

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



School Context

At Nancealverne School, our curriculum is designed around four distinct pathways — Engagement, Exploration, Discovery, and Investigate — each personalised to meet the diverse and complex needs of our pupils aged 3-19 with moderate to complex learning difficulties. These pathways are adapted from trust-wide frameworks to reflect our unique context as a special maintained school operating across three sites, including a SEMH primary provision and a satellite site, Cury School.

Our curriculum rationale is grounded in the principles of personalisation, inclusivity, and high aspiration, ensuring that every pupil's learning journey is tailored to their individual needs, interests, and passions while maintaining alignment with the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum as a flexible vehicle, ensuring equality of opportunity in subject access while adapting content, pace, and delivery to suit each pathway's focus and pupil profile.

Intent

At Nancealverne School, we value reading as a key life-skill and are dedicated to enabling our pupils to become lifelong, confident readers. We believe reading is key for all academic success and know that using a strong systematic synthetic phonics program will support every one of our pupils to become confident and fluent readers. We believe that phonics provides the foundations of learning to enable every child to effectively learn to read. We want all pupils to begin their journey to read with confidence, develop a love of reading and apply their skills competently to writing.

Reading is at the heart of everything we do. Our curriculum is book driven and we fuel an absolute 'Love of Reading' across the school. We aim to support all learners to become the very best independent readers they can possibly be and have multiple cross curricular reading opportunities daily. To achieve this, we offer rightly pitched reading sessions such as phonics, guided reading and functional reading.

Children begin their reading journey with a focus on sound discrimination, understanding patterns and developing oral skills whilst developing their skills to attend and learn. Progress learning to read is made through systematic phonics teaching and includes learning high frequency words, whole words & precision teach, functional reading activities, guided reading, fluency and comprehension. We aim to prepare our pupils for life outside of Nancealverne as they progress through the school, developing their independence skills, life skills and functional reading to enable them to access as much of the written wider world as possible independently. This may include the introduction of social sight and functional vocabulary recognition where appropriate.

We are committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of their individual needs, can become confident and capable readers. Our intent is to provide a structured, inclusive, and accessible approach to learn to read. We teach children to read through phonics instruction, tailored to meet the diverse learning needs of our learners. We achieve this using the Twinkl Phonics Program, a comprehensive, evidence-based resource designed to support pupils at all stages of their reading development.

We aim to:

- Provide a structured, systematic approach to phonics that is flexible and adaptable to meet the varying needs of all our pupils.
- Offer explicit and multisensory teaching methods that engage all learners, ensuring that each student can make progress in their reading skills.

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



- Foster a love for reading by creating an inclusive and supportive environment where every pupil feels motivated and confident to learn.
- Ensure that phonics is taught consistently, with frequent opportunities for revision, reinforcement, and application in a variety of contexts.
- Work collaboratively with parents, caregivers, and outside specialists to provide the best possible support for our students.

By focusing on phonics as the foundation for learning to read, we aim to close the gap in literacy achievement for SEND learners and help them become independent, lifelong readers.

Implementation

To implement phonics instruction effectively for pupils, we use the Twinkl Phonics Program to ensure that all learners receive a high-quality, individualised education that is aligned with their unique needs and abilities. The program's systematic approach, which is supported by multisensory resources, is adapted for the range of learning styles and needs of our pupils

Key strategies for our implementation include:

1. **Differentiation:** We tailor the Twinkl Phonics Program to the specific needs of our students, ensuring that lessons are accessible and challenging at the appropriate level. This includes providing additional resources, scaffolding, communication resources and breaking down tasks into smaller steps to support individual progress. Where appropriate for learners with sensory impairment, who use AAC or require other adaptations to their curriculum, we supplement this with whole sight recognition strategies.
2. **Consistent approach:** We are a Twinkl phonics trained school- and the scheme has been embedded with whole school INSET CPD training, new staff training and staff top up training videos, workshops and meetings. We have also invested in Rhino Reader books to enhance the offer with accessible and engaging new materials which align to their phonics level. Every class has phase flash cards for their phonics sessions and all classes have a Twinkl login to access the scheme, e-books and resources.
3. **Multisensory Learning:** Staff incorporate visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic methods to ensure learning is accessible for all learners. This includes the use of Twinkl's interactive resources, flashcards, songs, and physical activities to reinforce phonetic concepts.
4. **Small Group/1:1 Support:** Many of our pupils receive targeted 1-2-1 individualised teaching for their reading or phonics, but some are in small-group sessions. Each session is structured to provide focused phonics or progressive reading skills at a pace that suits each child's progress. The teaching is carefully matched to the learner's developmental level.
5. **Additional practice:** Pupils that are identified as requiring further support are identified to receive further phonics and reading intervention. These can be groups to target gaps or to stretch and challenge our most able students. Interventions run on a 6-week block to help to move them on and make targeted progress.
6. **Reading Books Matched to the phonics program and individual stage of development:** Pupils who are accessing the phonics program use matching Twinkl Rhino Readers books which ensure they only read books matched to the sounds they know. Teachers can assign students to the appropriate book level based on their current reading level and access resources and activities linked to the reader on the Twinkl website or access the eReader version of the text they are reading. There are opportunities for the children to read both at school and at

