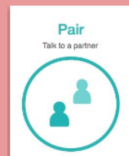




Abbey Readers



Sherborne Abbey
CE Primary School



Our Approach to Reading

Our reading programme is designed to build a strong foundation in phonics through the Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) scheme and gradually transition students into confident, skilled readers who are prepared for the demands of secondary school.

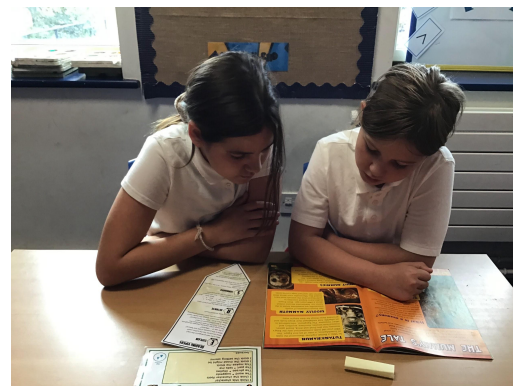
Foundation Stage and Year 1: Building Foundational Skills

Our approach begins with the structured ELS phonics programme, where children learn to read using decodable books that are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. Towards the end of Year 1, we begin to teach scaffolded reading lessons to introduce more complex, age-appropriate books that may not be fully decodable. This smooth transition helps children move beyond phonics-only reading and prepares them for the next stage of their reading journey.

Year 2 and Beyond: Developing Advanced Comprehension and Fluency

In Year 2, our students engage in whole-class reading lessons that focus on two key areas:

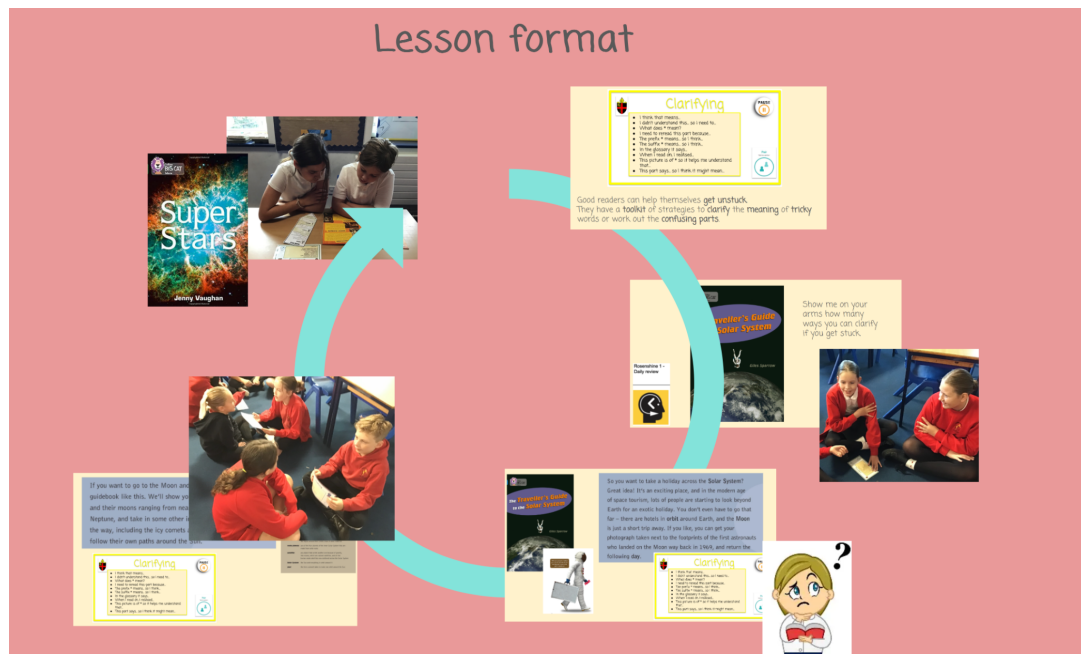
- **Close Reading:** The teacher reads challenging texts aloud to the class. This reduces the cognitive load for students and allows them to focus on comprehension and critical thinking. During this time, the teacher models a "reader's voice" by thinking out loud and using explicit speaking stems to show how to analyse and understand a text. Students then practise these skills with a partner while the teacher provides support.
- **Fluency Reading:** Students read aloud from a book that is at their instructional level. This practice helps them build reading speed and confidence. They are encouraged to apply the skills they learned during the close reading session, with adults circulating to provide targeted support as needed.



What does whole-class reading look like at Sherborne Abbey?

