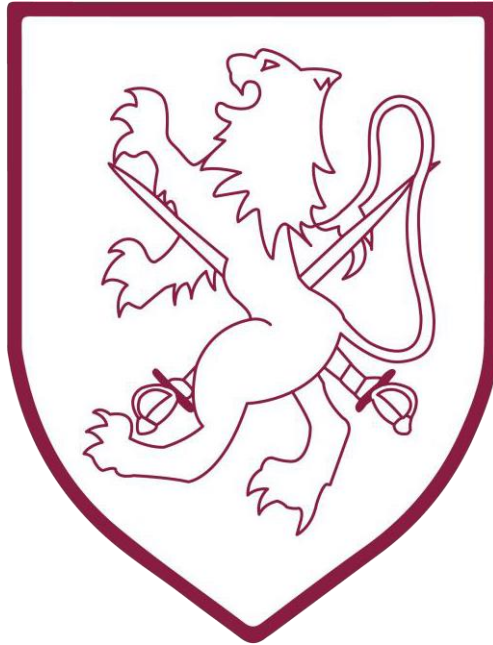


ENGLISH POLICY



Walter Infant School and Nursery

'To be the best I can be'

ENGLISH POLICY

Version	Action	By	Date
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Responsibility of: Full Governing Body and the Headteacher
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1. POLICY STATEMENT AND AIMS

Our Walter Infant School and Nursery Policy is in line with the 2014 National Curriculum. This policy is a statement of the school's agreed approach to the teaching of the English Curriculum. It is to inform teachers, support staff, governors, parents/carers and the school community.

At Walter Infant School and Nursery by the end of Year 2, or Key Stage 1, our aim is for our children to be '*Junior School Ready*'. We want our children to leave Walter Infant School and Nursery being able to read and write with fluency and accuracy at Age Related Expectations (ARE). We believe that we equip them with the foundations for lifelong reading and writing. For this reason, it is essential that the children receive the highest quality teaching for reading and writing possible. Best practice approaches have been adopted by the school to facilitate Quality First Teaching (QFT). This policy outlines the teaching of English at Walter Infant School and Nursery. Our school's motto is '*To be the best I can be*', and for this reason we want our children to leave our school being the best possible reader and writer.

2. READING AT WALTER INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

The National Curriculum states that children should be able to read fluently, and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Therefore, Walter Infant School and Nursery staff will do everything possible to promote an enjoyment and passion for reading. The children should have access to a wide variety and range of books, which includes fiction, non-fiction/information text and poetry.

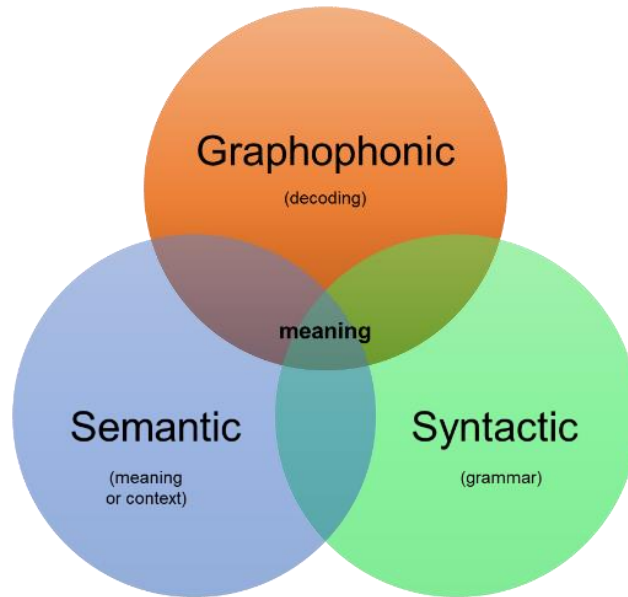
The Simple View of Reading (Appendix A) and the current National Curriculum breaks reading down into two dimensions: word reading (or decoding) and language comprehension. Therefore, it is essential that children develop both these skills to enable them to become confident and able readers. Word reading is primarily taught through the teaching of synthetic phonics, and exposure to a wide range of vocabulary. Language Comprehension is developed through high quality book talk and discussion with an adult or teacher. The DfE's Reading Framework discusses that reading is one of the best ways to develop high quality talk and discussion. Both skills require a broad access and exposure to high quality texts, which includes stories, non-fiction/information texts and poems.

