**St Thomas CE (VC)**

**Primary School**

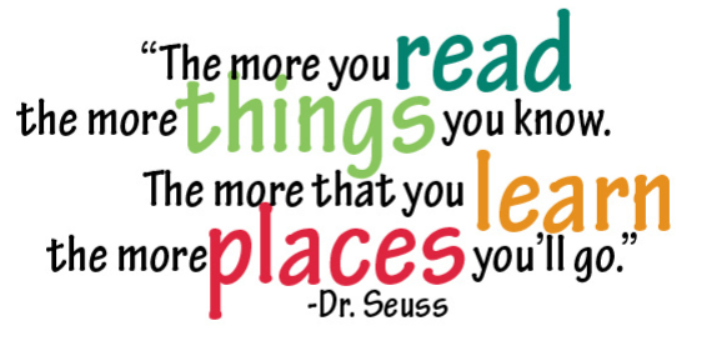


**Reading Policy**

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| **Policy Reviewed on:** | **August 2025** |
| **Review Date:** | **May 2026** |

**Reading Subject Policy – St Thomas Primary School**

**At St Thomas Primary School, the entire school community recognises that reading is the key to unlocking learning across the curriculum. That’s why we make it our top priority to ensure that all pupils—regardless of background or ability—are supported to become fluent, confident, engaged, and successful readers, achieving the highest possible standards.**



**INTENT:**

At St Thomas Primary School, we recognise that **reading is one of the most important skills a child will ever acquire**. As a result, we are committed to embedding a strong **culture of reading** at the heart of our school. We provide **targeted and inclusive support** to ensure that all pupils—regardless of starting point—are given the opportunity to achieve and thrive as readers.

Our reading curriculum is designed to develop pupils who:

* **Take great pleasure** in listening to adults read and in selecting and reading books independently.
* Are **happy, healthy, and curious learners** who read fluently and confidently, and who use reading as a means to explore and acquire knowledge.
* Can read **prosodically**, with **accuracy, automaticity, and speed**, freeing up the cognitive mind to support comprehension.
* Build a **rich and broad vocabulary**, empowering them to become effective speakers, confident writers, and discerning readers.
* Develop a **lifelong love of reading**, taking genuine pleasure from books and becoming enthusiastic, independent, and reflective readers.
* **Draw upon prior knowledge**, building on existing skills and understanding as they encounter new texts.
* Are able to **decode unfamiliar language**, reading around challenging words or phrases to gain clarity and deepen comprehension.
* Make **thoughtful and well-justified responses** to texts, retrieving key information and making accurate inferences with supporting evidence.
* Can **summarise key ideas and events**, identifying the who, what, when, where, and why, and sequencing events logically.
* Are regularly exposed to a **diverse range of high-quality literature**, woven meaningfully throughout the curriculum and across the school day.

At St Thomas, we believe every child is a reader. Our aim is to ensure that all children leave us with the skills, confidence, and love of reading that will serve them for life. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that all children are taught to read with **fluency, accuracy, automaticity, prosody, and understanding**. This is achieved through a wide range of carefully planned learning opportunities and activities. **Reading is taught daily**, from Reception through to Year 6, ensuring consistency, progression, and a strong foundation for all learners.

In addition, during English lessons, pupils engage in the **close study of high-quality texts**—including stories, poems, rhymes, and non-fiction. Through this exposure, children learn to analyse the structure, layout, and language features of each text type. As a result, they are able to **confidently apply this knowledge in their own writing**, drawing on complex, subject-specific vocabulary that has been introduced, explored, and fully understood in context.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Where children are working below the national expectation in reading for their age group, opportunities are provided throughout the day for additional support and guidance.

**Lowest 20% of Readers**

At St Thomas Primary School, we are proactive in identifying the lowest 20% of readers within each year group. Once identified, interventions are implemented swiftly and strategically to ensure pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive the support they need without delay.

Interventions are tailored to the individual needs of each pupil—for example:

* **Extra phonics support** (e.g. using the *Essential Letters and Sounds* programme),
* **Fluency development**, or
* **Comprehension practice** (e.g. using 60-second comprehension tasks).

