



BLACKFRIARS ACADEMY READING CURRICULUM



THE DESIGN OF OUR READING CURRICULUM

“

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free

”



These are the words of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who learned as an enslaved boy that education and freedom go hand in hand.

VISION

To enable students to become successful and confident at communicating, and to gain independence, reading is a vital component in their ability to interact with the world in which they live. At Blackfriars Academy we work together to share the responsibility of developing students' ability to communicate, use language and understand that words have meaning. We believe that students' success in reading impacts directly on positive progress in other areas of the curriculum and is crucial in building students' self-confidence, motivation and well-being.

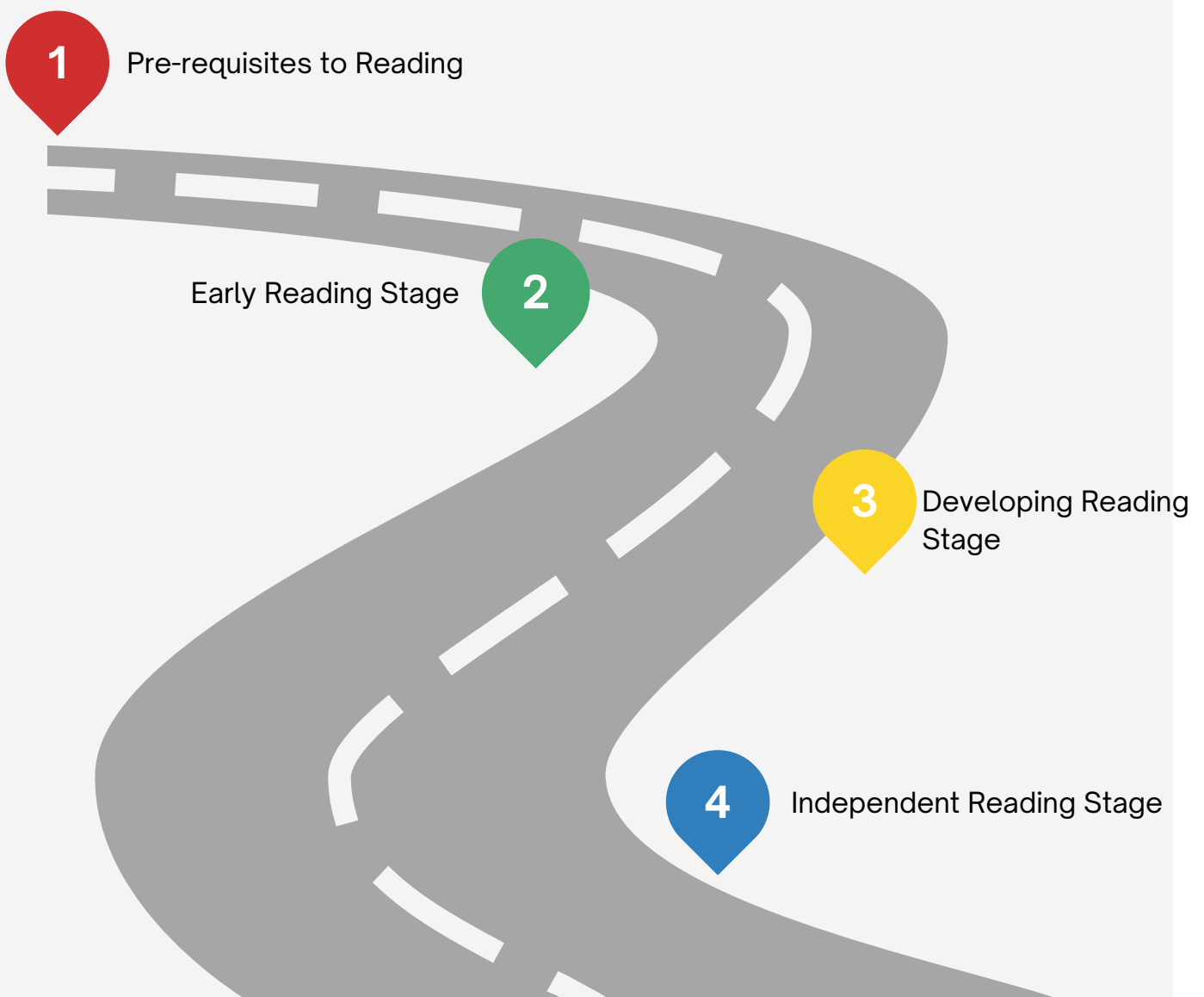
At Blackfriars Academy we define reading as the way learners gain meaning from text, symbols and the environment. The routes into reading are many and varied, from students participating in a multi-sensory experience of a story in our Immersive Pathway through to the independent reading of more complex novels in our Questioning Pathway. 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.

