

Approach to reading for Deaf pupils (iASEND Strands S – D)

Pupils are encouraged to acquire a love of books and to develop a respect for them. Younger children are introduced to the conventions of books, left to right orientation, discussing illustrations as an integral part to the story. Pupils focus on identifying letters of the alphabet, developing sight vocabulary and linking these to the British Sign Language (BSL) signs and individual signed letters of the alphabet.

Reading has a high priority within the timetable and focused reading tasks are planned and incorporated into the daily routine which involves guided reading sessions for some children. Each class has access to planned BSL sessions from a native sign language user which incorporates signed stories and promotion of deaf culture via storytelling.

Children are encouraged to take a scheme book home with a reading record. The pupils share their books with an adult in school at least three times per week. The adult asks questions relevant to the interest of the child and encourages predictions and signed conversations about the text. The pupils are encouraged to decode unknown words using appropriate strategies. The word is then linked to the BSL sign in conjunction with an explanation regarding the context of the sign for example the word 'watch' – watch (time piece), watch (watch something). Understanding of the differences between meaning and context is continually re-enforced even though the spelling is the same.

Books are read / signed regularly in class.

The school library is open to pupils; all pupils are encouraged to choose a library book from the library each week.

Reading comprehension is taught weekly and may cover a wide range of activities including answering questions related to text/pictures and rewriting text.

Regular assessment ensures pupils' progress is continually monitored, strategies are adapted according to need in order to maximise progress.

Strategies used to teach reading with Deaf pupils

Phonics

For deaf pupils acquiring phonics skills is only one key skill in developing literacy, having ongoing opportunities to develop language skills and to read text is vital as this cohort may have fewer opportunities than other pupils to learn spoken language incidentally (through overhearing what other people are saying). The Deaf pupils at Northern Counties School use a variety of communication methods including spoken English, BSL, Sign Supported English (SSE) and cued speech. Access to a language-rich environment with appropriately qualified BSL signing staff supports the promotion of good language skills. Consistent use of hearing aids, cochlear implants and other amplification technology, means most deaf children can perceive the full range of speech sounds, however it is important to note that this group of young

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people do not generally hear with as much clarity, or as easily, as hearing children (some of our students have little or no residual hearing and do not use any form of amplification). The ability of being able to perceive a sound is not the same as being able to hear and understand it.

For those who have emergent listening skills, a phonics based approach to reading may be utilised whereby pupils learn to decode phonemes with their respective sound may be employed.

Other alternative strategies may also be adopted for example, whole word recognition delivered by SSE (written English words taught through individual signs, supported by the use of illustrations and images). New words and phrases will be linked to personal experience where appropriate to ensure understanding of meaning and opportunities to rehearse signs and written words in context. Texts may also be translated into BSL to promote reading for meaning and allow for the teaching of further individual and multi-channel signs whilst developing awareness of how the structure of written English is different to that of BSL.

THRASS (Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills) is used with those students who possess good listening skills. Phonics for our profoundly deaf students is taught using BSL and grapheme correspondence.

Teaching phonics skills requires differentiation for each deaf pupil dependent upon their hearing levels. A variety of active learning techniques are utilised to support teaching in this area such as using scooter boards, outdoor learning opportunities and specific teaching in visual phonics utilising individual student motivation and learning style.

Phonological awareness and the use of THRASS with deaf students

Many grammatical forms are signaled by subtle changes to sounds in words, for example, boy/boys, walk/walked and man/men. Many of the smaller, 'non-content' words that make a sentence grammatically complete are difficult to listen to, as they are unstressed or shortened, for example, 'I am going to the café for my tea,' could sound like, 'I'm going t the café f m tea' to a deaf child using their amplification.

Visual phonics supports the development of phonological awareness and supports 'phonological cognition'. Visual phonics can be a useful tool in supporting the internal representation of new vocabulary. For students with deafness and/or auditory processing difficulties it provides information which may not be available using the auditory system alone. Cued Articulation is a visual phonics system in which simple hand cues relate directly to articulation features. These features can also be illustrated by simple symbols called 'articulograms'.

The THRASS system, complimented by visual phonics, illustrates the link between

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speech sounds (phonemes) and spelling (graphemes), which can otherwise be very confusing for students with weak auditory skills. The logical, visual environment of the chart enables students to analyse and make decisions about English spelling.

Shape and colour coding

We use an adapted version of the shape coding approach at Northern Counties School to develop student's use and understanding of English grammar. This is where different parts of English are represented by different shapes and colours. This makes the rules of English grammar explicit for students learning English as an additional language to BSL. For more information, please refer to our grammar rationale.

Individual reading

- Teachers and support staff listen to pupils read individually. Texts are chosen from the scheme and are at the instructional level for each child.
- Pupils have a book which they can select from the school library each week to support their reading.

Individual reading will be used to:

- Teach reading strategies and behaviours at the instructional level of the child
- Provide a context for the teacher to teach high frequency words, decoding skills, use of picture clues and context to support prediction
- Provide an opportunity for the child to practice decoding/word recognition skills
- Support the pupil in the application of comprehension strategies
- Monitor the comprehension and application of reading skills of the child.

Shared reading

- Teachers will provide on average three, fifteen minute sessions of shared reading each week.
- The texts selected will be linked to writing activities planned and whenever possible and may link in with BSL specific sessions.

Shared reading will be used to:

- Demonstrate how to read a wide variety of different genres and text types
- Demonstrate that reading is a pleasurable experience.
- Give access to challenging texts as appropriate
- Provide a secure environment for learning to read
- Provide a context for explicit teaching about reading
- Enable teacher and other staff to model the skills and strategies used by effective readers

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Guided reading

Pupils who have learned to decode text are at the reading to learn stage. Guided reading is used as a key teaching strategy for pupils at this stage. Guided reading will be planned on a weekly basis for one twenty minute session. And these sessions may occur outside literacy sessions.

Guided reading will be used to:

- Teach reading strategies and behaviours at the instructional level of the group
- Provide an opportunity for pupils to practice their reading skills independently
- Provide a context for pupils to share responses and understanding of different text types and genres with others
- Explicitly support pupils further enhance their comprehension strategies

Independent reading

Teacher will set reading tasks for pupils that require them to read without teacher support. Some of these tasks may require a written response.

Independent reading will be used to:

- Promote enjoyment of reading
- Promote the development of independent learning strategies
- Provide a context for the application of skills and knowledge about reading.