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



home with reading books and reading journals sent home to reinforce the sounds learnt at school where applicable. Log-ins for Rhino Readers are available for children to access further reading at home. This also encourages multiple reading of the texts to enhance fluency and confidence.

7. **Motivation and enjoyment:** We also use apps to support enjoyment, development and engagement of reading such as 'Reading Eggs' and 'Teach your monster to read' which have worked as a brilliant bridging tool and helped to improve the progress of our KS1,2 & 3 classes in an engaging and motivated way that really appeals to our learners. Reading Apps sessions are also used in timetabled reading sessions allowing that online access for students who prefer it. These apps have access to over 5000 e-books which are aligned to their phonics and reading levels and the student's login can even be accessed at home.

8. **Progress Monitoring and Assessment:** Regular formative assessments using Phonics assessment trackers and ongoing observations help track the progress of our students on the phonics program. Learners are assessed each term to ensure any barriers to progress are addressed and that they are assigned to the correct compatible group and stage of the program. Adjustments will be made to ensure that each pupil's phonics skills are developing effectively and in accordance with their learning profile. For our pupils who have progressed past the Twinkl program, we use B-Squared to assess our students progress against the 3 frameworks which best suits the individual pathways of our students. We also work towards accreditation in KS5 using ASDAN and Edexcel Entry Level qualifications.

9. **Collaboration with External Agencies:** Where necessary, we will collaborate with speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, hearing and sight impairment teams and other specialists to ensure that the phonics program and reading lessons are adapted appropriately to meet the needs of our individual learners.

10. **Parental Involvement:** Engaging parents in the phonics learning process and our reading strategies through home learning resources and communication.

11. **High priority regular daily teaching:** Throughout the primary school and KS3 classes we deliver phonics and reading sessions 4 times a week. KS4 & 5 have a reading session each morning linked to guided reading, SPAG, comprehension or functional reading. We also time-table daily reading sessions across the school for students to read their matched level readers and access a high interest text each day.

12. **Commitment to staff training and development:** We ensure that our phonics training is successful by implementing whole school training and CPD at staff INSETs, staff meetings and training materials in new staff transition packs to guarantee confidence and consistency with delivery.



By the end of KS3 if our learners have not progressed from Phase 2/3 of the phonics programme or earlier where applicable then the focus for reading becomes the development of social and functional sight vocabulary through functional English activities. If a more personalised approach is recognised earlier as being a more effective strategy due to the student's individual needs, then it is introduced and delivered alongside the phonics sessions in class. This may include whole word recognition, and the use of AAC/Visuals and sensory based activities to support the learners who are non-verbal or have sensory impairments. We also work closely with our SITT team to identify interventions to support this. In KS4 & 5 we move to more functional reading to align to their accredited pathways and to help our students prepare for adulthood and keep them safe in community.

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



Pathways Phonics

Reading and Phonics Pathways:

