



Hillside Primary Curriculum

Early Reading & Phonics Curriculum

Intent

At Hillside Primary School, our Early Reading curriculum is designed to place the needs and aspirations of our pupils at the heart of their learning journey. We deliver a knowledge-rich, ambitious, and inclusive curriculum that empowers every child to master the alphabetic code and develop a lifelong love of literature, helping them to **"Be the BEST they can be."**

Our intent is underpinned by four key attitudes, ensuring pupils develop the character and resilience to thrive:

- **Believe**
- **Engage**
- **Succeed**
- **Try**

BELIEVE: Building Confidence & Belonging

- We foster an environment where children believe in their potential by ensuring early success.
- By matching books strictly to phonic knowledge, we build the confidence necessary for children to see themselves as readers.
- We believe that the "invisible privilege" of being read to must become a "universal right" for every child at Hillside.

ENGAGE: Curiosity & Connection

- We inspire curiosity through a diverse and ambitious reading spine.
- In EYFS and Key Stage 1, we prioritise daily Storytime to bridge the "cultural capital" gap, engaging children with complex narratives that motivate them to read independently.

SUCCEED: Precision & Mastery

- Success is rooted in the mastery of the 44 speed sounds.
- We aim for all pupils to meet or exceed national standards, moving from mechanical decoding to the automaticity required for deep comprehension.

TRY: Resilience & Hard Thinking

- We cultivate resilience through "hard thinking." Whether tackling a new digraph or navigating a "resistant text" during Storytime, pupils are encouraged to embrace challenges and learn from the process of decoding.

The Foundations: Read Write Inc. (RWI)

We ensure fidelity to the Ruth Miskin Read Write Inc. Phonics programme to provide the Substantive Knowledge (phonemes/graphemes) and Disciplinary Knowledge (blending/segmenting) required for literacy.

- Inclusive Achievement: Through rigorous assessment, we ensure no child is left behind. For older pupils in Years 5 and 6 who require further support, we utilise Read Write Inc. Fresh Start. This age-appropriate intervention ensures foundational gaps are closed, allowing all pupils to access the secondary curriculum.
- Vocabulary for Success: We believe vocabulary is the gateway to achievement. Our curriculum moves pupils from simple oral blending to mastering Tier-3 terminology, ensuring they have the linguistic tools to express complex ideas.

The Power of Storytime: Bridging the Gap

Storytime is a non-negotiable component of our daily curriculum, designed to combat material deprivation and foster social-emotional wellbeing.

- Biological & Cognitive Connection: Shared reading synchronises the physical and cognitive states of the listener with the reader, building empathy and communication skills.
- Daily Storytime at Hillside acts as a critical intervention to ensure all children, regardless of socio-economic background, flourish.
- Daily Expectations: Storytime occurs daily. Books are read under a visualiser so all children can follow the text, promoting an uninterrupted, engaged experience that repositions 'poorer' readers as 'good' readers.

Early Reading 'Big Ideas': Substantive Concepts & Vocabulary

Our curriculum is anchored by 'Big Ideas' that build the mental schema required for literacy:

Big Idea	Essential Knowledge	Vocabulary Examples
The Alphabetic Code	Mastery of the 44 speed sounds and their graphemes.	Phoneme, Grapheme, Digraph.
Fluency & Expression	Reading with accuracy and a "storyteller voice."	Tone, Pace, Automaticity.
The 5 Plagues	Navigating archaic, non-linear, and complex texts.	Allegory, Nuance, Ambiguity.
Comprehension	Using retrieval and inference to explore meaning.	Infer, Retrieve, Summarise.

Working as a Reader: Disciplinary Progress

Strand	EYFS	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2 (Fresh Start)
Decoding	Recognise Set 1 sounds; blend orally.	Master Set 2 & 3; read with speed.	Apply phonics to polysyllabic words.
Storytime	Daily immersion in oral storytelling.	Follow complex plots via visualiser.	Evaluate themes and authorial intent.
Resilience	Try to blend unfamiliar words.	Navigate "The 5 Plagues" of reading.	Justify interpretations of "resistant" texts.

Through this vocabulary-rich, sequential framework, Hillside pupils do not just "learn" to read; they build the character, resilience, and cultural capital needed to thrive in the modern world.