2.1 Synthetic Phonics

For children to be able to read they initially have to be taught how to decode, or turn print into meaning. This is done through exposure to a wide range of vocabulary; written and spoken. We also teach children synthetic phonics. Synthetic phonics is the process of breaking words down into their smallest possible sound. Much research has been done into the use of phonics as a decoding strategy, which has shown that it gives *most* children the best possible

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chance at reading or decoding words. Phonics should be used as the prime method; however, it is not the exclusive method for word reading. Other cueing strategies can be considered, such as word recognition or on-sight graphic knowledge (the shape a word makes), grammatical awareness (syntactic), or contextual understanding (semantic). All readers use their graphophonic, semantic and syntactic knowledge in order to develop an understanding of the text. As we become more proficient at reading, these skills are employed efficiently and speedily by our brains without applying much thought. Therefore, these skills must be taught and practised to a high standard in order for children to make meaning.



Phonics is taught daily at Walter Infant School and Nursery, and applied and promoted holistically across the school as the prime method for decoding (reading) or encoding (spelling) words. We use a systematic synthetic phonics programme, provided by the Rocket Phonics. Rocket Phonics breaks down the journey using colour banding, which we use for guided reading in school. Each stage is progressive, and consolidated through revision. Rocket Phonics was chosen, because it allows for some level of flexibility and adaptation to suit our *personal* needs, as a school. In Nursery, we have a personalised programme based on the best practices of Phase One, from the Letters and Sounds documentation.

2.2 Book Banding

The book banding system is a universally adopted approach used by many schools to *grade*, or *level* books. The book bands are broken up into colour groups (Appendix B). The system was designed to allow teachers to choose the right texts at the right time when teaching children various skills required for

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reading. It is a way to organise books into a simple, progressive and useable system. Each book band, or colour, has a set of descriptors to differentiate each band and make the teaching of reading a systematic approach. These were expanded to include a wider range of colour bands. The school has also agreed and adopted a 'Walter Level' for reading. This was designed to allow the teachers to make better judgements when deciding on summative assessments on reading, and to encourage aspirational goals and targets.

In line with the DfE's Reading Framework and the Rocket Phonics SSP, our reading scheme was refreshed in 2021 and 2022 to allow for more phonically decodable texts to be included. This is to enable children to advance through the colour bands more progressively and rigorously whilst still allowing for high quality discussion. We have also chosen books that reflect our cultural capital, for example books with pictures of children from different backgrounds, books that reflect our Walter Values or our agenda on well-being and books that might be relevant to our Big Curriculum.

2.3 Guided Reading

Guided Reading has been identified as a good model for teaching children to read. It allows for an environment whereby the children can practise and apply their phonics, or word reading skills, and allows for high quality discussions with a class teacher or supporting adult. The children should have at least one Guided Reading session a week, and this is complemented with other activities that involve reading or the application of phonics.

Guided Reading allows children to explore a wide range of texts and discuss these to help develop an understanding. Children are taught in small groups of no more than six and the session is led by the teacher or learning support assistant. It is planned for using the objectives and programmes of study taken from the National Curriculum or relevant frameworks.

Each session should last for approximately 20-30 minutes, be objective led, allow children opportunities to decode and consist of high quality discussions revolving around the chosen text. The enabling adult should act as a facilitator, by asking high quality questions and raising points for discussion by the children before, during and after reading. During this process the adult will take notes, which allows for a build-up of comments and evidence of the children's reading ability and development of skills. The children then have an opportunity to return to the text and complete an activity to demonstrate their understanding and allow them to apply their skills.

