

WCPS English Reading Comprehension Curriculum Overview 2025-2026

WCPS Curriculum Intent for English Reading Comprehension

Reading is perhaps the most valuable of capabilities that a person can acquire. Every other capability of equal or greater value, such as walking or talking, comes relatively instinctively. In contrast, we have not evolved to be readers. Learning to read is a singular challenge that demands expertise from teachers and school leaders. Thankfully, reading development has been studied for decades. The accumulated evidence, informed by professional experience, can guide us in our aim to give every pupil the best chance of becoming a capable, confident reader...

Reading is the comprehension of visual symbols that represent language. To do this, pupils must develop two capacities that become increasingly integrated as expertise develops – (1) recognising words, and (2) building meaning from those words:

1. To recognise words on a page, pupils must learn to associate the sounds of our language with visual symbols. (The sounds represented are the smallest chunks of spoken sound that we can categorise, called phonemes. The visual symbols representing these phonemes are letters of the alphabet operating individually or in groups.) Explicit teaching can help pupils to learn these associations and how to use them. This is called phonics. Over time, pupils also associate these visual symbols with units of meaning directly. (Words can be thought of as composed of chunks of meaning called morphemes.) Due to the complexity of our writing system, lots of reading is required for pupils to learn these associations between visual symbols, sound and meaning.
2. Building meaning from written words uses mostly the same knowledge that is used to build meaning from spoken language: knowledge of concepts that words represent and knowledge of how words interact with each other. This means that developing pupils' spoken language and their knowledge of the world is key to fostering their ability to read. Building meaning from words is also supported by some knowledge that is unique to written language, including knowledge of how words are presented within texts.

As pupils become more expert at recognising words and building meaning from them, their reading begins to flow. Pupils can reinforce this important sense of fluency through text experience and through rehearsed reading aloud.

Teaching comprehension involves the provision of fascinating, challenging experiences with texts that have been chosen for the breadth and relevance of their content. It also involves awakening pupils to the active, personal nature of comprehension through explanation, modelling and rich discussion.

Pupils learn aspects of reading at different rates. While the same principles apply to all developing readers, struggling readers require targeted teaching that is sensitive to their specific needs, motivation and self-efficacy. The relationships between teachers, pupils and books is central to the promotion of pupils' independent reading. Reading aloud to pupils is both a necessity and a privilege.

There are various ways to organise reading instruction. At WCPS, we keep in mind the ideas outlined above in order to construct, implement and evaluate our reading curriculum to give our pupils the best chance of becoming capable, confident readers.

WCPS's approach to reading comprehension is based upon *The Art & Science of Primary Reading* by Christopher Such

WCPS Curriculum Implementation for English Reading Comprehension

At WCPS, we deliver high quality teaching and learning in reading comprehension through Shared Reading, Fluency Reading, Closed Reading and Extended Reading. Time for reading and/or phonics is scheduled to be taught every day of the week from EYFS – Year 6

Fluency Practice Reading

This is the act of repeated reading of short text or extract can greatly aid reading comprehension. The text being read should encompass the *Goldilocks Affect*: the text should be of a difficulty so that the child reading is challenged to read the text fluently for the first time. Some modelling from the person listening to the reading will be necessary. Unfamiliar vocabulary, concepts and schemas should be discussed and unpicked. Before, during, after reading the question should be asked, “What are we trying to achieve after repeated reading of this text?” All fluency practice has to have at its heart the main reason for reading... to learn interesting things from what the text is telling the reader. There will be lots of discussion and questioning of what the text is trying to communicate to the reader.

- * Fluency Practice Reading in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2: every child will be heard reading by the Class Teacher once a week and by the Teaching Assistant once a week.

- * Fluency Practice Reading in Year 5 & Year 6: this is done as a whole class once a week. Pupils sit in mixed ability pairs attempt to read the text aloud to their partner. Both pupils are involved - non-reading partners track each line of text with a ruler before switching roles. Partners may alternate a line each to read aloud. Every child reads the text aloud at least x3 times aiming for greater fluency each time. Readers model to the class and support partners to blend tricky words to instill confidence in their partner's efforts. Adults move around the room hearing differing reading pairs, pausing the class to model a particular word or sentence when required. Teachers give whole class feedback on how to be a better reading partner and decode certain words - Individuals who's Reading Age is behind their Chronological Age frequently read to an adult

