

Alfreton Park School



English & Reading

Date	Review Date	Headteacher's Signature
September 2026	September 2027	
Governors minute number:		

Chair of Governors: TBC
Headteacher: Josie O'Donnell
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Contents

Our Vision.....	3
Curriculum Design.....	4
Pathways Model: Roots, Branches & Leaves	5
Reading For Pleasure	5
Home-school Links.....	6
Teaching Approaches	7
Phonics.....	7
Fluency and Comprehension	8
Interventions.....	9
Assessment.....	9
Impact.....	10
Appendix	11

1.Our Vision

At Alfreton Park, we believe that reading is more than a skill – it is a bridge to independence. As the DfE Reading Framework (2023) states, *“Being able to read is the key to developing other life skills and is essential for pupils to access the rest of the curriculum.”*

We place reading at the core of our provision because it unlocks learning in all subjects and contributes significantly to pupils’ social, emotional, cultural, and future development.

Through our **Reading for Connection pledge**, we commit to placing reading at the heart of our school culture. We will champion stories that reflect every pupil’s voice and introduce them to worlds beyond their own. We will read together – for joy, for knowledge, for comfort, and for understanding.

We are committed to:

- Nurturing a deep love of reading in every pupil, recognising that enjoyment is the foundation of lifelong literacy.
- Sharing diverse books that connect us to different lives, experiences, and perspectives – serving as *mirrors* to reflect our pupils’ own identities, cultures, and experiences, and as *windows* into the lives, perspectives, and histories of others.
- Protecting daily time for reading, including DEAR time, because we know reading matters.
- Building a community where children, staff, and families read together and grow together.
- Using reading to inspire writing, thinking, and empathy across the curriculum.

Reading at Alfreton Park is not only about literacy, but about preparing every pupil for their adult lives:

Employment – enabling pupils to access training and future work opportunities through functional reading, such as timetables, instructions, and digital communication.

Independent Living – supporting pupils to manage personal life skills such as reading bills, labels, recipes, and transport information.

Community Inclusion – equipping pupils to engage fully in their communities through reading signs, menus, newsletters, and cultural texts that connect them to others.

Health – empowering pupils to make informed decisions by reading health information, appointment letters, and medication instructions.

2. Curriculum Design

Our English curriculum is underpinned by the *Power of Reading* framework and has been carefully designed to be broad, balanced, and sequential, in order to meet the diverse and often complex needs of our learners. Central to our approach is a strong commitment to inclusive, high-quality literature that inspires a love of reading and supports the development of language, comprehension, and critical thinking skills.

Our Reading Spine (please see Appendix 1) has been deliberately curated to ensure that pupils engage with a wide range of rich and diverse texts. These texts encompass a variety of genres, cultures, experiences, and voices, promoting representation and encouraging all learners to both see themselves reflected in literature and to develop empathy through exposure to perspectives beyond their own.

A key feature of our curriculum is the integration of reading across the wider curriculum through our Learning Question approach. This cross-curricular model ensures that English is not taught in isolation but is meaningfully connected to other subject areas, such as History, Geography, and Science. By embedding reading and discussion into broader learning contexts, we deepen pupils' understanding, reinforce subject knowledge, and provide multiple, accessible entry points for all learners across our different pathways.

To further enhance the breadth and depth of our reading provision, we use *Supplementary Texts* to ensure that pupils are exposed to a wide variety of reading genres, including non-fiction texts. These carefully selected texts are designed to support curriculum coverage across subjects and to enrich pupils' understanding of key concepts beyond the English classroom.

Each Supplementary Text will be closely aligned with the termly Learning Question, reinforcing cross-curricular links and embedding reading as a tool for discovery and deeper learning. For example, pupils might explore non-fiction texts about African landscapes and cultures during Geography units, or engage with scientific explanations and reports to complement their Science learning. In doing so, reading becomes an integrated and purposeful part of the wider curriculum, supporting knowledge retention and making learning more meaningful and relevant.

These texts will be made available to all formal classes through our partnership with the Library Service, ensuring high-quality and age-appropriate materials are accessible to staff and pupils. In addition, they will be incorporated into our school library provision, supporting both structured classroom use and informal, independent exploration of topics.