A typical 'Abbey Readers' lesson begins with an explanation of a focus skill before activating prior knowledge with a low-stakes retrieval prompt. Next, the teacher reads aloud a carefully-selected extract to expose readers of all abilities to texts which they might not normally select themselves, therefore

widening all pupils' vocabulary. Pupils practise their comprehension and critical thinking skills in mixed-ability partners. Finally, pupils build up their 'reading miles' by reading aloud instructional-level texts.



Below is an example of a typical Abbey Readers 'close reading' slide. This is where the teacher (as best reader in the room) models how the text is intended to sound when read aloud. As the teacher reads, line-by-line, they pause to 'think aloud.'

There are footprints in the snow, sunken marks picked out by the moonlight. They weave a path through the forest, round the ring of ancient oak trees and on towards the wooden hut. But there they stop, and the smoke curling out of the chimney is the only sign that anyone is inside.

What impression do you get of the setting and mood.

Give reasons to justify your viewpoint.

Inferring

- I think the character is... because...
- The author makes it seem * because...
- The word * suggests...
- The phrase * implies...
- This makes me think that...
- I know... so I think I know...
- I noticed * so I'm wondering...
- I think the mood seems... because...
- I think the setting is... because...

- “I think the setting is cold and wintry because there’s snow on the ground.”
- “Hmm... I noticed there are footprints in the snow so I’m wondering if somebody is being followed?”
- “Oooh... I think the mood seems mysterious because the footprints suddenly stop and I don’t know who is inside the wooden hut.”

During our whole-class ‘Abbey Readers’ lessons, teachers instruct their pupils to know what good, paired ‘fluency reading’ looks like:

What does good paired reading looks like?



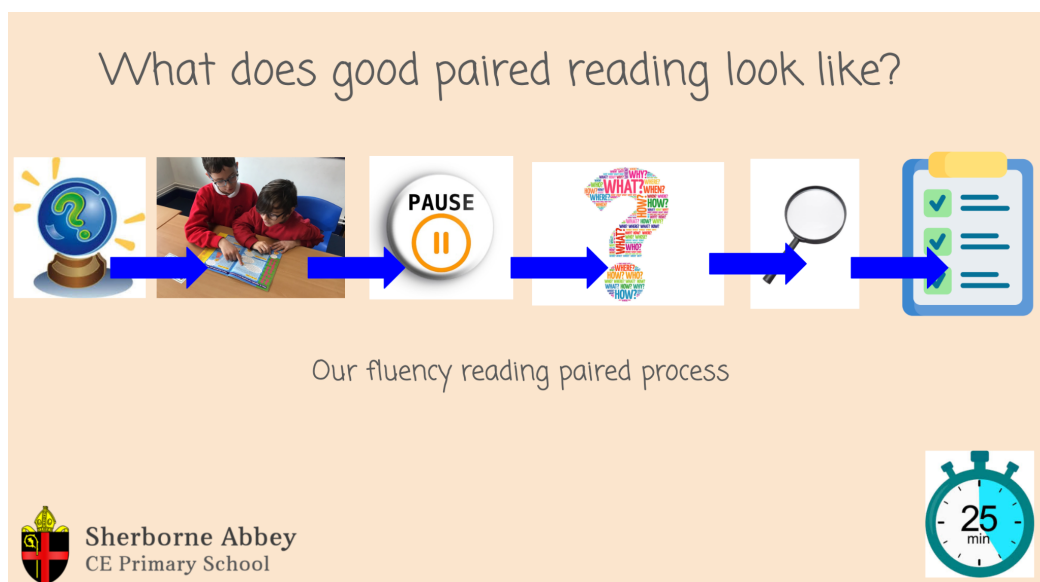
- Both partners seated nicely facing the book
- Taking turns
- Reading aloud with your best readers' quiet voices
- Giving encouragement and praise
- Suggesting strategies from the toolkit when a partner gets stuck
- Nodding and smiling
- Asking questions
- Using the Abbey talk stems
- Challenging your partner courteously if you disagree on something
- Summarising to check each other’s understanding



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Over time, good readers can combine their reading skills and become competent at discussing texts at greater depth. This better prepares our readers for the demands of the secondary curriculum.

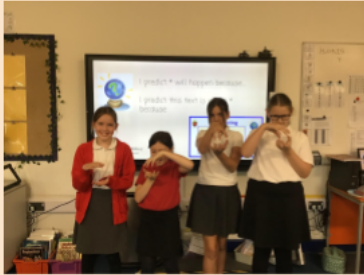




Start the session by using clues to make a prediction about what you think the text will be about.

