



Stages of reading

Stage 1 - Pre-reading Stage

Secure a consistent yes/no response.
Play with sounds (e.g. match instrument to symbol, sound to animal, clapping rhythms etc.)
Match letters and small words (e.g. inset jigsaw / flashcard snap, familiar shop names etc.)
Enjoy sharing simple stories / songs every day (joining in / responding through any form of communication such as signing, PODD, ACC, gestures, yes/no responses).

Stage 2 - Early Reading Stage

Begin to learn Set 1 sounds (see attached sheet for order)
Oral blending (with pictures / objects not written words).
Recognise a few keywords by sight (name, days of week, cat, dog etc.).
Blending to read a few simple words e.g. mat.
Reads a few very simple sentences e.g. I am Sam.
Enjoy reading stories, rhymes and non-fiction books with adults.
Respond to very simple questions about pictures/ events (through any form of communication such as signing, PODD, ACC, gestures, yes/no responses).
E.g. "Where is the cow?" for "Who fell down?"



Stage 3 - Developing Reading Stage

Set 2/3 Read Write Inc. phonics teaching (tailored to individuals/groups).
Blending to read words containing known phonemes in your head.
Reading sentences containing a mixture of Red words (sight vocabulary) and Green words (containing known phonemes for blending).
Blending to read nonsense words containing known phonemes.
Showing comprehension of sentences read by answering simple questions using signing, PODD, ACC, gestures, yes/no responses.

Stage 4 - Independent Reading

You now know all the phonemes and can blend and segment words to read and spell!
Read a wide range of books you enjoy—try to explore a variety of genres including myths, legends, traditional stories, modern fictions and fiction from history and books from other cultures and traditions (but mainly—read what you LOVE to read!)
Check ability to decode new words using the Diagnostic Distractor Array technique.
Model reading aloud to develop your child's ability to read with fluency and expression when s/he is reading silently.
Talk about the books you read with friends / adults... use writing, signing, PODD, ACC, gestures, yes/no responses.
Discuss the characters and plots, drawing inferences such as feelings, thoughts, motives. Sometimes use the text to justify opinions/ideas.

Our Vision

At Saxon Hill we intend for our pupils to:

- Build the strongest foundations for a lifelong love of reading.
 - Use reading as an effective tool for communication.
- We are aware that, for our nonverbal pupils, the ability to read can quite literally give them a voice. Being able to read, at any level, opens the door to communication with the world around them. For example; it may enable them to access Augmentive and Alternative Communication devices. In addition, it offers a stimulus for the imagination and a means to supporting well-being and positive mental health.

Why "Non-Verbal" Reading?

Traditional phonics teaching and assessment relies on verbal responses. At Saxon Hill, we recognise that these teaching techniques do not provide the best learning opportunities for all. Therefore, we are actively exploring ways to teach reading most effectively to our non verbal pupils.

For the purpose of this document "Nonverbal" will encompass any pupil who would struggle to vocalise letter sounds or words in the traditional manner. Our English Lead, Helen Fone has carried out extensive research looking at data, research projects, practices and personal experiences around the globe, as well as within our own community.

The key findings from all this research were:

Nonverbal pupils need a balance of phonic understanding combined with sight recognition of key words.

When learning phonics, nonverbal pupils need to learn to "say it in your head" - the adult models the correct sound and encourages them to sound it out in their head (this ensures they learn the correct sound) .

It is vital to check understanding of words/sentences through discussion, use of pictures, signing and symbols (such as PODD).

"Diagnostic Distractor Arrays" are a good way to assess accuracy (more on this later!).

Reading itself has the single biggest impact on reading progress (read, read, read and read some more... LOVE reading!)

Diagnostic Distractor Arrays

This is a very high-tech word for a very simple and useful technique!
To assess whether your nonverbal child has accurately read a word you might usually give him/her a choice of 2 or 3 written words and ask him/her to identify a particular word. This technique is actually of limited value— the child may only be recognising the initial sound or length of the word as it may be significantly different from the other choices available.

So use a diagnostic distractor array instead! This is how:

1. Show the child one word on a flashcard (e.g. bat). Ask him/her to sound it out in his/her head and blend it to hear the word (do not say any sounds yourself).
2. Say 3/4 similar words but change the first sound in one (e.g. mat), the middle sound in another (e.g. bit) and the end sound in another (e.g. bag) and the actual word (bat). The child should indicate when you say the word which matches the flash-card they have read.

This technique means you can identify if the child is reading accurately on his/her own but also if s/he is making mistakes you can see if s/he is getting the first sound, middle sound or end sound confused and re-teach the blending instantly modelling the correct reading.