



Durham Trinity School & Sports College

Reading Policy

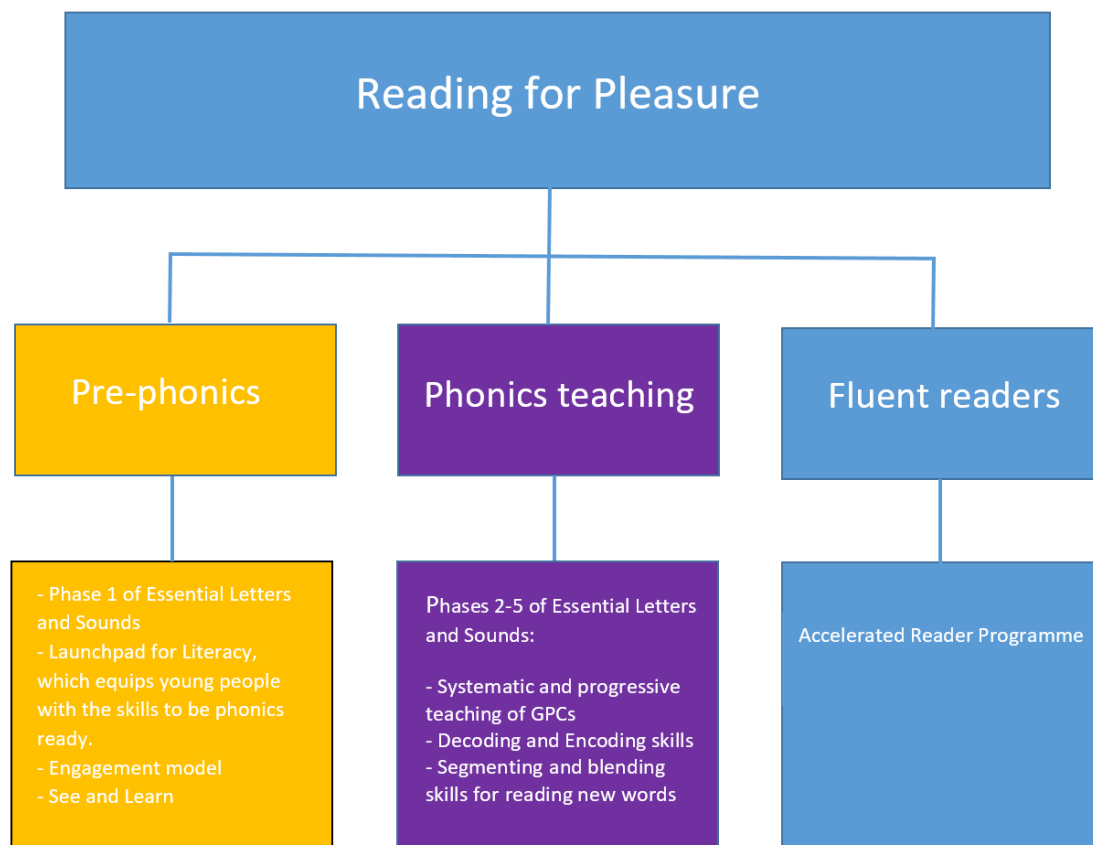
Context

Durham Trinity School and Sports College is a 2-19 generic special school catering for a wide range of learning difficulties including Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Communication difficulties including autism, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) including multi-sensory impairment and visual impairment. Pupils access learning in one of three pathways depending on their learning needs and destinations. These are Pre-Formal, Semi-Formal (including Post 16) and Specialist Autism Provision (see Appendix 1). This changes year on year as cohorts change - more complex pupils with speech, language and communications needs are joining in EYFS and Key Stage 1. Therefore, we anticipate the proportion of the school population accessing pre-phonics and phonics to increase over the coming academic years.

Aims/Rationale

Durham Trinity School and Sports College offers a curriculum that is designed to enable pupils, no matter what their special needs to learn in a way that will maximise their potential. All pupils learn through different approaches and at different rates and their achievements vary. The key to success is in providing fun, interactive and challenging learning opportunities appropriate to the needs of the pupil. A whole school reading overview has been created to reflect the different reading practices (including phonics) taking place across the different stages and ages to ensure all pupils are taught to read where appropriate, at the appropriate level and make progress.

