



# Reading at Wheatcroft



*“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.”*

*Frederick Douglass*

## Our intention – What do we want to achieve?

Wheatcroft School is dedicated and driven to:

- ★ Ensuring that every child will learn to read to a high standard of fluency and understanding, regardless of their background, needs or prior attainment.
- ★ Promoting and instilling a love and enjoyment of reading in all children.
- ★ Closing the ‘word gap’ by expanding children’s vocabulary and deepening their understanding of the texts they are reading.

## Our implementation – How will we achieve this?

Reading is the golden thread that runs through every part of our Wheatcroft curriculum. Children read every day and are read to every day. We are passionate about:

- ★ Talk, talk and more talk – Language rich environments.
- ★ The power of books – Literature rich environments.
- ★ Instilling a love of reading – Sharing a wide range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction texts.
- ★ Reading aloud to children **every day**.
- ★ Early reading and our SSP (Systematic synthetic phonics programme.)
- ★ Developing fluency and understanding of texts.
- ★ Wonderful words.
- ★ Our home school partnership.

Please read on to find more detailed information about what these areas look like in our school.

## Our impact– What have we achieved?

The **impact** of our approach to Reading is that children are excited to read, frequently recommend books and talk about their favourite authors and books.

- ★ Pupil voice – please refer to this section as this is what we’re most proud of.
- ★ In 2019, 81% of children across school achieved the age-related expectations (ARE) in reading and 41% of children across school achieved the greater depth standard (GD).
- ★ In 2019, 86% of children in Year 1 met the standard for the phonics screening check. (Above the national of 82%)
- ★ In 2019 at the end of Key Stage 1, 79% of children achieved the expected standard in reading. (Above the national average of 75%)
- ★ In 2019 at the end of Key Stage 2, 74% of children achieved the expected standard in reading. (Above the national average of 73%)

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 2018/2019 is the last academic year when statutory assessments took place.

## Talk, talk and more talk – Language rich environments.

*“Reading and writing float on a sea of talk.”*

*James Britton.*

At Wheatcroft, we understand that children’s vocabulary, understanding of the world, ability to use accurate grammar, and their ability to communicate effectively, all depend on the quality of language they hear. We prioritise language-rich environments, where adults engage children in high-quality conversations throughout the day. The more conversations children engage in, the more they will understand once they can read, and the more vocabulary and ideas they will have once they can write. We carefully and deliberately plan ways to develop children’s spoken language within our English units. We extend their vocabulary and understanding by:

- Paying close attention to and responding to what children say, giving them time to share their thoughts and opinions.
- Rephrasing and extending what children say when appropriate.
- Asking lots of open questions.
- Modelling accurate spoken grammar.
- Modelling making connections between events.
- Modelling new language for children and modelling thinking out loud.
- Modelling language from books and stories.
- Extending children’s vocabulary by introducing, teaching and explaining new words in different contexts.
- Deliberately repeating and consolidating new vocabulary to build words into children’s working memory.
- Using our ‘Challenging Talk’ posters when engaging in conversations and expecting children to justify their opinions or answers.
- Sharing high-quality and engaging books and talking about them every day.
- Asking our home/school community to engage in talk homework.
- Providing additional smaller-group story times for children with delayed language.
- Helping pupils retell and develop their own stories orally and take on different roles in imaginative play and drama.
- Taking rapid action when speech, language and communication delays are identified.
- Working with external agencies to support these children make progress.
- Investing in a speech and language advanced teaching assistant, to assess children, deliver interventions, liaise with teaching staff, and communicate with external agencies and to overview any children requiring support in this area.
- In addition, we also invest in a qualified speech and language therapist through the SEASIDE SALT company, who carry out their own assessments and support individual children with therapy plans.



We have high expectations for the way in which all pupils and staff communicate with each other. This includes the ways in which we listen to each other. We teach children to listen and model the ways in which listening is important. We maximise participation in class and group discussions wherever possible.



Challenging Talk at  
Wheatcroft



Can you show me in another way?

Why is this important?

Can you prove it?

Tell me how you know that?

Do you agree?

Can you persuade \_\_\_\_\_ to  
agree with you?

Would anyone like to add anything  
else?

Can you see an answer you would  
like to defend?

Justify it...

How did you work that out?

Why do you think that?

What did you use to help you?

Can you develop your answer  
further?

Explain it to me...

Clarify that to your partner...

Why did you decide to...?

Has anyone got a different  
idea/method?

Did anyone see it differently?

Can you find another way?

I like the way you explained that  
because I now I know that...

How is this like another problem  
you've solved before?