All pupils in the lowest 20% access a minimum of three targeted intervention sessions per week, delivered by a learning mentor, individual support worker, or teaching assistant. These sessions are designed to develop key reading components, including:

* Sounding and blending,
* Vocabulary acquisition,
* Fluency, accuracy, and automaticity,
* Prosody and pace of reading.

The goal is to free up pupils' working memory, enabling them to focus on comprehending and understanding the text.

To ensure impact, interventions are timetabled and prioritised to avoid cancellation, reflecting our strong commitment to closing the gap and ensuring every child becomes a confident, capable reader.

***SEND Readers***

In addition to targeted **phonics (ELS), fluency, and comprehension interventions**, we provide a wide range of additional support to meet the **individual learning needs of our SEND pupils** throughout the school day. These interventions are carefully selected based on need and may include:

* **Toe by Toe** (structured literacy support),
* **Progress in Learning**,
* **Black Sheep Press** resources (speech and language development),
* **Language for Thinking** (developing reasoning and verbal comprehension skills),
* And **many more specialist programmes** tailored to specific areas of need.

These interventions are delivered by trained staff and are reviewed regularly to ensure they are **impactful, inclusive, and aligned with each pupil’s learning profile and progress**.

***At Risk***

Alongside provision for the lowest 20%, **detailed analysis of reading assessment data** (formative), is used to identify pupils who are **at risk of slipping behind** or who are beginning to show signs of falling below age-related expectations.

Class teachers are promptly made aware of these pupils and are expected to **make adaptations to planning** in order to close emerging gaps. These adaptations may include changes to:

* **Scaffolding** and support materials,
* **Structure** and sequencing of tasks,
* **Scale** (amount or complexity of content), and
* **Style** of delivery to meet individual learning needs.

In addition, these pupils receive **timetabled intervention sessions**, delivered by a **learning mentor, teaching assistant, or individual support worker**. These sessions are tailored to specific areas of need and are designed to provide **targeted, short-term support** to help pupils get back on track with their peers.

***Classroom support***

At St Thomas Primary School, **high-quality planning and teaching of reading** ensures that **all pupils are thoughtfully considered** at every stage of the planning process. Lessons are carefully designed so that pupils working **below national expectations** receive **targeted, in-class support**, enabling them to access the curriculum and make sustained progress alongside their peers. At the same time, pupils who are **working at or above national expectations** are consistently provided with **appropriate challenge,** supporting them in developing **deeper understanding, critical thinking, and a love for reading.** Planning includes opportunities for them to deepen their thinking, explore complex texts, and engage in activities that promote **creativity, resilience, engagement, and motivation**—ensuring that all learners are supported and stretched to reach their full potential.

In addition to classroom support, teachers **timetable specific, intervention-based activities** throughout the week. These are informed by **assessment data, test analysis**, and ongoing formative assessment, and may include:

* **Focused comprehension groups** targeting specific reading domains,
* **Morning work activities** to develop understanding of challenging vocabulary and phrases,
* Small-group or 1:1 support to address individual gaps in fluency or understanding.

**St Thomas Primary Reading Spine**

At St Thomas Primary School, our carefully curated Reading Spine encompasses a wide range of high-quality, inspiring texts that are designed to captivate our children and foster a love of reading across the school.

This document supports the development of whole-class reading and vocabulary acquisition, while offering a diverse and stimulating selection of books tailored to the needs and interests of our pupils. Each book has been thoughtfully chosen following extensive research and consideration of what will resonate with our children and help them grow as readers.

Texts are selected to be age-appropriate and progressively challenging, building year on year in terms of:

* **Complexity of language and syntax**
* **Narrative structure and levels of meaning**
* **Literary and linguistic features**
* **Semantic depth and authorial style**

Where possible, books are also linked to **wider curriculum themes**, enabling pupils to deepen their understanding and knowledge across subjects.

Our spine includes a balanced mix of:

* **Modern and classic literature**
* **Fiction and non-fiction**
* **Texts with rich figurative language and symbolic plots**

It reflects a commitment to diversity in authorship and representation, ensuring that pupils are exposed to characters, cultures, and perspectives beyond their own lived experience. Pupils in Lower and Upper Key Stage 2 experience a greater number of chapter books, while children in EYFS and KS1 explore a range of rich, text-driven picture books.