Engagement	Explore	Discover	Investigate
<p>Type of Reader: <i>Pre-reader / early communicator developing attention to sound, meaning, and print through sensory and supported experiences.</i></p>	<p>Type of Reader: <i>Emerging reader exploring sounds, symbols, and early phonics with structured support.</i></p>	<p>Type of Reader: <i>Developing reader applying phonics knowledge and decoding strategies with increasing independence.</i></p>	<p>Type of Reader: <i>Independent or near-independent reader using phonics and reading strategies flexibly across contexts.</i></p>
Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
<p>Engage with stories, rhymes, songs, and environmental sounds</p> <p>Respond to sound, rhythm, and repeated language</p> <p>Experience books and print through shared, sensory interaction</p>	<p>Explore phonemes through listening and play</p> <p>Match sounds to letters and symbols</p> <p>Blend and segment orally with support</p>	<p>Recognise phonics patterns (CVC, digraphs, vowel teams)</p> <p>Read sentences and short decodable texts</p> <p>Begin to read for meaning</p>	<p>Decode unfamiliar words independently</p> <p>Self-correct and explain reading strategies</p> <p>Apply reading skills across subjects</p>
Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
<p>Sustain attention to familiar texts and sounds</p> <p>Respond to key words, symbols, and auditory cues</p> <p>Make choices and express preferences linked to texts</p>	<p>Apply early phonics to decode familiar words</p> <p>Read short, supported texts with visual prompts</p> <p>Develop confidence and reading stamina</p>	<p>Read paragraphs with accuracy and fluency</p> <p>Apply spelling rules and decoding strategies</p> <p>Develop comprehension of age-appropriate texts</p>	<p>Read for meaning, purpose, and inference</p> <p>Compare texts and vocabulary choices</p> <p>Read to learn across the curriculum</p>
Post-14 (Functional Reading)	Post-14 (Functional Reading)	Post-14 (Functional Reading)	Post-14 (Functional Reading)
<p>Recognise symbols, logos, and familiar words in real-life contexts</p>	<p>Recognise and read familiar functional words</p> <p>Use phonics strategies with guidance</p>	<p>Read and understand short functional texts</p> <p>Apply decoding strategies to unfamiliar vocabulary</p>	<p>Read and interpret real-world documents</p> <p>Compare and evaluate information from different sources</p>

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



<p>Respond to signs, routines, and simple written information</p> <p>Use reading to support communication and independence</p> <p><i>Progression to: ASDAN Communication & Personal Development</i></p>	<p>Access short functional texts (labels, signs, instructions)</p> <p><i>Progression to: ASDAN Literacy for Life Entry Level 1 (secure)</i></p>	<p>Use reading to follow instructions and gather information</p> <p><i>Progression to: ASDAN Preparation for Independence Entry Level 2 (secure)</i></p>	<p>Use reading to support work, training, and independent living</p> <p><i>Progression to: ASDAN Employability & Independent Living Entry Level 3</i></p>
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Progression across school

In ACORN, APPLE & CHERRIES CLASSES – Early Years and Year 1

We aim to encourage our children to access a broad range of knowledge and skills outlined within the early learning goals (EYFS Framework), providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in word reading using phonics, retrieving information, deducing and inferring (why and how questions), begin to use and talk about language for effect and beginning to identify themes and conventions. Effective teaching and learning will include playing and exploring (children investigating and experiencing and having a go; active learning (improving concentration and resilience if they encounter difficulties and creating and thinking critically (developing their own ideas, making links between ideas and developing strategies).

Learning is informal in nature and pupils are taught through planned purposeful play and a mix of adult led and child-initiated activities. The aim is to provide a secure foundation for the move to the next stage in pupils' learning.

Teaching will focus on supporting pupils to work towards the Early Learning Goals:

- I am building my phonetic knowledge.
- I am beginning to use my phonetic knowledge to decode regular words.
- I am beginning to spot and read regular words out loud.
- I am beginning to spot and read some common exception words
- I am demonstrating understanding when talking to others about what I have read.
- I can answer 'How' and 'Why' questions in response to stories.
- I can join in and continue a rhyming string.
- I am listening carefully to stories.
- I can anticipate key events and respond with comments, questions or actions.

CHESTNUT CLASS (LKS2) – Ready to Learn cohort- Linked provision of Formal and Non-formal

Our aim is to continue to progress from the students' start-points in early years, developing skills in reading and their early learning goals. Expectations are high with Phonics and English sessions timetabled daily in a gradual approach, where children can enjoy a range of text types through a book driven topic and taught through cross curricular subjects. Learning is interactive and purposeful and learning is rotated to

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



improve engagement and focus to stretch and challenge our learners and start to prepare them for KS2 but is delivered in an activity-based learning environment of continuous provision of fun, active and engaging tasks.

- Begin to recognise some whole words – without segmenting or sounding out parts.
- identify key events or ideas in a text.
- answer straightforward questions about a story or character.
- express simple opinions and simple predictions about a character or event.
- appreciate and recognise patterns, repetition and rhyme.
- become familiar with key stories and story types and their core characteristics.
- begin to relate stories to real life or personal experience.
- develop understanding of key vocabulary linked to a text or text type.