The processes by which pupils comprehend spoken language are the same as those by which they comprehend the words on the page; the difference being that the first relies upon listening skills and hearing the word and the second upon picture recognition to seeing the words in written form. In order to comprehend written texts pupils must first learn to recognise, that is decode, the words on the page.



There are skills required before they are able to decode and read fluently. High-quality phonics teaching will secure these crucial skills of word recognition that, once mastered, enable pupils to read fluently and automatically thus freeing them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

Some pupils at Durham Trinity School and Sports College will secure automatic decoding skills and progress from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' for purpose and pleasure. The ultimate goal of learning to read is comprehension. To achieve this, practitioners and teachers are clear about which activities are designed to teach pupils to acquire word recognition skills, and which will help pupils develop high-level comprehension skills supporting them to achieve across the whole curriculum.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils have a right to access a broad and balanced curriculum designed and adapted to meet their individual needs. There should be no barriers to learning.

What Reading looks like at Durham Trinity School and Sports College:

Reading takes different forms at Durham Trinity School:

- Reading for pleasure
- Pre-phonics
- Phonics
- Lexia
- Accelerated Reader programme
- Shared and guided reading – whole class, small group and individual reading sessions
- Reading embedded across the curriculum, e.g. researching topics.
- See and learn
- Use of symbols and visuals embedded and communication aids.

Reading for Pleasure

All of our young people regardless of ability are exposed to reading material in different forms to foster a love of reading. We facilitate this by forming positive relationships and getting to know the young people's interests. We also use reading materials as a means of developing further interests, e.g. introducing new topics. The reading materials used are differentiated according to individual needs, e.g. sensory stories in Pre-Formal and in Semi-Formal, as well as picture books, ebooks and chapter books for our older pupils. Reading for Pleasure occurs across all pathways in different forms. Many reading skills are developed through reading for pleasure such as listening and attention skills and inference and deduction skills from pictures. It immerses our young people in a language rich environment, which prepares them for learning to read. Being exposed to texts that they enjoy also fosters a desire to read.

As pupils are developing reading skills through our phonics programme, they have opportunities to practise and apply their skills with decodable books that address different interests and genres. These are found in our library areas in school, alongside other books. Many classrooms also have inviting reading areas to further develop a love of reading. Once our young people become fluent readers, they are able to access a wider range of reading material that they can read for pleasure.

Pre-phonics

Many of our young people are working to develop their pre-phonics skills. These include:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds

- Body percussion (e.g. clapping and stamping)
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting

These are all prerequisite, building block skills for being ready for learning phonics. How this looks is different in every class, according to the individual needs and learning styles of our pupils. Our Pre-Formal Pathway use the Engagement model, which immerses pupils in all these skills throughout the day. Pupils in the Pre-Formal Pathway will continue to develop and consolidate their pre-phonics skills throughout the pathway.

Pre-phonics teaching also takes place in the Semi-formal pathway, particularly in EYFS and Key Stage 1 but there are also pupils within classes across the Semi-Formal Pathway accessing these skills as part of their personalised curriculum. Again, this is embedded within some discrete sessions but also across different areas of the curriculum, e.g. songs and rhymes linked to topics, transitioning around school, etc. Pupils in the Specialist Autism Pathway also access pre-phonics as part of their reading activities. Attention Autism style activities are delivered regularly which develop pupils listening, attention and communication skills at a level appropriate to their ability.

Reading experiences include: Sensory/tactile book boxes/story sacks, sound stories with the use of props/objects/symbols and signs, Attention Autism style sessions.

Launchpad for Literacy

The Launchpad for Literacy document also contains many prerequisite skills that prepare pupils to learn phonics, developing the seven skills listed above. This document can be used to address any skills gaps in interventions and in class teaching. Some of our youngest pupils in the Primary Semi-Formal pathway will access this during class time or during intervention as well as some in the Specialist Autism Pathway.

