



Transitions from Phonics to Comprehension - A focus on fluency



Why, What, When and How?

We are a school that does not like to stand still. After analysing our KS2 result in 2023, we identified that we wanted to be more forensic in our approach to KS2 reading standards. We have incredibly high standards in our reading results in KS1 and phonic screening check results and wanted our KS2 results to match this. We carefully and considerately looked through our SATs papers for gap analysis and completed a YARC assessment on our pupils reading below the expected level for their age across the school and identified that fluency was an area that required further focus in our school. As a result, our whole staff received training from our Trust English Leader on Reading Fluency using the HFL Fluency project and the work of Tim Rasinski. We introduced fluency intervention groups for all pupils below the expected level in 2023-2024 and began to embed fluency teaching within our daily whole class reading lessons in KS2. Building on the strength of this work and the impact we were seeing at the end of 23-24 when we completed follow-up YARC assessments and Rising Stars assessments, in the Autumn of 2024, we reviewed our whole class reading curriculum even further, tailoring the balance of decoding, fluency, vocab, comprehension and explicit skills teaching in each KS2 cohort based on the outcomes of their assessments. This bespoke curriculum ensures we are teaching to the needs of each year group while we continue to close gaps. As part of this fluency continues to be a focus across KS2, but particularly in the transition from KS1 to KS2 where it will always remain a focus going forward. Therefore fluency is now an embedded part of our reading offer in Year 2 and Year 3. In the Autumn of 2024, we carefully considered the transition from Phonics provision to Reading comprehension provision and decided to introduce the RWI Comprehension programme for our pupils in KS1 who had completed the RWI phonics programme. We chose this for the following reasons:

- RWI comprehension closely matches the expectations and routines of RWI phonics, reducing the cognitive load for pupils which would be created by transitioning to a new approach. A consistent approach means we are focussing the power of children's thinking brains on the skills of reading – not on routines and expectations.
- RWI comprehension focusses on building fluency with longer and progressively more complex texts than those used at the end of the RW phonics programme, ensuring the transition between programmes is neither too challenging nor too simple. We call this a Goldilocks transition as the level of challenge in the texts is 'just right'.
- RWI comprehension has both fiction and non-fiction texts in every unit so pupils are building their reading miles as well as their knowledge and experience of different genres of texts in preparation for the broad variety of texts they will continue to explore in KS2.
- The Teacher 'Read aloud' section of each lessons helps to build fluency through modelling by an 'expert' reader.
- Targeted questioning planned throughout each lesson helps pupils to build strong mental models of what they read over increasingly complex and lengthy texts.
- Decoding practice of unfamiliar words helps to build automaticity – a key part of fluency.
- Vocabulary exploration helps to expose pupils to new vocabulary in a meaningful context which helps to build a schema around new language.
- Grammar and punctuation development are also supported through the modules.
- Planned partner work and oracy opportunities allow cognitive capacity to focus on reading skills rather than writing skills so cognitive demand is targeted at the focus skills for the lesson.

We believe that using RWI Comprehension as a bridge between our Phonic and Comprehension provision will improve standards in Reading in KS2 through supporting in fluency development which is foundational for strong comprehension skills when reading.

