

beatrice tate school

# Reading at Beatrice Tate School

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## Our Vision for Reading

**At Beatrice Tate, we believe that every learner is a reader.**

Our Reading Strategy reflects a commitment to providing highly personalised, inclusive, and meaningful reading experiences for all learners—regardless of cognitive, sensory, or physical needs. By teaching all strands of the Reading Rope where appropriate, and aligning practice with evidence-based frameworks such as *Little Wandle SEND*, *Foundations for Phonics*, and *Comprehensive Literacy for All*, we ensure that reading is not only accessible but empowering.

Our four-level framework offers a clear, structured pathway through which students can develop the skills, confidence, and enjoyment needed to become successful readers in a way that is relevant to their lives. We will continue to reflect on and adapt our approach as our learners, staff, and evidence base evolve.

At Beatrice Tate, we believe that literacy is a human right. All students are entitled to a rich, meaningful, and personalised reading curriculum, regardless of cognitive, physical, or sensory needs.

Reading is both:

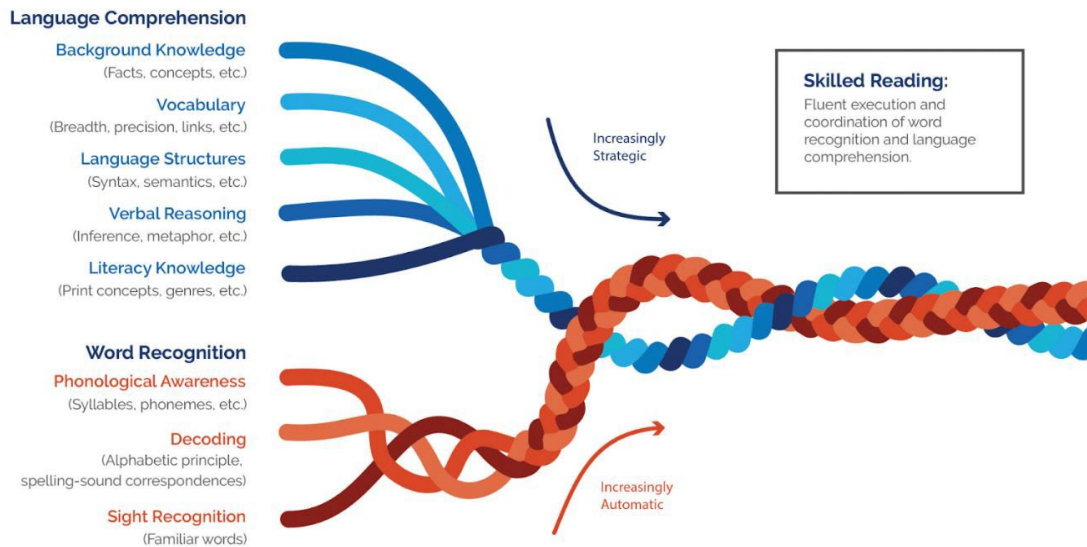
- Embedded across the curriculum, with access to print, books, symbols, and communication systems in every subject
- Taught as a discrete subject, especially for students ready for more formal phonics, decoding, and comprehension

Our goal is to provide daily, purposeful reading opportunities that support communication, independence, emotional expression, and *Preparing for Adulthood* outcomes.



## Access for All

All students at Beatrice Tate are given the opportunity to learn to read at a level appropriate to them. Our differentiated reading levels recognise that, for many of our learners, reading may look a little different—but the goal remains the same: to unlock communication, comprehension, and confidence through literacy.



Scarborough's Reading Rope (above) illustrates how skilled reading is woven from two key strands: word recognition and language comprehension. As these strands strengthen and intertwine, learners become fluent, confident readers who can understand and apply what they read.

We aim to teach all strands of the Reading Rope where appropriate, adapting our approach to meet individual needs. This includes:

- **Language Comprehension** – vocabulary, background knowledge, narrative structure, verbal reasoning
- **Word Recognition** – phonological awareness, decoding, sight word recognition.

We differentiate reading instruction across four levels:





## Level 1: Pre-readers

### Pre-readers

Our **pre-readers** are at the very beginning of their literacy journey. Before developing recognised reading skills, **these learners need time and support to establish a secure foundation of early behaviours and responses.** These are not just early “skills” but essential pre-requisites for learning — and for many students, they remain the focus throughout their time in school.

We prioritise the development of visual and auditory processing, self-awareness, symbolic understanding, and communication. These provide the foundation for later word recognition and language comprehension.

