



Early Reading

At Birklands, we follow the Rocket Phonics story-based Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) programme for Reception and Year 1 from Reading Planet. This programme is based on the progression of Letters and Sounds (2007) and provides a rigorous approach that combines engaging stories with in-depth phonics knowledge and skills.

The programme ensures pupils keep up rather than catch up: the steady pace and progression deeply embeds knowledge and skills from the start. Essential literacy skills are developed, whilst igniting a love of reading and consolidating decoding skills by immersing pupils in illustrated stories and a rich variety of fully-decodable fiction and non-fiction.

Rocket Phonics is aligned with the progression of the original Letters and Sounds document (2007). The programme follows the same teaching order of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) but with a steadier pace of two GPCs per week rather than four. The programme follows the cycle outlined below:

1. Review and revisit previously taught sounds.
2. Teach new letter-sound correspondences within the context of stories.
3. Practise reading and writing skills.
4. Apply knowledge and skills through fully-decodable target practice books.
5. Apply and consolidate using additional Rocket Phonics books.

Half-termly Expectations

	NEW grapheme-phoneme correspondences			Common exception words
Reception/P1				
Autumn 1	/s/ as in sun /a/ as in apple /t/ as in tap /i/ as in insect	/p/ as in pan /n/ as in net /m/ as in mouse /d/ as in dog	/g/ as in goat /o/ as in octopus /k/ as in cat /l/ as in kite	I, the, to, go, no, into
Autumn 2	/k/ as in duck /e/ as in elephant /u/ as in umbrella /r/ as in rabbit	/h/ as in hat /b/ as in bat /f/ as in frog and cliff	// as in ladder // as in shell /s/ as in dress Double consonant letters Two-syllable words	
Spring 1	/j/ as in jug /v/ as in van /w/ as in web	/k+s/ as in fox /y/ as in yellow /z/ as in zebra and puzzle	/z/ as in bugs /k+w/ as in queen	he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, her, they, all, are
Spring 2	/ch/ as in chick /sh/ as in sheep /th/ as in thumb and feather /n+g/ as in ring	/ai/ as in train /ee/ as in bee /igh/ as in light	/oa/ as in boat short /oo/ as in book long /oo/ as in moon	
Summer 1	/ar/ as in car /or/ as in fork /ur/ as in purse	/ou/ as in owl /oi/ as in coin /eer/ as in ear	/air/ as in chair /y+oor/ as in manure /uh/ as in hammer	some, one, said, come, do, so, were, when, have, there, out, like, little, what
Summer 2	/w/ as in wheel /ff/ as in dolphin /ail/ as in crayon	/ai/ as in cake /ai/ as in acorn /eel/ as in scene	/ee/ as in shield /ee/ as in peach	

Year 1/P2				
Autumn 1	/igh/ as in child /igh/ as in time /igh/ as in pie /igh/ as in spy	/oa/ as in rope /oa/ as in snow /oa/ as in toe /oa/ as in piano	/ee/ as in happy /ee/ as in key	Consolidation: some, one, said, come, do, so, were, when, have, there, out, like, little, what
Autumn 2	/y+oo/ as in unicorn short /oo/ as in push /y+oo/ as in cube long /oo/ as in flute	/y+oo/ as in statue long /oo/ as in blue /y+oo/ as in news long /oo/ as in screw	/ur/ as in herbs /ur/ as in bird /ou/ as in cloud /oi/ as in toy	oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked, could, water, where
Spring 1	/or/ as in astronaut /or/ as in strawberry /oa/ as in shoulder long /oo/ as in soup short /oo/ as in should	/ar/ as in father and palm /ur/ as in pearl and world /eer/ as in deer and here /air/ as in square, bear and there /or/ as in ball	/or/ as in four /or/ as in core /or/ as in door /or/ as in daughter	who, again, thought, through, many, laughed, because, any, eyes, friends, once, please
Spring 2	/s/ as in celery /j/ as in giraffe /e/ as in bread /s/ as in house	/s/ as in fence /k/ as in school /sh/ as in chef /j/ as in bridge	/j/ as in package /uh/ as in mother	Consolidation: oh, their, people, Mr, Mrs, looked, called, asked, could, water, where who, again, thought, through, many, laughed, because, any, eyes, friends, once, please
Summer 1	/ul/ as in bottle /t/ as in mixed /d/ as in drilled /m/ as in comb	/n/ as in knot /n/ as in sign /r/ as in writing /ch/ as in hatching	/zh/ as in treasure, television, collage	
Summer 2	/ch+u/ as in picture /i/ as in pyramid /s/ as in scissors	/s/ as in whistle /o/ as in watch /sh/ as in station	/sh/ as in musician /sh/ as in percussion	

EYFS and KS1 Reading Books

We have purchased the Rocket Phonics reading books, which are fully aligned with the SSP programme. These are introduced to children when all the GPCs in a colour band have been taught and are used to provide our children with additional reading practice in school and at home.