3. Pathways Model: Roots, Branches & Leaves

Pupils' reading experiences are structured through our *Roots, Branches & Leaves* pathway model, which provides a developmental framework for reading progression across the school. This approach ensures that all learners, regardless of ability or need, engage with texts that are carefully matched to their cognitive, emotional, and academic development.

At the **Roots** stage, children are pre-readers, with a focus on developing foundational literacy skills. This includes nurturing early language development, building phonological awareness, and fostering a love of storytelling through rich, immersive experiences.

At the **Branches** stage, children are emerging readers who begin to make connections between graphemes and phonemes. They are introduced to the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme and regularly engage with '**Fred Talk**', promoting a consistent, structured approach to decoding unfamiliar words.

At the **Leaves** stage, children are functional, confident readers. They are supported to engage with a wide range of mature and diverse texts that promote critical thinking, deepen comprehension, and encourage thoughtful discussion. To ensure progress, we regularly assess both **reading fluency and comprehension** through structured checks, allowing us to identify next steps and provide targeted support where needed.

Texts are selected from our curated Reading Spine and are integrated within this model to ensure consistency, inclusivity, and appropriate challenge at every stage. The pathway model is designed to be flexible, allowing for personalisation and targeted support, and used as a formative assessment tool, while maintaining high expectations for all pupils as they progress in their reading journey (Please see Appendix 2 for Pathways diagram)

4. Reading For Pleasure

At the heart of our English curriculum is a strong commitment to promoting a lifelong love of reading. We actively foster a culture of reading for pleasure through a range of whole-school initiatives and carefully considered practices designed to engage, inspire, and empower all learners.

One key initiative is *D.E.A.R – Drop Everything and Read*, a dedicated time during the school day when the entire school community pauses their usual activities to engage in reading. This shared, school-wide routine helps to establish reading as a valued and enjoyable part of daily life. During *D.E.A.R* sessions, reading experiences are adapted to meet the individual needs and preferences of our pupils. This may include opportunities for pupils to engage with books that interest them personally, whether through tactile sensory stories, audio-supported texts using Yoto boxes, or visual read-alouds projected on the board. Small group or whole-class *circle time* sessions also provide a nurturing environment where stories are shared and discussed, supporting communication, social interaction, and emotional engagement. Staff actively model and participate in these activities, fostering a culture of reading that is accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable for all learners.

In addition, we celebrate *Poetry Fridays*, where pupils are introduced to a variety of poetic forms, voices, and themes, helping to broaden their literary exposure and foster appreciation for rhythm, language, and creative expression.

Teachers are also encouraged to personalise reading experiences by embedding pupil interests and linking text selections to the wider curriculum. This approach strengthens engagement by making reading more relevant and meaningful, supporting both emotional connection and deeper academic understanding.

By creating time, space, and opportunity for pupils to enjoy reading in a relaxed and supported environment, we aim to nurture confident, motivated readers who read not only for learning—but for life.

5. Home-school Links

To strengthen home-school engagement in reading, we facilitate:

Parent Workshops: Practical sessions to equip parents with effective reading strategies to support their children at home.

Home-School Reading Diaries: Updated diaries featuring reading logs, tips for parents, speed sound lists, and space for teacher feedback to promote consistent home reading and communication.

RWI: Video links are sent home to support speed sound teaching and letter formation.

Reading Breakfasts: Regular events where parents/carers can enjoy breakfast at school while reading with their child, fostering a love of reading and strengthening school-family connections.

Clear Expectations: Guidance on home reading routines, including recommended frequency, variety of texts, and open communication channels between families and school.

6. Teaching Approaches

Consistent reading strategies are used by adults to support independent reading. These are more commonly used with our formal learners but all pupils are exposed to these strategies through whole class teaching and with each individual pupil in mind.

To make learning more accessible, we have mapped out *key vocabulary and Makaton signs* in our long-term planning. This ensures that children can understand, express, and connect with the words they are learning, supporting both spoken language and early reading.

Each week, every pupil also takes part in a *1:1 reading session* with a trusted adult. These personalised sessions help build confidence, fluency, and a love of books in a quiet, supportive space.

