Reading and Phonics at Chadsgrove

At Chadsgrove, we understand the importance of developing a love of reading and have designed a carefully sequenced and inclusive approach to ensure every pupil can access and enjoy books and stories. Across all pathways, pupils are provided with daily opportunities to engage with a wide range of texts through multi-sensory and meaningful experiences that match their learning needs.

Adventurers Pathway

In the Adventurers Pathway, pupils enjoy a rich variety of literature, shared both as a group and in one-to-one sessions with adults. Stories are brought to life through props, music, videos and sensory elements, with simplified text to help highlight key words and events. Symbols, signing and Big Mac switches are used to support understanding and encourage interaction. Pupils revisit familiar stories to build anticipation, recognition of images and early narrative awareness, supporting the development of early communication and literacy skills in a highly engaging way.

Discoverers Pathway

Our Discoverers learners are immersed in ongoing, multi-sensory experiences that build the foundations of emergent literacy. Reading opportunities are embedded throughout daily routines, and pupils are supported to develop key pre-reading skills such as self-awareness, rhythm, pattern, and order. Emphasis is placed on strengthening essential visual, auditory and motor skills, attention and focus, and early communication. These experiences enable pupils to begin building meaningful connections with the world around them through stories, objects, sounds and symbols.

Explorers Pathway

In the Explorers Pathway, the foundations for reading are developed through a focus on both language comprehension and word recognition. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities to develop vocabulary, listening and speaking skills, and understanding of language. This includes sharing high-quality stories and poems, learning rhymes and simple verses, and engaging in structured play and communication activities that support phonological development and language awareness.

Navigators and Pioneers Pathways

Pupils in the Navigators and Pioneers Pathways follow the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' systematic synthetic phonics programme. This programme teaches pupils to read by identifying and blending individual phonemes (sounds) to form words. Common exception words that cannot be decoded phonetically are taught through sight recognition. The programme uses a multi-sensory approach, combining visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning to support memory and application of phonics knowledge. Pupils also access 'Big Cat' decodable books, matched to their phonics stage, enabling them to practise and apply their skills with increasing independence and confidence. This helps to build fluency and fosters a lifelong enjoyment of reading.

Post-16

In Post-16, pupils are offered meaningful and functional reading opportunities that support the development of cognitive, social and communication skills, both in school and in the wider community. Pupils practise reading through real-life contexts such as reading signs and timetables, navigating websites, completing online shopping, reading for independent living, and using digital communication like emails. Reading is embedded across the Post-16 curriculum to help pupils access information, engage with their community, and build essential life skills.

Reading for Pleasure

Across all pathways, we prioritise 'reading for pleasure'. We believe that positive reading experiences contribute significantly to a pupil's success, enjoyment and sense of fulfilment. Pupils explore books through sensory stories, story massage, role play, and 'Books Beyond Words'. Our classrooms feature inviting reading areas, and our well-stocked school library is a hub for exploration and discovery. We enrich our reading culture with author visits, themed curriculum days, and whole-school reading competitions to inspire a love of stories and literature in every learner.