



## Reading and Phonics at Woodfield

Literacy is fundamentally about finding meaning in spoken and visual symbolic language. QCA (2001) states “For pupils with learning difficulties, reading may be interpreted as any activity that leads to the derivation of meanings from visual or tactile representation.”

When considering pre-reading we have to ensure that the pupils have an understanding and are not just learning by rote. We try to teach this by putting pre-reading tasks into every day, relevant situations. Pre-reading tasks will be presented in a way to suit individual learning styles.

In primary classes (Key Stages 1 & 2) the **Jolly Phonics** scheme is used for pupils who are able to learn reading skills by synthetic phonics. This is assessed on an individual level and will be taught, if appropriate, to anyone who is showing the ability to recognise letter sounds. In developing phonic awareness, the ‘**Letters and Sounds**’ scheme has been found to be very useful particularly the early phases. This scheme is well supported with resources and games including those on the computer.

Many pupils experience symbol supported texts to help with their communication skills, which supports their individual communication systems including PECS, AAC Makaton etc. At this age classes use **Oxford Reading Tree** resources, including computer supported texts.

Our English Policy says:

“It should also be noted that research suggests that pupils with severe autism do not learn by phonics as the English language has too many deviations from standard phonemes. If pupils have the pre-requisite skills then phonics will be taught. If they are working at a younger level and are not able to recognise their phonic sounds and segment words into phonemes then pre-reading skills will be put in place first.”

The Down’s Syndrome Education Trust advocate that children wait until they have a sight vocabulary of 50 words before introducing phonics. (*Ref: Teaching children with Down Syndrome to read – Sue Buckley*). Many of our pupils will not acquire a sight vocabulary of 50 plus words, but if they do, staff are mindful of this. Woodfield have therefore developed our own ‘First 50 words’ and a ‘Second 50 words’ which are motivating and relevant, as traditional early vocabulary is not appropriate to our pupils as they derive no meaning from them.

By Key Stage 3 emphasis is given to social sight vocabulary and ‘look and say’ approach, unless an individual pupil is already a good reader. Pupils will learn functional signs and they also have **Trackers and Fireflies Reading Scheme**, to use as appropriate.

By Key Stage 4 we are working on life skills and functional communication such as reading recipes, bus timetables (to work on travel training) and age appropriate text/magazines for leisure. They have a **Folens Reading Scheme**, to use as appropriate.