Guided Reading starts in the Foundation Stage. The children are exposed to various texts and understand that books provide information, as well as stories and entertainment. Books are shared with the children on a regular basis (several times a day), including group guided reading session through our Rocket Phonics SSP. They should be able to listen with increasing attention and join in with rhyming patterns and phrases. By the end of Foundation 2 the

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children should be able to: handle books independently, read from left to right, read short sentences whilst tracking with their fingers and start to discuss books; which includes making very simple predictions.

2.4 Reading at Home

Most pupils at Walter Infant School and Nursery are expected to practise reading at home with a grown up. This forms part of their homework and encourages a fostering for the enjoyment of reading and sharing stories and texts.

At the start of F2 and Year One, the parents are invited to attend a workshop and presentation on reading and phonics. The mechanics of reading are discussed and shared, alongside appropriate subject knowledge of reading and phonics. We practise the phonemes with the parents and discuss the importance of pronunciation and enunciation. We also offer tips and advice on how to read successfully with your child, including the importance of book talk and high-quality conversations. We share these on our website for access later on.

The children take books home in F2, Year One and Year Two. They take home a book that is below the colour band they are reading in school, for example if they are reading blue during a guided reading session with the class teacher, they should take home a yellow book. This is so the children can practise and consolidate their skills for reading and fluency, it also allows the actual focused teaching to be delivered in school led by the class teacher.

When choosing a book to take home, the children are encouraged to make their own choices. In F2, the children start taking books home after the first half term, in October. They start by taking two books home and build up the rate of books by the end of the year. In Year One, the children are expected to change their books 3-5 times a week, based on their ability and fluency. The same is expected of Year Two; however, greater depth readers take home longer chapter books and replace these when they are finished. The children have access to physical books and e-books; accessed through our Rocket Phonics Programme. We still encourage the grown ups at home to read other books with their children; sharing stories is a cultural norm across many families and people of different backgrounds.

We also provide access to and suggest using high quality resources online for home. For example, using Alpha Blocks on BBC, Mr Thorne Teaches Phonics on YouTube or playing games on PhonicsPlay.co.uk. The teachers are always able to offer advice and support on how to help with reading at home. We understand that the parents are not always experts. Additional resources are made or purchased, where needed; particularly for disadvantaged children and families; for example, children in receipt of pupil premium grants.

2.5 Other Reading and the Promotion of Books and Texts

The children have access to high quality texts. These are provided by our school

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library, which the children visit weekly, and the inclusion of a Reading Corner in each classroom. Books and texts should always be on display and celebrated around the school.

The children should be exposed to high quality texts on a daily basis. This is done through timetabled reading times, assemblies and through using texts as an inspiration for their writing. Whilst reading books and texts, the teacher or adult should discuss what they are reading; to ensure a good level of understanding and exposure to new vocabulary.

Books should be celebrated and shared to help children foster a love and enjoyment of reading. This is done through the sharing of books with the children and modelling positive attitudes towards reading and books. The school also takes part in events; such as World Book Day and holds book fairs, wherever possible.

3. WRITING AT WALTER INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

The National Curriculum states that children should develop to become competent and fluent writers. The National Curriculum breaks the teaching of English (writing) into dimensions: transcription (spelling and handwriting); and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them from speech into writing). In order for children to become fluent and competent writers they need both of these areas to be well developed by the time they leave Walter Infant School and Nursery and be '*Junior School Ready*'.

The current National Curriculum has a greater focus on the grammar side of writing and requires a deeper understanding of the composition of a sentence. Handwriting is now promoted as a lifelong skill and has a greater emphasis towards developing fluency and accuracy of writing. As well as using phonics for encoding (spelling), the children are also required to have a well-developed understanding of various spelling patterns and rules, including adding various prefixes and suffixes.

Due to the heavier focus on the secretarial skills and requirements of the current National Curriculum, it is even more important to foster a creative and exciting learning environment for the children. This can be achieved through a use of high-quality texts across the school, best practices borrowed from the EYFS across all year groups and resources to help inspire the children's writing at Walter Infant School and Nursery.

