

# Glyne Gap School

## Curriculum Guideline 18 (CG18):

# Supporting the Teaching and Learning of Phonics & Early Reading at Glyne Gap

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## 1. Curriculum Intent:

**Our curriculum focus is on the areas of learning that are going to bring happiness, purpose and fulfilment to our pupils lives both now and in the future. Our curriculum intent is that all pupils have opportunities and develop skills to be as independent as they can be; understand and be understood; build aspiration and make a contribution.**

In order to understand how the teaching of “Reading” supports this Curriculum Intent, we must first understand what reading looks like in its broadest sense and how Reading skills are developed.

### “The Simple View of Reading”

In DfE guidance “The Reading Framework”, Reading is described as the product of decoding and comprehension, as proposed in Gough and Tunmer’s “Simple View of Reading”(1986). The national curriculum programmes of study for reading reflect the model, presented as two dimensions: ‘**word reading**’ and ‘**comprehension**’.

#### Language comprehension

Comprehension does not refer to reading itself but, rather, to the way in which we make sense of words, sentences and the wider language we hear or read.

#### Word reading (decoding)

Decoding refers to:

- reading unfamiliar words (words that have not been read before) by saying the sounds corresponding to the letters in the words and then blending the sounds together, either aloud or silently
- reading familiar words accurately and silently ‘at a glance’, that is, no longer saying the sounds consciously.

**This model states that children need both good language comprehension and good word reading to become “good readers”.**

### Implications for Early Reading at Glyne Gap

Due to the nature of our pupils learning disabilities at Glyne Gap, ALL pupils will require additional support for their Language Comprehension. In our setting we refer to this as one aspect of their learning within the Curriculum area of “Communication.”

Until pupils can make sense of the spoken language, they cannot apply this knowledge to decode and make sense of written words. We refer to this as “The Bridge to Literacy.”

## **Communication... the Bridge to Literacy**

*(An Overview)*

### **COMMUNICATION**

**ESSENTIAL** skill for learning and life

Skills learnt are central for pupils to be able to meet their basic needs and to progress nearly all other learning.

An integral pre-cursor for all pupils "literacy"



### **COMMUNICATION**

Once pupils have achieved GGA6 in Communication, they are introduced to early functional literacy skills alongside their continued work within the Communication curriculum.

Pupils working below GGA6 will continue their essential learning in Communication and experience a breadth of literacy experience in their tier2 learning supported working within the engagement profile.

*GGA Assessment areas include:  
Expressive Language, Social Communication & Speech, Receptive Language, Attention & Listening, Comprehension & Imaginative Play*

### **CORE SKILLS FOR FUNCTIONALITY**

#### **Functional Literacy**

For pupils working GGA7+

Emphasis on teaching the core skill of literacy is in terms of 'what it can do' to develop pupil's independence and confidence through its functional use to support their learning in school, in the community and in their future lives, rather than teaching the skill in isolation.

*GGA Assessment areas include:  
Independence & Organisation, Leisure, Mechanics of Reading and Writing (7-10)/ Independent living (11+) and Core Vocab.*

### **CORE SKILLS FOR FUNCTIONALITY**

#### **Phonics & Early Reading**

For pupils working GGA11+

(Pupils demonstrating capacity to develop higher reading skills)

Emphasis on teaching the mechanics of reading (i.e. word reading and Lang comprehension) to support the functional application of literacy. Taught alongside ongoing learning in Functional Literacy.

*Assessed using READ, WRITE, INC phonics screening tool & GGA National Curriculum Literacy Based Profile*



**IMPACT**

The impact of this curriculum is that pupils will be able to:-

- Apply their skills of communication & literacy to advocate for themselves, make & express informed choices to the best of their ability
- Apply their skills of communication & literacy to independently access purposeful leisure and vocational opportunities (including where appropriate work) that are meaningful to them
- Maintain and develop meaningful relationships and friendships (including where appropriate using functional technology to keep in touch)

***This policy outlines how the Phonics and Early Reading Curriculum is implemented in order to support the achievement of our Curriculum intent, and should be read in conjuncture with the Curriculum at Glyne Gap Policy (CG1), Communication & Language Policy (CG5), and Core Skills for Functionality (CG8)***

## 2. Communication...the Bridge to Literacy

Communication and Language (along with personal and social development) is at the very centre of of SLD/PMLD education and as such our Curriculum. We define it as an Essential Skill for Learning and Life, and is prioritised as such in all pupil's individual learning plans. We believe EVERY child is a "*Communicator*", and should be provided with Outstanding Teaching and Learning opportunities to develop these skills, to the best of their ability.