Close Practice Reading

This reading comprehension lesson involves detailed analysis of a short piece of text or extract and thus focuses on the development of word knowledge, background knowledge, and text knowledge through deep discussion and analysis of vocabulary, schema and context. This comprehension lesson requires repeated reading of a text whereby the first read gives an overall sense of the text, and subsequent reads involve the discussion of particular themes, vocabulary choices from the writer, literary devices, plot points or anything else worthy of focus. Unfamiliar vocabulary, schemas and concepts should ideally be discussed as they are encountered, though this can be also done before the reading begins – front load / pre-teach. Due to the in-depth analysis, highly skilled discursive and dialogic nature of this technique, Close Reading is best suited to UKS2

- * Close Reading in Year 5 & Year 6: this is scheduled to take place twice a week, involving rich discussion and/or may involve answering questions independently in writing. A third of the lesson should compromise reading and two thirds should involve discussion and/or comprehension analysis.

Extended Practice Reading

This lesson compromises prolonged engagement an exposure to a longer piece of text or extract, focusing on the development of fluency, word/vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, text knowledge and schemas. There are FOUR different ways to undertake such reading, depending on the current reading ability of the class:

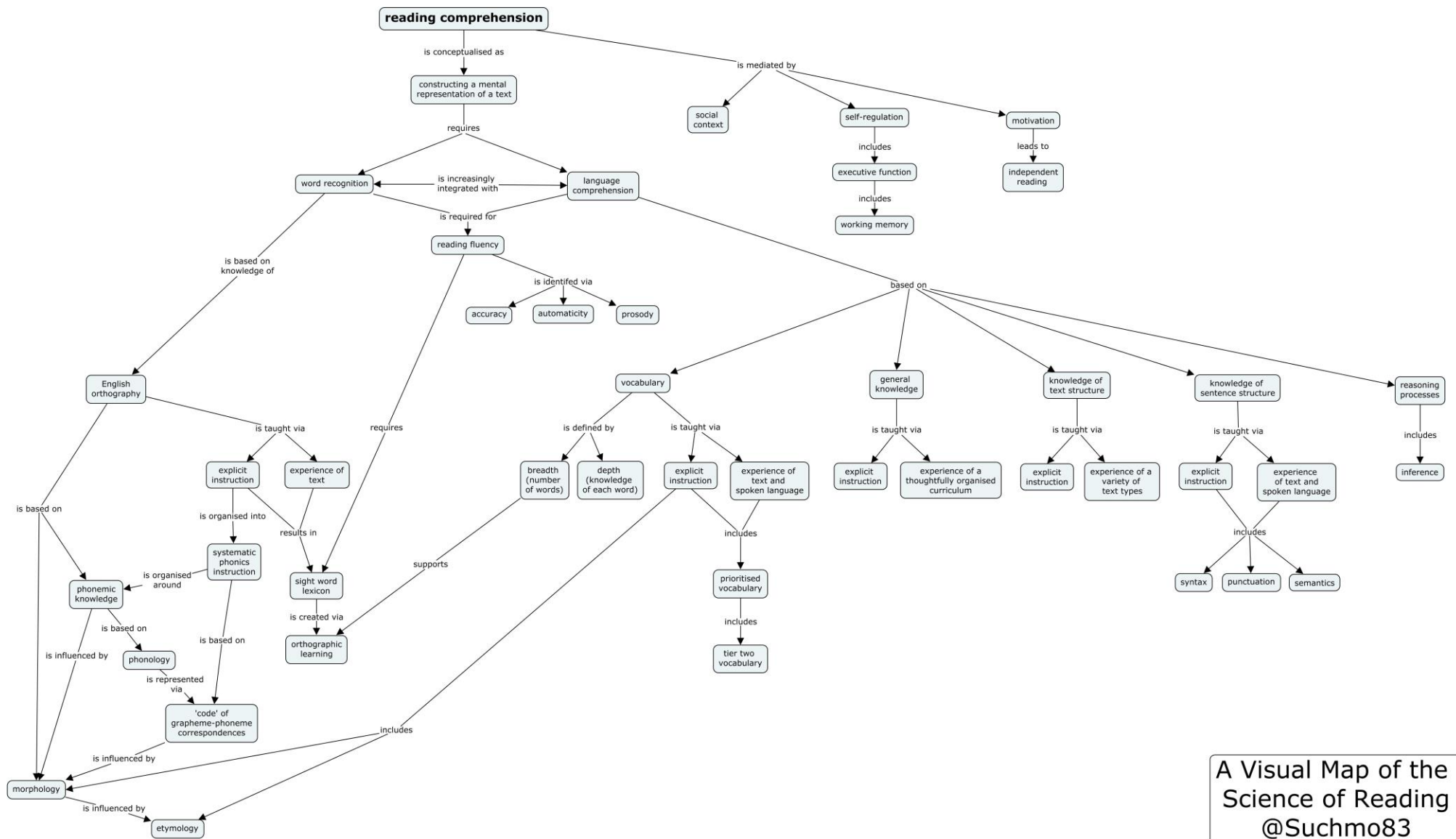
- I. The teacher reads to the class as they follow the text, keeping pace with a ruler. Accountability can be ensured by the teacher pausing and asking the class to say the next word in the text in unison.
- II. Children, selected by the teacher, take it in turns to read a few sentences aloud while the rest of the class keep pace with a ruler. The teacher also occasionally takes a turn to model fluent reading. Accountability can be ensured by quick transitions between readers and by the teacher pausing and asking the class to say the next word in the text in unison when it is the teacher's turn to read.
- III. Children read silently in short bursts, the length of which is carefully managed by the teacher. At first, the amount of reading to be done is very short to minimise the issues caused by the children's different reading speeds, and over time as the children's ability develops, the amount of reading in each burst is increased.
- IV. Children read to extended periods in silence from a shared text. Due to differences in reading speeds, questions are prepared for early finishers to ensure that they have actually read the text and have attempted to comprehend its meaning.