IN JUNIPER CLASS (UKS2), our principal focus of teaching reading is to enable pupils to:

Continue to progress from their endpoints in KS1 and LKS2, developing their reading, writing and speaking and listening. Reading and English teaching is more formal to help to begin to prepare the children for Key-stage 3. Expectations are high with daily phonics and reading sessions timetabled and a continued focus on maximizing reading practice in learning opportunities across the day. Functional reading skills are now being embedded with lots of non-fiction and cross curricular tasks and texts used with opportunities to begin to put these skills in practice through role-play, writing tasks and community visits. Routine is now more embedded with daily reading slots, library visits and established targeted phonics groups. Teaching uses an aspiration book to hinge a topic on and involves a range of reading and writing tasks, but also plenty of opportunities for students to be creative through drama, arts & crafts, music and story retelling to further learning. Teaching and learning is flexible and multi-sensory, the class team are passionate to promote immersive learning with their interactive props, story boxes, displays, sensory stories and mini-worlds to further understanding and promote the practice of reading skills with a real focus on pupil interests whilst encouraging fun, stretch and challenge.

Teaching will focus on supporting pupils to:

- continue to consolidate their skills achieved within Key Stage 1 and Lower KS2.
- become increasingly fluent with letters, sounds or whole words practiced in Key Stage 1 reading and phonics.
- extend understanding of reading strategies to decode and establish meaning.
- actively participate in structured and timetabled reading and English lessons
- develop their ability to discuss reasons for events and characters actions.
- scan a range of text types to find a particular section- especially non-fiction texts to begin to use our more functional reading skills to gather information.
- enjoy a range of more aspirational texts with introductions to Dickens, Shakespeare and some poetry linked to topics.
- begin to search and find evidence and clues from the text to back up their opinion or answer.
- extend their ability to explain and try to remember what has happened so far.
- make connections between texts, books and characters.
- develop a habit of reading widely and often for enjoyment and information.
- show greater precision and fluency in their work.
- continue to focus on developing understanding, reading using and spelling of key vocabulary linked to the context or content of the book and topic in study.

In PALM CLASS (LKS3) AND ELM CLASS (UKS3) our principal focus of teaching reading is to enable pupils to:

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



Consolidate the skills developed in KS2 and to extend learning further, again through a cross curricular approach but with very clear subject based sessions. Learning is primarily formal in nature, although flexible enough to allow sensory learners access to stimulating practical resources and shorter bursts of learning with regular sensory breaks. Teaching is both maximized across the day and within focused reading and writing sessions, and skills are utilised and developed across the curriculum in a functional way, e.g. through using holiday leaflets in a geography session or designing a menu or writing a recipe for cooking. Learning is increasingly focused on functional skills and increased independence, incorporating classroom, school-based and community activities, and prepares students increasingly for KS4 and life beyond school whilst practicing skills towards accreditation.

Teaching will focus on supporting pupils to:

- continue to consolidate skills achieved within Key Stage 2
- to become increasingly fluent and confident with the letters- sounds and words learnt in previous key-stages with many reading more age and interest relevant books.
- develop an understanding of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, including in particular whole books, short stories, poems and plays with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, forms and authors.
- develop an understanding for increasingly more challenging texts through learning new vocab, referring to evidence in the text, and knowing the purpose of a piece of writing.
- continue to develop functional reading skills such as beginning to use a dictionary, reading a train timetable, finding the prices on a menu.
- developing an understanding that vocabulary choice, grammar, text structure and organisational features, presents meaning.
- compare a range of texts and identify common characteristics, language techniques or conventions.

In ASPEN (KS4) AND OAK (KS5) our principal focus of teaching reading is to enable pupils to:

Consolidate and extend the skills developed in KS3 and develop functional reading and communication skills that will enable them to progress through different pathways towards growing independence and life beyond school.

Building upon the reading and communication work previously delivered, students within KS4 and Post 16 will study functional reading, focusing on opportunities to apply and use these skills in increasingly wider contexts within the broad areas of pathways of accreditation. Our aim at Nancealverne is that every child will leave KS5 with accreditations which provide our students with the best skills & abilities they need to make to take an active and responsible role in their communities, everyday life, the workplace & educational setting, encouraging them to be effective and involved as citizens, preparing them well for their next steps in life. Such skills will encourage and enable them to operate with greater confidence in life, using their vital reading and communication skills with greater effect, increasing their ability to understand & make sense of information and to use & process that information in a meaningful way.

Pupils work towards either ASDAN Accreditations, or EDEXCEL Entry 1,2 & 3 levels. The curriculum is driven by functional skills- Practical Real-Life Situations and further preparation for Life out of School.

Within KS4 and 5 students have daily reading sessions working individually, in small targets groups or as a whole class students access guided reading, comprehension, SPAG and functional reading activities. Also, students have work related opportunities working on real-life projects, utilising key skills. In Post 16, students again have daily individual skills sessions (linked to current topics in literacy) and Post 14 &16 students have timetabled focused English lessons at least 3 times a week. In addition, running through the curriculum are work related learning and enterprise opportunities, community-based shopping and travel activities plus independent living

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



skills and library visits which all encompass many of the functional reading and communication skills allowing students to really master and put them into real practise.

