

Reading at The Westminster School



At The Westminster School, we recognize that pupils have had a rich experience of Phonics and Reading throughout their time in Sandwell Education. We aim to support and develop this learning during their time with us by building pupils confidence and basic skills in a supportive and differentiated way.

We know that Communication skills are vital to developing Literacy Skills and these are at the core of all aspects of our curriculum. Phonics, Spelling and Reading are taught when pupils are ready and able to access this method of learning, this includes both cognitive and pastoral readiness.

Phonics

We baseline all pupils on entry to the school and follow the Letters and Sound programme. There are six incremental phases of Letters and Sounds. Phase One concentrates on activities to promote speaking and listening skills, phonological awareness and oral blending and segmenting. Phase Two to Six focus on high quality phonic work to ensure that children develop fluent word reading skills and have good foundations in spelling.

At The Westminster School we recognize that some of our pupils may find learning through phonics challenging and many have gaps in their learning which could delay progress. Part of the reading support package for learners is to identify these gaps and overcome them. Where suitable we also use a range of sight words to embed learning and enable success in Literacy.

Spelling

Spelling, where appropriate, is taught in class groups and is linked to the curriculum coverage. In addition to our phonics teaching we are developing a programme of writing across the curriculum for our non-core subjects.

Spellings are sent home on a weekly basis for those pupils who are at the relevant point in their learning. These spellings are linked to sound patterns and tricky words and are personalized to meet the needs of your child. Practicing spelling at home helps to reinforce and consolidate learning.

The use of phonics and spellings are supported through a range of writing opportunities across the curriculum; marking pupil's work to assess progress and identifying targets for further improvement and teaching and practicing handwriting.

Reading

At The Westminster School, reading is a skill taught, practiced and promoted throughout the school, across the whole curriculum and through a range of strategies:

- Reading for pleasure
- Reading homework
- Phonics lessons
- Guided Reading
- Reading comprehension
- The study of a range of genres of text
- Class Texts
- Reading for the wider curriculum, related to topics
- Access to the school library

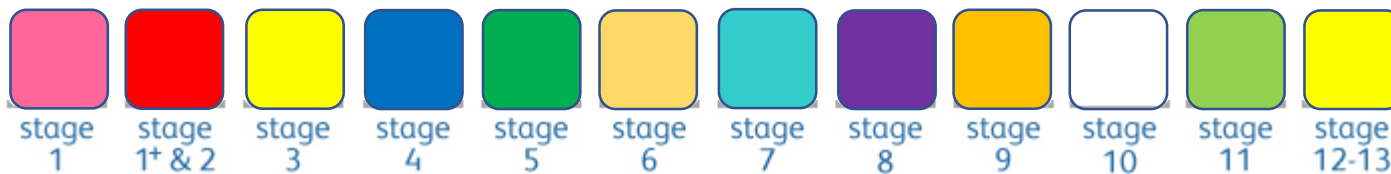
Guided reading materials have been compiled from a range of different schemes including Collins Big Cat, Dandelion Readers, Sky Racer and Oxford Reading Project X. Other texts, not linked to a scheme, by well-known authors, are also studied to ensure children experience a wealth of literature. The children also have access to a range of books to read individually and take home for reading homework.

Our pupils are tested biannually on their reading ages. This is used alongside Skills Outcome Statements and observations of reading to gain a baseline of pupils needs. As the Reading Test (Salford and Pera) are administered on a particular day, outcomes from our pupils can vary. Progress over time is therefore measured on reading engagement (SOMs) and decoding skills (Book Bands). Reading tests can support teachers to identify gaps in pupils learning and highlight differences between decoding and comprehension.

All curriculum areas have identified reading, writing and communication skills for each level to support the pupils to access all areas of the curriculum.

Book Band and Reading Ages

Each book band has its own colour. These are shown below together with some sample pages to show the levels of difficulty at each band.