There is a complex link between communication and literacy. At Glyne Gap we define literacy as reading and writing with a focus on teaching skills for functionality. **Communication** should not be seen as a separate subject, but as an **integral pre-cursor** to all literacy development. Although all pupils are working below national standards at key stages 1 and 2, the DFE programme of study (2014) makes explicit: "the National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum- cognitively, socially and linguistically. The document goes on to say that 'spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing'.

Our **Communication Curriculum** therefore outlines the start of pupil's journey into reading and encompasses all aspects of "Language Comprehension".

*(Please see Communication and Language Policy (CG5) for further information)*

## 3. Aims of this Policy

- *To ensure all staff understand what reading looks like at Glyne Gap, and their role in supporting this.*
- *To ensure there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading across the school, including sufficient challenge and expectation for Reading within pupils individual learning plans.*
- *To ensure pupils for whom it is relevant are identified and supported to develop "formal" reading skills as appropriate for their individual needs.*
- *To ensure pupils for whom it is relevant are given outstanding learning opportunities to extend their knowledge in their Early Reading.*
- *To ensure appropriate supports are in place to enable families to support their young person develop their skills in Early Reading.*

## 4. Core Skills for Functionality - Early Literacy

**We believe all pupils need to establish the pre requisite skills of “Communication” (Essential Skills for Learning and Life) before then progressing to working on their skills in Early “Literacy”.**

Once pupils have achieved GGA6 in Communication, they are introduced to early functional literacy skills through the teaching of the Core Skills for Functionality. This includes the teaching of the foundation skills for the mechanics of reading and writing (word reading /decoding), and assessed in this area through GGA Functional Literacy Skills.

The emphasis on teaching the core skill of literacy is in terms of ‘what it can do’ to develop pupil’s independence and confidence through its functional use to support their learning in school, in the community and in their future lives, rather than teaching the skill in isolation. (for example, being able to read specific high frequency words on a shopping list and then be able to locate items from signs in a supermarket).

Alongside bespoke communication plans for every pupil and specific functional literacy targets and sessions, the school offers all pupils a language rich total communication environment, in which pupils are immersed in stories, the spoken word, written word, signing and visuals. “Communication Stations” are available around the school, which provide language opportunities along with high quality resources in a range of environments, to support pupils developing receptive language and comprehension skills, and support the first steps on their journey towards word reading. (e.g. applying their knowledge of the communication ladder to recognise and understanding the meaning carried by an Object of Reference/ Photo/ Symbol).

Stories and non-fiction books that appeal to our pupils are available to support the development of reading for pleasure and purpose and captures their interests to support the development of language comprehension.

*(For more information see the Core Skills for Functionality Policy CG 8).*

### Working towards becoming a “good reader”

For pupils demonstrating they have the capacity to develop the reading skills to unlock the alphabetic code, (i.e. those who demonstrate they can or have the potential to de-code and encode text AND comprehend the meaning of the text), We have created the Phonics and Early Reading Strand of the Core Skills for Functionality Curriculum to ensure they have the opportunity to be sufficiently challenged and extend their learning in order to reach their full potential.

Through this strand, we provide specialist teaching for Word Reading and Language Comprehension, to offer these pupils the best opportunities to become competent readers, to facilitate them to gain the greatest level of independence and personal autonomy for the future.

## 5. Curriculum Implementation

In order to support and extend the learning of a small cohort of pupils, demonstrating they are developing skills which could and should be further focussed in preparation for the future; Glyne Gap have employed an Early Reading Lead.