Although the reading spine is a structured document, it also allows for professional flexibility. Staff are encouraged to adapt or supplement selections based on the interests, motivations, or specific needs of their cohort—for instance, choosing texts to engage reluctant readers, incorporate newly published titles, or respond to current events.

Reading at St Thomas goes beyond books alone. Pupils are regularly encouraged to read a broad range of text types, including:

* Songs and poetry
* Newspapers and magazines
* Comic books and graphic novels
* Diary entries, letters, and play scripts

Teachers read aloud regularly, modelling fluent, expressive reading and demonstrating the pleasure and power of books. As soon as children start at St Thomas Primary, they are immersed in the rich, diverse texts provided by our reading spine. Early and ongoing exposure to broad vocabulary is essential in supporting language comprehension and fluency, helping to break the cycle of reading difficulty and disengagement.

At St Thomas Primary, we are committed to promoting a positive reading culture in which all pupils are supported to become confident, motivated, and enthusiastic readers. Our staff are knowledgeable reading advocates who prioritise reading across the day and across the curriculum, ensuring every child has the opportunity to experience the joy and lifelong value of reading.

***“There is a great variety of books that have been chosen for us to read in class that include super/up-levelled vocabulary for us to magpie, exciting story plots and twists! They definitely keep me engaged!” Xander Year 6.***

**Reading Book Provision and Monitoring at St Thomas Primary School**

We have made significant investments in a wide variety of reading books to ensure children have access to texts that suit both their personal interests and reading abilities. Once pupils confidently sound out and blend, and ideally pass their phonics screening (typically by the end of Year 1), they transition from the ELS phonics scheme to the **Oxford Reading** and/or **Collins Big Cat** schemes. These levelled schemes offer a structured progression through a broad selection of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry texts, matched to each pupil’s reading ability and age. This approach supports fluency, comprehension, and reading stamina throughout primary school, providing an appropriate level of challenge to each reader.

From Year 2 through Year 6, pupils are encouraged to change their books **at least once a week** and are required to bring their reading books into school daily. This allows staff to listen to reading regularly and provide timely support. We closely monitor the return of books to quickly identify pupils who may not be reading at home, enabling us to implement appropriate in-school interventions promptly.

To support communication with families, weekly reminders are sent to parents and carers about their child’s book change day. Additional messages and letters emphasise the importance of reading at home, encouraging adults to read with or listen to their children regularly.

Each pupil has a **reading record book** kept in school, which serves as a working document to record all phonics and reading interventions that take place during the school day. In EYFS and KS1, pupils also take home reading records so parents can log any reading done outside school. Pupils in KS2 receive a reading bookmark for this purpose.

We carefully match books to pupils’ reading levels and abilities, using data from **termly reading assessments** and **Hertfordshire Reading Tests** (which provide reading ages). Teaching assistants and learning mentors listen closely to pupils’ reading to ensure that the selected levelled books are appropriate for their fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and text comprehension.

**Reading in EYFS:**

Reading at St Thomas is prioritised early, to ensure that pupils can access the full curriculum. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage offers many opportunities to develop the skills required for reading. Speaking and listening are two of the first skills to be focused upon; these are developed through listening to stories, shared reading, role-play, opportunities for talk through continuous provision and Phase 1-5 of the Essential Letters and Sounds phonics scheme. Within both Foundation Stage settings there are dedicated reading areas both indoors and outdoors that promote the love of reading. Within the provision, there are key opportunities to rehearse and retell stories using roleplay and small world play. Parents support reading in the classroom by volunteering as a mystery reader to engage pupils. Within the EYFS unit every child reads to an adult at least once a week in school.

**Reception:**

Within Reception, reading is taught through both literacy-focused activities based on books and through specific teaching of the ELS Phonics Programme. Topics are well planned and based around high quality texts making links with the wider curriculum. Throughout the continuous provision, books linked to the topic theme and provision areas are displayed and the children are encouraged to use the books alongside their play and learning. Our focus in on broadening vocabulary, knowledge and application. In reception every child has a 1:1 reading session individually with an adult. During these sessions children are heard reading a chosen book linked to the phonics taught.

Children who have been identified as needing support to improve their reading are targeted for additional reading whenever possible. Every child has a reading record and an individual scheme reading book that they take home regularly. Reading at home encourages parental involvement. The book is shared and read with an adult up to four times, the reading record signed and then can be changed every Friday as this links to the phonics teaching sequence. Any parents who do not comply are spoken with to encourage a positive home reading experience.

