

# Reading Policy

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Review by: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2026

## 1. Our vision for reading

We want our children to leave Hillstone as fluent readers with good comprehension skills and a love of reading. We know that reading is crucial for allowing our pupils to access and enjoy a wide range of opportunities in school and in life, but of course, we also focus on the sheer joy of reading and the inherent pleasures it brings. In fact, these two areas are connected: we value reading highly and constantly expose children to quality texts, thus helping them have positive attitudes about reading.

## 2. Reading in Early Years

We build a real love of the written word in our youngest children by reading a wide range of quality stories to them regularly and teaching them rhymes and songs. Some books will be integral to the learning we are focusing on – a picture book can offer a great way for younger children to learn about all sorts of important concepts and knowledge. Other books they enjoy will come from our reading spine, where we have specified books we guarantee our children will have read to them – these are books that will be re-read several times with the teacher having planned in deliberate learning opportunities along the way. This allows them to become really familiar with these books, such that they can join in with parts of them and anticipate events. It also helps them start to be able to talk about which books they prefer, and perhaps why.

A love for books and an understanding of how to handle them are both crucial foundations to put in place before children start to learn to read words and sentences themselves. Another crucial focus is speaking and listening – developing skills in these areas is so important in allowing children to access a range of other learning opportunities.

## 3. Reading in Key Stage 1

Children continue to learn to read via daily Read Write Inc. Phonics in small groups. These sessions allow them to gradually read more complex texts as well as developing their comprehension skills.

When they have completed the phonics programme, they will have daily English lessons which offer a careful mix of reading and writing and continue using many of the activities and approaches that the children are familiar with.

Once a week, they will also have a reading lesson with their whole class, which is a time to really develop a range of other reading skills and to share a text linked to their current topic.

Daily, children are read to by their class teacher and have time to read a book independently.

#### **4. Reading in Key Stage 2**

Most children move into KS2 having completed the RW Inc phonics program, but some children may benefit from additional phonics-focused sessions and we, of course, provide these.

Having said that, all children continue to use and apply their phonics knowledge when reading. Reading is taught several times a week in classes, using a range of engaging and appropriate texts. Our reading spines detail the exact texts we use. The lessons follow a carefully thought-out structure, which uses a range of activities to promote a love of reading, develop reading fluency and build comprehension.

Some children require additional help with reading fluency; this is provided both via targeted work within reading lessons and independent reading sessions, but also via extra practice during the school day.

#### **5. Reading for all**

Some children are identified as having special educational needs (SEN) in reading. For many such children, their main reading learning takes part in a group which is carefully matched to their current attainment; this is the case for those accessing the RW Inc programme.

For other children, reading lessons will be adapted to meet their needs and additional support outside of reading lessons will also be provided.

For all children, the reading book(s) which they bring home will be matched to their current attainment and plenty of practice reading it/them will really benefit their reading progression. Your child's class teacher may also suggest other activities you can do at home to help your child progress well in reading.

Other children are identified as being gifted and talented in reading. In reading lessons, their class teacher will ensure they are suitably challenged. In addition, their home reading book will reflect their ability and be a key way to ensure they continue to excel in this area of the curriculum.

#### **6. Reading spine**

We have built a reading spine for our school to ensure our children enjoy a varied and rich literary diet during their time at Hillstone.

Although the books are varied and diverse, there are also plenty of deliberate opportunities for teachers and children to make useful links between books they have read.

All texts on our reading spines have been carefully selected so that our children experience a wide range of books and poems during their time at Hillstone. Ensuring progression, and allowing for a variety of links to be made, were both key considerations when the spines were built. In KS2, all texts on the reading spines are used in reading lessons, with the novels also being used for whole class story time. In EYFS and KS1, some texts will be used in reading lessons, some for whole class story and some for both – and many will inspire writing as well.

## **7. Assessing reading**

Our progression map details the skills and knowledge against which children are assessed. Teachers make use of this assessment information to guide the learning and experiences that each and every child receives. We recognise that good readers can both read fluently and comprehend well – and these two aspects are at the heart of our assessment system. Tests (both written and oral – as in the case of phonics checks) are an important part of our assessment system. However, we also recognise that although there is value to teaching children how to answer test-style questions – and to becoming familiar with sitting such papers – the key to improving comprehension lies not in practising answering such questions, but instead in a range of other activities and priorities. As such, as we have ensured that our reading curriculum and lessons – and indeed our wider curriculum – reflects this.

## **8. Links with home**

For all families, we provide information on the book(s) that their child brings home with them, including how we would like them used and tips on how they can help with their child's reading journey. We also signpost families to useful online resources.

To promote the importance of books, we use them as gifts at Christmas and for those receiving end-of-year awards. We also regularly reward children – for great behaviours and attitudes around reading – with a token they can use in our book vending machine.

We host book fairs regularly and ensure these align with parents' evenings. Each year, we host a literary festival. Other events – such as workshops – help communicate the importance of reading to our families. This aim is also met through smaller – yet important – actions, such as ensuring our reading stock is up-to-date and reflects the diversity and interests of our community and our children.