



**Greenhall**

**LITERACY**



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## 1. Literacy

Reading, along with writing, makes up literacy, one of the four specific areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Although learning for young children is very much concerned with the integration of areas of learning and is often centred around a theme, nevertheless it is important within this area of learning that planning focuses on the individual components in order to ensure that -

- a) skills specific
  - b) knowledge specific
  - c) language specific
- elements of each aspect are addressed.

As the children attending Greenhall present with a very wide range of physical, communication and language, social and emotional and learning abilities they will obviously access learning experiences and activities in very different ways - planning and assessment will therefore need to take account of individual learning needs. Some children will be operating on a sensory level where activities such as sensory stories need to be repeated and their reactions to these closely monitored. Other children will have restricted physical abilities and be unable to access books independently, but otherwise may enjoy and benefit from a wide range of stories and books and be able to answer comprehension questions, responding using a variety of means e.g. verbally, communication books, pointing to symbols. Some children will have a combination of all of these areas of limitation and the teacher's skill will be in providing activities that offer learning experiences for all of the children.

The learning environment should be a language-rich environment in which adults talk with children throughout the day. It should also be rich with symbols and objects of reference used to enhance displays of children's work.

Literacy has specific links with physical development and some activities within the area of Literacy require certain physical pre-requisites, although specialist equipment, strategies and interventions will be employed as appropriate to ensure that children's physical abilities do not impact their ability to show learning and development in literacy.

Where appropriate and reflecting the age and stage of development, the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP) should be used in the teaching of literacy skills.

## **2. Reading**

Reading is fundamental to education. Proficiency in reading, writing and spoken language is vital for pupils' success.

*(DFE Reading Framework 2021)*

Greenhall values the importance of reading and we work hard as a setting to grow our Reading for pleasure pedagogy.

This aspect of the Literacy curriculum can be further dissected into four distinct areas: enjoyment, comprehension, participation, phonic knowledge. It is important to note that some literacy skills rely on aspects of development that some children may not be able to exhibit because of existing difficulties e.g. answering questions about stories verbally. Adults must therefore provide opportunities and resources appropriate to the children for them to be able to demonstrate these skills.

### **Enjoyment**

The first step towards reading is to foster a love and familiarity with books, rhymes, poems and stories. Children need to be part of a reading environment that capitalises on opportunities to promote reading as an important skill for everyday life.

### **Books**

From birth to three in the EYFS 2021 Development Matters it states that children should 'Have favourite books and seek them out' and be willing to share these books with an adult, another child or look at them alone.

Children should be given access to a wide range of books and stories from a very early age. Children at the earliest stages of development will enjoy looking at books and printed materials with familiar people. They will handle books and printed materials with interest and may have favourites. It is important that not only is there a wide variety of genres available but that the children are given the opportunity to interact with books regardless of their difficulties. Some children who have sensory impairments may need visually striking books. Children may need facilitation to turn pages, with board books making this easier for them to learn page turning initially. For children with visual impairment it is important that books with different textures represent the textures realistically, and that they have access to VI books and Objects of Reference.

Children should be able to choose from a symbol board or their own individual methods or react with vocalisations or facial expressions when shown the book / props / hear the name of the book.

### Book Corner/ or Book Area

*'Every book in a book corner should be worth reading aloud'*

DFE Reading Framework 2021

All book areas in the nursery should be a 'mini - library' with a selection of books that suit the age and stage of development of all children. Every child should be able to spend time in the book area and teachers should consider displaying books that have been read aloud to children. Different books should be introduced gradually and should consist of 'key books' that all children will experience: these should be 'must have' reads – the classics' [Pie Corbett - Reading Spine].

They will learn to handle books carefully, holding them the correct way up and turning pages one at a time. However, children's ability to understand books and their knowledge of conventions of books e.g. when to turn pages, may be greater than their physical ability to do so.

We also have a well stocked library which children can access, as well as a lending library where children can take home a book for a week and then exchange it. We also have book bags with objects of references and switches to explore with the story.

### Stories

Children must be given access to high quality story books relevant to their stage of development. Many of the story books offered to the children should be very repetitive which makes it easier for them to join in with so that the reading experience becomes interactive. Suitable reading book suggestions are outlined in the Pie Corbett Reading Spine – nursery children article.

Children with sensory difficulties should be given opportunities to listen to and interact with a variety of sensory stories that include simple sentences and opportunities to engage with a variety of sensory materials and props. Observation of the children during these sessions is vitally important in order to measure progress in relation to their understanding e.g. do they show signs of anticipation, recollection, enjoyment? Do they recognise a prop used in the story?