**Reading in KS1 and KS2:**

As children progress, we build on their existing reading experiences to develop fluency, word-level knowledge, comprehension, and independence. At St Thomas Primary School, we use a consistent 4/7-stage reading format from Year 1 through Year 6. This rigorous approach fosters confidence and enjoyment in reading, enabling pupils to deepen their knowledge as they advance. For 30 minutes, four days a week, pupils engage in a variety of enjoyable, age-appropriate yet challenging activities designed to enhance fluency, word recognition, and comprehension. Our teaching promotes high-quality talk and discussion within a language-rich environment. Partner and group discussions are encouraged, with pupils speaking in complete sentences and taking turns appropriately. The time allocated to each stage is informed by data, and both staff and pupils are familiar with the format, terminology, and activities involved at each stage.

**The 7-stage teaching sequence (disciplinary knowledge):**

1. **Activate Prior Knowledge:** Pupils make predictions about the text using clues like the front cover, blurb, images, and key vocabulary, drawing on what they already know.
2. **Reading and Fluency:** Pupils develop fluency and prosody by listening to teacher modelling and reading aloud themselves. They focus on rereading familiar sections to improve understanding and confidence.
3. **Initial Thoughts and Observations:** Pupils receive background information and context, then read or listen to parts of the text. They share questions and thoughts aloud to promote discussion and curiosity.
4. **Breakdown and Repair:** Pupils learn strategies to decode unfamiliar words and phrases, with explicit teacher modelling. They reflect on confusing parts and vocabulary gaps to improve comprehension.
5. **Comprehension Questions:** Focused on addressing gaps identified through data, pupils think aloud, find evidence, and practice forming clear oral and written responses to questions. Comprehension lessons focus on one domain at a time to allow targeted teaching, which helps close specific gaps, builds pupil confidence, improves skill retention, and makes progress easier to assess. Lessons follow an I do, we do, you do approach, gradually building pupil independence through scaffolding.
6. **Delve at a Deeper Depth:** Pupils explore themes, characters, and language in depth through engaging activities such as debates, role-plays, and visualisation to deepen understanding.
7. **Summary:** At any point, pupils summarise extracts, chapters, or the entire text to demonstrate clear understanding.

Training has ensured that all staff have a clear understanding of the 7-stage teaching sequence and demonstrate high competency in its planning and daily delivery, providing quality first teaching consistently. The training also introduced a comprehensive bank of activities for each stage, designed to reinforce and embed knowledge and understanding.

*“The 7-stages we follow during reading lessons have been really helpful, allowing me to understand the books we read in more detail. We have focused on one stage at a time, helping me answer questions more accurately. Gunvir Year 5.*

In addition to the 7-stage teaching sequence, pupils are provided with a dedicated weekly session to read a book of their choice during reading lessons, known as ERIC (Everyone Reading In Class). This may include books from the class or school library, or personal selections brought from home. We place great importance on fostering a love of reading for pleasure, firmly believing that regular, sustained reading significantly enhances literacy development.

**Year 1:**

In Year 1, children begin the year learning Phase 5 phonics through the ELS phonics programme, building on skills from Reception. They progress to alternative sounds within Phase 5, following the ELS scheme throughout the year. Targeted interventions take place daily in the afternoons to support pupils needing additional Phase 2 and 3 phonics support.

Each week, pupils read one-to-one with their teacher or support assistant to ensure quality reading time. Disadvantaged pupils, those at risk, or within the lowest 20% of readers receive additional reading opportunities. The books used align with the sounds taught in the ELS programme. These decodable books, matched to each child’s phonics ability, are sent home every Friday, with parents encouraged to support reading at home by re-reading the text at least four times during the week to develop fluency, accuracy, and sound recall.

In Year 1, reading lessons are taught every other week and concentrate on the first four stages of the 7-stage format — Activate Prior Knowledge, Initial Thoughts and Observations, Reading and Fluency, and Breakdown and Repair — with an emphasis on fluency, vocabulary development, and word recognition. These lessons foster a culture of discussion and engagement and immerse pupils into books, supporting writing outcomes.