Central to this vision is encouraging our students to “Read for Pleasure”, read widely and often and for them to feel comfortable with reading to empower their self-confidence and enjoyment, whilst developing independence skills as preparation for adulthood (PfA). To this end we

ensure we include a range of ‘real’ and age appropriate books within the English curriculum, as well as the opportunity for sustained reading from our book collections available in classrooms and our Learning Pathway Corridors.

Our staff are “reading role models” for our students, normalising reading and encouraging students to read, often through recommendations from their own reading. Staff actively discuss the purpose for reading as well as the pleasure of reading. Likewise, major literacy days such as World Book day and World Poetry day are celebrated within the Pathways and whole school. Reading is strengthened in our Academy through our school-wide learning anchors that unify our learning and through the daily Big Read across the Pathways. This session allows our students to experience a story read to them and evokes the story-telling traditions of old.

ROUTES INTO READING





ROUTE ONE

Pre-requisites to Reading

- ✦ Looking, attending, listening, tracking
- ✦ Reading own body
- ✦ Be stimulated by the rhythm and pattern of words and stories
- ✦ Match letters, pictures, objects, insert jigsaw pieces
- ✦ Enjoys sharing simple stories, song, music
- ✦ Responds through any form of communication such as: gesture, signing, PECS AAC
- ✦ Anticipate, recognise the familiar



ROUTE TWO

Early Reading Stage

- ✦ Beginning to learn level 2 sounds (Twinkle Phonics)
Oral blending/in head (with pictures / objects not written words).
- ✦ Recognise a few meaningful keywords by sight (name, mum, dad etc.).
Blending to read a few simple words e.g. mat.
- ✦ Recognise the initial sound of words/symbols
- ✦ Reads a few very simple sentences e.g. the cat sat on the mat. (may be symbol sentences)
- ✦ Enjoy reading stories, rhymes and non-fiction books with adults.
- ✦ Recognise environmental signs and print
- ✦ Respond to very simple questions about pictures/ events (through any form of communication such as signing, PODD, ACC, gestures, yes/no responses). E.g. “What is the animal?” “Who went to the shop?”



ROUTE THREE

Developing Reading Stage

- ✦ Developing phonics understanding level 3-6 (Twinkle Phonics)
- ✦ Multi-Sensory language Programmes (MSLP)
- ✦ Lexia Core 5, Hickey, Beat Dyslexia, Alpha to Omega, cued articulation
- ✦ Further developing blending and segmenting skills
- ✦ Further developing comprehension skills, extracting information from a given text