I agree because...

I disagree because...

I've changed my mind because...

I can prove it by...

I know that because...

I think that because...

I didn't understand... Can you  
explain it to me again?

My strategy is like yours because...

My strategy is different to yours  
because...



'Highly skilled adults use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to encourage them to think more deeply. Pupils are now even starting to ask challenging questions of themselves and others.'

OFSTED 2018

## The power of books – Literature rich environments

At Wheatcroft, we understand the power of books. Books allow children to explore other worlds and can transport them beyond their own environments and experiences. We immerse children in literature-rich environments and ensure access to a wealth of high-quality and engaging texts.

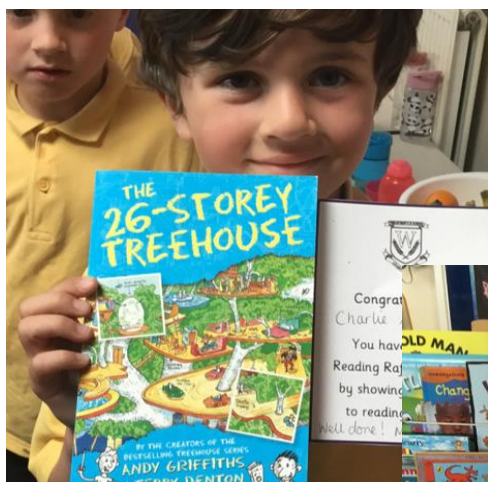
- We carefully choose the books we share with children, ensuring that they can see themselves represented within the pages. We also ensure that we celebrate diversity through books, exploring different experiences, religions, perspectives, abilities, cultures, races and emotions.
- Each year group chooses engaging stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction books to develop children's vocabulary, language comprehension, knowledge and love of reading.
- We overview each year group's book choices regularly to ensure there is a diverse, interesting range and that there is an appropriate level of challenge.
- We speak to children about the books they are enjoying, encourage them to recommend stories to each other and reflect on the books they have read.
- Books are used at every opportunity from showcasing grammatical features being used in an authentic text, to exploring themes and ideas during whole school assemblies.
- Class novels are chosen to challenge, broaden vocabulary and expose children to varying themes and cultures. They are sometimes linked to linked learning topics and sometimes stand alone.
- Extracts from books, picture books and class novels, are used to inspire writing for a real purpose and for a real audience.
- Every class has an enticing display of books in the classroom where children can enjoy reading for purpose and pleasure.
- We use books across the whole curriculum to enhance learning, providing opportunities for reading for purpose as well as pleasure.
- We invest in new books regularly to ensure that they are high quality, engaging and grow fluent, motivated readers.





## Instilling a Love of Reading – Purpose and pleasure

- Teachers read aloud to children EVERY DAY. This time is planned, timetabled and is a priority. Teachers find ways to make this time special, varied and exciting.
- We introduce 'Helicopter Stories' in our Bluebells class which is an accessible and child-centred approach for younger children to enjoy storytelling and story-acting. It helps them to see themselves as real authors and allows them to experience the excitement of creating their own stories.
- The adults in school display their favourite childhood book on the door of the room they work in, along with a recommendation of why they love it.
- The Book Bay (our school library) is themed to link to our school 'Locality Driver'. Classes enjoy a timetabled library session per week, but also have the freedom to use the library at other times during the week to enhance learning.
- During library sessions, children engage in 'Book Talk' when they talk about what they are reading, recommend books to others and discuss their favourite authors.
- Our team of Year 6 librarians are responsible for running our lunchtime reading clubs, writing our half-termly reading newsletter to our families, maintaining the library space and supporting younger children to make choices about books they read.
- Every class discusses 'Good readers can...' within reading lessons, making the lifelong skills of reading accessible and explicit.
- When introducing or consolidating an aspect of grammar, we showcase it being used in an actual book and talk about how it impacts the reader. We signpost children to as many books as we can in this way, sharing extracts from books we have in the library and others that may hook their interest.
- Our children participate in reading events such as World Book Day, author visits and workshops, reading buddies, reading raffles, competitions and the Summer Reading Challenge.



A huge well done to Charlie who has won our reading week! 🎉🌟😊



## **Reading Aloud to Children Every Day**

At Wheatcroft we understand that reading aloud to children every single day, creates an authentic shared literacy experience, stimulates thinking and motivates children to read. At Wheatcroft, reading aloud to children:

- creates a time of enjoyment while developing children's love of books.
- creates a safe context to talk about feelings.
- creates opportunities to discuss issues and debate dilemmas.
- allows children to access texts that they couldn't read independently.
- increases children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- introduces children to an increased number of authors and genres.
- supports children to be visual thinkers and use their imaginations.
- supports children develop their 'listening stamina' and 'listening comprehension.'
- supports children to develop their vocabulary.
- supports children to be better writers.
- allows opportunities for escapism.