Principles of high-quality phonics work at Durham Trinity School and Sports

College

Beginner readers should be taught:

- how to listen and recognise environmental, instrumental sounds and picture recognition before moving onto grapheme–phoneme correspondences
- to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through a word to read it
- to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell

- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes

High-quality phonics work will be most effective when:

- it is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages pupils in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness
- it is multi-sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning
- it is systematic, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme with reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure pupils' progress
- it is taught discretely, where appropriate
- there are opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonics knowledge and skills across the curriculum
- pupils' progress in developing and applying their phonics knowledge is carefully assessed, monitored, tracked and evaluated

The teaching of phonics provides the building blocks for reading. **Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is our chosen phonics programme. It is a synthetic, systematic phonics programme validated by the DfE.** The aim of ELS is 'Getting all young people to read well, quickly'. It teaches pupils to read by identifying the phonemes (the smallest unit of sound) and graphemes (the written version of the sound) within words and using these to read words.

Pupils begin learning phonics at the beginning of their school journey if they are ready to do so (pre-phonics activities precede this if they are not yet ready to access phonics teaching) and it is explicitly taught regularly during a dedicated slot on the timetable. Pupils accessing phonics in the Primary Semi-Formal Pathway are working between phases 1 and 4 within the ELS progression framework.

Throughout the day, pupils will use their growing phonics knowledge to support them in other areas of the curriculum and will have many opportunities to practise their reading. This includes reading 1:1 with a member of staff, with a partner during paired reading and as a class.

Pupils continue regular phonics lessons throughout the school to ensure all young people become confident, fluent readers.

We follow the ELS progression and sequence. This allows our pupils to practise their existing phonics knowledge whilst building their understanding of the 'code' of our language GPCs (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence). As a result, our pupils can tackle any unfamiliar words that they might discover.

Pupils experience the joy of books and language whilst rapidly acquiring the skills they need to become fluent independent readers and writers. ELS teaches relevant, useful and ambitious vocabulary to support each pupil's journey to achieve their

potential in reading, whether this be to achieve fluency or to read a wide range of CVC (consonant vowel consonant) words.

We begin by teaching the single letter sounds before moving to diagraphs 'sh' (two letters spelling one sound), trigraphs 'igh' (three letters spelling one sound) and quadgraphs 'eigh' (four letters spelling one sound).

We teach young people to:

- Decode (read) by identifying each sound within a word and blending them together to read fluently
- Encode (write) by segmenting each sound to write words accurately.

The structure of ELS lessons allows our pupils to know what is coming next, what they need to do, and how to achieve success. This makes it easier for our pupils to learn the GPCs we are teaching (the alphabetic code) and how to apply this when reading.

ELS is designed on the principle that pupils should 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'. Where further support is required, 1:1 intervention are used where needed. These interventions are short, specific and effective.

All staff in school have taken part in ELS training to ensure consistency throughout school and revisit aspects of the programme regularly. Since ELS is a validated SSP, there is the need to adapt it to meet the complex and individual needs of our pupils. Staff understand the SEND of the pupils therefore adapt the phonics approach:

- Pupils with SLD have a number of memory difficulties (ref: Imray & Coley 2017 – Appendix 2) therefore limited ability to recall letters and their sounds.
- Due to social and emotional needs, there may be some pupils accessing the Semi-Formal Pathway for this specific need, therefore they would continue the Semi-Formal Phonics within elements of a formal approach.

Another challenge for pupils with SEND and memory recall difficulties is that they may be able to recognise and sight read but do they comprehend what they have read? Therefore, the phonics approach needs to be adapted for these pupils.

Reading activities/experiences include: Pleasure for Reading through the use of class reading area with a variety of books/magazines. Call and response story activities from Equals My Communication. Books without words. Individual or Small Group Phonics

Interventions. Discrete phonics lessons adapted to meet individual learning needs. Application of phonics to pupils' special interests, e.g. games.

Criteria for accessing phonics teaching

As ELS is a relatively new scheme, pupils whose reading level is assessed as a phonics stage (i.e. phases 2 to 5) should have the opportunity to access phonics for at least 3 terms. If they are making progress towards retaining sounds and using them to segment and blend, pupils continue with accessing phonics teaching. ELS was introduced in the spring term of 2022 and therefore pupils should have the opportunity to access consistent phonics teaching regardless of age in order to give pupils the opportunity to develop their phonics knowledge and skills.

Those pupils who have reached their potential in terms of acquiring the phonics knowledge they are able to, go on to apply this in functional contexts, which occurs predominantly in the Secondary Semi-Formal Pathway but a minority in Primary Semi-Formal. This includes but is not limited to using Accelerated Reader and the Blanks Levels of Questioning in order to develop their comprehension skills.