We address these pre-requisites through:

Focus of Learning	Activities
<b>Body-awareness &amp; early tracking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mirror play and “peek-a-boo”</li> <li>• Eye-gaze games and light-rope tracking</li> <li>• Tac Pac</li> </ul>
<b>Shared sensory stories &amp; book-play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resonance-board or dark-den sensory stories</li> <li>• Story Massage sessions</li> <li>• Tactile or cloth books with props</li> </ul>
<b>Early symbolic understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objects of reference</li> <li>• Symbol-matching/discrimination games (2–3 choices)</li> <li>• Personal photo books for home–school routines</li> </ul>
<b>Attention &amp; turn-taking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call-and-response songs (“copy my clap / tap”)</li> <li>• Echo-clapping / echo-vocalising simple sound patterns</li> <li>• “My turn / your turn” object passing with a motivating sensory item (e.g., light-up ball)</li> </ul>
<b>Rhythm, rhyme &amp; body percussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action rhymes and circle games</li> <li>• Body-percussion sound copying</li> <li>• Early sound-awareness games (Phase 1)</li> </ul>
<b>Cause-and-effect &amp; choice-making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switch-activated stories, musical boxes</li> <li>• Big Mack for page-turn lines</li> <li>• Choice boards with 2–3 photos/symbols</li> </ul>
<b>Early alphabet exposure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alphabet sensory trays (sand, gel bags, etc.)</li> <li>• Magnetic-letter fishing / posting boxes</li> <li>• Name-song routine with large letter cards</li> </ul>

**Key indicators of readiness to move to the next Level 2 (Emerging Readers):**

- Consistently shows preference, anticipation, or initiation during shared stories.
- Discriminates between at least three familiar objects/photos/symbols.
- Displays early phonological play (e.g. joins a simple rhyme, copies a beat).
- Demonstrates intentional choice-making using a consistent communication method.



### Emerging Readers

**Emerging Readers** are beginning to develop early reading skills, building on the foundations laid at Level 1. They continue to engage in rhythm, sound play, symbolic understanding, and book-sharing — but in more sophisticated and purposeful ways. **These students are starting to recognise familiar logos, personalised symbols, and high-interest words such as their own name and favourite characters.**

At this level, we focus on a specific set of pre-requisite skills that support access to early reading as a distinct stage of literacy. These include:

- **Symbolic discrimination** – recognising and discriminating between similar shapes and visual features, including the letters of the alphabet
- **Short-term memory** – holding and retrieving information to support meaning and decoding
- **Auditory discrimination** – listening for environmental, instrumental and body sounds with increasing attention, exposing them to letter-sound correspondence.
- **Sound imitation** – copying vocalisations such as animal sounds and rhythm patterns
- **Appreciation of rhythm and rhyme** – recognising patterns in poems, songs and repeated phrases
- **Left-to-right sequencing** – experiencing print directionality through books, names and functional routines
- **Vocabulary development** – learning new words, concepts, and associations through repetition, generalisation and symbol-supported communication

At this stage, **students begin to understand that print carries meaning.** Through daily opportunities to access personal reading books, symbols and stories, they start to build phonological awareness and a personal sight vocabulary.

Many of these learners will be working within or towards Pre-Key Stage Standard 1 for English language comprehension and reading, and benefit from the Foundations for Phonics programme (*Little Wandle SEND*) to develop listening and sound awareness before formal phonics begins.

Focus of Learning	Activities
Personalised sight vocabulary & logos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalised name cards and self-registration boards</li> <li>• High-frequency word games (snap, bingo) with social words</li> <li>• Functional word lists (e.g., dressing routine, snack choices)</li> <li>• Matching familiar logos (favourite cafés, YouTube, supermarket brands)</li> </ul>
Symbol discrimination & matching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2–4-choice symbol-matching games (picture ↔ word ↔ object)</li> <li>• Now-and-next boards to sequence daily routines</li> <li>• Topic boards for subject vocabulary (farm animals, transport, etc.)</li> <li>• ‘Odd-one-out’ symbol discrimination tasks</li> </ul>

Phonological awareness & early phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily Foundations for Phonics (Little Wandle SEND) sound-play</li> <li>• Action rhymes and clapping syllables in names</li> <li>• Rhyme-detection games with picture cards</li> <li>• Body-percussion echo patterns (stamp, clap, tap)</li> <li>• Making Words (Build- it- Change-it)</li> </ul>
Letter & name recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magnetic/tactile letters explored in multisensory trays</li> <li>• Alphabet routine (songs, alphabet arc, ordering letters)</li> <li>• Name puzzles and letter-sorting trays</li> <li>• Mark-making over large letter stencils with chunky crayons</li> </ul>
Reading for meaning & story structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared reading of symbol-supported stories with AAC modelling</li> <li>• Predictable Chart Writing sessions to build sentence awareness</li> <li>• Story mapping / sequencing 3-picture strips ('first-then-last')</li> <li>• Talk-for-writing retell with props or small-world figures</li> </ul>
Functional reading across the school day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading menus, signs and posters around school</li> <li>• Following simple visual instructions (e.g., hand-washing sequence)</li> <li>• Independent visual task cards for self-registration</li> <li>• Environmental-print hunts: spotting labels and logos in corridors</li> </ul>

