

Rachel Madocks



Approaches to Reading

Valued for being me



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1. Introduction

All students will develop high self-esteem, independence skills and an enthusiastic attitude to life and learning

At Rachel Madocks we are committed to developing the reading skills of our students through a clear, consistent, whole school approach. Reading is a lifelong skill, vital for independent learning and is therefore given the highest priority. We define 'reading' at Rachel Madocks as the way that learners gain meaning through their environment, for example, objects of reference and object cues, both visual and tactile, photos, pictures, symbols and words.

As a school, we work together to share the responsibility of developing students' ability to communicate, use language and understand that words carry meaning. We strongly believe that success in reading has a direct impact on progress in all other areas of the curriculum and it is crucial in building an individual's self-confidence and motivation.

At the forefront of this vision is encouraging students to 'Read for Pleasure' and to develop their engagement with books and literature; read widely and often and for them to be comfortable with reading in order to build up self-confidence and enjoyment, whilst further developing the independence skills needed for post-16 education. Reading will always be viewed as a cross curricular skill, which although reading skills will be taught as part of the Communication and English curriculum, will be practiced and generalised throughout the school day and in many different topic areas and learning environments. We ensure that we include a range of 'real' and age-appropriate books within the English curriculum, as well as the opportunity for sustained reading from a range of other self-chosen fiction and non-fiction texts from our school library.

We believe that all staff should be 'reading role models' for students; normalizing reading and encouraging students to read through recommendations from their own reading. Likewise, major literary days such as World Book Day and World Poetry Day are celebrated within the Teams and wider school. Students are encouraged to take part in Drop Everything and Read during the school day.

Throughout the school, we endeavour to expose students to a rich range of literature. Classrooms all include a range of texts and students are exposed to a literary-rich environment including areas for students to enjoying small group or individual reading within a well-known and supportive environment. This also includes our schools communication board which signposts students to words, symbols and signs of the week.

2. Team Based Approaches

2.1 Team 1

Reading in Team 1 aims to be wide, varied and challenging. Students are encouraged to read whole books, to read in depth and to read for pleasure and information. Students will use written information in books, websites and notices to gain practical information and to extend their knowledge in areas of interest. They will be supported to read newspapers and news media and to use social media with care to develop social interaction and learn about the world. As students in Team 1 are able to access the internet independently, their curriculum will include guidance on using technology safely. For reading strategies and interventions utilised in Team 1, see the 'Rachel Madocks Reading Groups' Section. 2.2

2.2 Team 2

The aims for reading in Team 2 are the same as above, in Team 1. A differentiated approach is used which utilises picture books, multi-sensory storytelling, drama and nonfiction materials of all kinds.

To support reading in Team 2 the following is also utilised:

- Makaton signs and symbols are used to support students' understanding of print and texts
- Specialist software; Communicate in Print, is used to translate text into symbol form to support the development of early reading skills
- Big books, enlarged and adapted texts and interactive white board programmes are used to enable participation in shared reading activities where appropriate
- Sensory stories, story sacks and communication bags are used to provide a range of tactile resources and sensory experiences
- The reading schemes ... are utilised to support reading and comprehension, as well as a range of fiction and non-fiction texts with a higher a higher interest level but at the required reading level for the needs of our students
- Picture word match and/or exchange

For reading strategies and interventions utilised in Team 2, see the 'Rachel Madocks Reading Groups' Section.

2.3 Team 3

Reading in Team 3 refers to ability to making meaning from objects, people, words, sounds, body language, photographs, symbols and environment around them. We encourage our students to communicate their needs and feelings in order to be met and recognized. There is a strong focus on developing and using students' functional communication skills through their preferred mode. Due consideration is given to both the learner's age and their interest level. Learning is differentiated through use of bespoke resources and use

of communication systems to enable all students to access the knowledge and skills across the curriculum. The same tools that are utilised in Team 2, mentioned above are used in Team 3.

Reading behaviours and enjoyment are also taught through:

- Attention Autism
- Intensive Interaction
- Action songs and rhymes / Musical instruments and games
- Songs related to topics of interest
- Sing and sign during assemblies
- Personalised books / Independent exploration of books
- ALD, PECS and/or other AAC
- Use of symbols, music and objects for transition and schedules
- Environmental print and symbols
- Tac Pac

2.3 Team 4

The dictionary definition of 'read' is "look at and comprehend the meaning of (written or printed matter) by interpreting the characters or symbols of which it is composed." Reading in Team 4 refers to the ability to making meaning from people, objects, symbols, words, sounds, photographs and whole environments. We strive to enable our students to know how to get their needs known and met. We want our students to have a voice and to make meaning from their environment and the people around them in order to be as confident and independent as possible. Gaining skills to read the environment first requires developing the ability to attend, anticipate, respond and interact. The methods in Team 3, mentioned above are used, as well as effective use of 'sensory stories' are utilised frequently. Individual students have their own communication system that is most suited to them. Individual student abilities and learning needs are prioritised and built on. The communication systems can be objects of reference, object cues, sign and symbol systems. We believe in the philosophy of Total Communication, incorporating all forms of communication into our practice.

