

# How Our Curriculum Supports Literacy Development



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The Story Project helps to nurture and strengthen children's literacy from the Early Years through to Year 6. At its heart are high-quality children's books: stories that are diverse, engaging and have a genuine 'wow' factor. These carefully chosen texts offer children a safe and inviting way to explore real-life experiences and emotions. As the DfE Reading Framework (2023) reminds us:

*"They (books) allow pupils to engage with a wide range of human experience: why characters make the choices they make, and why they feel what they feel... as well as exploring universal moments."*

## A Curriculum Rooted in Stories

From the moment children begin, they are immersed in rich, engaging storytelling. This approach closely reflects the message in Strong Foundations (Ofsted, 2024), which highlights that: "...reading stories aloud to children can also inspire their play: they gain knowledge about real and fantasy worlds that they can use later."



Across the primary years, The Story Project ensures that reading always feels purposeful. Every book is chosen for its beautiful language, thoughtful themes and potential to spark meaningful conversations. With every lesson centred on a story, children naturally develop curiosity, empathy and connection – powerful drivers of reading motivation and comprehension.

*"Pupils who once struggled to engage with reading and writing are now excited to tell their own stories. The lessons sparked imagination, improved emotional vocabulary and, most importantly, gave our pupils a voice. They felt heard, valued and proud of their creativity, thoughts and feelings."* Headteacher

## A Structured Approach to Comprehension

To support children's understanding of what they read, the programme is designed around the key reading content domains: vocabulary, retrieval and inference. These are the central skills assessed in both statutory and non-statutory reading tests.

The Story Project strengthens these areas through:

- regular, purposeful questioning
- opportunities for paired and group discussion
- clear modelling of rich, high-quality language
- regular revisiting of ideas, themes and vocabulary across the school

Schools have seen this translate directly into improved outcomes:

*"We've seen clear improvements in inference and written answers in reading papers as a result of the focus questions in every lesson."* Headteacher

This impact closely reflects the guidance in the Reading Framework.



The books used in The Story Project offer an abundance of language for children to explore. Through repeated exposure to new words in meaningful contexts, children build a strong and varied vocabulary. Because lessons are rooted in discussion, teachers are able to support children to clarify, extend and experiment with new language in a supportive environment.

The programme's spiral curriculum ensures that understanding deepens year on year, building both confidence and fluency as children progress through the school.

## A Structured Approach to Comprehension

The Story Project naturally supports writing development. Children are exposed to a wide range of sentence structures, writing styles and narrative techniques, enriching their own writing in meaningful ways.

This aligns with the Writing Framework (2025), which states:

“The more pupils read, or are read to, the wider their exposure to different sentence structures, with potential benefits to their writing.”

Discussion, reflection and vocabulary exploration sit at the heart of every lesson, strengthening children's written work.

*“Every child has an emotional vocabulary grid that they can access in every lesson. This has enabled them to develop a wider vocabulary when discussing thoughts and feelings about characters and themselves. This skill has transferred into their independent work.”* Headteacher



## Reading for Pleasure and Wellbeing

A love of reading is one of the most powerful gifts we can give a child. The Story Project places reading for pleasure at the centre of school life, offering stories that children genuinely enjoy – stories that spark imagination, encourage empathy and help children see themselves and others reflected in the pages.

*“The fact that it's a literacy-based approach, taught through engaging, colourful storybooks, made it feel genuinely different from other interventions. Using stories that reflect trauma, difference and disability helps children see that these things happen to others too – and that they are safe to talk about.”* Headteacher

Research consistently shows the long-term impact of reading for pleasure:

Reading for pleasure is one of the strongest predictors of a child's future academic and life success – more significant than socio-economic status (Education Standards Research Team, 2012)

Children who read for pleasure tend to feel more confident, develop richer vocabularies and show stronger comprehension. By using stories to connect with children's real experiences and emotions, The Story Project supports not only literacy development but whole-child growth. As one school reflected:

*“Teachers have noticed a real difference in engagement. For many children, this was the first time they saw their experiences reflected in a story or felt empowered to create something of their own. It's not an exaggeration to say that this project has ignited a love of learning and opened doors that some of our pupils never thought possible”* Headteacher