Pupils who access the RWI scheme enjoy Storybook lessons, whereby children revisit the same texts through *repeated reads*. This helps them feel secure, recognise familiar words, and develop fluency in a way that is comfortable and reassuring.

We carry out *formal fluency checks* using *online tools* to track progress carefully and ensure every child is on the right path. These checks help us make thoughtful decisions about groupings and additional support.

7. Phonics

We believe that every child should be exposed to rich and meaningful reading experiences, and we are committed to helping each pupil find their voice through communication and connection. We use the Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics programme to teach early reading in a way that is structured, supportive, and adapted to meet the individual needs of our learners.

All pupils on the phonics pathway receive daily RWI lessons that are multisensory, engaging, and carefully paced. Sessions are designed to be inclusive and accessible, using visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic approaches to support memory and engagement. Our delivery includes all elements of the systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) approach, including the teaching of Speed Sounds, blending for reading, segmenting for spelling, and reading RWI storybooks that match pupils' phonics knowledge.

We draw from both the RWI *one-to-one tutoring handbook* and the *red teaching handbook*, enabling us to tailor sessions precisely to each child's stage and pace of learning. Sessions may be delivered 1:1, in pairs, or in small groups, depending on the pupil's needs and learning profile. Storybooks and activities are chosen to build confidence and enjoyment, with repetition and reinforcement used strategically to consolidate learning.

Our approach to phonics is always inclusive, flexible, and nurturing, ensuring that all children, regardless of learning need, communication style, or pace, are supported to on their own journey, in their own time.

8. Fluency and Comprehension

Our approach to teaching fluency and comprehension is firmly grounded in the *Power of Reading* scheme, which provides a structured and engaging framework to develop these critical skills. This scheme ensures that pupils encounter high-quality texts that promote not only reading accuracy and speed but also deep understanding.

We incorporate a *research-informed impact statement* that highlights how fluency and comprehension are actively nurtured through evidence-based strategies. This statement underlines our commitment to continuous improvement and demonstrates the measurable progress pupils make in these areas.

For pupils following the formal pathway, fluency and comprehension are further supported through *weekly Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling (GPS) lessons*. These lessons complement our English curriculum and are integrated with the *Power of Reading* texts, reinforcing language structures and enabling pupils to apply these skills in context.

To promote richer understanding and critical thinking, we embed opportunities for strategies such as *Talk to Your Partner (TTYP)* encourage pupils to articulate their ideas, engage in meaningful dialogue, and deepen their reasoning. This interactive approach supports comprehension by allowing pupils to explore texts collaboratively, clarify their thinking, and build confidence in expressing interpretations.

Together, these elements ensure a balanced, comprehensive approach to developing both fluency and comprehension, preparing pupils for successful reading and learning across the curriculum.

9. Interventions

Targeted streaming interventions are carefully designed and implemented for learners to support both fluency and comprehension. These interventions are informed by ongoing assessments that identify individual strengths and areas for development, ensuring that support is precisely tailored to each pupil's needs.

10. Assessment

Our assessment approach combines a variety of formative and summative tools to provide a comprehensive picture of each pupil's reading development and to inform targeted teaching. This multi-faceted approach ensures that assessment is purposeful, ongoing, and closely aligned with our curriculum and intervention pathways.

Formative Marking: We adhere to the school's marking policy, using formative feedback to guide pupils' learning in real-time. This feedback helps identify misconceptions, celebrate achievements, and set next steps, fostering continuous improvement in reading skills.

Think Pinks: This strategy employs Bloom's Taxonomy to encourage higher-order thinking and deeper comprehension. Through targeted questioning such as, "*Why did Funni feel sad?*", pupils are prompted to analyze, evaluate, and infer meaning from texts, enhancing their critical engagement with reading material.

Pre-Reader Checklists: For early learners, these checklists assess foundational reading behaviours such as book handling, phonemic awareness, and interest in print. This enables early identification of strengths and areas needing support, allowing timely intervention (Please see Appendix 3)

B Levels Tracking: We systematically track pupils' reading progress using B Levels, which provide a clear framework for assessing reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension across developmental stages.