3.1 Planning and Teaching for Writing in Key Stage 1

The teacher plans all writing opportunities or English lessons in line with the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum breaks down the Programmes of Study into four sections: Transcription, Composition, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation and Handwriting. Each year group (Year 1 and 2), have their own

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separate objectives or outcomes. To meet the demands of fluency and accuracy with writing, the children should only be taught using the Programmes of Study for their year group. The teacher should not go beyond these objectives, but teach at breadth to allow for mastery of these objectives in a variety of contexts, text types and genres.

Planning should be done through a personalised learning approach, as this is deemed best practice. The teachers should plan each unit to last for one or two weeks. The teacher first identifies, through formal and informal assessment, the greatest need for the children. This should be done by looking through the children's books, through discussion and by employing a range of AfL strategies (Assessment for Learning). The teacher will then decide the next steps for the children's learning. The main focus or outcomes are chosen from the National Curriculum for that year group. The teacher will choose one Programme of Study or an objective from the relevant assessment frameworks to become the main focus for the unit of work. A Programme of Study is chosen from each area of the curriculum that links to the chosen outcomes of the unit. This will allow a good range of secondary outcomes and breadth of study. Learning intentions, genres, text types and contexts are then chosen to support and drive the learning. Although, the genres, text types and contexts are not explicitly listed in the National Curriculum it is important that a good breadth is covered. Once the unit plan has been created the teacher can then plan day-to-day. This should also follow a personalised learning approach.

Daily planning should be based on the prior lesson's learning, areas of development identified through Assessment for Learning (AfL) and the work the children have produced. The lesson should be objective led, by choosing or composing a learning intention based on the Programmes of Study. The learning intention should be context free, so that it is not constrained and it is measurable, for example, '*I can use adjectives to describe a noun.*' rather than '*I can write a poem using wow words*'. An appropriate activity should then be planned for, which should be adapted or differentiated according to the ability of the children; to enable all learners the best possible chance to achieve the objective. Success Criteria should be used to help children identify the steps for the learning, so they have a greater chance at being successful. The adults in the class should be used to guide children in small group work during the lesson. All children should have a guided session at least once a week. Pupils with specific needs, and in specifically identified vulnerable groups, should receive appropriate support, these could include SEN, Pupil Premium, EAL and various targeted groups.

To enable parity across all classes the respective year groups should plan as a team. For example, Year 2 plan a unit together for the following week. The objectives, outcomes and learning intentions are the same. The activities and resources can be created and shared across the year group. This should help to provide a good work load balance. The teacher should then plan for their own pupil's needs and requirements.

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3.2 Writing in the Foundation Stage

In Foundation Stage, the Development Matters documentation and guidance is used to help plan, assess and teach literacy. The teacher's work towards the children achieving the EYFS Early Learning Goals.

Early literacy skills are highly valued at Walter Infant School and Nursery; we celebrate all mark making and children are encouraged to publish and display their own work. There are many opportunities for children to write inside and outside each day; the children also work regularly in small adult-directed groups to develop their writing skills at an age appropriate level, with highly trained staff. They quickly become confident at encoding; due to the systematic teaching of phonics. They are encouraged to take risks and share their thoughts and ideas using a variety of different equipment, media and tools.

The children are taught in shared and guided writing sessions; they are encouraged to write for different purposes. These might include making lists, making signs, or writing short sentences. They practise writing down what they have said, reinforcing the strategy for oral rehearsal required for later writing.

4. CROSS CURRICULAR WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers should regularly provide opportunities outside of the English lessons for extended writing. Although, these should be led by the foundation subjects Programmes of Study, objectives and learning intentions they should have a secondary intention on writing. This is to provide children with an opportunity to apply and embed their writing skills. Equally, English lessons provide an opportunity for the children to write across a wide range of topics and subjects.

Equally, other curriculum areas could be used as a basis or context to deliver the English lessons. This also considers that our children are still very young and they can become tired more quickly than older children. For this reason, we choose to place some of our Foundation Subject learning, such as History or Geography, into the English lessons. Our children do have opportunities to write in the afternoon, but we find that the writing is of a higher quality in the morning and allows them to feel more successful in their learning. We find this helps to foster a more positive attitude towards writing. We do still explore high quality stories and use high quality texts. However, we might also use contexts such as researching famous people from history and record/present facts, such as King Charles III in Year One or Nelson Mandela in Year Two.