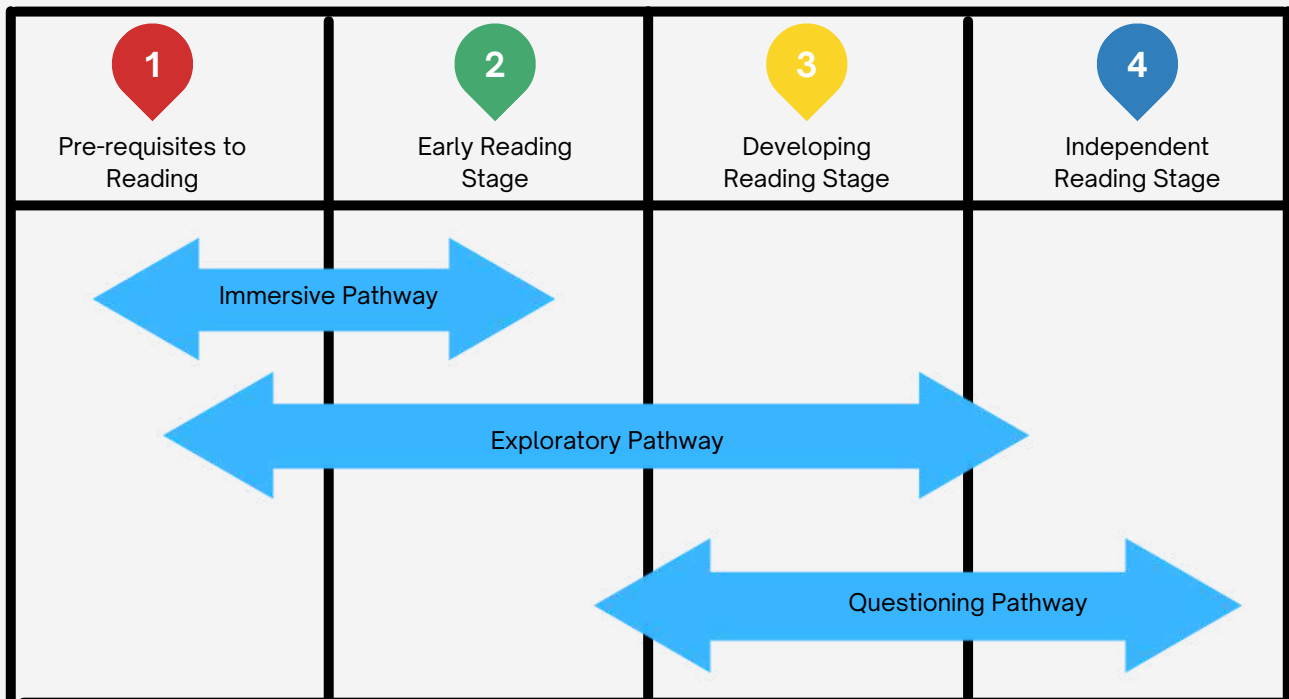


ROUTE FOUR

Independent Reading Stage

- ✦ Skills further consolidated through, Lexia PowerUp and guided reading sessions in 1:1, small group and whole class settings
- ✦ Reads a wide and varied range of books, exploring a range of genres – myths, legends, plays, novels and non-fiction as well as poetry.
- ✦ Reads whole books to read in depth and to read for pleasure and information
- ✦ Consolidating comprehension skills, using close reading questions with comprehension as they develop inference skills through discussion and writing.
- ✦ Use written information in books, websites and notices to gain practical information
- ✦ Use written information in vocational tasks including: form filling, booking appointments, job applications and planning leisure activities

As students are able to access the internet independently, guidance on using technology safely is delivered across the curriculum.



WHAT DOES THE VISION MEAN ACROSS OUR PATHWAYS?



Reading in the Immersive Pathway (Intent)

















Immersing students in a language rich reading environment where they can experience the prerequisites of learning self-awareness, a sense of rhythm, pattern and order and communication skills. Students need to attend, anticipate, respond and interact through on-going, multi-sensory experiences to foster emergent literacy skills and awareness through all aspects of their daily routines and work.

They need to:

Gain meaning from objects, people, words, sounds, body language, symbols, photos, their environment

Have a voice—communicate needs and feelings—develop functional communication

Ways we do this (Implementation):

-  Intensive Interaction
-  Action songs and rhymes
-  Sing and sign
-  Objects of reference
-  Tac Pac
-  Sensology
-  Morning Greeting
-  Symbols and photos to make choices
-  Sensory stories
-  Topic Story
-  Interactive stories on the whiteboard
-  Resonance Board activities
-  Drumming
-  Beating out the words/rhythm of a poem
- Massage—reading our bodies
- Rebound—sensations in our bodies
- Sensory diet activities—reading/responding to our bodies
- Through individual AAC systems
-  Books all about them
-  News from home—their story

How do we know if there is progress? (Impact):

By using SCERTS to baseline, set targets and monitor progress against their Communication target.