### Language and Comprehension

*'Comprehension does not refer to reading itself but, rather, to the way in which we make sense of words, sentences and the wider language we hear or read'*

DFE Reading Framework 2021

Children should learn that objects, words, pictures, and symbols can communicate meaning and provide information in a language-rich environment. For some children this may mean recognising their name / symbol used to identify their own belongings. For example, a child with a Visual Impairment may have a tactile object attached to their photo to enable them to recognise their photo card. Symbols / words / objects of reference may also be used for timetables, objects and activities and children's attention should be drawn to these. Children should be aware of the way stories are structured and then begin to use this to inform their own verbal or written stories, given the

appropriate means to do so. Children that are unable to speak or write should be given the opportunities to create / sequence / answer questions about stories using alternative methods such as technology, symbols, communication boards and pictures / photographs.

The important conventions of stories e.g. characters, setting, events, endings should be taught and children given opportunities to use these in their own work, including role play and small world play. Puppets, props and puppet theatres play an important part in children's ability to tell and retell stories and can give adults an insight into the comprehension abilities of those children who are unable to answer specific story based questions.

### Participation

Children should be given opportunities to participate in literacy activities at their own stage of development. This may include children vocalising during a sensory story, or perhaps using a switch to join in a repeated refrain during a story with props and prompts.

Rhyming stories and those with repeated refrains should be a regular part of story time with the children, giving the children opportunities to become familiar with rhyme and rhythm. Repeated refrains allow the children the opportunity to join in with a familiar phrase. Some children may not be able to say the actual words but could repeat the intonation of the refrain, or use a switch to communicate.

Children should also have the opportunity to engage in activities involving rhyme and alliteration, participating as appropriate e.g. putting all animals beginning with the same sound on Bertha Bus e.g. cat, crocodile, cow.

Dramatising the story once the children know it well can also hold their interest and focus.



### Phonic knowledge (link to writing)

When appropriate to the child's stage of development he/she will begin to follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP) at Greenhall. Taught in discrete phonics sessions, the children learn the graphemes [typically in groups of 4] that represent a single phoneme in the following order:

s a t p i n m d g o c k ck e u r h b f l ff ll ss j v w x y z zz qu ch sh th ng nk

All 'high quality' phonics sessions should demonstrate new learning in bite-sized chunks. Every time the children are taught a new sound, they will also read words during the phonics lesson that contain that new sound, so that they can practise what they have learned. All the children should participate by listening and responding, and by practising and applying what they are learning through their direct teaching sessions.

When they have learnt up to 16 graphemes, some children in Reception will be ready to practise reading books. They will take part in reading practice sessions three times a week. In these sessions the children will have access to the Collins Big Cat for Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which are fully decodable books that are matched to the programme progression.

The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody – reading with meaning, stress and intonation
- comprehension – understanding the text.

Children are also taught to read 'common exception words' [sometimes referred to as tricky words] that they are unable to decode using their phonic knowledge e.g. said, to, was, I, the, me, no, of, all, he and you.

### Sources of experience within reading

#### 1. Pre-reading activities

- Tracking (objects, lights on a screen)
- matching object to object
- matching object to picture
- matching shape to shape
- matching symbol to symbol
- story sequencing
- visual discrimination
- auditory memory
- familiarisation with books / symbols / pictures
- photo recognition
- auditory discrimination

#### 2. Reading / phonics activities

- listening skills [Phase 1 Phonics Activities]
- recognition of letters
- relationship to letter sound
- blending and segmenting
- whole word recognition
- initial sounds
- final sounds

- CVC/CVCC words
- Familiar words in the environment e.g. names / labels

### 3. Writing

Writing is an important part of communication as children develop. In the later stages of early years development it is directly linked with children's phonic knowledge and ability.

*'Children's later writing is based on skills and understanding which they develop as babies and toddlers. Before they can write, they need to learn to use spoken language to communicate. Later they learn to write down the words they can say'*

However, children at Greenhall may be given opportunities to use alternative methods of recording, along with their alternative methods of communication e.g. using technology such as clicker, ipads, symbols to 'write' and communicate meaning. Alternative methods of recording will be based on both the children's individual physical skills and their stage of development in reading and communication.

It is important to note that in the early stages of children's development (Birth to 3 Years) children will 'mark make'. This is not the same as writing. It is a sensory and physical experience which children do not yet connect to forming symbols which can communicate meaning.

Children should be given opportunities to make marks in a variety of sensory materials using all of their bodies (link to Physical Development). Children need to be provided with physical development opportunities that develop their ability to control their bodies and use their hands effectively for mark making, developing their hand-eye co-ordination (see Physical Development policy).