Extended reading methods I. & II. should only be used where there's an inability to decode that results in silent reading consolidating dysfluency. Extended Reading should be accompanied by discussion & related questions for children to answer to probe their understanding of the text. Teachers plan and choose key points in the text that need dissecting with the pupils, picking key moments that need clarifying, summarising or exploring the schema or inferring something new. Explore unfamiliar vocabulary as it is encountered is central to this approach. Pupils can be required to write answers to questions to reinforce what they have understood – but it's the reading itself and the related discussion that will most advance children's reading ability. We aim for two-thirds of the lesson to comprise reading and one-third of the lesson to comprise discussion.

- * Extended Reading Year 1: during a Reading Time lesson, individual children will be Fluency Reading either with the Class Teacher or Teaching Assistant and the rest of the class will be engaged with independent phonics, handwriting and reading activities, monitored by the TA/Teacher who support the children with their learning. Small groups of pupils may do Extended Reading activities around a piece of text with either the Class Teacher or Teaching Assistant.
- * Extended Reading in Year 2: during a Reading Time lesson, pupils will have a mixture of Fluency and Extended reading experiences. The Class Teacher and/or Teaching Assistant who isn't Fluency Reading 1:2:1 with each child throughout the week, the Class Teacher/Teaching assistant will do Extended Reading with a group of pupils who will each have a copy of a piece of text. Other children will be engaged with phonics, handwriting and other reading activities.
- * Extended Reading in Year 5 & Year 6: pupils engage with Extended Reading activities twice a week involving paired and whole class analysis and discussion of longer pieces of text.

Shared Reading:

This is effectively daily 'Story Time'. Every class has 10-15 minutes of 'Story Time' a day with a teacher reading the class a story for pleasure. Pupils may be questioned as the story is read or there may be a discussion at the end of the session.



EYFS Statutory Framework Reading Comprehension Related Objectives

Communication & Language

- reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive.
- through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Literacy

- it is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading.
- language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth - it only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together.

Understanding the World

- listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.
- extend pupils's familiarity with words, supporting understanding across domains, enriching & widening vocabulary, supporting later reading comprehension.

Year 1 National Curriculum

Pupils should be taught to:

* develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:

- listening to and discussing a wide range of poems, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently
- being encouraged to link what they read or hear read to their own experiences
- becoming very familiar with key stories, fairy stories and traditional tales, retelling them and considering their particular characteristics
- recognising and joining in with predictable phrases
- learning to appreciate rhymes and poems, and to recite some by heart
- discussing word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known

* understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to by:

- drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
- checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading
- discussing the significance of the title and events
- making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done
- predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

* participate in discussion about what is read to them, taking turns and listening to what others say

* explain clearly their understanding of what is read to them.