In the case that limited progress has been made by a particular pupil (identified using the phonics trackers), other methods of teaching reading will be explored in discussions with the Reading Lead, Pathway Lead and Assessment Lead through RAP meetings.

Alternative reading approaches

See and Learn

Due to some pupils' complex Autism at Durham Trinity School and Sports College, they can recognise and read on a whole word level rather than breaking words down into their components, i.e. weak central coherence. For these pupils, See and Learn is used. It is a personalised whole word reading programme as this is the preferred learning method for pupils with weak central coherence. See and Learn is the predominant method of teaching reading in the Specialist Autism Provision but also for pupils who have made limited progress in phonics in other pathways. Alongside See and Learn with the Specialist Autism Provision, pre-phonics is intertwined within their curriculum and is apparent throughout the day. For example, regular Attention Autism style sessions, songs and rhymes for transitions, sensory stories, etc.

Reading activities/experiences include: Attention Autism, songs and rhymes, sensory stories, music sessions, reading function and personalised words throughout the day.

Functional Reading

Similar to See and Learn, there are pupils at the end of Secondary Semi-formal and Post-16 who access functional reading activities. These are based on reading whole words in real life contexts, e.g shop signs, social signs such as 'toilets' and 'fire exit.'

Blanks Levels of Questioning

All staff are trained and skilled at identifying each individual child's level of understanding (see Appendix 3). They use this information to ask questions at the right level and develop their understanding of texts that they read.

Lexia

Once our pupils have the prerequisite skills for reading, they are able to access Lexia. Lexia runs alongside phonics teaching and beyond. It supplements the teaching of reading and enhances the reading skills taught in phonics teaching. Our pupils access it independently and have tutorials for skills they find difficult.

Reading Enrichment Opportunities

Alongside embedded reading in the curriculum, our pupils also engage in a range of engaging events and activities that raise the profile of reading across the school. We celebrate World Book Day each year, as well as National Storytelling Week and fundraising events linked to reading, e.g. sponsored reading events. We are also keen to emphasise the link between reading and careers so we welcome any story tellers and authors in to school to read with our pupils.

Classroom Environment

Where appropriate, teachers will develop the classroom environment to have an age appropriate display or learning area concentrating on books, sounds, pictures, objects and key words. All classrooms have inviting, age appropriate reading areas for pupils to access and some displays linked to the reading activities that take place, e.g. ELS posters, Blanks Levels of Questioning.

From previous Speech and Language Training staff are aware of the 3 tier word banks (Appendix 4) and apply this accordingly to the appropriate pathway. Staff have also been trained in how to use the Blanks Levels of Questioning across the curriculum.

Post Phonics – Fluent Readers

Accelerated Reader Programme

Accelerated reader is accessed by those young people who have developed skills in word reading and can read words. These learners will be in Secondary Semi-Formal with a small minority in Primary Semi-Formal. They read texts closely matched to their ability and their understanding is assessed through use of questions. It is engaging for many of our pupils as it uses technology to access some of the reading materials and to complete the quizzes. It also fosters independence and gives pupils ownership of their learning. They also have opportunities to apply the decoding skills learned from phonics teaching.