Read Write Inc. (RWI) Online Assessments: For pupils following the RWI phonics programme, we utilize the online assessments strictly within the designated assessment windows. This ensures accurate monitoring of decoding and phonics skills and informs progression through the RWI stages.

Together, these assessment tools provide robust data that drives personalised teaching, supports intervention planning, and enables us to celebrate pupil achievement at every stage of their reading journey.

11. Impact

The implementation of CLPE's *The Power of Reading* has had a significant impact on literacy and wider learning across our school. More than a reading programme, it has become a core part of our curriculum, enriching pupils' educational experiences and supporting key developmental outcomes.

The use of high-quality texts, combined with creative teaching approaches, has enhanced pupil engagement in reading and writing. Carefully chosen literature encourages deeper thinking, empathy, and imagination, while supporting the development of vocabulary, comprehension, and communication—essential skills for all areas of learning.

The programme's emphasis on oral language, drama, and discussion has been particularly effective in supporting pupils' communication and social interaction. It also encourages independent reading and nurtures a genuine enjoyment of books, helping to foster lifelong reading habits (Please see Appendix 4 for CLPE The Power of Reading Impact Data)

Across the curriculum, *The Power of Reading* provides meaningful links to other subjects and themes, supporting personal, social, and emotional development. It aligns closely with the *Preparing for Adulthood* framework by promoting literacy as a foundation for future independence, participation, and wellbeing.

In addition, the programme has strengthened the consistency and quality of teaching practice across the school, providing staff with the tools and confidence to deliver inclusive, engaging literacy experiences tailored to our pupils' needs.

At our school, the success of the reading curriculum is measured through the lens of the *Preparing for Adulthood* framework. We recognise that developing strong literacy skills is not only a foundation for academic progress, but also a vital part of enabling our pupils to lead fulfilling, independent, and connected lives beyond school.

Our reading provision is designed to ensure pupils are equipped with the literacy skills necessary for:

Employment – developing the ability to read instructions, complete applications, and understand workplace communication.

Further and Higher Education – enabling access to continued learning and vocational pathways through comprehension, critical thinking, and independent reading skills.

Independent Living – supporting everyday tasks such as reading timetables, following recipes, understanding signage, and managing written correspondence.

Social Participation – fostering communication skills, empathy, and engagement with the world through shared reading experiences and exposure to diverse voices and narratives.

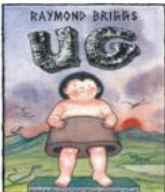
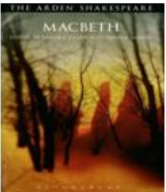
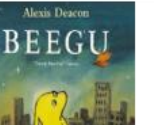
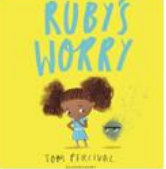
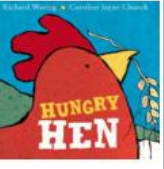
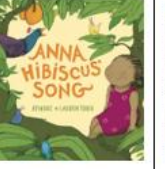
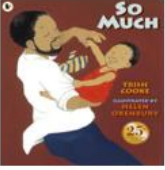
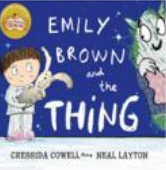
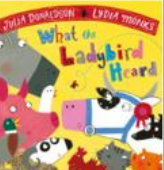
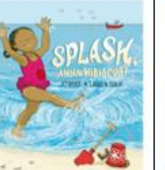
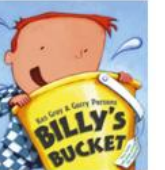
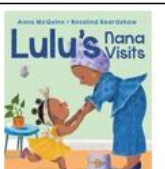
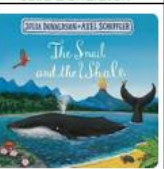
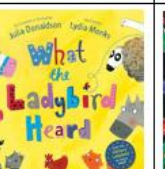
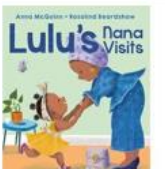
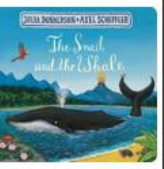
Health and Wellbeing – empowering pupils to access health information, express themselves effectively, and find enjoyment and comfort through reading.