I predict * will happen because...

I predict this text is about * because...



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Predicting

- I wonder if... because...
- I predict... because...
- I think that...
- I know that... therefore I think I know that...
- I imagine...
- I think * will happen because...
- I think I will learn...
- The next part will be about...
- Since * happened I think * will happen next.



Take turns to read aloud.
Use your best reader's voice.
Pause and talk about unfamiliar words or confusing parts.



Clarifying

PAUSE
⏸

- I think that means...
- I didn't understand this... so I need to...
- What does * mean?
- I need to reread this part because...
- The prefix * means... so I think...
- The suffix * means... so I think...
- In the glossary it says...
- When I read on, I realised...
- This picture is of * so it helps me understand that...
- This part says... so I think it might mean...



Take turns to ask your partner questions to check their understanding



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Asking questions

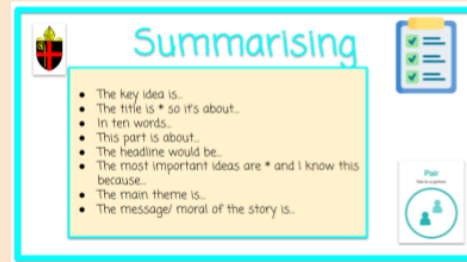
- Where could this be?
- Who might this be?
- When did * happen?
- What exactly is happening here?
- Why did * say that?
- How can I tell that the character feels *?
- How do you know *?
- Why do you think that happened?
- What if this happened instead?

Rewind to summarise.



What is the key idea of this part?

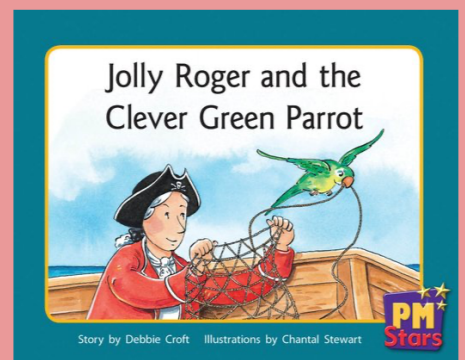
What was the most important thing you learnt from this section?



How do we assess and track progress?

Running records are used by teachers to match pupils with instructional-level books.

This ensures the correct challenge for progress without frustration.



What is the instructional level?

- A book is at the instructional level when a pupil can read it with 90–94% accuracy.
- This translates to making about one error every 10–20 words.
- At this level, a teacher's support allows a child to progress with new vocabulary and strategies.

- Any lower accuracy is considered a "frustration level" and is too difficult for effective instruction.

The assessment process

- While a child reads a passage aloud, a teacher uses a running record to note their correct words, errors, and self-corrections.
- After the reading, the teacher calculates the accuracy percentage to determine the appropriate reading level.
- This data guides instructional planning and book selection for the student.

LITERACY ASSESSMENT 1 LEVELS 1-30 STUDENT RECORD

Name: Natalie Oude DOB: 22/12/2018 Age: 5
 School: Sutherland West Class: FH Date of assessment: 30/12/2019

Text: The Pirate Ship Level: 5 Text Type: Narrative Total Running Words: 87

1. Retell
 Book orientation: This story is about Tom and Ava who play a trick on their dad.

Retelling Indicators to Check for Understanding

Indicator	Yes	No
Retold main events/facts without assistance from teacher prompts or book support	☒	☐
Summarised main events/facts succinctly	☒	☐
Retold main events/facts using text-specific vocabulary	☒	☐
Retold main events/facts coherently and confidently	☒	☐

2. Reading Record

Page	Text	E	S.C.	Errors	S.C.
02	"Tom," said Ava. "Come here. Come and look at Dad!"	1		M S V	
04	"Oh, no!" said Tom. "Dad is asleep on the pirate ship."	1		M S V	
06	"We can wake Dad up." Ava said.	1		M S V	

Step 2: Calculate the accuracy rate

The accuracy rate is a percentage that shows how accurately the student read the text aloud.

