Tachbrook Nursery School
Reading Policy

'Happy, Healthy & High Expectations'

Reviewed: September 2024

Reading Policy

Introduction
At Tachbrook Nursery, we recognise the critical role that literacy plays in a child's overall development and future success. This policy outlines our commitment to providing a supportive environment that fosters literacy skills, promotes a love for reading, and nurtures language acquisition. By implementing this policy, we aim to equip each child with the necessary tools and opportunities to become confident readers and lifelong learners.

Aims:

1. Literacy-Rich Environment:
a. We will create an environment that is rich in literacy experiences, with accessible and engaging print materials, books, and resources that reflect diverse cultures, interests, and abilities.
b. We will establish inviting reading areas, well-stocked libraries, and literacy-focused displays to promote a love for reading and encourage children to explore written language.

2. Language Development:
a. We will foster language development by providing a language-rich environment and encouraging children to engage in conversations, storytelling, and discussions.
b. We will promote vocabulary expansion, sentence structure, and comprehension skills through a range of language-based activities and experiences.

3. Phonological Awareness:
a. We will introduce early phonological awareness activities to support children in understanding the sounds and letter-sound relationships in language.
b. We will provide opportunities for children to explore rhyming, letter sounds, and beginning phonics skills through interactive games, songs, and a range of activities.

4. Reading Experiences:
a. We will provide a diverse selection of high-quality books, including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, to cater to children's interests, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.
b. We will create opportunities for children to engage in shared reading experiences, independent reading, and discussions to develop their reading comprehension, fluency, and love for books.

5. Parent and Family Engagement:
a. We will actively involve parents and families in supporting their child's literacy development through regular communication, workshops, and resources.
b. We will provide strategies and suggestions for parents to create literacy-rich environments at home, engage in shared reading experiences, and support language development.

7. Staff Training and Development:

a. We will provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance their knowledge of effective literacy instruction in early years.

b. We will encourage staff members to model a love for reading, use evidence-based instructional strategies, and create engaging literacy activities that cater to children's individual needs and interests.

Our Reading Ethos at Tachbrook

Teaching the early skills of reading and writing is one of the most important things we can do for our children at Tachbrook. Not only because a child who learns to read has the opportunity to enjoy a lifetime of reading, but also because a child who doesn't learn to read is missing a vital tool to negotiate their way through life.

Being able to read is a crucial skill, closely bound up with other aspects of language development, speaking, listening, and writing. It allows us to find out information that is encoded in writing. (E.g. how to read a map, read a sign when queuing in the supermarket, reading information to fill out a form at the GP.)

We set enormous importance on developing children's love of reading; their knowledge of the wide range and purpose of books and other written materials; their development as thinking readers - critics able to compare stories and express preferences.

Children will be starting nursery with varying experiences of books and literacy. Some will have homes full of books of all types where all family members read regularly. They will be used to going to the library and looking at books with parents, carers, older siblings, other relatives. They will have positive feelings towards books and will already have favourite characters and tales. They will enjoy looking at books on their own, working out meaning from illustrations. One or two occasionally may even be reading. Other children will have had less rich early experiences.

One of our most important tasks is to develop children's love of and interest in books. For some this will be building on an already rich and ongoing involvement with books; for others nursery will be the starting place for that.

How we teach Literacy development

Children's learning is linked to our curriculum progression map. This maps out progress children should make during their time at Tachbrook. Half termly learning objectives are linked to individual learning activities which all children are able to access.

BECOMING A READER

Reading is comprised of two skills;

- **Comprehension** (how children make sense of words and language that they hear).

- **Decoding** (word reading - using phonic knowledge and familiar words).

Children need to be able to do **BOTH** to be good readers.

Comprehension is understanding what you hear. To be able to understand what you hear you need exposure to a rich language and vocabulary. A rich language and vocabulary is developed through interactions with others, through listening and speaking.

Comprehension is developed through listening and talking about stories, learning poems and songs and high-quality interactions (dialogue) with adults about things we are interested such as snails or hoovers. The greater emphasis on adults talking to children (rather than sitting and writing observations) aims to support children to increase their vocabulary, language and comprehension skills, which in turn, supports their reading skills. Adults using/ modelling new words for children and asking them "Do you know what that word means?" is hugely motivating for young children. E.g. "I think the squirrels in the garden are very mischievous… do you know what mischievous means?"