Year 2 National Curriculum

Pupils should be taught to:

* develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:

- listening to, discussing and expressing views about a wide range of contemporary and classic poetry, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently
- discussing the sequence of events in books and how items of information are related
- becoming increasingly familiar with and retelling a wider range of stories, fairy stories and traditional tales
- being introduced to non-fiction books that are structured in different ways
- recognising simple recurring literary language in stories and poetry
- discussing and clarifying the meanings of words, linking new meanings to known vocabulary

discussing their favourite words and phrases

- continuing to build up a repertoire of poems learnt by heart, appreciating these and reciting some, with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear

* understand both the books that they can already read accurately and fluently and those that they listen to by:

- drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
- checking that the text makes sense to them as they read and correcting inaccurate reading
- making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done
- answering and asking questions
- predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

* participate in discussion about books, poems and other works that are read to them and those that they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say

* explain and discuss their understanding of books, poems and other material, both those that they listen to and those that they read for themselves

Year 3 & Year 4 National Curriculum

Pupils should be taught to:

Develop positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:

- Listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
- Reading books that are structured in different ways and reading for a range of purposes
- Using dictionaries to check the meaning of words that they have read

- Increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including fairy stories, myths and legends, and retelling some of these orally ☒ identifying themes and Conventions in a wide range of books English 36 Statutory requirements
- Preparing poems and play scripts to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone, volume and action
- Discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination
- Recognising some different forms of poetry [for example, free verse, narrative poetry]

Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:

- Checking that the text makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and explaining the meaning of words in context
- Asking questions to improve their understanding of a text
- Drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
- Predicting what might happen from details stated and implied
- Identifying main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph and summarising these
- Identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning
- Retrieve and record information from non-fiction
- Participate in discussion about both books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say.

As in key stage 1, however, pupils who are still struggling to decode need to be taught to do this urgently through a rigorous and systematic phonics programme so that they catch up rapidly with their peers. If they cannot decode independently and fluently, they will find it increasingly difficult to understand what they read and to write down what they want to say. As far as possible, however, these pupils should follow the year 3 and 4 programme English 34 of study in terms of listening to new books, hearing and learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and discussing these.

Year 5 & Year 6 National Curriculum

Pupils should be taught to:

* maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:

- continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
- reading books that are structured in different ways and reading for a range of purposes
- increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions
 - recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices
 - identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
 - making comparisons within and across books

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- learning a wider range of poetry by heart
- preparing poems and plays to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience
- * understand what they read by:
 - checking that the book makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context
 - asking questions to improve their understanding
 - drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
 - predicting what might happen from details stated and implied
 - summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas
 - identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- * discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader
- * distinguish between statements of fact and opinion
- * retrieve, record and present information from non-fiction
- * participate in discussions about books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously
- * explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary
- * provide reasoned justifications for their views

EYFS – Year 6 Reading Comprehension Curriculum

Through the teaching and learning of Phonics, Fluency Reading, Close Reading, Extended Reading, Shared Reading and general discussion of text used across the curriculum, pupils' comprehension will develop by focusing on the schema and vocabulary of the text being studied and pupils' growth in being able to use and apply the following skills in an age-appropriate way:

Skills

- Pupils will develop being able to define and clarify

When a reader is able to define an unknown piece of vocabulary through their knowledge of the context, synonyms or the use of dictionaries, thesauruses, online. Readers clarify their understanding of a sentence/phrase by asking and answering questions.

- Pupils will develop being able to visualize

When a reader forms a picture of what they are reading in their minds and can give textual evidence of how those pictures of events impact the story. It could be a picture of a character, setting or sequence of actions.

- Pupils will develop being able to make connections

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When the reader is able to connect the text to their own life, another text or the wider world.

- Pupils will develop being able to predict

The reader is able to use clues and prior knowledge to make predictions about a text.

- Pupils will develop being able to ask questions

A reader can recognise when the author has withheld information and they need to ask a question to further clarify. The reader is curious about missing details and only asks questions that support comprehension.

- Pupils will develop being able to infer

When a reader can assume truths about the plot or characters based on the text that support their comprehension.

- Pupils will develop being able to summarise

The reader is able to sum up what they have been reading. They bring insight into literal and inferential clues in the text to use their own vocabulary to show how they know what is happening in the text.