Nursery	Lilac			
Reception	Lilac Plus	Pink	Red	Yellow
Year 1	Blue	Green	Orange	
Year 2	Turquoise	Purple	Gold	White

Lilac band fully prepares our youngest children for reading by developing essential early language skills through familiar Early Years topics, themes and stories. Fiction and non-fiction books are paired in each strand. Children will have the opportunity to develop vocabulary and communication skills through paired wordless fiction and non-fiction at this stage. These texts will encourage children to retell stories in their own words whilst learning the technical skills of handling and navigating a book. Our early readers will progress to explore the concept of segmenting and blending in the Lilac Plus first words books. This stage bridges the gap between wordless books and first sentences through familiar stories that use very simple decodable words.

Pink – Orange books support the teaching of phonics at Birklands. Each text is fully-decodable and is aligned to the SSP programme. During this stage our children will:

- Practise phonic decoding skills in context through a range of modern and colourful fiction and non-fiction.
- Develop solid comprehension skills through exciting books featuring engaging artwork and photographs.
- Nurture a love of reading through stories and information books that they will genuinely want to read.

During the next stage of their reading journey (Turquoise – White), our children will continue to develop their decoding skills as well as developing their reading fluency and comprehension skills. Books during this stage will:

- Bring curriculum topics to life with exciting character stories linked to history, geography, science and more!
- Tell the story of modern adventures featuring relatable and diverse characters and topics.
- Explore themes such as bravery, teamwork and problem-solving.

Key Stage 2

Reading Books

We have purchased the Reading Planet reading books, which follow on from the scheme used in EYFS and KS1. During KS2, we aim to develop our children into confident, independent readers with 96 books covering Lime to Red+ book bands.

Fiction: Children will read books that capture their imaginations through classic and contemporary illustrated fiction.

Non-fiction: These books aim to spark curiosity and intrigue with fascinating content that supports study across the curriculum and taps into children's interests. Our children will:

- Develop essential non-fiction reading skills; the books are packed with non-fiction text features such as infographics, diagrams, glossaries and captions.
- Widen their knowledge of different non-fiction text types with instruction books, guides and biographies.
- Engage in non-fiction using books that explore modern and relevant topics such as computing, environmental issues and sports.

Year 3	Lime	Brown (Mercury)	Brown (Venus)
Year 4	Grey (Earth)		Grey (Mars)
Year 5	Dark Blue		Blue-Red
Year 6	Blue-Red		Red+

Running Records

To ensure that pupils are allocated a reading book from the correct book band, a running record is carried out to assess reading accuracy, fluency and understanding. These are updated at least once during a half-term.

100 Books to Read Before You Leave...

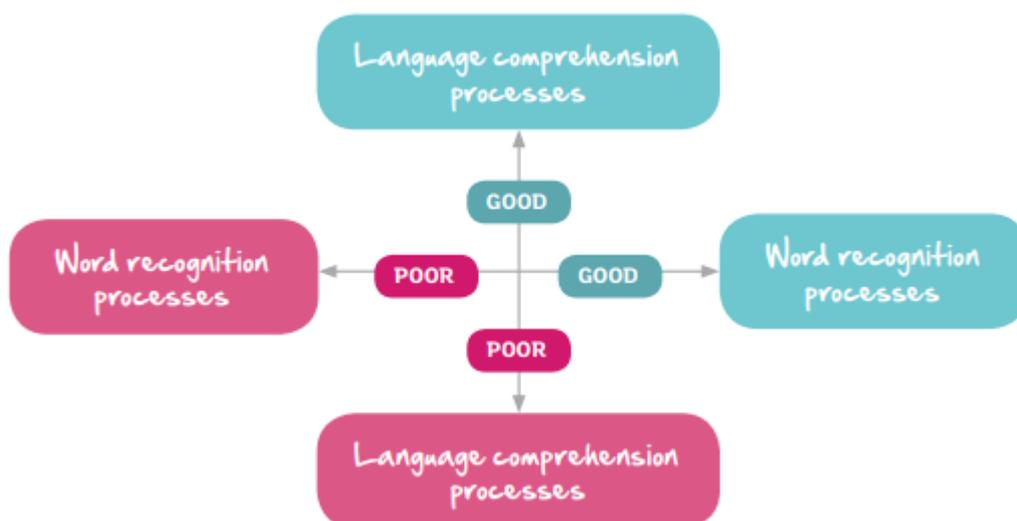
In addition to the colour-banded reading books, each of our four phases in school has a selection of 100 fiction books for children to choose from. Each child is given a booklet displaying their texts, which they can tick off during each two-year period at Birklands. The idea behind this approach is to foster a love of reading and an enjoyment of a wide-range of books. As these books may be above the instructional reading level of some children, we encourage adults to read these texts with them and to benefit from the reading experience together. Certainly, for our more fluent readers and older pupils, this is an opportunity for them to explore an extensive range of authors and genres. These children will be expected to write a recommendation after they have read each book, or to discuss their book in class, which will influence their peers' next book choice and hopefully create a 'buzz' for reading.