*Early mark making-* this can involve any part of the child's body and any sort of material- imagination is the only limit!

Ideas for sensory mark making materials include:

- Foam
- Sand
- Gloop – Cornflour and water
- Custard
- Silly putty
- Playdough
- Lentils
- Rice
- Sawdust
- Soil
- Wet mud
- Glue spread on a surface & sprinkled glitter
- moon sand
- Paint

NB- due care and attention must be paid in regards to health and safety

Ideas for surfaces that could be used for sensory mark making include

- Sandpaper - Waxed crayon  
Clay  
Notepads  
Paper  
Windows  
Tiled walls  
Paper tissues - Felt pens and water  
Mirrors  
Table tops  
Sheets of foil  
bubble wrap  
corrugated card

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Items that could be used for mark making at all stages of development (with or without facilitation)

- Pencils  
Pens  
Crayons  
Chalks  
Pastels  
Paintbrushes  
Toothbrushes  
Combs  
Ice cubes  
Frozen Paints  
Cotton buds  
Small car wheels  
Cotton reel rolling  
Dish mops  
Scouring pads  
Fir cone  
Glue sticks  
Fingers  
Toes  
Hands  
String of beads  
Rope  
Cord  
Wool  
Ribbon  
String  
Tinsel  
Twigs  
Plant stalks - straw  
Paint rollers  
Highlighter pens



Droppers  
Squeezy bottles

*Later stages of mark making* - Sometimes marks are made for the pure physical enjoyment of the activity – the feel of the felt-tip pen as it glides over the surface of the whiteboard or the chalk as it grates over the bumpy tarmac, the sight of the brightly-coloured dribbles of paint as they run down the paper on the easel, or the sensation of the glue, oozing between children’s fingers as they spread it over the paper. On these occasions children have no interest in an end product at all; the physical activity is an end in itself and an opportunity for them to experiment and explore with their senses, developing confidence and dexterity through the process.

As children develop they begin to distinguish and ascribe meaning to the marks that they make. Although an adult may not be able to recognise what the children have drawn / written, the important detail is that the children themselves are able to do so.

When appropriate to the child's stage of development he/she will begin to follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSP) at Greenhall. This programme encompasses both reading and writing. The children learn to write the letters/letter groups which represent the sounds, to learn to write words by saying the sounds and graphemes, to write simple sentences, to compose stories based on picture strips and to compose a range of texts using discussion prompts.

Writing is closely linked to reading. Children should be given opportunities during their play and story sessions to encounter a wide variety of writing for different purposes e.g. shopping lists in role play, labels around the environment, captions for story pictures, before they are expected to write these.

The physical act of writing is linked closely to physical development. Children practice, use and refine their fine motor skills as detailed in the Physical Development policy. However, alternative methods of recording may be used for children where it is deemed appropriate. This may include alternative technologies, typing, Clicker, use of the iPad.

Links to other areas of learning

- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Understanding the World

#### **4. Dyslexia**

Greenhall endeavours to meet the diverse needs of its pupils to ensure inclusion for all. All our pupils are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, delivered in a relevant and differentiated manner, enabling progression and continuity to be experienced.

We promote equal opportunity for all children regardless of gender, age, religion, culture, ethnicity or ability. We acknowledge that our children are very young and have additional needs, predominately physical disabilities. Because of this, they may not show the traditional indicators of dyslexia e.g. letter reversal, but they may show dyslexic tendencies in all areas of the curriculum. We believe that a dyslexic friendly school will not only benefit children with dyslexic tendencies but will also have a significant impact on other pupils whose literacy skills are not appropriate to their age. Strategies that are good for the dyslexic learner are good for everyone.

#### **5. Assessment, recording & reporting**

Children's progress is recorded on session evaluations and used to inform future planning. Annotated photographs and observations are kept in the children's individual learning journeys. Reference is made to the aspect of Literacy as well as the child's age and stage.

Children's Literacy skills are assessed using the EYFS and B-Squared EYFS assessment tool on entry to provide a baseline and then each term. This is reported to the Headteacher and data is analysed with regards to progress made at the end of each academic year although information is gathered on trends at the end of each term.

At the end of their reception year, children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals in line with National Regulations.

#### **6. Monitoring Effectiveness**

The coordinator for Literacy at Greenhall is Natalie Hart. She will monitor the effectiveness of the policy together with the Curriculum link Governor. They will then report back to the Headteacher and Local Governing Board.

#### **7. Equal Opportunities**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

*Policy reviewed and approved: November 2022*

Signed.....Date.....  
(Headteacher)

Signed.....Date.....  
(Chair of Governors)