Additionally, every Friday afternoon, Year 1 classes enjoy a ‘Mystery Reader’ session, where a guest—such as a parent, staff member, librarian, or older student—reads aloud to the children. This much-anticipated event excites pupils and encourages a love of reading.

**Year 2:**

From September until October half term, reading is taught through literacy-focused activities alongside the explicit teaching of the ELS Phonics Programme, emphasizing alternative sounds. After this period, pupils follow the 7-stage reading format, concentrating on the first five stages: Activate Prior Knowledge, Initial Thoughts and Observations, Reading and Fluency, Breakdown and Repair, and Comprehension Questions. In the latter part of the academic year, the final two stages—Summary and Delve Deeper—are introduced to promote higher-order thinking and deeper engagement with texts.

**Adaptations**

The reading curriculum at St Thomas Primary is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Teachers hold high expectations for SEND learners, ensuring the curriculum is neither diluted nor unnecessarily reduced. Like all pupils, SEND students benefit from a carefully considered curriculum. We adopt an adaptive teaching approach, where teachers continuously assess learners’ strengths and needs and adjust their instruction accordingly. This approach allows the whole class to work towards the same learning goals, with tailored resources and support ensuring every pupil has the tools to succeed. Importantly, the core reading knowledge remains intact to avoid creating barriers for future learning. At St Thomas Primary, we consider the “4 S’s” when adapting lessons to meet diverse needs. Below are strategies for teachers to support all pupils in reading effectively.

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| **Scaffold** | **Scale** |
| **Before any book is planned and taught, it MUST be read by the teacher so appropriate scaffold can be made.**  **Pre-teaching – identify potential barriers. Supply background knowledge where necessary.**  **Allow certain chn the chance to read in advance.**  **Sentence starters – particularly in Activate prior knowledge, Initial thoughts and observations and Summary stages.**  **Word/phrase banks – key words from the text and required in explanations/justifications.**  **Word Consciousness – continuous discussion of unknown, tricky words – add to the working walls. Break down and repair lessons may facilitate this. Children to play “read aloud” bingo and cross off words or phrases that he or she hears – discuss understanding.**  **Introduce/remove support – based on teacher and pupil assessment.**  **Use of visualisers for modelling – to read certain sections of the book. To model punctuation, for pupils to follow during fluency.**  **Where possible, a copy of the book for all children to follow/Give a student a copy of the text to highlight words or phrases of interest as the teacher reads.**  **Clear steps to success – see WALT slide. What do you want the children to achieve and how are they going to get there?**  **Rephrasing questions or content – using language and real -life context that pupils will understand. Further probe and provide stretch.**  **Highlighting key learning points e.g. vocabulary**  **Pre-teach vocabulary – allow certain children to read the text at home before initial lessons.**  **I do, We do, You do – particularly during fluency lessons. Teacher to model fluency, Echo reading, Independent.**  **Use of technology – audios of stories being read. Free teacher up to add to working wall e.g. key questions/storymap/word bank.**  **Model and provide modelled examples – Lots of metacognition required. This is essential through the teaching of all the stages.**  **Visual aids – books in hands, audio clips of stories, video/films clips, comparison between book and film (visualisation) images used to activate prior knowledge as to what the story might be about, images to aid understanding of complex texts.**  **Make links to prior learning – via review.**  **Ask prompting questions – these should be pre written/considered as part of the planning process to support pupils in acquiring the LO. Target questioning.**    **Think aloud time/Chance to talk/** **Time for ‘thinking about thinking’**  **Mind Maps e.g. What do we know about the main character?**  **Concrete/Hands on resources – books, items/objects that link to the story being read. Children to hold and manipulate to get a better understanding. Explore a “story kit” filled with objects related to the story.**  **Use of a real-life context – make links to everyday events in real life that children are aware of.**  **Tech aids e.g. talking postcards, use of i-pads to video themselves reading for self-evaluation.**  **Mini plenaries, prepared key questions, mini white boards for formative assessment** **to help monitor understanding and when to move on.**  **Allow opportunities for self-evaluation – particularly during fluency lessons when working on a particular fluency strand e.g. expression, punctuation, smoothness, word recognition, prosody.**  **Each child uses a ruler to read line by line – to see who is listening/following.** | **Vary in length – of extract to practice for fluency.**  **Challenge of book in terms of complexity, vocabulary and inference.**  **Scale up or down – consider visually impaired and pupils who may have forgotten their glasses.**  **Give the student an adapted version of the book (e.g., one with extra pictures, large type, or laminated pages) so they can follow along.**  **Study books by authors that have been studied in the past – make connections/similarities and differences.**  **Size of resources – pencils written with, do pupils require a finger grip?**  **Books with suitable coloured pages for SEND pupils who require support.**  **Writing up/presenting/debating – Not all chn need to show their understanding of the objective in the same way.**  **Role within the group**  **Extra time**  **Complexity of Language**  **Pacing instruction**  **Modifying instructions**  **Amount of content** |
| **Structure** | **Style** |
| **Peer support – particularly when generating ideas. Children to learn from one another. Peers can offer a different perspective and support.**  **Mixed ability groups – works particularly well during fluency lessons. Allows pupils with the chance to interact with a variety of class mates (social skills).**  **Flexible Groupings**  **Who is reading e.g. teacher, TA, Echo, Pupil?**  **Role-play/Drama – supports consideration of the thoughts, feelings and emotions of the main characters by children putting themselves into the shoes of the main characters.**  **Flipped classroom – homework to look at key vocabulary that will be covered in the next story.**  **Carousal/stations**  **Visually/verbally/in writing – not everything needs to be in books. Create a whole class pictogram that can be stuck into books, children to record themselves reading and to upload onto Seesaw.**  **Talk about how it has been learnt as well as what has been learnt. This puts a focus on process.** | **Change Medium**  **Change Audience**  **Change Purpose**  **Offer alternative ways of doing/means of representation** |