Reading Comprehension

Teaching reading beyond the early decoding stages and turning children into committed, avid readers is a top priority for us. There is a shifting emphasis towards the explicit teaching of comprehension at Birklands as decoding skills are established and used with accuracy and fluency.

It is vital to teach comprehension rather than purely testing it. Comprehension is essential to enjoyment; there must be sufficient understanding of a text to make it worth reading on. We recognise that understanding is not automatic: decoding and understanding are different processes and therefore comprehension is not a direct consequence of being able to pronounce a word aloud.

The Simple View of Reading highlights the need to give the curriculum for comprehension the same attention that is given to the teaching of phonics and decoding. We use this to identify the reading needs of individual children and the next steps in terms of teaching approaches and possible intervention.



The FFT Reading Comprehension framework

The FFT Reading Comprehension framework underpins the comprehension practice in our school. This consistent and systematic approach fundamentally equips our pupils with the tools they need to be able to understand the texts they encounter. The framework identifies the themes and major areas of emphasis within the programme of study and organises these under clear headings and areas of focus.

Four essential strategies and skills for reading comprehension:

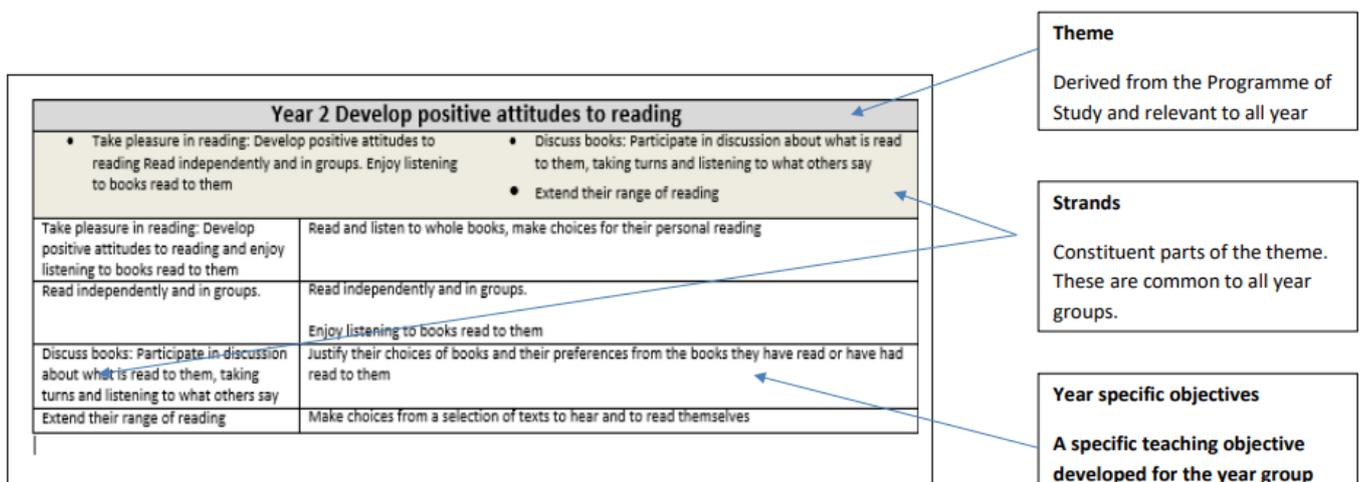
- Develop positive attitudes to reading.
- Understand the vocabulary used in texts.
- Skills and strategies to read for understanding.
- Express, record and present their understanding.

Four key outcomes

- Understanding the whole text.
- Retrieve information from texts.
- Inferential understanding.
- Reading to find out and to learn.