5. SPEAKING AND LISTENING AT WALTER INFANT SCHOOL

Speaking and listening are integral to a child's learning and writing. Children must have a rich and varied oral vocabulary in order to become skilled writers. The children should receive many opportunities to discuss and debate out loud, and become skilled speakers on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. They

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should be able to perform and speak to an audience. The National Curriculum provides ongoing Programmes of Study for Spoken Language; however, this covers Years 1 to 6. Communication and Language is broadly outlined, and interlinked, within the EYFS.

At Walter Infant School and Nursery, we need to ensure that the children have exposure to high quality language, vocabulary and the correct subject terminology. Any new vocabulary should be explained and checked to ensure the children have understood. Where appropriate some words can be shared and celebrated through the use of a 'magpie wall' or area within the classroom. The children should be given opportunities to think and discuss when being asked questions in all subjects.

AfL lists high quality and focused questioning as a prime strategy for finding out what the children know and have learnt. AfL is considered good practice and a model for continuous assessment, and therefore should be used by all teachers when formally or informally assessing.

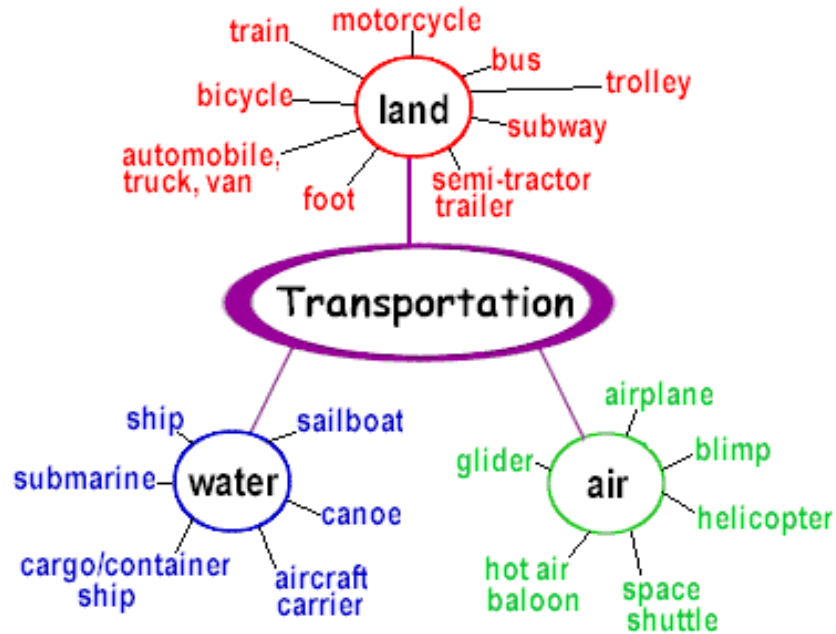
All classes hold a yearly special assembly to share their successes and learning with the parents/carers and the rest of the school. This provides the children with an opportunity to talk to a large crowd of people. The children also perform plays, performances and musical during their time at Walter Infant School and Nursery.

5.1 Semantic Fields

The DfE's Reading Framework discusses that talk and discussion helps to develop vocabulary and that this is an important element. A child with a wider vocabulary has a better chance to engage in high quality discussion with a good understanding. Talk is an essential life skill and can provide many benefits and opportunities.

The DfE's Reading Framework discusses the use of semantic fields. A semantic field is a set of words (or lexemes) related in meaning. The phrase is also known as a word field, lexical field, field of meaning, and semantic system. Linguist Adrienne Lehrer has defined semantic field more specifically as "a set of lexemes which cover a certain conceptual domain and which bear certain specifiable relations to one another" (1985). By making more and more links and word associations the child's vocabulary can become more complex over time. This is illustrated in the diagram below:

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6. ASSESSMENT AND PERSONALISED LEARNING

Assessment and marking should be completed in line with the relevant policies and best practices of the school. Personalised Learning is an essential strategy for the teaching, planning and assessment of English. It is considered best practice by many, and is supportive of the current National Curriculum introduced in 2014.