CLASSES OFFERING SPECIALIST PROVISION: Pre-formal curriculum

Within the school we also have additional learning bases that cut across year groups and offer specialist provision. These classes alongside Sycamore also follow a Topic and Book Driven' curriculum which covers a broad range of exciting topics and have hinged their lessons and cross curricular tasks on really aspirational texts.

OLIVES & MAPLE CLASS (Olives- EYFS and Primary, Maple- Secondary -KS3,4,5):

Pupils in Olive and Maple class have high health needs and always need close support. Pupils are primarily on the Learning to Learn Pathway and taught holistically through termly topics. Within this structure, Reading and Literacy learning is very much embedded into routines throughout the day - whether it be sequencing in sensory awakening, story massage, matching symbols, following instructions in cooking lessons and DT lessons, or memory-based tasks and songs etc. These classes have a daily reading/phonics inspired lesson (a more functional reading and age-appropriate approach in Maple) and access reading across their curriculum. These sessions are short discrete literacy sessions incorporating reading and communication games/activities and story-telling related to topic-based work are also offered daily.

SYCAMORE CLASS KS1 - - Pre and semi-formal Learning Pathway- Focus on engagement:

Our aim is to Continue to progress from their start-points in early years, developing skills in reading and their early learning goals.

English and literacy in KS1 is taught in discrete sessions daily, through a book driven topic and taught through cross curricular subjects and text types. Learning continues to be informal to meet and follow the non-formal pathway. There is a real emphasis on sensory activities, practical tasks, purposeful play and interactive games/activities to build fluency and develop key skills. Teaching and learning is based around a highly differentiated National Curriculum and is flexible to enable progression from individual start points, but also to ensure appropriate challenge. Opportunities for reading are maximised across the day.

Teaching will focus on supporting pupils to:

- Continue to develop phonetic knowledge – level 1 sound discrimination but also starting to recognise and use some Level 2 sounds.
- Possibly beginning to segment and sound out word parts
- appreciate and recognise patterns, repetition and rhyme.
- become familiar with key stories and their core characteristics

WILLOW CLASS (KS2-4): Bridging to learn with a focus of preparing for adulthood:

Pupils in Willows Class have diagnoses of ASD and need a much more personalised, highly structured, multi-sensory learning environment and journey with 1:1 support. Pupils access reading and phonics sessions daily, but benefit from a more holistic approach to learning supplemented with short, interactive, practical communication sessions focused on games, rhymes and role-play, in addition to a semi-formal curriculum which is loaded with immersive learning, sensory stories & songs, mini-worlds, work stations, memory games, motor skills practice and sequencing and matching activities. The introduction of colourful semantics allows more structured reading and writing sessions to take place daily also.

Rationale for Reading and Phonics

Nancealverne



The implementation of the Twinkl Phonics Program and structured reading provision at Nancealverne is having a positive impact on the reading skills and reading development of all our pupils.

Our evidence shows that:

- **Pupils have Increased Confidence:** students demonstrate greater confidence in their ability to decode and recognise words, leading to improved engagement in reading activities. They further develop confidence through building their skills of fluency and comprehension.
- **Pupils develop Improved Phonics Skills:** Pupils learn to blend and segment sounds, resulting in increased reading fluency. Regular assessment data of children on the phonics program show that pupils are progressing at a pace that reflects their individual needs. Assessments identify gaps and ensure teaching is at the correct stage each pupil requires.
- **Pupils develop enhanced Reading Enjoyment:** The multisensory approach of the Twinkl Phonics Program , engaging reading lessons and the various events and activities embedded into our daily provision have fostered a positive attitude toward reading with all staff and pupils. Learners across school show a greater enthusiasm for reading books and exploring texts independently.
- **We foster an inclusive Learning Environment where every child makes progress:** The differentiated and supportive nature of our phonics and reading lesson instruction ensures that every child, regardless of their SEND or learning pathway, feel included in the learning process.
- **Sustained Progress:** Our students are making steady progress towards their individual reading goals. We are confident that these gains will continue as we maintain a consistent, individualised approach to phonics and reading teaching. Comparing the data to the autumn baseline, students are making progress by advancing along the phases and successfully achieving set sounds, blending, segmenting and accessing tricky words they previously could not when they started.

The fantastic range of resources, cycle and structure of lessons, phase progress assessments and consistent monitoring by the Lead has raised the profile of reading and phonics and ensures that it continues to be an absolute priority for all our learners.