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Early Reading Lead

- Alongside senior leaders, lead the school's understanding and philosophy regarding the importance and impact of Early Reading
- Lead the whole school systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading approaches/strategies, ensuring consistency across the school.
- Raise the profile of early readers and attainment of pupils who have the potential for higher level skills in Literacy (see identification of pupils below)
- Undertake the statutory assessment of pupils who are working above standard 2 in Literacy at the end of key stages 1 and 2 where appropriate
- Proactively work with parents to support early reading & functional literacy (particularly for pupils who have the potential for higher level skills) and provide strategies to work on at home to support learning
- Maintain oversight of developments in Early Reading nationally and report these to SLT
- Maintain and develop policy and practice of the teaching of Early Reading at Glyne Gap
- Be a Knowing Colleague offering training, support and guidance to teachers in the delivery of Early Reading at Glyne Gap

### Identification and Assessment of pupils

Pupils who may have the potential to become "formal readers" (i.e. unlocking the alphabetic code to decode and encode written text with the ability to apply this understanding), are identified and discussed at termly liaison meetings and/or at EHCP reviews, based on evidence from their achieved goals in IEPs and completed GGAs in Functional Literacy & Communication: Receptive Language.

Pupils will have usually achieved GGA Functional Literacy Level 10 including at least 80% of the mechanics of reading and writing and Pre-Key Stage Standard 2 for Reading and Language Comprehension.

Once identified and agreed by class teacher, Head of School and parents, a referral is made to the **Early Reading Lead** for an Initial Reading Assessment.

### *Initial Assessment*

Within 2 weeks of a referral being made, the Early Reading Lead completes an initial assessment in the areas of Phonic knowledge, sight vocabulary and Reading Comprehension, using the schools recognised phonics assessment tool (Read, Write Inc.)

Following this assessment, the Early Reading Lead will share the outcomes with the Class Teacher and Head of School and agree next steps for pupil's learning within their early reading curriculum. All parties must agree it is appropriate for them to move onto this curriculum strand. Through the initial assessment an outcome may be that specific targets within pupils Functional Literacy skills or Communication need to be addressed prior to them moving onto the next stage of the Reading curriculum. In this instance, goals to address these barriers are writing in pupils termly goals and additional support can be requested as appropriate from the Communication Team.

If it is felt it would be appropriate to move onto the Early Reading strand of Function Literacy, provision to support the next steps in learning is agreed. This may be in the form of identified goals to be taught within the class context, the provision of specific resources to enable access to Early Reading opportunities, additional training for class based staff, or direct 1:1 or small group phonics and reading sessions with the Early Reading Lead.

### Planning & delivery of the Early Reading Curriculum

Once the assessment has been completed, the Early Reading Lead will identify the key next steps that the individual needs to work on, and in discussion with the Class teacher regarding the pupils' individual needs; create an individualised learning plan of specific goals, with activities and adapted resources to meet the individual child's needs in order to deliver these goals.

The Early Reading Lead works in partnership with the class teacher to support the delivery of the learning in Early Reading and ensure its delivery across the school day. The Early Reading Lead will meet with the class teacher to share the learning plan and offer guidance on teaching methods to deliver this learning. Goals will be included in pupils IEPs, and these along with teaching methods, will be disseminated to the class team by the class teacher in team meetings and delivered across the week throughout the school day. If required, additional training for class teachers/teams is provided to support the delivery of the learning outcomes, and in addition pupils may direct input from the Early Reading Lead.

### Systematic teaching of Phonics

Reading is taught through 'Read Write Inc.' which is a DfE approved systematic, synthetic phonics programme. By using Read, Write Inc. we provide pupils with a personalised, but structured approach to the teaching of reading from the starting point of identifying sounds and moving through to reading books and comprehension work.

Phonics is taught daily (or as appropriate to individual pupils) in small groups or individually following the Read, Write, Inc. Programme aligned with pupils' goal and/or IEP targets.

Class teachers lead the teaching of phonics within their class teams with resources that are simple and limit distraction.

Resources are adapted to support pupils by:

- using pictures to select responses and augmentative communication strategies
- using alternative communication systems, such as Communication books and iPads
- using Makaton signing
- using enlarged texts, if needed.

### Systematic teaching of Reading

Pupils have the opportunity to read in school at least 3 times a week. Individual reading books are matched to pupils' phonic phase and are practiced at home and school. These are specifically selected to support the development of decoding skills. In the same way pupils require a bespoke, small step approach within their phonics, Reading Comprehensions goals are broken down in a similar way and taught through the use of Read Write Inc texts, along with supporting materials and activities from Reading with RIC (Retrieve, Interpret, Choice) language comprehension programme.