At the end of their journey at Walter Infant School and Nursery the children are assessed using the objectives from the end of Key Stage One Teacher Assessment Framework (non-statutory, since September 2023). This provides a 'cut down' or discrete set of standards that the children are assessed against. It helps to determine if the children are either operating at pre-key stage standards (PKS), working towards the expected standards (WTS), working at the expected standards (EXS) or working at greater depth (GDS). Our aim is to ensure that as many children as possible are operating at the expected standard or above. However, we would never overly stretch or challenge the children to the point where they could experience failure. Our assessments should be informative, accurate and precise at all times. We moderate internally and externally, where possible, to help with teacher judgements.

If our children fall to within our lowest 20% or below, they receive a more personalised provision; which is suited to their needs. This could include a range of strategies, such as increasing the number of reading opportunities, a simpler range of texts to take home, reading a more phonically decodable text within their colour band which still allows for high quality discussion. The needs of these pupils are identified and a catch-up programme is designed to meet their needs.

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7. INCLUSION

All our children at Walter Infant School and Nursery are entitled to *Quality First Teaching*. We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils, or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Children working at 'Greater Depth' (exceeding age-related expectations) will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided. Differentiation is key to allowing all children to achieve across a range of abilities. We advocate the use of Bloom's Taxonomy (Appendix C) to help teachers to plan and resource their lessons. Bloom's Taxonomy provides a model for learning. It demonstrates how children can learn through a process of knowledge to developing skills and higher order thinking.

The Inclusion Manager and the English as Additional Language Leader will monitor provision and ensure the needs of all SEND children and EAL children are met through planning, resources and personalised provision. They will keep all staff up to date with CPD opportunities and participate in all network meetings provided by the Local Authority.

8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Walter Infant School and Nursery stakeholders want every child to succeed and to be the best they can be, regardless of their background or circumstances. Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged. In order to engage all children, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. A wide range of texts and other resources should be considered which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children. We believe in valuing what the child brings to school and recognise the importance of supporting a child's first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English.

9. ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- monitoring and evaluating English, which includes:
 - pupil progress
 - provision of English
 - and the quality of the Learning Environments
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- advising on resources
- keeping up to date with recent English developments

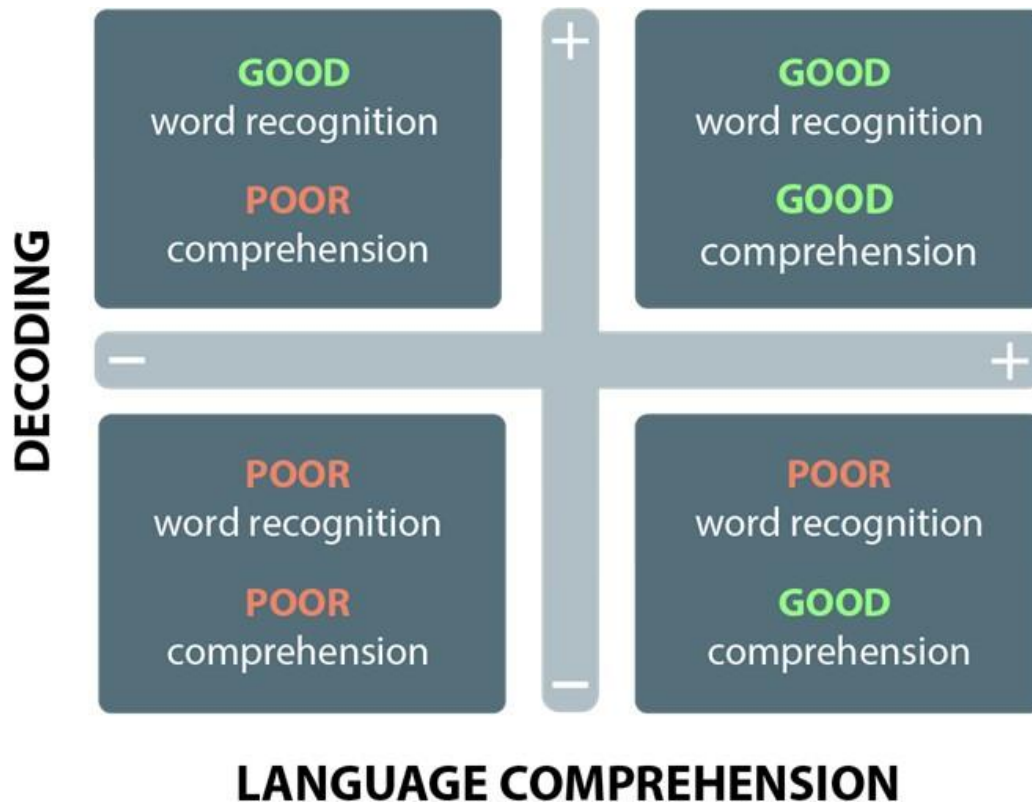
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TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:

