recognition, using the words in that students personal word bank.

At Park Lane School we also have students with profound and multiple learning difficulties who need further support to work on the pre-requisite skills to learning, such as engaging, tracking and beginning to communicate. This is supported by research by Flo Longhorn and the ‘Q Curriculum’ in Northern Ireland.

Additionally we have students with severe learning difficulties and associated developmental delay and these learners require a longer amount of time to work on early reading skills, outlined in the Early Years Goals, which give them the skills needed to be able to access the National Curriculum and National Phonics programmes.

**Overview of the Pathways:**

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| **Name of Pathway** | **Pathway 1** | **Pathway 2** | **Pathway 3** | **Pathway 4** |
|  | Prerequisite skills | Early reading skills and vocabulary recognition, Phase 1 Phonics skills. | See and Learn (Sight Reading) /Phase 1 and 2 phonics | Synthetic Phonics ( Phase 1-6) |
| **Research supporting pathway** | Flo Longhorn- Pre requisites to learning  Northern Ireland- Q Skills Curriculum- for Students working below KS1 | EYFS Framework and  EYFS learning goals  ‘Tell me AAC in the Pre-school classroom’  SaLT research on Aided language stimulation/Vocabulary and symbol progression. | Down Syndrome Education- UK  Down Syndrome Research Foundation- Canada  Numerous research papers ( See English and Reading Policy for more specific examples) | Government guidance- Letters and Sounds Programme |
| **Resources/ Delivery** | Follow Park Lane Progression of skills for Non-subject specific learners.    Intensive Interaction  Attention Autism – Stage 1  Eye gaze- where appropriate  Music Therapy  TacPac  Sensology  Massage and Sensory stories  1:1 and small group teaching- following individualised programmes and Personal learning goals. | Vocabulary progression – follow Park Lane vocabulary progression checklist- developed with SaLT  Aided Language Stimulation (point talking)  Progression Pathway 1-4 for Early reading skills.  Phase 1 Twinkl Phonics | Following See and Learn Programme principals for developing sight reading- see Park Lane See and Learn Document.  Then after 50-100 sight words- revisit Phonics Phase 2. | Twinkl Phonics Scheme  Level 2-6  Delivered in a systematic way- all resources on shared server to follow week by week. |
| **Assessment** | Ongoing teacher assessment- observations  Evidence for Learning  PLGS | Teacher Observations  Vocabulary Progression Assessment Sheet  Phase 1 assessment sheet    Evidence for learning  PLGS | Teacher Observations  Park Lane See and Learn recording sheets  Personal resources e.g. words I know, words I am learning.  PLGS | Teacher Observations  Twinkl Phonics assessment sheets on school server  PLGS |