



English at The Cedar School

Our hopes for a Cedar child

Communication

Pupils will develop their communication skills through experiencing, exploring and examining adapted high-quality texts. They will learn to communicate their preferences, ideas and viewpoints that are elicited through a wide range of literature. Through their preferred communication method, pupils will become more confident in elaborating on their initial thoughts as to explain clearly their understanding throughout lessons. They will learn to apply this through their writing also. Through high-quality discussions and sharing literature with rich word choice, pupils will be supported to experience and extend their vocabulary found within stories, both contemporary and from our literary history, and understand the meaning of those words.

Empowerment

Pupils will be empowered to communicate their sensory preferences through highly immersive sensory stories so that they know their voice is heard and so learning can be tailored to ensure high levels of engagement throughout reading. Pupils will be supported and encouraged to share their thoughts, feelings and opinions on different pieces of literature. They will learn to articulate and form these within their writing. They will understand that reading is a personal experience and that their opinions are valued. Pupils will be empowered to make choices throughout the development of their reading skills and text choices will be tailored to ensure that a love of reading is fostered and developed throughout their time with us.

Discovery

Pupils will discover representations of their lives and realities reflected within and throughout their reading journey at The Cedar School. Pupils will also learn about religions, cultures, disabilities and sexual identities and orientations that differ from their own to ensure that they develop culturally, emotionally and socially through their explorations of literature. They will be encouraged to develop their sense of excitement and curiosity through discovering new stories and re-reading familiar favourites.

Aspiration

Pupils will be exposed to the current and historical impact that literature has played in their lives and the world around them. They will be encouraged to understand the power of reading and writing, as well as the benefits these skills will have on life chances once they leave school. Pupils will develop their skills relevant to their age and stage of development. Where appropriate pupils will have the necessary skills to embrace formal learning and accreditation in their future education.

Resilience

Pupils will be challenged to decode and read texts, appropriate to their phonics knowledge, as independently as possible throughout the curriculum. They will be encouraged to use and apply their reading skills to access their learning and the world around them. Pupils will be resilient in their approach to reading and writing, understanding that learning to read and write is a process that takes time and practice to get right.

Principles

Our reading curriculum encompasses phonics, reading comprehension and developing a lifelong love of reading for our students. Whilst this will look different for pupils within different pathways of learning, experiencing high-quality literature in an adapted and meaningful way and learning the skills to read are priorities for all of our pupils.

We teach these strands of reading through daily phonics sessions for our semi-formal and formal pathway pupils in our primary department and 2-3 times a week in our secondary department for pupils still progressing with phonics. If a pupil cannot access phonics as their approach to learning how to read, alternative approaches to reading are implemented on an individual basis.

Our approach aims to increase pupils' skills throughout all 5 key stages and to continually broaden the range of text types through which pupils develop their skills.

Approach within developmental stages	
Pre formal stage	Pupils will work on developing skills selected from the pre-formal curriculum and practise, contextualise and embed core skills throughout different learning contexts. Reading for these learners will consist of highly immersive and engaging sensory stories, message stories and the use of multi-sensory resources such as sound beams and resonance boards to bring stories to life.
Semi-formal stage	Pupils will work on developing early targets from the Cedar Reading Stages through interest-based text choices and practical activities linked to chosen texts. Pupils will begin to share thoughts and feelings that they recognise within texts or are elicited within themselves. Engaging and inspirational texts will be selected and adapted from the Literary Spine document.
Formal stage	Pupils will work on increasingly more subject specific targets from the Cedar Reading Stages through more formal learning experiences, application and examination of different types of literature. Pupils within this stage will also be able to form, discuss and debate different viewpoints presented throughout different texts. Engaging, inspirational and challenging texts will be selected and adapted, where necessary, from the Literary Spine document.
Further Study	Pupils who complete the Cedar Reading Stages should be supported to study English at GCSE or another accredited course.

Phonics

At The Cedar School, we recognise reading as a priority for all of our pupils, but as individuals with their own needs, that this will look different across our school.

Whether through developing their auditory skills through captivating sensory stories and exploratory activities, learning to decode, blend and segment texts using our chosen validated phonics scheme, Rocket Phonics, or requiring a visual approach to reading – we prioritise reading, in a way that is meaningful, challenging and aspirational, for all of our pupils.

Auditory Skills Development

For our Early Years pupils and our pupils who learn and access the world in a primarily sensory way, it is a priority to develop the auditory skills required to experience and discriminate between different types of sounds, rhymes, rhythms and alliteration so they can move on either to access

the letter-sounds in our Rocket Phonics programme or to be able to interact and engage with the world around them more purposefully.

