



Hill House Reading and Literacy Strategy

Overall ethos “to encourage engagement with, and to develop a love for reading”

At Hill House School, we are passionate about ensuring that all students are able to engage with books and the written word. It is our aim that our students are presented with the written word in such a way as to foster a **love of reading**.

Hill House Students – barriers to learning and literacy

- ASD and SLD and the associated difficulties acquiring reading skills for these students
- The students having Non-normative approaches to communication and learning
- All of the students are working significantly below age related expectations in one or more areas of literacy whether it be accuracy, fluency or comprehension – the majority of our students are working significantly below in all three areas of literacy.
- Periods of time outside formal education, history of placement breakdown with negative experiences of learning
- The majority of our students have not experienced any consistent teaching of reading and phonics prior to coming to Hill House School
- Reading being presented in such a way as to be perceived by the students as a high stakes demand
- A significant number of our students have developed their own approaches to acquiring language and words and these are effective for them and they are naturally resistant to other approaches.
- Students who had developed compulsive or ritualised behaviours around books and the written word
- Fear of failure and anxiety around reading
- Special interests limiting the genre of fiction/non-fiction the student is prepared to engage with.

In relation to Literacy and reading we have broadly speaking three different cohorts of students at Hill House School.

Pre-Phonics Non-Literate	Emerging Understanding of Phonics Non-Literate	Literate Students
Students who are beginning to make connections with physical movements and the creation of different sounds	Students who are able to recognise and recall phonemes	Those students who at the point of starting at Hill House had already developed their own idiosyncratic approaches to reading and decoding new or less familiar words

Given these three very different groups of learners we continue to develop our literacy curriculum to meet their needs

Literacy and Reading Curriculum offer		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Reading Profile • Literacy and Reading IEP target • x 1 literacy lesson per week (TOPIC) • x 1 Pre -Phonics based activities per week • I the above informed by the guidance of the SALT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Reading Profile • Literacy and Reading IEP target • x 1 literacy lesson per week (TOPIC) • x 1 Phonics based activities per week • Opportunities to use the School Library at least x1 a week • All the above informed by the guidance of the SALT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Reading Profile • Literacy and Reading IEP target • Where achievable Standardised Single Word Reading Test • x 1 literacy lesson per week (TOPIC) • x 1 reading for meaning session each week • I the above informed by the guidance of the SALT • Focus on generalising their reading skills when out and about in the community

Our **intent** is to develop a strong phonic awareness and effective blending and decoding skills for those of our students who are learning to read. However also we recognise that different approaches towards the development of decoding skills works best for our students. We aim to enable students where appropriate to be able to understand letter sounds, blending sounds together to read and spell words and applying these skills across the curriculum. **We recognise that many of our students are working at a pre-phonics stage or have over time developed their own strategies to access the written word, with our more able readers appearing to be Gestalt Language Processors using these methods and approaches to reading the written word.**

What are Gestalt Language Process methods and approaches?

- Many GLPs are hyperlexic and can decode very easily, but then have difficulty with reading comprehension.
- Many GLPs are whole word readers and benefit from a "whole to part" approach.

- Some GLPs will read later and won't "catch on" to a phonics-based approach until they have progressed in their language development (self-generated language) and are processing words as units.
- Working closely with our speech-language therapist we identify what approach might work best for our students.
- Focus on reading for meaning as often these students have relative strengths in accuracy with weaker comprehension e.g. meaning over mechanics

This area of our understanding of language acquisition and processing is new and in constant development and we will be working with external partners such as SMARTBOX, UCL and ACORNS to produce action research on what methods and approaches best suit our GLP's.

We **implement** our literacy curriculum through dedicated timetabled lessons throughout the week delivered by our specialist SEN team, these lessons are also supplemented by a dedicated reading session which takes place weekly in the classroom or the school's library. Where appropriate students will be baseline assessed in relation to their understanding of and abilities with phonics. Each student has their own reading profile outlining their strengths and the challenges they face with reading and engagement with the written word. Students will also be set termly reading and literacy targets as part of their IEP. These targets will be reviewed at the end of each term and the progress celebrated in the students learning journeys. Our approaches to developing reading and phonics are also informed by our Speech and Language Therapist who supports and advises on target setting.

We passionately believe that teaching children to read and write to support their expressive communication is one of the core purposes of our literacy curriculum. Our intent is for the impact of this curriculum will support our students in accessing a broad and exciting curriculum, ensuring they flourish as learners throughout their time at our school. These fundamental skills not only hold the keys to the rest of the curriculum but we also aim to support the students generalise these skills "Out and About" in the community and to take them forward with them into adulthood. We also recognise that the development of this knowledge and skills also has a huge impact on student's self-esteem and enhances their cultural capital and future life chances.