- Count the words:** Count the total number of words in the passage the student read.
- Count the errors:** Count the total number of miscues (incorrect words) the student made. Do not include self-corrections in this count.
- Calculate the percentage:** Use the following formula:

$$\left(\frac{\text{Total words read} - \text{Total errors}}{\text{Total words read}} \right) \times 100 = \text{Accuracy rate}$$

Example calculation from the form:
 Total words read: 97
 Total errors: 1

$$\left(\frac{97 - 1}{97} \right) \times 100 = 99.38\%$$

To track progress, we regularly assess students' reading abilities. We listen to children read daily, assessing their fluency, word reading and understanding. We use low-stakes quizzes to gradually expose our pupils to the different question formats that may be used in an end of key stage two SATs test. This helps teachers assess their pupils' progress against particular areas of reading.

Low stakes quizzes (selfies)

Someone with a candle comes down the passage towards us. 'What's all this frightful noise?' It's a woman's voice.

I lunge for the door. Like I say, it's not in my nature to dwell on the people I thrive from. All I think now is run run run.

Inferring

1. Circle the character best described by the text.
 2. Circle the character best described by the text.
 3. Circle the character best described by the text.
 4. Circle the character best described by the text.

What impressions do you get of the narrator at this point in the extract?

Give two impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

3 marks

Clarifying selfie

Circle the best word which matches 'overcome'.

defeat conquer subdue destroy

Which word tells us that it is a struggle getting off Earth?

What does the word *solution* tell you about getting into space? (tick one)

- It's impossible to get into space.
- It's always been easy to get into space.
- Scientists have found a way of getting into space.

Inferring

1. Circle the character best described by the text.
 2. Circle the character best described by the text.
 3. Circle the character best described by the text.
 4. Circle the character best described by the text.

How do you think Isabel feels?



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We use unseen comprehension texts once a week to help students practise applying their skills under timed conditions, similar to what they may experience in tests.

Extended reading

Throughout their time at our school, pupils are exposed to a wide range of high-quality children's literature. We carefully map these books across all year levels to ensure students experience different complexities, such as archaic language or non-linear plots. This broad exposure is key to preparing them for the advanced language curriculum they will encounter in secondary school.

Y6 autumn 1	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Front cover							
Authors	Philip Pullman	Emma Carroll	Abi Elphinstone	Katherine Rundell	Giles Sparrow	Carol Ann Duffy	C.S. Lewis
Reading skill	Inferring	Inferring	Inferring	Asking questions	Clarifying	Evaluating	Making connections
Genre	Fantasy adventure	Historical fiction	Fantasy	Classic adventure	Science	Poetry	Fantasy
Themes	Friendship Gender stereotypes Pursuit of dreams Courage Perseverance Dangers of greed	Friendship Courage Loyalty Pursuit of dreams	Friendship Loyalty Power of magic Family Courage Importance of natural world	Identify Family Nonconformity Courage Hope Perseverance	Exploration Pursuit of knowledge Pursuit of dreams	Imagination and wonder Humour and wit Mortality and loss Emotional experience of childhood	Creation vs destruction Temptation and consequence Path to maturity Nature of good and evil
Rationale Text complexity	Figurative / symbolic	Narratively complex	Narratively complex	Figurative / symbolic	Curriculum link to science topic	Resistant	Allegorical/ archaic

Summary

The **"Abbey Readers"** programme at our school is designed to build a strong reading culture, taking students from foundational phonics skills to advanced comprehension and fluency, ultimately preparing them for the demands of secondary school.

Key Aspects of the "Abbey Readers" Program

- **Building Foundational Skills:** The programme starts in Foundation Stage and Year 1 with a structured phonics program, using decodable books that are aligned with students' phonics knowledge. Towards the end of Year 1, students transition to more complex, age-appropriate books that are not fully decodable.
- **Whole-Class Reading:** From Year 2 onwards, whole-class reading lessons are central to the approach. These lessons focus on two main components:
 - **Close Reading:** The teacher models how to analyse challenging texts by reading them aloud and "thinking aloud" to demonstrate comprehension strategies. This reduces cognitive load and allows students to focus on critical thinking.
 - **Fluency Reading:** Students practise reading aloud from books at their instructional level, which helps them build speed and confidence. They apply the skills learned in the close reading sessions with support from adults.

- **Assessment and Tracking:** Progress is tracked using running records to match students with books at their instructional level (90–94% accuracy). This ensures a proper challenge for growth without frustration. The programme also uses low-stakes quizzes and weekly unseen comprehension texts to prepare students for timed assessments and track their progress on specific reading skills.
- **Cultivating a Love for Literature:** A key part of the programme is exposing students to a wide range of high-quality children’s literature, including texts with complex language or non-linear structures. This broad exposure is carefully mapped across all year groups to prepare students for the advanced language curriculum they will encounter later in their education.