2.5 Team 5

In Team 5, our post 16 provision, a combination of all of the above is utilised dependent on the individual student needs. There are also increased opportunities for generalising and reading social sight signs in the wider environment based on the Post 16 curriculum. In Post 16 they will be supported to use literacy in vocational tasks such as completing forms and records and in life skills such as reading information, booking appointments and planning leisure activities.

Rachel Madocks Reading Groups

3.1 Student Profile:

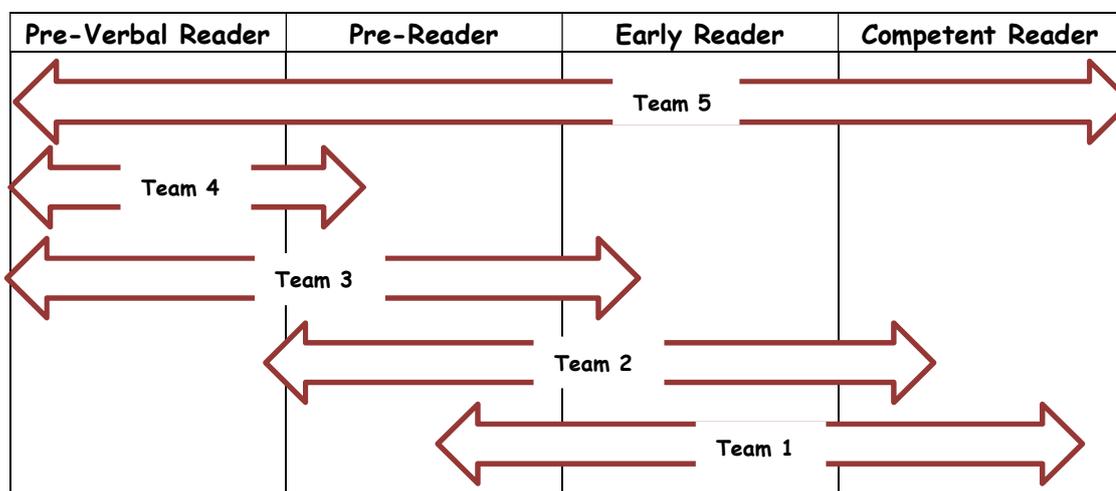
- **Competent Reader:**

'reading to learn'; students who can read 'competently', the focus is on improving comprehension, and vocabulary.

- **Early Reader:** Mix of 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn'; students who can read single words but struggle with language comprehension. Focusing on word identification, fluency, and building vocabulary. Where appropriate there can be a focus on phonemic awareness, phonics and word identification

- **Pre-Reader:** 'learning to read' and symbol readers, students who struggle with single word reading. Opportunities to develop an awareness and orientation of books, and answer simple comprehension questions. Exposure to letters and the written word in a variety of sensory environments provide opportunities to explore reading in a meaningful way.

- **Pre-Verbal:** 'immersing in reading' predominantly PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties) learners. Building communication skills is the highest priority. Students are immersed in on-going, multi-sensory experiences to foster emergent literacy skills and awareness through all aspects of their daily routines and work.



	Pre-Verbal Reader	Pre-Reader	Early Reader	Competent Reader
Intervention	AAC Scaffolding Letter-Sound Correspondence Assessment using the 'Engagement Scales'	Systematic Synthetic Phonics - cumulative instruction in alphabetic code, decoding words	1 to 1 reading daily Shared reading	Reading comprehension - understanding and reflecting on what is read
Primary Focus (All-reading for pleasure)	Recognising: Colours symbols - letters of name - Vocalise in response to pause in text or question	Letter-sounds link, blending, decoding, fluency	Practise blending, work towards automatic word recognition	Build Vocabulary - Access to the wider curriculum Knowledge and understanding of the world
Secondary Focus	To match symbols/photos to Makaton/tassel Turning pages correctly, following text with supported adult, pointing, developing call and response in text	Cumulative texts matched to the current letters sounds studied in class	Promoting an appreciation of literature	Supportive of self-esteem
Texts	Text related to curriculum areas text/poems/ sensory stories / exploring the pace of text Wide range of printed and audio books	Matched texts and decodable books	A wide range of books - stories, poems and nonfiction	Any books and texts

4. Whole School Approaches

4.1 Reading Materials

Throughout the school, each class will focus on different reading materials linked to the topics from the Curriculum Plan. Texts will be chosen by the teacher based on the termly topic, student interest and relevance. This provides opportunity for shared reading and the chance for the teacher to model comprehension strategies.

4.2 Meeting individual need:

Although there are clear pathways for progression, all students will learn in their own way and at their own pace and so individualised planning is essential. The Rachel Madocks Reading Groups have to been created to ensure a consistent refined approach to reading. Students can transition between groups or different interventions and focuses can be used if it is beneficial to the student. All members of the team need to be aware of the strategies which individuals find helpful and the milestones they have reached. There is a broad spectrum of need at Rachel Madocks and below are examples of how these individual needs can be met and supported.