By recording evidence on the Evidence App in line with their EHCP targets.

By seeing the development of —recognition, familiarity, anticipation and enjoyment!

By assessing levels of Engagement through the Engagement Model.

Reading in the Exploratory Pathway (Intent)

Students begin to explore and focus on sounds in spoken words (phonemic awareness) and the links between the sounds and spelling (phonics), moving to word identification and alphabet recognition. This mix of “learning to read” and “reading to learn” helps progress students along the reading route.

Ways we do this (Implementation):

- Phonics - We use the systematic, synthetic phonics scheme Twinkle Phonics.
- Oral blending/in head (with pictures / objects not written words).
- Recognise a few meaningful keywords by sight Blending to read a few simple words e.g. mat.
- Recognise the initial sound of words/symbols.
- Reads a few very simple sentences Enjoy reading stories, rhymes and non-fiction books with adults.
- Recognise environmental signs and print.
- Respond to very simple questions about pictures/ events (through any form of communication such as signing, PODD, ACC, gestures, yes/no responses).

How do we know if there is progress (Impact):

By using SCERTS to baseline, set targets and monitor progress against their Communication target.

By recording evidence on the Evidence App in line with their EHCP targets.

By seeing the development of —recognition, familiarity, anticipation and enjoyment!

By assessing levels of Engagement through the Engagement Model.

Reading in the Questioning Pathway (Intent)

Reading aims to be wide, varied and challenging in the Questioning Pathway, built on the key tenets: fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Students are encouraged to read whole books and other media, to read in depth, to read for information and to read for pleasure. Through active reading students are encouraged to question, debate and engage with the texts, both fiction and non-fiction. Communication and interaction lies at the heart of learning, and reading is a vital component in their understanding and interpreting the world in which they live.

Ways we do this (Implementation):

- ✦ Continue to develop and consolidate blending and segmenting skills through systematic, synthetic phonics scheme Twinkle Phonics, as well as MSLP – Hickey, Beat Dyslexia, cued articulation, Lexia Core 5 and PowerUp plus SMART bespoke interventions delivered within a 1:1 format.
- ✦ Teach a range of skills to decode sight words
- ✦ Whole class and guided reading focusing on the key tenets: fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.
- ✦ In lessons, students are exposed to a variety of reading forms: teacher reading aloud, echo reading, choral reading, close reading, skimming and scanning texts, accountable independent reader and partner practice. Repeated reads enable students to become fluent and builds confidence.
- ✦ Vocabulary instruction focuses on strategies for determining the meaning of words and their relationships with other words and looking for contextual cues in a sentence. Key vocabulary and subject specific words are taught prior to the introduction of a specific text or subject and revisited throughout the series of lessons. This spiral approach ensures continued practise and mastery.
- ✦ Consolidating comprehension skills, using close reading questions with comprehension as they develop inference skills through discussion and writing.
- ✦ Use written information in books, websites and notices to gain practical information
- ✦ Use written information in vocational tasks including: form filling, booking appointments, job applications and planning leisure activities
- ✦ Students are encouraged to read at home for pleasure and or for homework specific task, using Lexia, books or articles; as well as having the opportunity to read in school. The more “reading miles you cover the stronger you will become”.

How do we know if there is progress? (Impact):

By daily assessment in form and lessons across the curriculum. Through timely feedback from teachers on what has gone well and what could be improved upon whilst they respond to what they have read. Students read each other’s work and peer assess by key areas of strength and areas of development. This allows students to become self-reflective and respect peer reflection.

Monitoring progress on Lexia and against our termly data drop using our Blackfriars Academy Reading Skills Grid and the student’s pre plotted progress flight path.

