



Melland High School

Reading Policy

**Ratified by
Governing Body:**

Reviewed: Jan 2024

**Next Review Date:
Jan 2026**



Melland High School Reading Policy

At Melland High School we celebrate reading. We aim to support each student, so they develop a love of reading and leave school functionally literate, as appropriate to their individual needs. We endeavour to promote a love of reading that will stay with them throughout their lives. Reading is arguably the most important skill students will learn during their schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and well-being.

The independent review of early reading conducted by Jim Rose (June 2009) confirmed that 'high quality phonic work' should be the prime means for teaching students how to read and spell words. Many of the students who arrive at Melland have significant gaps in their phonological awareness which can be due to many reasons. We aim to identify and address these gaps at the start of Year 7 through high quality phonics teaching, thus ensuring that students are making progress appropriate to their individual needs.



Although we see first-hand the benefits of a phonics-based approach to reading, our experience has shown us that this approach does not work for all our students. Many of our students with complex needs find phonics difficult to master. With these students, we are using Total Communication, reading software programs such as Nessy and whole-word recognition. We strive to individualise our approach to teaching reading and consider preferred learning styles so that all students, regardless of their ability or additional needs, can make outstanding progress in their personal reading journey.

As identified in The DfE Reading Framework (July 2021) reading for students with special needs and disabilities is a critical skill in helping them prepare for life. We place communication at the heart of everything we do and one of the strategies we use to develop communication skills is to foster a love of stories, books and independent reading wherever possible and appropriate.

We believe in being aspirational for all students at Melland High School linking and embedding the curriculum to our Skills for Life philosophy.





Teaching Phonics at Melland High School

In line with our school's commitment to excellence in reading, every student in the formal pathway accesses a 25-minute phonics (or spelling) session every day, as well as 10 minutes daily Reading for Pleasure as recommended by the National Literacy Trust. Students in both KS3 and KS4 are set by ability into phonics groups. Students from the specialist pathway will join these session if appropriate to their needs

This allows us to identify and address gaps in phonic knowledge early on and allows students to better access the curriculum across the school. At Melland, we use Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) systematic synthetic phonics programme. Although we follow the same teaching sequence that ELS suggests, our timeline will differ as we are supporting students with significant learning difficulties and complex needs and are starting at various places within the programme to meet individual needs.

Baseline assessments are also taken into consideration.

- Essential Letters and Sounds follows the original Letters and Sounds teaching order.
- Keeps routines simple to reduce cognitive load and maximise the chances of success.
- The programme includes harder to read and spell words from the original Letters and Sounds 'tricky words' list with some additional words from the National Curriculum.
- Matched decodable books mean we can closely match students' phonics practice to their secure phonics knowledge.
- Every lesson gives opportunities to review, model, practise and apply new learning.
- We use Phonics Tracker to track progress through the different phases of our systematic, synthetic phonics programme.



Vocabulary

We place additional significance on the teaching of vocabulary throughout the curriculum pathways. Vocabulary is one of our curriculum drivers. Vocabulary is important as it helps shape our thinking. The explicit teaching of vocabulary is essential for our students as they may not acquire vocabulary incidentally through indirect exposure. All our students benefit from developing their vocabulary. Our curriculum pathways strike an appropriate balance between functional vocabulary and enriching vocabulary.

The development of vocabulary is not restricted to academic development but also enriches personal development and as such is appropriate and accessibly ambitious for all.



Reading for Understanding

We prioritise the teaching of communication all the way through school, throughout the curriculum and this underpins comprehension skills.

- A Total Communication approach underpins the development of reading.
- Drama, poetry and role play will be used to build students confidence and to practice their skills in speaking, listening and understanding.
- Specialist strategies such as Colourful Semantics and key questioning Who? What? Where? Doing? Why? are used at Melland High School to support the development of reading for understanding. High-quality guided reading sessions, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction books take place during English lessons weekly.

Reading for Pleasure

We recognise the importance of students building a love of Reading. As such, we place high importance on encouraging Reading for Pleasure in a wide variety of ways. We invite authors and poets into school and promote authors via webinars in lessons. We take part in Manchester's Readathon and celebrate World Book Day. Students have the opportunity to read for pleasure every day. Staff read aloud to students and students are encouraged to take part in the Melland Big Read. This is where reward points are given for reading/sharing books and the winning House gets 100 points.

Texts

We understand how important a wide range of texts are to build a love of Reading. As such, we invest in updating our texts regularly through student voice. We encourage students to read a variety of material and each classroom, where appropriate, has a range of high quality books celebrating race, diversity and inclusion. Subject specific texts, dual language books, magazines, newspapers and other fiction and non-fiction texts can be found in our class reading areas. In the Specialist Pathway students experience a range of multi-sensory approaches and a rich language environment including rhythm and rhyme, Sensory Stories, Bag Books, audio stories and story massage.



Celebrating Reading

We celebrate Reading and continue to raise the profile of reading throughout the year through:

- Assemblies & visits to the local library
- Reading in different places, with different people including therapy dog reading sessions.
- Books as prizes/gifts
- World Book Day / Literacy Week /Roald Dahl Day/Shakespeare Day
- National Storytelling Week/National poetry Day/visiting authors
- Linking books to educational visits and in-school events



We promote a reading culture that supports all students to become enthusiastic about books and reading in line with their overall ability.

Impact

We believe that every student should leave Melland High School with the developmentally appropriate access to reading that they need to progress in their next steps of life and prepare them for adulthood. We want every student to make outstanding progress from their starting points on entry to our school.

We measure the impact of our approach in a variety of ways. Teachers and support staff read 1:1 with students each day to assess their decoding and comprehension skills. Staff also ask questions from which inference and prediction skills can be assessed and developed.

We inform students and parents of their progress, achievements and attainment via annual EHCP reviews, annual reports, parents' evenings and through informal discussions at events like phonics workshops and parent/carers coffee mornings.



Assessment

We use Phonics Tracker to track progress through the different phases of our systematic, synthetic phonics programme.

We currently use the Hertfordshire Reading Test to give us a fast, approximate reading age for each student to aid staff when designing lessons and resources, as well as for the purposes of guiding students when choosing books for Reading for Pleasure on our reading platforms such as Oxford Owl and Rapid Readers.

We use a wide range of formative and summative assessment strategies to monitor students learning and assess the impact of our approaches.

We use B-Squared to track and monitor individual student progress using the Pre-Key Stage Standards.

Teaching and learning linked to Reading is reviewed regularly by the English team and members of the Senior Leadership Team via the MHS QA cycle. Students needing additional support are provided with personalised, tailored support.

Accreditation

At Key Stage 4 and 6th Form students work towards the Functional Skills English qualification at entry levels 1-3, and levels 1 and 2 where appropriate. This qualification will demonstrate the learner's ability to read, write, speak, listen, and communicate in English at an appropriate level, and to apply the knowledge and skills to real-life situations. This qualification is also designed to provide a foundation for employment and continued studies.