As we read aloud to children, we utilise the power of modelling to demonstrate:

- our excitement for reading.
- appropriate pace, intonation, and projection.
- how we respond to a text and the impact literature can have on us.
- how we ask questions and make connections as we read.
- thinking out loud as a reader.
- misreading, re-reading and scanning.
- how we can make inferences.
- searching for the meaning of a word using its context to help us.
- collecting ideas for writing as we read.

## **Early Reading - Phonics Provision**

All adults at Wheatcroft have the highest expectation that children will become confident, fluent and skilful readers by the end of Key Stage 1, through the systematic and consistent implementation of our chosen phonics programme.



- At Wheatcroft we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised SSP (systematic synthetic phonics) programme. This is a DfE validated programme.
- We set clear expectations of pupils' phonics progress term-by-term, from Reception to the end of Year 1 and share these expectations with parents/carers.
- We ensure that the pace of the programme is maintained so that children become fluent, independent readers by the end of Year 1.
- We quickly identify children who are at risk of falling behind, by completing half termly assessments and daily teacher assessments within lessons.
- We ensure children's individual reading books have a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge and closely match their knowledge of sounds.
- We ensure that parents know the difference between a decodable book and a sharing book and that they understand the best way to support their child's reading at home.

**To find more information about our approach to Early Reading and our Phonics programme, please read our Early Reading and Phonics Policy.**

## Developing fluency and understanding of texts

At Wheatcroft, we develop fluent readers who read for purpose, pleasure and with understanding. We do this by immersing children in high quality and engaging texts as frequently as possible. We expose children to a wide range of genres and authors and allow them to develop their reading skills linked to the national curriculum reading domains:

Content domain reference	
<b>1a</b>	draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts
<b>1b</b>	identify / explain key aspects of fiction and non-fiction texts, such as characters, events, titles and information
<b>1c</b>	identify and explain the sequence of events in texts
<b>1d</b>	make inferences from the text
<b>1e</b>	predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

Once children have completed their phonics programme, we use a variety of approaches when teaching reading: hearing children read individually, paired reading, repeated reading, group reading sessions, choral reading and whole class reading lessons. All these approaches develop both fluency and comprehension. When discussing a text, questions which develop the following reading skills are prioritised:

Content domain reference	
<b>2a</b>	give / explain the meaning of words in context
<b>2b</b>	retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction
<b>2c</b>	summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph
<b>2d</b>	make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text
<b>2e</b>	predict what might happen from details stated and implied
<b>2f</b>	identify / explain how information / narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole
<b>2g</b>	identify / explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases
<b>2h</b>	make comparisons within the text

- Retrieving information
- Exploring vocabulary
- Making inferences
- Discussing and considering authorial intent (strengthening the reader-writer relationship.)

Our reading lessons are varied and engaging. Children are given background information about texts, authors, themes and cultures prior to reading, helping them understand different points of view or exposing them to different ways of life. Children are asked to demonstrate their understanding or opinions in different ways: verbally, drawing pictures of setting/character descriptions, voting on dilemma problems, written answers, emotion graphs, true or false questions amongst many other approaches.

## Reading schemes and Books

We are passionate about our children feeling successful when they read. We ensure that children only read books that they have the tools to decode. We closely match their individual reading books to their phonic knowledge. We provide opportunities for children to re-read the same text, focusing on different reading skills each time. This allows children to feel confident, motivated and to develop their fluency and understanding. We explain to parents why both these things are important.

At Wheatcroft, we ensure that children have access to a range of high-quality books for a range of purposes. Any child who is progressing through the phonics programme, is given two decodable books per week, closely matched to their phonic knowledge. In addition to this, the children choose a library book each week which is shared with staff and parents if they are unable to read in independently.



Collins  
**BIG CAT**  
Phonics



Once the children have completed the phonics programme, they choose a colour banded book matched to their reading fluency, comprehension and stamina from the Collins Big Cat reading scheme. We chose this scheme because it includes characters from a range of ethnic and social backgrounds, tells stories about people with differing abilities and challenges gender stereotypes. It also offers an equal balance of fiction and non-fiction texts. They also have the opportunity to choose a library book each week.