It is important to focus on the teaching of each essential skill. Objectives are clearly identified for each year group and for each strand. In each year, children focus on similar areas of learning, allowing a cumulative development of skill and the establishment of consistent practice. Each of these skills and outcomes is further divided into strands and objectives, providing the basis for a consistent and coherent curriculum.

For example:



The framework also identifies the different comprehension skills and strategies needed to read for understanding. This clearly demonstrates the progressive nature of the teaching requirements for each year group.

For example:

Retrieve information from texts

Progression	
1	Discuss characters' appearance, behaviour and the events that happen to them, using details from the text Find specific information in simple texts they've read or that has been read to them. Find information in a text about an event, character or topic.
2	Identify what is known for certain from the text about characters, places and events in narrative and about different topics in non-fiction. Give reasons why things happen where this is directly explained in the text. Locate information using contents, index, sub headings, page numbers etc. Express and record their understanding of information orally, using simple graphics or in writing.
3	Locate, retrieve and collect information from texts about significant or important elements or aspects (e.g. characters, events, topics). Take information from diagrams, flow charts and forms where it is presented graphically. Express and record their understanding of information orally, using simple graphics or in writing.
4	Identify and discuss key sentences and words in texts which convey important information about characters, places, events, objects or ideas. Pick out key sentences and phrases that convey important information. Take information from diagrams, flow charts and forms where it is presented graphically.
5	Establish what is known about characters, events and ideas in narrative and non-fiction texts, retrieving details and examples from the text to back up their understanding or argument. Locate information confidently and efficiently, using the full range of features of the information text being read, including information presented graphically.
6	Use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas. Identify similarities and differences between characters, places, events, objects and ideas in texts. Retrieve information from texts and evaluate its reliability and usefulness.

Book Journals

Children create book journals - a collection of activities which support their engagement with texts - for each of the core books studied. These provide a range of formats for recording ideas and discussion about important elements of a text, such as the opening, the characters, moments of crisis etc. (in narratives) or the key questions that need to be researched and the information collected (in non-fiction texts). Together the completed activities add up to a significant body of work, which helps bridge the gap between oral understanding and written answers and gives strong evidence of children's developing understanding.

Book journal work:

- *Develops understanding*

Engages children with texts in lively, interesting ways through a range of interesting activities.

Builds comprehension and hence enjoyment.

Slows down the readers in ways which build interest and engagement.

Makes text analysis a way of enriching reading.

- *Develops comprehension skills*

Develops comprehension skills rather than continually testing what children do not know.

Can be adapted to give experience of comprehension question/answer formats.

Enables a focus on core response/comprehension activities, which can be supplemented by text appropriate work.

- *Supports the teaching of comprehension*

Gives a focus for teaching and modelling.

Leads into independent work.

Is easily differentiated and links into and from guided reading.

Provides starting points for discussion and follow up.

Provides a record of reading work.

Builds into a collection of worthwhile tasks and reading outcomes.

Develops a consistent approach to texts, year on year, building children's skills and understanding.

Links to reading across the curriculum.

Literacy Spine

Core texts for each year group have been carefully selected to support the teaching of each curriculum theme throughout the year. These form our school's Literacy Spine. This is revisited regularly to reflect topic changes, feedback and the publication of new literature.

Book Corners

Our book corners include a mixture of familiar and unfamiliar texts from both fiction and non-fiction. These books are chosen and refreshed regularly to maintain engagement.

Vocabulary

We build and extend children's vocabularies through text-based work. Equally, we recognise the need to equip our pupils with skills and strategies for making a 'best guess' at unfamiliar vocabulary, learning to locate meanings where these are given, and infer meanings where the author expects understanding. Vocabulary is explicitly taught each day to build up word familiarity. This teaching takes on various formats, including our daily Word of the Day activity. We highlight and discuss new words when reading with children and dedicate time across the school week and in different subjects to use and reinforce unfamiliar vocabulary. All classes have a word wall to highlight new and key vocabulary. Dictionary use is a routine part of lessons (Key Stage 2) and children are taught to use these to make sense of what they have read without disrupting the flow of reading.

Reading Across the Curriculum

Listening to, reading and discussing information books and non-fiction establishes the foundations of learning in other subjects. Our children are taught that in real life, we read non-fiction texts because they are useful, because they are fun or because we want to learn something.

Other aspects of reading are developed when reading across the curriculum, for example:

Follow instructions

Rise to a challenge

Enter a competition

Build a model

Answer a quiz

Play a game
Set problems
Give a role
Use source material
Conduct research
Extend understanding
Cross reference information

Our children are taught to recognise that reading is at the heart of everything that we do and that proficiency in this area opens the doors to a lifetime of opportunities.