Rocket Phonics

Rocket Phonics is a fully resourced, systematic synthetic phonics programme that has been written by phonics experts and provides us with everything needed to teach children to read and write. It includes a combination of digital and printed resources, and two fully matched series of decodable reading books. With a dual banded system, Rocket Phonics also provides age appropriate, highly decodable texts for our pupils in our Secondary department who are still accessing phonics teaching.

Alternative Reading Approaches

For some of our pupils, we recognise that learning to read through a phonological approach isn't appropriate and these pupils therefore require an alternative approach to reading. On these occasions, the alternative approach used is chosen based on the individual needs of these pupils.

Developing a love of reading

As a school, we are committed to teaching Literacy skills through a range of high-quality texts that form our Literary spine. This is an evolving and reflective document that is informed and updated with the interests of our pupils, topical societal issues and movements that our pupils should be taught and the most current trends in children's literature.

Library and reading areas

We have focussed on developing our school library to create an enticing, engaging and accessible learning space for students to foster and develop their love of reading. Our pupils were involved throughout the designing and development stages, with some of their wishes for the library including;

'Comfy places to read'

'Social space and clubs'

'New books'

'Different types of books'

'Space to work'

Our new library is situated at the heart of our school and marked a moment in our whole school reading journey in which we prioritised developing our love of reading as a staff team! Our pupils' responses speak volumes for what they think of our new library:

'It feels really cosy!'

'The circle in the middle is amazing to sit in with friends!'

'There is a great choice of books!'

'It's really big- there is a lot more room than the last library.'

'I found my favourite books! Diary of a Wimpy Kid.'

'It is so nice and bright!'

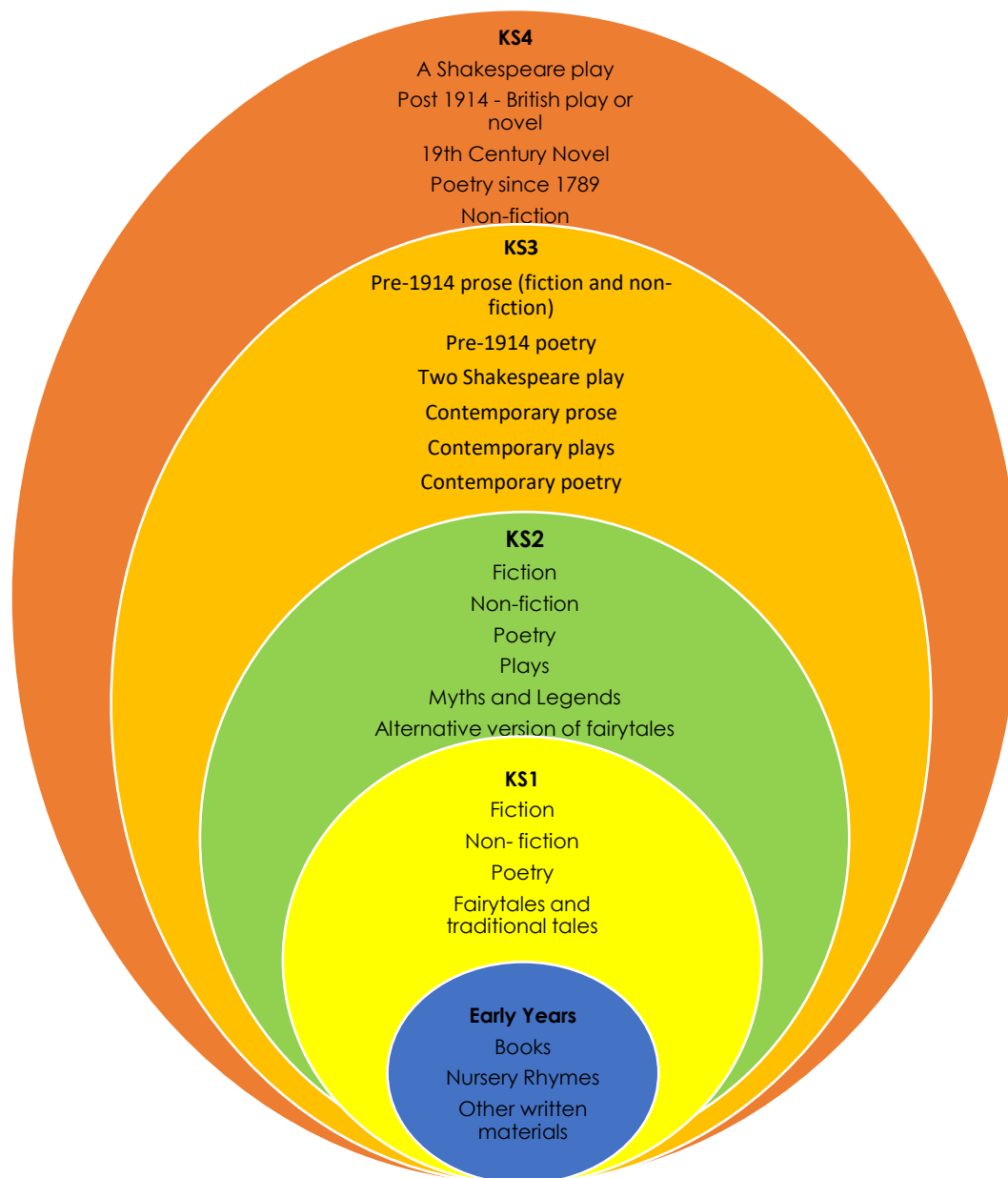
'The new library is so inviting.'