**Across the Curriculum (Cornerstone Curriculum)**

At St Thomas Primary, we provide a broad and balanced curriculum that exposes pupils to age-appropriate, engaging, and challenging texts. These high-quality texts enable children to explore the wider curriculum while applying their reading skills in meaningful contexts. Our tailored Cornerstone Curriculum offers carefully sequenced reading opportunities through captivating fiction and non-fiction texts, including glossaries. Selected texts incorporate subject-specific vocabulary, ensuring pupils become familiar with technical terms and previously unknown words. Vocabulary development is a key thread across all subject areas, with targeted identification and explanation to help pupils build a rich and varied language repertoire as each project progresses.

**Reading for Pleasure:**

**Story Time**

At St Thomas Primary, pupils have the opportunity to listen to their teacher read aloud for 20 minutes, four times a week, during a dedicated story time session. This is timetabled immediately after lunchtime to help pupils settle and calm before engaging with wider curriculum projects in the afternoon. Story time is prioritised and takes place in a distraction-free environment, allowing children to become fully immersed in the text. It offers pupils the chance to listen to and engage with literature uninterrupted. Teachers read with confidence and enjoyment, modelling fluent reading with appropriate prosody and pace, bringing characters to life and exposing children to a diverse range of texts, including stories, poetry, rhymes, and non-fiction. During these sessions, teachers often encourage discussion, enabling pupils to express their understanding, preferences, and opinions about the text. Whole-class story time enriches children’s imagination, vocabulary, and comprehension, while also supporting their writing development.

**Book Club**

Once a week, pupils are also provided with a 20-minute session where teachers introduce new book titles and share recommended interesting reads. During this time, pupils are also encouraged to share and recommend their favourite books. This may be done through reading a chapter of their favourite book, introducing the main character, sharing fun facts they have learned as a result of reading a particular text.

**Learning Environment**

In our school, we will strive to give pupils a stimulating environment, where reading materials and pupil work is presented in an attractive, inviting and easily accessible way.

*Reading Displays*

Reading displays are given high importance and are an essential part of the classroom environment, where pupil work is celebrated and valued, learning objectives covered are highlighted and the learning process is clearly evident. Key words and phrases, discussed during lessons, are included and key questions asked by the pupils are highlighted. Pictures of pupils enjoying reading, whether independent, paired or whole class reading, are included, clearly showing how much pupils at St Thomas are enthused and motivated by reading. Reading displays are interactive, evolving daily. Learning aids, from each lesson are included, with an aim of supporting pupils with their work.