At Tachbrook we support reading **comprehension** through -

- **Listening to and talking about stories**: Reading aloud to children and talking with them about what they hear. Stories are a rich source of language, vocabulary and syntax. Children encounter vocabulary that they are unlikely to hear in everyday conversation e.g. bellowed, startled etc. We read Big Books and Picture Books at Story Time and during the session.
- **Opportunities to 'Live the Story'**: That is: repeat listening, acting out and retelling of the same story.
- **Using non-fiction books:** to develop and extend children's language related to topics of interest. The ELG, the Natural World refers explicitly to children 'drawing on their experiences of what has been read in class'.
- **Listening and talking to peers:** Supporting children to develop excellent listening skills and to listen to each other speak – at Circle Time and during focused activities.
- **Book Corner:** High quality books reflecting children's interests and developing knowledge and skills.
- **Reading at home**: Library books are changed every Friday. Children have the opportunity to read with an adult 1-1 and to be supported in learning reading skills such as correspondence, directionality and letter-sound correspondence. Children's progress in reading is tracked in their reading record.
- **Learning and reciting poems and songs:** We have core songs and ring games and sing regularly with Steve and Natasha.
- **Reading familiar words and logos:** through environmental print such as labels, recipe cards, manuals and writing frames.

Decoding (word reading) refers to reading unfamiliar words by saying the sounds that correspond to letters in the words and then blending them together AND/OR reading familiar words accurately and silently – no longer saying the sounds consciously. The DFE suggest that decoding (and encoding – word writing) should be taught through a Systematic Synthetic Phonics System. They suggest children begin this in Reception.

KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, SKILLS & ATTITUDES

Learning to read is a very complex activity that takes place over a period of time. Children need to learn lots of things before they become fluent readers; reading is about much more than the technical skills involved in decoding a piece of writing.

At Tachbrook we aim for each child to develop the following:

KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

- Of a wide range of books, fiction, and non-fiction.
- That print conveys meaning - that it is speech written down.
- That the text remains the same on each re-reading.
- That language is made of separate words.
- That words are made up of letters.
- Of the names of the letters of the alphabet.
- Of the symbolic nature of the alphabet - letters stand for sounds.
- Of the conventions of English writing system - reading from left to right, from top to bottom.
- That books are written and illustrated by people.
- Of the structure of stories - beginning, middle and end.
- Of the conventions of book language - once upon a time, use of past tense, adverbs etc.
- Of wide vocabulary and semantic sense so that sensible guesses can be made about what is coming next.
- How to use books for reference - finding things out, following instructions e.g. recipe cards & instruction manuals. Knowing that the index guides us through a book.

SKILLS

We want each child to be able to:

- Listen to stories.
- Retell and reinterpret stories.
- Invent stories.
- Distinguish between print and picture.
- Talk about their favourite books.
- Recognise some letters and words by sight and sound.
- Read illustrations ("what is happening in the picture?").
- Handle books carefully (hold the book the right way up, turn pages in the right direction).

ATTITUDES

We want each child to have:

- A love of books and story.
- Confidence in themselves as emerging readers.
- The ability to talk about how a book makes us feel. (Did we like it? If not, why not?).

How we promote reading development

PROVISION & ORGANISATION

The materials we provide, the way we organise our spaces, the nursery day and the children will all have a huge impact on how successfully we carry out our aims.

We need to ensure that books are not only *displayed* throughout the nursery, both inside and outside, but also are *used* by adults and children.

- The book corner in the yellow room provides the main focus for fiction. The selection available here should be changed regularly. We must make sure that a range of stories is always available - traditional, simple, complex, from a range of cultures, dual text, picture only etc. This area should be inviting and comfortable for children to enjoy looking at books on their own, with a friend, in small groups and with an adult throughout the session.

- We provide a variety of story bags, props: cut-outs and photos, puppets and artefacts to encourage children to retell and invent stories.