## Assessing Reading

Children in Reception and Year 1 follow our school's phonics programme and are assessed regularly within lessons and at the end of a 5-week teaching block. If children in Year 2 still need support with their phonics progress they are continued to be assessed in this way.

Once children have completed the phonics programme, ongoing assessments are made whenever children read and by completing termly standardised reading assessments. Children are explicitly taught how to answer written reading questions, considering the number of marks available and ensuring evidence is used (when required) to justify their answers.

The ongoing assessment of children's reading progress at all ages identifies those at risk of falling behind. Rapid and targeted support is given to those at risk. This support may come in various forms, depending on the area/s of need: 1-1 phonics interventions, additional blending practise, increased individual reading, additional guided group reading, timed repeated reading, targeted questioning during whole class reading or a request for additional support at home.

At Wheatcroft we use the CLPE Reading progression scale to support teacher subject knowledge in the complex subject of reading development. The scale is not used as an assessment tool but allows teachers to think about where on the scale their children are sitting, which observable reading behaviours they are displaying and the required provision and practice required to move children forward. The scale also supports future planning and is used alongside the National Curriculum programmes of study.





## Wonderful words

Language is at the heart of all we do at Wheatcroft. We are committed to closing the 'Word Gap' ensuring all our children have all the words they need to thrive at home, in school, and beyond. We understand that language development not only improves academic outcomes, but also improves self-esteem, behaviour, a child's ability to make friends and their overall mental health and well-being.

Spoken language is a challenge for some children and we invest in training staff to communicate using Makaton and other software programmes so that all pupils can have their thoughts and views heard.

We believe that vocabulary has to be 'taught' as well as 'caught' and as such, we spend time explicitly teaching vocabulary in a variety of ways. We also understand how vital it is that words are not just taught once, but are frequently revisited in order for the word to be remembered and for stronger connections to be made between children's 'net' of words. We provide children with language-rich environments – the "caught" as well as the "taught. We never assume that children understand new language and check their understanding regularly. We model and extend language with children and dedicate plenty of time and opportunities for purposeful talk in everyday lessons.

Here are some of the ways that we teach and revisit vocabulary:

- **Word continuums -**

If freezing was at one extreme and sweltering was at the other, which words could we use to move gradually from one to the other?

- **Ranking vocabulary –**

Here are six words. Rank them from most effective to least effective to describe an object/person/situation.

- **Vocabulary schemas –**

Organising words into groups.

Words to describe smell (aroma, stench, fragrance, odour.) Varying degrees of smell (faints, gentle, strong, pungent.) What can smells do? (Waft, linger, creep, drift, seep.) Are any of these words more positive or negative? Finding examples in an authentic text.

- **Wonderful word books and displays –**

Big books and displays where collected vocabulary can be revisited/referred to with pictures and prompts.

- **Synonyms and opposites –**

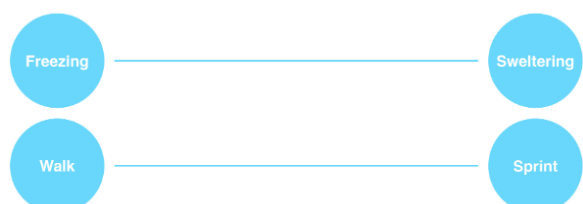
Colour wheels, synonyms, thesaurus work.

Tier 1 words	Tier 2 words ✓	Tier 3 words ✓
<b>Everyday words</b>	<b>General academic and literary words</b>	<b>Subject specific words</b>
Most often found in everyday talk. e.g. the 20 most common words: the, be, to, of, and, a, in, that, have, I it, for, not, on, with, he, as, you, do, at.	Most often found in academic speech and texts e.g. relative, vary, formulate, specificity, accumulate, calibrate, itemise, misfortune, dignified, faltered, unabashedly,	Most often found in Information texts within a specific subject or field. e.g. lava, missionary, timbre, circumference, deciduous.

3  
*Escape*

The barn was very large. It was very old. It smelled of hay and it smelled of manure. It smelled of the perspiration of tired horses and the wonderful sweet breath of patient cows. It often had a sort of peaceful smell – as though nothing bad could happen ever again in the world. It smelled of grain and of harness dressing and of axle grease and of rubber boots and of new rope. And whenever the cat was given a fish-head to eat, the barn would smell of fish. But mostly it smelled of hay, for there was always hay in the great loft up overhead. And there was always hay being pitched down to the cows and the horses and the sheep.