***Classroom Reading Areas***

Each classroom’s reading area is stocked with a rich variety of age appropriate and engaging books based upon the children’s interests thus allowing the children to have access to a significant collection of books on a daily basis (mini libraries). Reading areas are made welcoming and comfortable, and pupils are encouraged to use such areas, to read for pleasure, when an opportunity arises. Where possible, books are forward facing so that pupils can be enticed by the cover, title and/or author more easily.

***Library***

Our school library is well-stocked with a diverse range of genres authored by writers from various backgrounds, reflecting a wide spectrum of interests and cultures. Every class, and every pupil, has the opportunity to visit the library weekly to borrow and explore books that inspire and engage them.

We have established strong partnerships with Kirklees Library, actively participating in their projects and initiatives. The library team have visited our school to deliver special programs that have inspired our pupils and introduced them to a broader range of literature.

***Story Hub***

The Story Hub is a large, tent-shaped wooden building that has been built in the grounds of the school. We are extremely fortunate to have this wonderful resource at St Thomas. It contains a myriad of objects, for example, an old tin bath, ballet shoes, coloured bottles, a suitcase, a giant chair and a grandfather clock, which stimulate pupils and encourages them to talk and write, in addition, promotes and supports pupils with reading and story- telling. We have often had visits from actors dressed as characters, such as the giant from Jack and the Beanstalk, to the hub to make the learning even more exciting.

***Tommy’s Reading Challenge***

At St Thomas, we promote a whole-school reading challenge to encourage and celebrate reading at home. Pupils work through a series of engaging challenges, progressing through award levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald, Diamond, Platinum, and The Jewel.As each level is completed, pupils are recognised and celebrated in our singing assembly, where they receive a certificate and a badge to mark their achievement, helping to foster a love of reading and a sense of pride in their progress.

The aims of the reading challenge are as follows:

* **Encourage Reading for Pleasure:** Motivates children to read more frequently, beyond what is required in lessons. Helps establish daily reading habits and a lifelong love of books.
* **Raise the Profile of Reading:** Makes reading visible, celebrated, and exciting across the school. Reinforces that reading is valued by all staff, pupils, and families.
* **Foster a Reading Culture:** Builds a sense of shared purpose and excitement around reading. Sparks book talk, peer recommendations, and positive attitudes towards reading.
* **Promote Inclusivity:** Challenges designed so that every pupil, regardless of ability or background, can take part and feel successful.
* **Broaden Reading Experience:** Encourages children to try new authors, genres, and formats they might not usually choose.
* **Strengthen Home–School Links:** Involves parents and carers in supporting reading at home. Creates opportunities for discussion and shared reading experiences outside of school.
* **Track and Celebrate Progress:** Gives pupils a sense of achievement as they complete milestones or goals. Allows the school to gather insight into reading habits and interests.

**Leadership and Management**

The leadership of reading at St Thomas Primary is strategic, well-informed, and relentlessly focused on ensuring all pupils become confident, fluent readers with a love of reading. At St Thomas Primary we have a clear vision, which is rooted in high expectations, and ensures consistency and ambition across the school.

**1. Clear Vision and Strategic Direction**

* A well-communicated, whole-school vision for reading.
* Reading is prioritised as a core element of the curriculum.
* Long-term goals aligned with national expectations and school improvement priorities.

**2. Curriculum Coherence**

* A sequenced, cumulative reading curriculum from EYFS to Year 6.
* Progression is mapped clearly (e.g. phonics > fluency > comprehension > deep understanding).
* High-quality, diverse texts are central to curriculum planning.

**3. Data-Informed Practice**

* Regular assessment of phonics, fluency and comprehension.
* Pupil progress is closely monitored, especially for:
  + Disadvantaged pupils
  + The lowest 20%
  + Pupils with SEND
* Interventions are planned, timely, and reviewed for impact.

**4. High-Quality Teaching and Pedagogy**

* Teachers are trained in the 7-stage format using the "I do, we do, you do" approach where possible.
* Reading is taught explicitly and systematically.
* The 7-stage reading sequence is embedded in all classrooms.

**5. Professional Development**

* Regular, focused CPD and coaching for staff on all aspects of reading.
* Support staff and teachers develop subject knowledge and confidence.
* Reading Lead models effective practice and support others to do the same.