Students complete a baseline assessment at the start of each academic year (The Oxford Reading Diagnostic) to identify their reading age, areas of strength and weakness. Further assessments at mid and end points of the year using Blackfriars Academy Reading Skills Grid and Lexia’s on-line tracking available in real time allows for the precise identification of next steps for the students and bespoke differentiation. These assessments also inform interventions in which students received 1:1 or small group tutoring for any gaps that have been addressed in their assessments, as well as in their English lessons. Assessments are completed more frequently where further

information is needed to support progress, as well as to ensure that students advance in their learning.

By recording evidence on the Evidence App in line with their EHCP targets
By seeing the development of reading fluency in our students as they prepare for adulthood.

Non verbal readers

Many pupils within Blackfriars are working at a pre-verbal level or have limited/unclear speech. Such difficulties can come about for a wide variety of reasons including physical challenges impacting on the clear production of speech, learning difficulties resulting in language not being acquired in the typical fashion or a sensory loss such as hearing impairment. These students use a range of AAC methods to aid their communication – including PODD, PECS, GridPlayer, Makaton and symbols. Students also communicate through facial expressions, hand gestures, eye gaze and vocalizations.

The term 'AAC', an abbreviation of Augmentative and Alternative Communication, refers to any intervention which enhances a pupil's ability to express his or her needs and desires. As such it can encompass no tech strategies such as the use of Makaton signing, low tech approaches such as the use of symbols and simple switches and high-tech equipment which has a voice output.

Traditional phonics teaching and assessment relies on verbal responses. We recognise that these teaching techniques do not provide the best learning opportunities for all. Therefore, we are actively exploring ways to teach reading most effectively to our non-verbal AAC pupils.

Nonverbal pupils need a balance of phonic understanding combined with sight recognition of key words. When learning phonics, nonverbal pupils need to learn to “say it in your head” - the adult models the correct sound and encourages them to sound it out in their head (this ensures they learn the correct sound). It is vital to check understanding of words/sentences through use of the AAC approaches mentioned below

At Blackfriars we have a holistic approach to communication and provide a language and symbol rich environment where pupils can use a variety of approaches to develop their communication skills and have a powerful ‘voice’ in and out of school.

We are always excited when a student attends our school with a new communication system for us to explore with them. We really are committed to a total communication approach. No type of communication is used in isolation and staff receive regular training and updates to ensure they can support our students to actively use their communication device both in school and in the wider world.



Makaton is a type of sign language that is now used by over 100,000 children and adults. We use Makaton in school as an enhancement of communication to all students. Due to its increasing popularity we feel it is important for all students, whether dependant on AAC or not, to have an awareness of Makaton and at least know some basic signs. This will enable them to venture out and speak to people in the community as well as their peers who are reliant on using sign language in school.

Makaton are very active on social media and promote a 'sign of the week'. Why don't you take a look and try giving the sign of the week a go at home?



PODD is a symbol-based language presented in a book format. The letters PODD stand for Pragmatic, Organisation, Dynamic Display and refer to how the symbols and language within the book are laid out. PODD books can include any symbol language but are usually formed by PCS symbols. PODD books come in all shapes and sizes and when we identify that a student requires one, they are made, personalised and given to the student. This is an exciting process that we like parents/carers and wider families to get involved in. Have you seen a PODD book in action before? If not, try heading over to YouTube to see lots of people interacting using PODD books.



Another communication system accessed widely and regularly at Blackfriars is Grid Player. This system is normally accessed via an iPad and depends on the user. They access different symbol sets such as 'Symbol Talker' and 'Super Core'. Students are often highly motivated to interact with Grid Player because it's on their favourite things – the iPad! Students touch the symbols on screen and a voice speaks the word out loud for them. This is fantastic for those students who are unable to use their voice or to assist those with limited language. We have a close working relationship with Smartbox (who own Grid Player) and staff access regular training and assistance.



PECs is one of the most widely known methods of AAC. It stands for picture exchange communication and students are able to obtain their wants and wishes by exchanging a photograph, picture or symbols for the object of their choice. PECS has many levels and users start off by using a picture symbol in exchange for one object at a time, potentially building up their knowledge to use symbols to create a whole sentence. It is now well known across the world and students with various diagnoses access PECS and have fantastic success!



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