Each pupil has a reading record for staff to complete in school and for parents to fill in at home to ensure regular communication between home and school.

Pupils have the opportunity to select books for pleasure, which they may enjoy being read to them, reading with an adult or by themselves at school and at home. An emphasis is placed on Language Comprehension, with staff encouraging pupils to use their primary means of communication to talk about the story and answer questions about it.

### Systematic teaching of Writing

Before children can write independently, it helps if they are able to say (aloud or just to themselves) what they want to write. Proficiency in spoken language gives them more that they can write about and more words for what they want to say. We again place the greatest of emphasis on developing pupils Communication and Expressive Language as the foundations for early writing.

For some pupils, the ability to form coherent shapes on paper may be limited due to their physical skills. We believe that "writing" should focus on composition to convey meaning and therefore may not involve pupils putting pen to paper, but using a range of resources/ ICT equipment to support this. Encoding to convey meaning is ALWAYS taught alongside pupils' word reading and language comprehension activities. The Early Reading Lead works with class teachers to identify and provide appropriate resources for the individual to enable this. For those for whom it would benefit, letter formation also forms part of these activities but is not used in isolation.

### Specialist Interventions by the Early Reading Lead

Following the initial assessment, pupils requiring additional specialist targeted teaching will be identifies and alongside their class-based learning, receive weekly interventions from the Early Reading Lead.

Pupils will receive a block of a minimum of 6 sessions, working either 1:1 or in small groups of pupils working on similar learning outcomes as identified initial and termly summative assessment. Blocks of input may be delivered alongside the class teacher, to support the behaviour for learning of pupils who are yet to build a relationship with the Early Reading Lead, or with a member of the class team to support skilling up staff to be able to deliver the learning in the classroom.

Pupils new to the Early Reading Curriculum will always receive an initial block of input and following termly reviews, it is agreed whether pupils need to continue receiving specialist support (for example if a new skill being introduced), or if they need time to consolidate existing learning outcomes which can be delivered by the class team. At the end of term, ALL pupils will be reassessed using the termly summative assessment by the early reading lead and in discussions with class teachers, next steps and further provision/ blocks of input agreed.

### Supporting Early Reading at Home

We work in partnership with parents and/or carers and ensure they are informed, involved and supported in the teaching of early reading for their child.

The Early Learning Lead meets with parents on a termly basis to discuss, plan and evaluate set targets for their child and provide strategies to work on at home to support learning.

Individual and group Phonic reading books matched to phonic levels are sent home along with a reading record to be used in partnership with school, parents are encouraged to make comments on the pupil's book chosen to share for pleasure at home.

Parent Workshops are delivered termly (6x per year) that offer support and guidance in supporting pupils within their Communication and the Bridge to Literacy. In addition an explanation of the



progression of Communication, the bridge to literacy curriculum, has been delivered to parents via Parent Forum.

Information sessions/parent workshops around the teaching and delivery of Phonics have been considered by the school, however are currently not planned for as the cohort for whom it would be relevant is so small. In addition each individual within this cohort, has such unique needs that bespoke teaching approaches are necessary and as such, we have felt our 1:1 approach for delivering home learning is better equipped for meeting both pupil and families need.

The Early Reading Lead is available to book 1:1 discussion at parent consultation (2xper year) if a parent whose child is not yet following the Phonics and Early Reading Curriculum wanted to discuss this curriculum further, and the school operates an open door policy with class teacher and HoS for any parent wishing to discuss their child's reading development.

### Training

All staff are supported to ensure they deliver the correct teaching method for reading with individual pupils through liaison with the Early Reading co-ordinator and discussion within their class team meetings.

Teachers are supported through 1:1 discussion with the Early Reading Lead and through training delivered in Teachers meetings.

Staff members may work alongside the Early Reading Lead for a block of input to receive "first hand" training on delivering teaching programmes to a pupil. The Early Reading Lead also provides training to class teams as part of their class team meetings upon request.

In addition, the Early Reading Lead keeps up to date with relevant external courses available and can recommend these to staff where it is felt this would benefit.

