

Highfields' Book Talk Policy

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Next Review: September 2026

Intent:

At Highfields, children are taught to read systematically through Little Wandle phonics. Once fluent, children in our school develop their reading skills through Book Talk. 'Book Talk' is a systematic way to teach reading strategies across the whole school from Year 2 to Year 6.

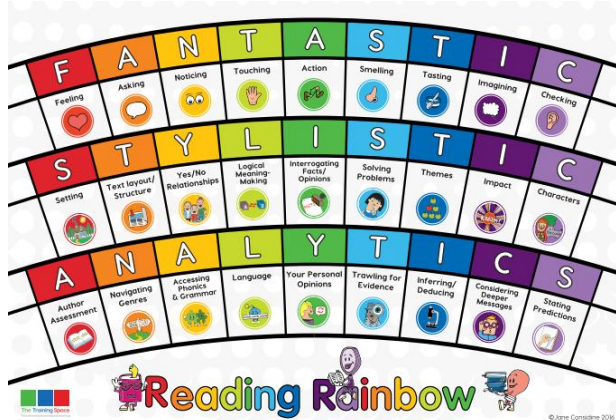
It is underpinned by certain guiding principles and these are outlined below:

Pupils are organised into reading attainment groups and share a set of the 'same' books pitched at their level with appropriate challenge.

All pupils in the classroom will be accessing narrative, non-fiction or poetry at the same time.

Pupils will receive a regularly timetabled 30 minute 'Book Talk' session and once a fortnight will intensively work with the class teacher for a 'guided read'

The session is layered with open-ended whole class questions to tackle the three layers of the reading rainbow. "On average, reading comprehension approaches improve learning by an additional five months' progress." (Education Endowment Foundation) The use of techniques such as graphic organisers and drawing pupils' attention to text structures are likely to be particularly useful when reading a range of non-fiction texts.



Implementation:

A hallmark of the session is on developing reading for meaning and oral comprehension techniques. Book Talk is structured with three reasons to read.

The reasons to read are taken from 'The Reading Rainbow'. One reason is taken from the top layer of the rainbow under FANTASTIC. The second reason is taken from the STYLISTIC layer. The third reason is taken from the ANALYTICS layer.

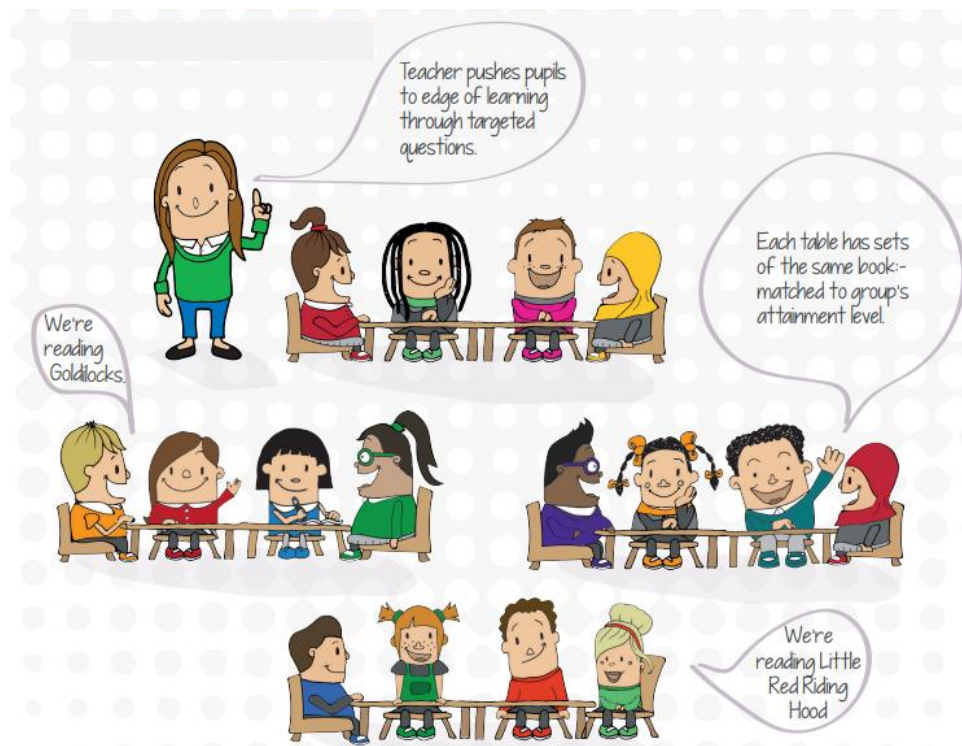
These are introduced to the pupils in chunks and it is through these generic lenses they think and discuss their reading material. The sessions work best if they operate like conversations

about books and 'hands up' is not used so there is a natural flow of talk about what they are reading.

During these sessions the pleasure principle of reading is fostered and highly engaging picture books should be used in favour of phonic based books to heighten engagement and excitement.

'Book Talk' is sharply focused on reading for meaning, listening to friends read and talking about books.

How 'Book Talk' is set up:



During these sessions, in each chunk, the lens, sentence starter and bonus word are introduced to the class and the children given time to read in their groups. Pupils could be 'reading around the group', reading in pairs or reading to themselves and the teacher will direct them in these different organisational ways. A specified amount of time is then given for group discussion to compose answers to finish the lens sentence starter and to try to include the bonus word. These answers are then shared with the class and points awarded appropriately by the teacher and peers in the class. (1 for using the sentence starter, 1 for finishing the sentence starter appropriately, 1 for using relevant evidence from the text and 1 for using the bonus word in the answer). The next lens is introduced. Up to a maximum of three lenses are worked on in a Book Talk session.

Impact/ Assessment

All children are assessed termly using PIRA assessments as well as teacher assessment in regard their progress to National Curriculum objectives for reading. These allow us to identify children on are achieving at expected standards or above as well as those that are working towards.

Provision for children who need more support is put into place after discussion in pupil provision meetings and may include supported Book Talk sessions; individual focussed reading or other required reading provision, e.g. phonics catch up.

General Data Protection Regulation

The General Data Protection Regulation provides a framework to ensure that personal information is handled properly. Personal information in school is managed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For further details of how we manage personal data, please see our privacy notice, which can be found on our school website <http://www.highfields.sandwell.sch.uk/our-school/3980-privacy-statement.html>. School's Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy can also be found on our website.