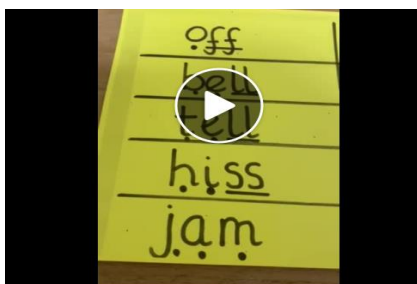
*Charlotte Webb – E.D. White*



## Our home school partnership

At Wheatcroft, our goal is to motivate children to want to share books and read at home. We understand the vital part that parents and carers play in shaping children's love of reading and supporting their progress. We communicate regularly with parents about their child's progress in reading through their reading records, Class Dojo, positive post cards and conversations. Here are some of the ways we support our home school reading partnership:

- Whenever children read at home they are praised and rewarded. We are grateful for comments from parents in reading records or messages on Class Dojo to inform us of how regularly and successfully this is happening.
- We have invested in an e-book library which replicates our in-school reading schemes. This ensures all children always have access to age-appropriate and high-quality books as well as physical copies of their decodable book and library book.
- If a child reads four or more times a week at home, they are entered into a Reading Raffle. The prize is a brand-new book.
- We use Class Dojo to share the books we are reading in school and to encourage children to engage in Book Talk at home.
- We post videos of the types of things we do and say when we are hearing children read and sharing stories.
- During the national school closures and in the event of any bubble closures, teachers record a reading video and post it on our Class Dojo platform.
- Our librarians write a termly reading newsletter to inform parents about which reading events are happening locally, tips for supporting reading at home and to share pupil voice about the books that are being enjoyed in school.
- We hold information briefings and question and answer sessions for families about how we teach reading and how they can support at home.

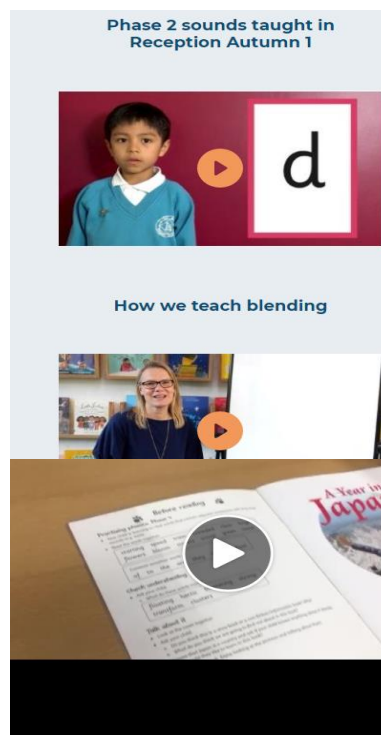


A quick explanation of how to use these words. Please see me if you have any questions!  
Mrs Earle 😊

13 likes 39 views



A huge congratulations to James who has won our reading raffle this week! Keep up the amazing reading everyone! 📖🌟🍌



Bea and I wanted to share her wonderful reading of one of our new books. She was really brave and I'm sure you'll be very impressed! We spent a long time talking about the vocabulary we were going to find in the book, noticing the punctuation and talking about the pictures. I do hope you're enjoying the new books and remember, reading a book more than once is a really effective way to develop fluency. Happy reading and have a lovely half term!  
Mrs Kirby x



## Pupil Voice

- ★ 'Our teacher reads to us every day. I'm enjoying reading 'My side of the Mountain' because it's teaching me how to push myself and challenge myself.'
- ★ 'I like that there's a bookshelf in every classroom, so I always have something to read even if I forget my book bag.'
- ★ 'We do a lot of reading in other lessons too like in History.'
- ★ 'I love being a librarian. I like that I can come in the library and help other children to choose books. I like recommending to Year 3 children because sometimes they get confused about what to choose.'
- ★ 'I love all non-fiction especially animal books. My favourite Primate is the Pygmy Slow Loris.'
- ★ 'My favourite book series is either Wizards of Once or the Tom Gates ones – they're funny and I like the Pop art.'
- ★ 'The teachers read the book first, so they know if it's going to be good or not.'
- ★ 'The island is a picture book with no words at all. It has some confusing pictures and pictures that help us to write. It is nice having pictures to help us instead of just words. We use a lot of books to give us ideas in writing.'
- ★ 'Our library is peaceful and relaxing and it's quiet and nice to have some time away from the playground.'
- ★ 'Cressida Cowell is my favourite. She talked to us about her books on World Book Day on the screen.'
- ★ 'I like the short emotions books even though they're easy to read. I know exactly where to find them, and they make me happy.'
- ★ 'I love the class novels because I liked all the action in the Enchanted Wood - like when the goblins took over the faraway tree it was amazing.'