**6. Promoting a Reading Culture**

* A love of reading is fostered through:
  + Storytime
  + ERIC sessions
  + Author visits
  + Reading displays
  + Well-stocked libraries

**7. Inclusive and Adaptive Teaching**

* Adaptive strategies are used to ensure all pupils can access the reading curriculum.
* SEND, EAL and disadvantaged pupils are planned for with precision using the 4S’s.
* Reading expectations are not lowered but made accessible.

**8. Parental Engagement**

* Parents are kept informed and involved (e.g. through reading records, workshops, home challenges).
* Home reading is encouraged and supported with clear guidance.

**9. Evaluation and Improvement**

* Leaders evaluate the impact of the reading curriculum.
* Lesson visits, book looks, pupil voice, and data are used to refine and improve practice.
* Reading remains high profile in school self-evaluation and development plans.

Reading at St Thomas is everyone's priority, rooted in evidence, carefully structured, and woven into the fabric of school life—from the earliest phonics to deep comprehension and a genuine passion for books.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

**The quality of teaching and learning in reading is rigorously monitored as part of the school’s appraisal process.** This includes lesson observations, learning walks, book and planning scrutinies, and detailed analysis of pupil progress and attainment data. The subject leader plays a key role in ensuring continuity and progression in reading across the school, closely monitoring both the implementation and impact of Assessment for Learning strategies.

**Partnerships with Parents**

At St Thomas Primary School, we greatly value the role of parental partnerships in supporting pupils to become confident, fluent and enthusiastic readers. Co-operation and support from parents and carers is vital in ensuring each child reaches their full potential in reading. We are committed to fostering a strong and positive relationship between home and school, built around a shared goal of nurturing a lifelong love of reading. All pupils from Reception to Year 6 take home a reading book, and parents are actively encouraged to listen to their child read regularly (at least 4 times a week). Older or more able readers are expected to read independently, while still engaging in regular discussions about what they’ve read. We welcome and value parental contributions to reading development through comments in reading records or bookmarks sent home with books.

Reading is embedded in our homework policy, with tasks set regularly to consolidate learning. During Parents' Evenings, reading targets are shared and progress is discussed; an annual written report, issued in the summer term, outlines the level at which the child is working.

**Impact:**

At St Thomas Primary School, we believe that our carefully designed reading curriculum has a profound and lasting impact on our learners. It fosters essential foundational skills, develops critical thinking, promotes empathy, and cultivates a lifelong love of reading—all of which underpin both academic success and personal development.

**Foundational Literacy Skills:** Through a clear focus on phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension, pupils are equipped with the core skills required to decode, understand, and engage with a wide range of texts. This strong foundation in reading supports learning across all areas of the curriculum.

**A Love for Reading**: By celebrating reading across the school and exposing children to a wide variety of genres and authors, we nurture a lifelong enjoyment of books. Our carefully curated St Thomas Book Spine ensures that pupils experience high-quality, age-appropriate literature, enabling them to explore the joys of storytelling, imagination, and knowledge.

**Deeper Understanding through the 7-Stage Format:** Our consistent 7-stage teaching approach encourages children not only to understand what they read but also to explore why and how texts are written. Pupils learn to analyse, infer, question, and reflect—developing the critical thinking skills necessary to interpret and appreciate increasingly complex texts as they move through the school.

**Cultural Awareness and Empathy:** Exposure to a diverse range of characters, settings, and authors helps our pupils build empathy and cultural understanding. Through literature, they are able to see the world from different perspectives, helping them become more compassionate, open-minded individuals.

**Improved Academic Outcomes**: Reading is the gateway to learning. As our pupils become more fluent, confident readers, we see positive outcomes across the wider curriculum, with reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and independence contributing to improved performance in all subjects.

**Targeted Support and Intervention:** Regular, robust data analysis enables us to swiftly identify pupils requiring additional support, including those in the lowest 20% or those deemed at risk. Timely and targeted fluency or comprehension-based interventions help to close gaps and ensure all pupils are supported in reaching their full potential.

**Inclusive and Adaptive Teaching**: All reading lessons are designed to be engaging, inclusive, and accessible. Adaptations and scaffolding ensure that every child—regardless of background or ability—can access and enjoy reading.