Autism

Students with autism may benefit from a highly structured approach with a set time every day for literacy. They may need short breaks or regular changes of activity to help them stay focused. They may learn better through multi-sensory activities e.g. sensory stories or using reading to support activities. Picture cues or symbols may support comprehension. Focusing on student's interests in the first instance encourages early success in reading by increasing their motivation and desire to learn and by helping readers to use their wider knowledge as a strategy to find the meaning of less familiar words.

Severe Learning Difficulties Students with severe learning difficulties may benefit from strategies that provide additional cues to meaning and enable them to consolidate learning. Each step will need to be addressed through many different tasks until it is thoroughly mastered.

Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties Students who experience profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) must experience and retain a series of pre-requisites to learning in order to move on to develop recognised skills in literacy. These pre-requisites include self-awareness, a sense of rhythm, pattern and order and communication skills. For most of our PMLD pupils gaining these pre-requisites will be a continuous process throughout their time at school.

4.3 The learning environment

Rachel Madocks strives to create a 'reading rich' learning environment from the moment students enter the school building.

Classrooms

Classrooms are set up to meet the needs of the students. Displays in the classroom provide reading opportunities for students, showing key words or symbols to reinforce developing literacy skills. All students have access to good quality books and reading material; which includes a range of types and genres, including some from reading schemes. For 1 to 1 reading teachers select books for individuals linked to the words, symbols and/or sounds they can read and try to make the material age appropriate. Where needed, symbols are created using the 'Communicate In Print' software package.

Wider shared school environment

- Displays: Displays are all over school. Like in the classroom; they aim to be engaging and promote reading.
- Spaces and places: Reading resources are engaging and varied in the school library, with students able to easily find what they are looking for. Every class has opportunities to borrow books or access the reading corner throughout the day.
- Use of Communication in Print and Communication Boards

4.4 Reading for pleasure

'Reading enjoyment has been reported as more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status' - (OECD 2002)

'Evidence suggests that reading for pleasure is an activity that has positive emotional and social consequences' - (Clark and Rumbold, 2006)

With both of these quotes in mind, encouraging students to 'read for pleasure' is a school wide priority. This is done in several ways:

Engaging material:

- Buying in a variety/certain stock and reading schemes, specialist braille books, sensory stores/sacks
- Validating/encouraging appreciation of different types of text, e.g. comics, graphic novels etc
- That is relevant, modern and complements the curriculum map

Reading role models:

- Post 16 will be reading champions and lead on delivering books providing a varied and rich resource to classes
- DEAR (Drop Everything and Read)

- Raising parental engagement
- Book Club meet up during identified lunch times

Reading celebration days:

- World Book Day: This is an opportunity for students and teachers to celebrate stories and characters from their favourite books. Book vouchers are distributed to every student.
- Sensory story Assembly
- Poetry celebrations

5. Assessing and tracking progress

Rachel Madocks utilise various methods to assess and track progress in 'reading':

Formative assessment: Where appropriate; this is verbal, differentiated questioning, and informal feedback. This is done in every lesson.

Evidence for Learning: Our online assessment tracking software. Students' Progress is recorded.

Personalised Targets: Our holistic assessment system, which is dynamically linked to the learning targets coming from the Annual Review of the EHCP (Education, Health, Care Plan). These targets may relate to improving reading skills. These are set and assessed termly.

Exam and Accreditation Results: All exams and accreditation requires students to improve their reading skills. Functional Skills in English has a Reading component, students in Team 1 and some in Team 2 take this exam if appropriate. Relevant AQA and ASDAN (Towards Independence and Transition Challenge) units may also be appropriate.

Using the 'Engagement Model' to assess reading: Though the Engagement Model is designed for students not engaged in subject-specific learning it will be utilised in Team 4 and parts of Team 3 to assess students' progress related to 'reading'. It can also be used to monitor and support engagement in reading for students in Teams 1 & 2.

6. Working Alongside Parents / Carers

Reading should be encouraged beyond school in to the home environment and in the community. Involving parents / carers enables new vocabulary to be generalised into many different settings and contexts and provides opportunities to reinforce and consolidate reading outside school. This is encouraged by the active involvement of parents / carers by:

Information on the school website: This document is published on our website, detailing our approaches to reading, as well as Curriculum Mapping and relevant information. Parents and carers can utilise this information to support students. Other information includes

reading information to download, and photographs to celebrate the success of reading events.

Letters Home / handouts / newsletter: Handouts and leaflets specific to reading, with information to promote reading events are sent home throughout the year.

Parent Forum: Under current circumstances (COVID-19) parent forums are restricted. There are plans to offer extensive workshops to parent / carer workshops in Summer 2022.

Parental Questionnaire: A survey is sent out termly before parents evening that gives parents / carers the opportunity to express their opinion on the school offer. Future surveys will include reading specific questions.

Parents Evening & Annual Review: Student progress is discussed with parents / carers termly. At parents evening in the Autumn, Spring term, and during the Annual Review in more detail. Progress relating to reading will be discussed at these meetings, and advice is also given to parents / carers where appropriate.

Books home: To create opportunities for books to be sent home to support parents and carers in engaging with students at home with books,