- Each area of the nursery has a collection of relevant books for use during play and investigations. The selections available need to be changed regularly from the main stock of books in the staffroom. They should be displayed attractively in baskets or boxes appropriately labelled. A supply of labels is kept in the staffroom so that boxes of books can be got together for specific purposes e.g., books about babies, or books about farms or transport.

- We need to ensure we keep an attractive and wide range of books available. Spending on books will always be a very high priority when the budget is set. When books are chosen, we must look for ones that portray positive images of women, people with disabilities, different ethnic groups and family circumstances: that reflect children's own backgrounds and experiences; that present new and unknown worlds; that fire the imagination; that offer new vocabulary; that have depths and levels of meaning in the illustrations; that cater to a range of developmental levels; and that cover all areas of the curriculum.

- School Library- Children may borrow books with a red/orange sticker. Children can choose a book to take home every Friday. Parents can also choose and borrow books with their children. We check that all parents know how the system works when they settle children in.

- The youngest children do not benefit from being part of a large group for story at the end of the session. Therefore, we offer need-based groups. Younger children who have

no experience of being in a group and limited experience of looking at books benefit from a daily session in a small group using interesting activities to develop shared attention. Our most experienced and able readers have a daily story that is longer and more challenging with a wider vocabulary.

- Group times at the end of sessions are used in different ways throughout the week to ensure a range of literary experiences for all children:

  - Monday - poetry and rhyme.
  - Tuesdays - Core Books and Sound Bags (supporting phonemic awareness).
  - Wednesdays - Circle Time (discussing emotions, behaviours, and feelings).
  - Thursdays - Maths stories and number rhymes.
  - Fridays- Stories. These can be either our core books or fiction or non-fiction books based on the interests of the children or seasonal themes.

From time to time we feature individual authors for a couple of weeks. A collection of all the books by the Ahlbergs, for example, would be put in a labelled box and read at both story time and throughout the session.

- We have a list of core books. These are books that children should know very well by the time they leave us. These books especially promote reading through repetition, rhythm, pattern, strong story structures and have high-quality illustrations. These books have corresponding story bags and are hung up at the end of the corridor.

- In the graphics area the alphabet is displayed in both upper and lower case. Alphabet books and examples of different scripts are also displayed there.

Music, Song and Rhyme

We use a combination of music, song and rhyme to help develop children's ability to listen, hear and discriminate sounds. To hear and follow, rhyme, beat and rhythm. To learn about story structures and develop a wide and rich vocabulary.

Teaching Phonological Awareness

Learning rhymes, poems and songs such as traditional nursery rhymes heighten children's awareness of the individual sounds within language and words. The ability to attend to and identify the individual sounds within language is referred to as phonological awareness. This is a foundational skill in learning to read and one that supports children to be able to distinguish phonemes in spoken words and to link them to graphemes when they learn phonics in Reception.

At Tachbrook nursery we teach phonological awareness through developing awareness of sounds in a multitude of situations and contexts. We regularly sing with the children and teach them new songs; we read and recite many poems and nursery rhymes; we promote

and support the development of playing with sounds, encouraging children to notice and make rhymes, to become aware of internal rhymes and words that start with the same phoneme. Some of these activities take place in groups and are adult-initiated e.g., singing sessions and story time 'Sound Bags'. Most will take place in play as adults respond to individual opportunities that arise. When teaching phonological awareness, we will teach children to do the following:

Discriminate Environmental sounds by:
Developing listening skills and awareness of sounds in the environment.
Identifying and remember the differences between sounds.
Talking about sounds in greater detail.

Discriminate Instrumental sounds by:
Developing awareness of sounds made with instruments.
Listening to and appreciating the difference between sounds made with instruments.
Use a wide vocabulary to talk about the sounds of instruments.

Use Body percussion to:
Develop awareness of sounds and rhythms.
Distinguish between sounds and remember patterns of sound.
Talk about sounds we make with our bodies and what the sounds mean.

Submerge ourselves in rhythm & rhyme:
Experience and appreciate rhythm and rhyme through stories, songs, rhymes and poems.
Develop awareness of rhythm and rhyme in speech.
Increase awareness of words that rhyme and develop knowledge about rhyme.
Talk about words that rhyme and produce rhyming word.
Develop awareness of alliteration e.g. 'A big bad bug bit the small beetle'.