This holistic approach reflects our school's commitment to nurturing confident, capable, and lifelong readers who are empowered to thrive in all areas of adult

[Preparing for Adulthood Pathway](#)

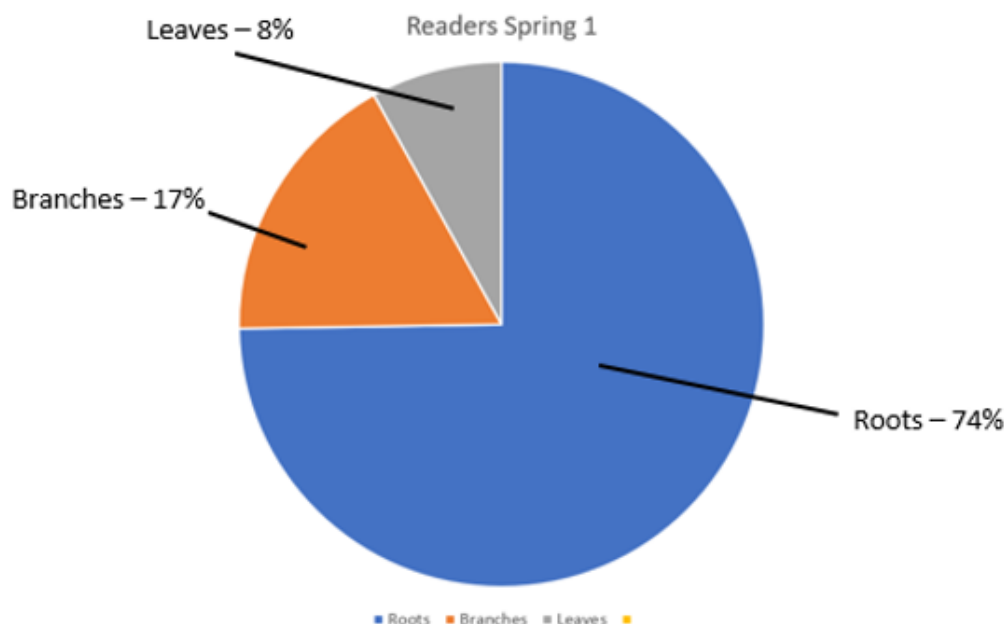
12. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Reading Spine 2025

Pathway	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Secondary – Formal	 Ug Raymond Briggs	 Macbeth Shakespeare	 Marcy and the Riddle of the Sphinx Joe Todd-Stanton	 The Rhythm of the Rain Gabriela Baker Smith	 The Viewer Gary Crew and Shaun Tan	 The Green Ship Quentin Blake
Primary – Formal	 TACTA David Almond	 Ruby's Worry Tom Percival	 Look Up! Richard Waring	 The Storm Whale Michael Rosen	 Rapunzel Anthony Browne	 BEEGU Alexis Deacon
Semi-formal	 So Much Trish Cooke	 Ruby's Worry Tom Percival	 Hungry Hen Richard Waring	 We're Going on a Bear Hunt Michael Rosen	 Anna Hibiscus' Song Anthony Browne	 Handa's Surprise Eileen Browne
Informal	 So Much Trish Cooke	 Emily Brown and the Thing Cressida Cowell	 What the Ladybird Heard Julia Donaldson	 A Brave Bear Sean Taylor	 Splash, Anna Hibiscus! Anthony Browne	 Billy's Bucket Kes Grey & Garry Parsons
Pre-formal	 Lulu's Nana Visits Anna McQuinn	 Winter Sleep Sean Taylor	 The Snail and the Whale Julia Donaldson	 Errol's Garden Gillian Hibbs	 What the Ladybird Heard Julia Donaldson	 The Leopard's Drum Jessica Souhami
EYFS	 Lulu's Nana Visits Anna McQuinn	 Winter Sleep Sean Taylor	 The Snail and the Whale Julia Donaldson	 Errol's Garden Gillian Hibbs	 What the Ladybird Heard Julia Donaldson	 The Leopard's Drum Jessica Souhami