### Key indicators of readiness to move to **Level 3 (Developing Readers)**:

- Knows most letters of the **alphabet** most of the time.
- Actively participates in **shared reading** (e.g. attend, respond, or comment).
- Use a reliable **means of communication** (e.g. speech, AAC, signs or symbols).
- Understands that **print carries meaning** and identifies at least five high-interest words (own name, key vocabulary).



c k, e, h, r, m, d  
 g, o, u, l, f, b  
 ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or  
 z, w, ng, v, oo, oo  
 y, x, ch, sh, th, th

Level 3: Developing readers

## Developing readers

Developing readers are ready to begin **formal phonics instruction**. At this stage, **pupils understand that print carries meaning** and are beginning to apply early decoding strategies to read simple, decodable texts. They participate actively in shared and guided reading sessions and are starting to **read for meaning** in familiar contexts. Learners develop a **growing bank of high-frequency sight words** for functional use, alongside systematic instruction in **grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs)**. Daily opportunities for purposeful reading across the curriculum help reinforce their developing skills. Symbol support may still be used to scaffold understanding while pupils transition to a print-focused approach.

Focus of Learning	Activities
<b>Systematic Synthetic Phonics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Little Wandle SEND lessons</li> <li>Interactive whiteboard phoneme frames; tapping phonemes on phoneme phones</li> </ul>
<b>Decodable reading practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1:1 and small-group reading of scheme books; echo and choral reading for fluency</li> <li>Readers answer literal questions using symbols or short sentences</li> </ul>
<b>Tricky &amp; high-frequency words</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-sensory spelling (sand trays, magnetic letters) of exception words</li> <li>Word walls updated with student-scaffolded vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary &amp; word study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily “word of the day” from topic books</li> <li>Semantic maps / Frayer models for new Tier-2 words</li> <li>Matching synonyms/antonyms with symbol support</li> </ul>
<b>Fluency &amp; prosody</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeated reading of familiar passages; Readers’ Theatre scripts</li> <li>Use of metronome tapping or drum beats to keep pace</li> </ul>
<b>Cross-curricular purposeful reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading recipes in food tech; scanning PE timetables; matching labels in science experiments</li> </ul>
<b>Reading comprehension strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prediction with picture prompts; sequencing storyboards</li> <li>CLOZE sentences using symbol software to reinforce meaning</li> </ul>
<b>Phoneme manipulation (Making Words)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Build-it-Change-it” tile routine (<i>at</i> → <i>pat</i> → <i>pit</i> → <i>pin</i>)</li> <li>Magnetic letters or Velcro tiles for eye-gaze/physical access</li> <li>Read each new word together and use it in a simple sentence</li> </ul>

### Key indicators of readiness to move to Level 4 (Applying Readers):

- Secure Phase 2–3 GPC knowledge; beginning Phase 4 blends.
- Reads a short decodable book with 90%+ accuracy.
- Answers literal who/what/where questions from text.
- Demonstrates emerging prosody (appropriate pauses, some expression).



## Level 4: Applying readers

### Applying readers

Applying readers have moved beyond early decoding. They **read a range of texts for pleasure and purpose, apply Phase 4–5 phonics knowledge in unfamiliar words, and use comprehension strategies** such as making inferences and summarising.

Focus of Learning	Activities
<b>Fluency &amp; expression</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paired reading with feedback on intonation; reader’s theatre performances</li> <li>Timed repeated reading to build words-per-minute pace</li> </ul>
<b>Advanced phonics &amp; spelling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Word-study games for alternative graphemes (ay/ai/a-e)</li> <li>Morpheme mapping of prefixes/suffixes to develop vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic comprehension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guided reading discussions using “predict-clarify-question-summarise” prompts</li> <li>Graphic organisers for main idea and supporting detail</li> </ul>
<b>Functional &amp; digital literacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using text-to-speech to research facts; skimming online articles</li> <li>Reading bus timetables, recipes, and workplace instructions</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary expansion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier-two vocabulary pre-teaching from topic units</li> <li>Frayer models and concept sort activities</li> </ul>
<b>Reading for pleasure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book clubs; personal interest magazines; audiobooks during leisure time</li> </ul>

#### Key indicators of consolidation at Level 4:

- Reads new Phase 5 words accurately in context.
- Summarises a paragraph or short text verbally or in writing.
- Selects books independently and sustains silent reading for 10+ minutes.
- Applies reading skills functionally across the school day.



## References

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