'Everything was well organised and the books were easier for me to find!'

Each classroom within our school also includes a reading area which contains texts which pupils can read independently (decodable texts) as well interest-based texts that pupils can have read to them.

Next steps

Over the next academic year, we will be focussing on developing social clubs to support reading, developing independence by utilising library-based responsibilities for our pupils and ensuring we have a range of age appropriate and accessible books for older and more reluctant readers to engage with.



Text coverage

Throughout their time at The Cedar School, pupils will learn, practise and embed reading skills appropriate to their level of learning through the exploration and examination of a range of different text types outlined for that key stage. This allows for our pupils to access a broad, balanced and progressive range of texts whilst also developing skills that appropriate, meaningful and challenging to their level of learning.

Literary Spine

We believe it is important that all of our pupils feel represented within the texts we teach our reading skills through and that as members of society, that they are aware, informed and accepting of different religions, beliefs, cultures, races, disabilities and sexual identities and orientations that make up our local and national communities. We have therefore created a diverse and inclusive Literary Spine to support the selection of high-quality texts throughout our curriculum in line with the key stage that each pupil is working within and in line with our Equality Objectives Statement. Our Literary Spine is an evolving document and reflective of the cultural climate, as well as the interests or issues that our pupils would like to explore further within their learning.

*Please see The Cedar School Literary Spine for recommended texts for each text group within each key stage.

Writing

As with reading, we prioritise writing, mark making and fine motor development for all of our pupils, but recognise that due to their individual needs that this will look different across our school.

At The Cedar School, we recognise that writing is more than putting pen to paper and our pupils use a wide variety of access software and technology to support meaningful access to engaging with writing. Whether through using Clicker 7 to form sentences or by sharing their thoughts, feelings and understanding through their individualised communication device, all of our pupils are empowered to engage with writing and develop skills appropriate for them.

Within our pre-formal pathway, pupils will develop fine and gross motor skills appropriate to their level of development and will be challenged to use these skills in a wide range of contexts. Pupils will develop their abilities to explore, and show preferences for, a wide range of different sensory experiences and materials. Pupils will develop their sensory systems, to attend to, and make marks more purposefully and know that their actions can have an effect, Pupils will also be empowered to initiate actions in whatever way is most meaningful to them which can be applied in a wide range of contexts.

In our semi-formal and formal pathway, pupils will learn to communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas and begin to form these within a written format. Through their phonics lessons, pupils will learn to segment words and apply their phonological knowledge to write or scribe words containing known sounds independently. Through exploring and examining an ever-broadening range of high-quality texts throughout different key stages, pupils will be supported to form writing in different styles and for different purposes. Pupils will also apply their writing skills throughout the rest of the curriculum.

Progress checks

Summative assessment and data collection for all subjects, including reading and writing, is carried out once termly – during the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. Whilst access to, and learning expectations within reading will vary depending on the pupil's individual need and learning pathway, each pupil within the semi-formal/ formal learning pathway has a reading and writing assessment folder in which evidence is gathered to show that pupil's progress within the Cedar Reading and Writing Stages.

For our pre-formal pupils, assessment is gathered for the core skills that have been selected and prioritised from the CEDAR pre-formal curriculum. These skills are practised and embedded within different learning contexts, including reading, immersive sensory story sessions and exploratory art and mark making sessions. The Engagement Model is also as a form of formative and summative assessment used to support and monitor our pre-formal pupil's engagement with learning and to measure individual progress.

Staff training

- Whole staff subject knowledge training on phonics.
- Whole staff training on chosen phonics scheme, Rocket Phonics
- Whole staff training developing a love for reading for our pupils.
- Half termly drop-in sessions to support the continued professional development of staff
- Ongoing coaching and mentoring to support the successful implementation and high-quality teaching of phonics across the school.
- Core phonics skills to form part of induction programme for new staff.

Monitoring and Review dates

This policy and the quality of teaching and learning of English will be monitored by Zoe Greatbatch (English Lead and Assistant Headteacher), the Senior Leadership Team and Hazel Long (Governor). Whilst ensuring the quality of reading throughout the school is continually being monitored, supported and developed, this policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is reflective of our current practice within school.

Date: December 2021

Date of the next policy review: December 2022

To be reviewed by: Zoe Greatbatch