## Impact of the Early Reading Curriculum

### Assessing & Measuring Progress

Formative assessment is used by teachers throughout every lesson, to identify any misconceptions, if pupil's are getting stuck or if any additional support is needed etc. Class teams share these misconceptions with the class teacher and class teachers can discuss them with the Early Reading co-ordinator. Targets or materials can then be adapted as necessary to support delivery of next steps.

Reading targets in pupils IEPs are assessed by class teachers termly (3x per year) and information is shared with the Early Reading Lead. Pupils working with the ERL are assessed at the end of a block of input and this information is shared with the class teacher in order to inform the evaluation of termly goals.

Evaluations are used to inform the Glyne Gap National Curriculum based Literacy Assessment (GGNCbLA), this summative assessment is completed by class teachers in discussion with the Early Reading Lead and used to inform curriculum next steps.

In addition, the Early Reading Lead will complete a summative assessment using the phonics assessment tool on all pupils on the Early Reading Curriculum at the end of every term (3xper year) to assess pupils' progress in this area and inform planning.

Statutory Assessment is the responsibility of the Early Reader Lead who undertakes the assessments for pupils at the end of key stages 1 and 2 completes their Teacher Assessments for Reading.

## Monitoring Progress

The Early Reading Lead is responsible for meeting with class teacher at the end of term to discuss Reading Goal evaluations and ensure progress is being made, and if not consider what the barriers are to the pupils learning. Goals and Evaluations are monitored termly by Heads of School through class file monitoring.

Class teachers make a termly judgement on their pupils' ER progress which is then moderated by the ER lead and an overall judgement is made. These judgements are monitored by Heads of School and reported to Governors.

The Early Reading lead conducts termly Learning Walks for all pupils working on the Early Reading Curriculum, to observe learning in the Early Reading Curriculum to ensure there is consistency in the teaching of skills and pupil progress observed reflects evaluations shared.

In addition, Functional Literacy and Early Reading may form the focus of Lesson Observation/Learning Walk by Heads of School, where this is a priority area of learning for pupils. (Communication is always an area of focus for these observations).

## Evaluating and Reporting Progress

The evidence for pupils learning in Early Reading is gathered, discussed and triangulated at termly liaison meetings with Heads of School. Heads of School are rigorous in evaluating evidence that pupils are making rapid and sustained progress, and when this is not the case, identify priorities for the next steps learning. Liaison outcomes are used to inform pupils PPIs to give a judgement on how well the pupil is learning against their own individual curriculum.

The Early Reading Lead submits a termly report outlining pupil progress outcomes in Early Reading including liaison judgments and any statutory assessments completed. These outcomes are reported to Head teacher and governors via Teaching and Learning governors' meetings.

In addition, Term5&6 liaison focusses on the annual discrete areas of Communication and Core Skills for Functionality to consider pupil's annual progress over time in these areas of the curriculum. All pupil outcomes are collated and considered in the annual Whole School Impact of the Curriculum data analysis meetings, used to identify next steps/ developments needed for the next year within the curriculum for inclusion within the whole school development plan.

The school meets all its statutory duties for assessment and information gathered is reported to the local authority.

*(See CG10 - Impact of the Curriculum-Assessing, Evaluating and Tracking Progress)*

## Next Steps/ Developments for Early Reading

### Development plan 2023-24

- To extend the skills of a group of pupils working towards subject specific skills within literacy and numeracy; including...
  - *Extending the staff training opportunities (whole school training delivered 24/, teachers received further training t2 and class teams & individual bespoke training delivered and ongoing offer for teams as required)*
  - *Extending the support for parents to continue this learning at home (in place for all pupils on cohort T3/4)*
  - *Ensuring the systematic monitoring of the Teaching & Learning of Early Reading across the school. (monitoring completed T3/4 – extending in T5/6 to ensure systematic approach to cyclical monitoring)*

*(See SDP for further detailed planning, key tasks & evaluations)*

### Links to Other Policies

CG1 - Curriculum at Glyne Gap School

CG10 - Impact of the Curriculum- Assessing, Evaluation and Tracking Progress

CG5– Supporting the Development of Communication and Language

CG8 –Guidance for Teaching Core Skills for Functionality-Literacy, Numeracy and ICT