

Thameside Reading Spine – Our rationale and how it works



Reading Curriculum: Design/Intent

Reading should be an enjoyable experience, and allows children to develop both their imagination and their vocabulary. Independent readers should be encouraged to read for a sustained length of time allowing them to become 'lost in a book'. Children must also read in order to access and make progress across the whole curriculum both in Key Stages 1 and 2. Reading is vital for future learning.

Baseline data shows that many children enter this school with low levels of language, phonological awareness, and independence. They can present as passive children who are not involved in their own learning. Therefore, we have to find a way of reaching these children, as there is no real reason why they shouldn't learn to read. School ethos, expectations and commitment to Assessment for Learning, ensures that children can become independent and motivated. Success through reading is the greatest motivator of all.

Our Reading Spine Rationale:

At Thameside we teach children both how to learn to read and to read to learn. Learning to read focuses primarily on the phonics skills of the children and being able to decode and blend sounds to read. This also includes alien words and high frequency words. Reading to Learn focuses primarily upon the reading skills children require to read for pleasure and to develop subject knowledge.

Reading comprehension skills are taught explicitly in our daily shared reading lessons, in groups or whole class. We plan our English lessons around high quality core texts, which also link to the topics and themes for that term.

We have identified two key anchor texts for every topic taught in a year group – one for whole class shared reading and one for English lessons. We have ensured our selected texts represent a wide range of diversity in both authors and protagonists and are engaging to encourage a love for reading. A diet of fiction and non-fiction is promoted within our Reading Spine.

We have researched many different reading spine templates and, on the recommendation of the local authority, we have based the Thameside Reading Spine on that of Mrs H https://twitter.com/Edu_MrsH with consideration of the key principles from 'Reading Reconsidered' by Doug Lemov.

At Thameside, we continue to focus on making links across the curriculum through the topics studied and the books we read.

Foundation Stage

We understand at Thameside that children thrive on repetition and by re-reading stories to children, teachers can deepen their familiarity with a story and increase their emotional engagement. Re-reading allows children to hear new vocabulary over again, which helps them commit the meaning of new words into their long-term memory. Additionally, children have new opportunities to connect with characters and their feelings, and to relive the excitement and emotion of stories.



Thameside Reading Spine – Our rationale and how it works

As such, children in the Foundation Stage will re-read their class reader books 3 times over the course of a six week term to enable them to explore the language and emotions more deeply.

How our spine works for Years 1-6:

Each year group has a spine. The spine has a front cover to clearly illustrate whose it is.



There are three shelves -

Shelf 1: Inspiring texts used in English lessons, as identified on our Literary Curriculum for writing.

Shelf 2: Our whole class shared reading book/text for the term.

Shelf 3: The book selected for the teacher to read aloud daily to the class.



Class readers or 'read aloud texts' are the books teachers have timetabled to read to their class for at least 10 minutes a day. Although linked to topics or concepts being taught, these books are for pleasure and do not produce work alongside them (though some children may magpie ideas from these books for their writing).

Thameside Reading Spine – Our rationale and how it works

Towards the end of the Year 6 Reading Spine there is a section titled '1000+ extracts'. These are 6 books (i.e. one per term) which have a Lexile count of 1000 or more. Extracts have been taken from each book (1 per week) for Year 6 to study in one of their shared reading sessions per week. The 1000+ extract work will include: a focus on key vocabulary; an extract to read; and subsequent comprehension questions to answer.

These texts were chosen because they link to previous topics studied during their time at Thameside Primary e.g. rivers in Year 5 and fairy tales in KS1.



Reading Spine Progression

KS1 – Reading Spine September 2023 onwards						
Term:	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Theme:	Nature and environment	Heroes and villains	Similarities and differences	Journeys and exploration	Animals, friendship and kindness	Imagination and creativity
Year 1						
ATOS	2.8 (Three Little Pigs) 2.6 (Masha and the Bear)	2.8 (Stickman) 2.9 (One Snowy Night)	4.1 (The Smoos and the Smoos) 3.2 (The Flower)	2.3 (The Gruffalo) 2.1 (Sidney, Stella and the Moon)	2.4 (Owl babies) 1.7 (Pig the Pug)	2.7 (Izzy Gizmo and the Invention Convention) 3.4 (Stuck)

Thameside has created a 'Reading Spine Progression' document.

Every book used in whole class reading lessons has been assigned an Accelerated Reader ATOS level (see appendix for what ATOS stands for).

Essentially, ATOS is a *measure of readability*—in other words, a readability formula designed to guide students to appropriate-level books. ATOS takes into account the most important predictors of text complexity—average

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sentence length, average word length, and word difficulty level. The results are provided in a grade-level scale that is easy to use and understand.

For example, a book with an ATOS of 6.0 would be understandable to individuals with reading comprehension skills of a typical student entering Year 7 (ATOS was originally American and Grade 6 is equivalent to the UK's Year 7).

To determine the ATOS level of a text, the *entire* text is analysed, and the following elements are considered:


- Average word length
- Average word grade level
- Average sentence length
- Book length

In comparison, the Lexile® formula specifically considers the following:

- Word frequency
- Average sentence length

To ensure progression in reading, Thameside has calculated the average ATOS level for each year group across the school:

Year group	Average ATOS of books read in whole class reading across the academic year
1	2.8
2	3.6
3	4.9
4	5.5
5	5.9
6	6.8



Thameside Primary is aspirational for its pupils and every year group reads studies books with an average ATOS level above that of their academic year.

S.Greenaway & K.Edwards Dec 2020

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Appendix

ATOS stands for:

“A” stands for Advantage, because the formula was created in the late 1990s, when Renaissance was known as Advantage Learning Systems.

“T” stands for TASA (now Questar Assessment), the group that Renaissance partnered with in the original development of ATOS, specifically for their experience in vocabulary and their graded vocabulary list.

“O” and “S” stand for “open standard,” which means that rather than a propriety and monetized reading formula.