Explore the sounds our voices make:
Distinguish between the differences in vocal sounds.
Explore speech sounds.
Talk about the different sounds that we can make with our voices.

Learn oral blending and segmenting skills:
Segmenting- break down a word into separate sounds and syllable's e.g. 'Ro-bot'.
Blending: put back together separate syllables and sounds to form a word.
Listen to sounds within words and remember them in the order in which they occur.
Talk about the different sounds that make up word.

Children often begin to learn about letters first through their own name. Adults will support children's knowledge of letter names and sounds as they teach them to read and write their names independently. Therefore, all children will not learn the same letters and their sounds in the same order. This personalised approach fits much better with young children's learning needs. Most children will then go on to learn many more, if not all, letters and their sounds through other contexts such as imaginative play, trips, reading one to one with an

adult, reading in small groups and hearing books read throughout the day and during story times.

For those children who show an interest and knowledge in early reading skills such as spoken/written word correspondence and identifying letters and linking them to sounds, we will support them to make progress in reading through small group activities such as shared and guided reading, sentence and word games, rhyming games and segmenting and blending.

We will refer to The Reading Framework (DFE Jan 2022) and research and materials from Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) when teaching reading.

ROLE OF THE ADULT

- To read with children during the session.
- To ensure each child gets a breadth of literary experiences e.g. having stories read to them, looking at books with an adult/ peer, traditional tales, non-fiction/ fiction, myths and legends etc.
- To be a model of an avid reader - instil and share a love of books and story.
- To point to the text as you read.
- To encourage children to read back a familiar story.
- To provide a print-rich environment by labelling areas and equipment as appropriate, both handwritten and printed labels.
- To encourage children to retell and create stories with a variety of props.
- To help children make their own books and to encourage them to "read" them back to friends and staff.
- To make books that record outings, pieces of works, shared experiences, and events in the nursery.
- To use writing in displays throughout the nursery.
- To monitor progress of children in key groups and plan next steps accordingly.
- To scaffold children's early reading knowledge through teaching phonological awareness and phonemic awareness.

PLANNING

- Our Curriculum Progression Map insures all children make progress over the half term and are invited to activities linked to progressive learning objectives.
- Day to day, staff will offer lots of opportunities for children to hear stories being read and to look at books. This should be planned weekly.
- Daily story groups are planned to respond to children's interests and developing knowledge and skills in reading. Story groups are monitored to ensure that children's reading skills progress during the year and that children develop the skills of listening, understanding and phonological awareness.
- When planning for all areas of the curriculum we will consider how we are going to use books and children's emerging literacy skills to support learning e.g., choosing reference books to support garage role-play or to stimulate interest in another topic.

ASSESSMENT & RECORD KEEPING

- Staff will assess and record children's developing reading skills and interest in books from their earliest days in the nursery.
- As children's experience and skills grow then staff assessments and recording need to become more precise; for example do they know the initial letter of their name? Can they say the corresponding sound?
- As children's skills develop staff will record what skills a child is using when reading back a text - memory, known sight words, and phonological awareness. These are noted in children's reading records.
- Once a week children are invited to choose a library book. Home/school reading diaries are for staff, parents and carers to record children's knowledge, comments and reading skills.

Equal Opportunities

- We provide traditional stories from all cultures.
- We choose books whose subject matter reflects the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of our pupils.
- We choose books which illustrate a range of family patterns and living circumstances.
- We choose books that include boys and girls.
- We choose books that positively represent children with a disability. We also make lots of our own books which reflect the diversity within our nursery.
- We offer dual text story bags with a CD and props so children can listen to and retell stories at home.

Conclusion

By implementing this reading policy, we are committed to fostering a literacy-rich environment that promotes a love for reading and language acquisition. We understand that literacy is a foundational skill that supports lifelong learning and success. Through engaging experiences, parent engagement, staff development, and a focus on inclusivity, we aim to empower each child to become confident readers, effective communicators, and lifelong learners.