- **The Foundation Stage Policy**
- **Handwriting guidelines**
- **The Teaching and Learning policy**
- **The National Curriculum Policy**
- **The Anti-bullying and Equality Policy**
- **The DfE's Reading Framework (July 2021)**
- **The DfE's Teacher Assessment Framework**

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APPENDIX A – THE SIMPLE VIEW OF READING



Sir Jim Rose in 2006 commissioned a national independent review on early reading. The review highlighted the importance of teaching synthetic phonics to develop reading, and the use of the 'simple view of reading' diagram. The simple view of reading illustrates that reading is made up of word recognition and language comprehension. This model allows us to see four different patterns of performance for children's reading ability.

Placing children into one of the four quadrants, the simple view of reading can be applied as a framework for assessment. An example of this in practice is where a child may demonstrate good language comprehension; however, they might have poor word recognition in which case this would need to be developed.

The simple view of reading also demonstrates that reading comprehension is limited by language comprehension abilities. Children need to be able to read written texts before they can begin to understand them; however, just because a child can read the text does not necessarily mean they can understand it.

Therefore, it is not only that a child needs to be able to read what is on the page, but understand what is being read in order to be a successful reader.

Copies of this model are available for the teachers to use as an assessment matrix. It provides a quick and easy method for helping to place groups of children together who may have similar needs or areas for development.

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APPENDIX B – BOOK BANDS, incl. 'WALTER LEVELS' (September 2023+)



Walter Infant School and Nursery Colour Banding and End of Year Expectations



Colour Band	Walter Attainment Level - End of Year Expectations
Pink A	F1 Exceeding for independent reading, but might still be guided in areas
Pink B	
Pink C	
Red A	F2 Emerging reader
Red B	
Red C	F2 Expected for independent reading, but might still be guided in some areas
Yellow	F2 Expected for independent reading Year 1 securely working towards the expected standard (WTS)
Blue	F2 Exceeding for independent reading
Green	Year 1 Expected for independent reading; with no support, reading fluently and at a good pace (intonation/expression) (EXS)
Orange	Year 1 Expected for independent reading; demonstrating all of the expected standards but might still be guided in some areas (EXS) Year 2 securely working towards the Expected Standard (WTS)
Turquoise	Year 2 securely working towards the expected standard (WTS); starting to demonstrate some areas of the Expected Standard
Purple	Year 2 securely working towards the expected standard; starting to build on and show some elements of the Expected Standard Year 1 Greater Depth for independent reading (GDS)
Gold	Year 2 securely working towards the expected standard; starting to demonstrate more elements of the Expected Standard
White	Year 2 Expected for independent reading; securely working at the Expected Standards (EXS)
Lime	Year 2 Expected for independent reading; starting to show elements of Greater Depth
Copper	Year 2 Great Depth for independent reading; securely working at Greater Depth (GDS)
Topaz	Year 2 Greater Depth for independent reading; consolidating at Greater Depth (GDS)

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APPENDIX C – BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