Appendix 2 – Pathways: Roots, Branches and Leaves – Spring 24

Data



Appendix 3 – Pre-Reader Checklist

Pre-Readers (Roots)	
8 Levels/Celebratory Checkpoints/Pre-Key Stage 1	
Is the pupil using speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults?	
Does the pupil make fleeting eye contact with an adult who is talking or turn head towards a sound and locate with accuracy?	
Does the pupil stop and still on hearing their name?	
Does the pupil respond to familiar voices, turn to their own name and 'take turns' in conversations with babbling?	
Does the pupil respond to action rhymes such as round the garden or show a preference for some sounds and dislike of others?	
Does the pupil begin to associate meaning or show anticipation of activities with aid of objects of reference?	
Does the pupil explore with a strong sense of impulse, hand familiar items to adult on request and clearly demonstrate the desire for more of an activity?	
Does the pupil point to things and use gesture to show things to adults and share interests?	
Does the pupil turn immediately to familiar voices across room, listen to and distinguishes between intonation and sounds of voices but stop if the speaker turns away?	
Does the pupil follow with gaze when adult directs attention to near objects by looking and pointing?	
Does the pupil attend to picture for short time when adult labels or makes comment and respond to adult speech when addressed directly to them?	
Does the pupil look for objects out of sight, find a hidden sound maker under a cushion?	
Does the pupil sing along with favourite action rhymes (although words may not be clear) and identify the correct object from a sound e.g. cow when adult says 'moo' and begin to imitate symbolic sounds?	
Does the pupil listen to familiar sounds and words during finger play, or to other adults / pupils taking during play?	
Has the pupil built vocabulary for familiar objects, animals and events? Can the pupil name pictures of common objects when pointed to or family members in photographs?	
Does the pupil exhibit fleeting attention not under pupil's control, new stimuli takes the whole attention? The pupil may move their whole body to sounds they enjoy or regular beat?	
Can the pupil pick out a simple instruction when there is background noise e.g., 'dinner time'?	
Does the pupil listen to music, respond when it is turned off e.g., stop singing, dancing or turn to look?	
Does the pupil notice a deliberate mistake in a rhyme or song or fill in a gap in a predictable sequence?	
Does the pupil understand questions such as, 'where is ...' 'what has ...' 'who will ...'?	
Can the pupil join in with a simple game e.g., sound Lotto, understand the language of ready steady go games and begin to take turns?	
Does the pupil listen in small groups or 1:1 when conversation interests them or attend and concentrate to a favoured adult led activity?	
Can the pupil focus attention, listen and do, can they shift attention?	
Does the pupil join in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories?	
Can the pupil listen and follow unfamiliar instructions to carry out an activity step by step?	

Does the pupil identify a musical instrument from up to four, or produce a sequence of sound from sound making objects?	
Can the pupil say a word which rhymes with a word an adult says or continue a rhyming string with nonsense words?	
Can the pupil maintain concentration and attention to an activity and sits quietly for longer periods of time, and persevere with a challenging activity?	
Can the pupil work as part of a group or class, taking turns?	
Can the pupil carry out a sequence of simple instructions during play, e.g., sit down, then pat head, then touch nose?	
Does the pupil remember three or four items shown on a list for example a picture shopping list of apples, oranges and bananas or remember a spoken list of three objects without visual cues? Can they fetch 3 objects at a time?	
Does the pupil play with sounds in words during games with pictures and objects? (Given a sound e.g. 'mmm' can give a word e.g. mouse; and, given a word, e.g. 'sun' - can hear and give the initial sound 's')	
Does the pupil initiate conversations?	
Does the pupil use doll or teddy as partner in play, talking to it and telling it what to do next?	
Can the pupil clap out the rhythm of words and phrases?	
Standard 1: Can the pupil correctly indicate pictures of characters and objects in response to questions such as 'Where is (the) ...'?	
Standard 1: Can the pupils show anticipation about what is going to happen - for example, by turning a page?	
Standard 1: Can the pupil join in with some actions or repeat some words, rhymes and phrases when prompted?	

Appendix 4 – Impact Data from CLPE The Power of Reading