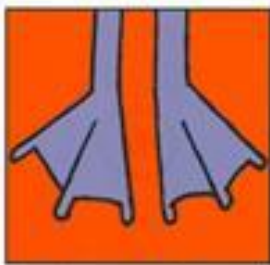


Pink book band - recommended reading age 4 - 5

For children just starting to read. Children are getting used to reading from left to right and matching spoken words to written words. Usually no more than 10 pages with up to 5 words on a page.



I like this snake.



Look at my feet.



This is a leopard.



My pet is a dog.



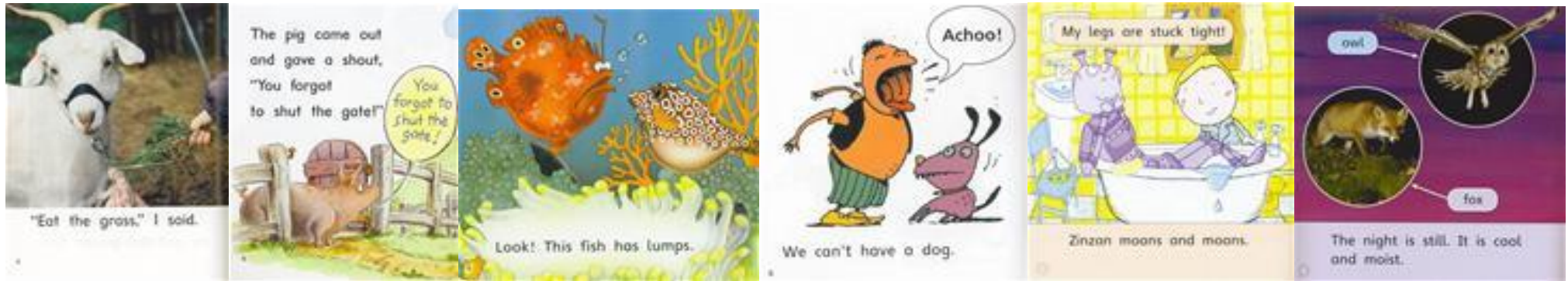
I like the red car.



I have a little horse.

Red book band - recommended reading age 4 - 5

The second step up the ladder as children gain a little more confidence and may know some words by sight. Usually no more than 15 pages with 1 sentence per page.



Yellow book band - recommended reading age 4 - 5

Children are beginning to read more varied sentence structures and taking some note of punctuation. Usually no more than 15 pages with 1 or 2 sentences per page.



Blue book band - recommended reading age 5 - 6

Children are becoming more confident at reading longer and more varied sentences. Usually no more than 15 pages with 2 or 3 sentences per page.



Green book band - recommended reading age 5 - 6

Children are starting to read quite fluently and take note of punctuation. Usually about 20 pages with 3 or 4 sentences per page.



Orange book band - recommended reading age 5 - 6

Children are starting to read longer and more complex sentences and can understand a range of punctuation. Usually about 20 pages with 4 or 5 sentences per page.



Turquoise book band - recommended reading age 6 - 7

Children can read complex sentences fairly fluently, taking note of punctuation. They use expression and do not rely on illustrations to help them. Usually about 20 pages with 4 or 5 sentences per page.



Purple book band - recommended reading age 6 - 7

Children might read silently or quietly at quite a rapid pace, taking note of punctuation. Usually about 25 pages with 5 to 10 sentences per page.



Gold book band - recommended reading age 6 - 7

Children might read silently or quietly at quite a rapid pace, taking note of punctuation. Usually about 25 pages with 5 to 10 sentences per page.



White book band - recommended reading age 7 - 8

Books might have chapters. Children will read silently most of the time. They are interested in longer texts which they can return to easily after a break. Usually no more than 30 pages and about 10 sentences per page.



Lime book band - recommended reading age 7 - 8

Books might have chapters. Children will read silently most of the time. They are interested in longer texts which they can return to easily after a break. Usually more than 30 pages.



Extended Readers book band - recommended reading age 8 - 9

Books might have chapters. Children read silently with confidence and perseverance. A wide variety of longer, demanding texts, usually with around 30 - 50 pages.