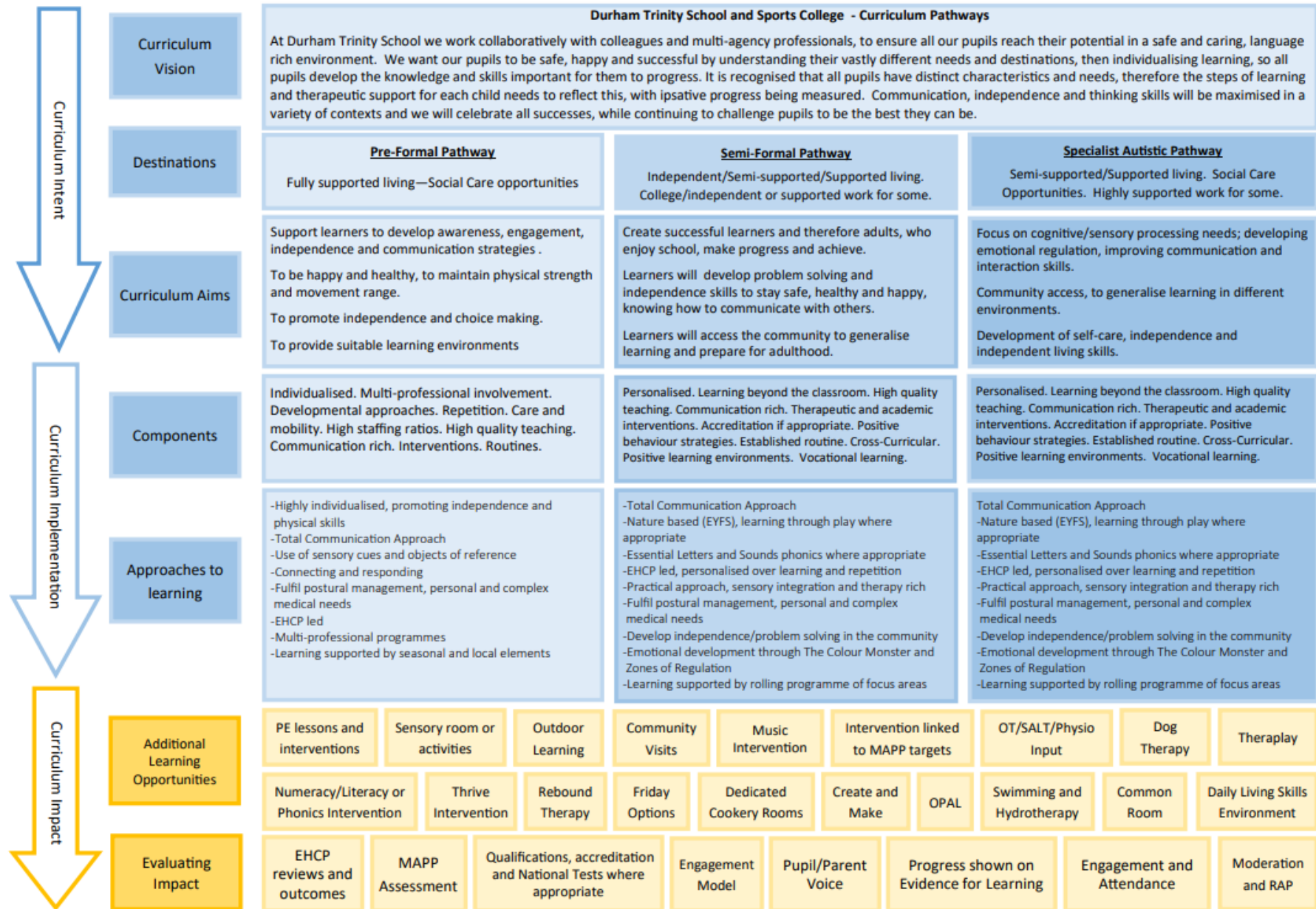
Assessment, Recording and Reporting

A continuous system of assessment and recording is essential in order to monitor and plan for progress. This procedure enables us to aid reporting for reading targets (where appropriate), Learning Intentions, Education Health Care Plans and to formulate aims, provisions and experiences to be offered by all teachers who are teaching the pupils. Phonics trackers are used to assess pupils' phonics knowledge, and are updated termly. These give an overview of progress and are used as a tool to identify gaps in learning so that intervention can be put in to place where required. They are also used to identify if a pupil is making limited progress and therefore assess whether phonics teaching is the most appropriate method of teaching reading for each particular pupil.

Procedures are in place which enable colleagues to provide evidence for reporting on progress to parents/carers and others. At Durham Trinity School and Sports College, class teachers will monitor the progress of all pupils, sharing the level at which the child is working with other teachers who will teach them for other curriculum areas. Learning is also recorded on Evidence for Learning, an online learning journal with links to personalised assessment and curriculum tags. Activities on Evidence for Learning are shared with parents/carers in order to demonstrate and celebrate the achievements and progress of the pupils at Durham Trinity School.

APPENDICES

1. Durham Trinity Curriculum Pathways
2. Severe Learning Difficulties (ref: Imray & Colley 2017)
3. Blanks Levels of Questioning Visual
4. Tiers of Vocabulary



APPENDIX 2 – Severe Learning Difficulties

- Consistently and over time working between P4 ish and at or below Level 1 ish of the National Curriculum
- Difficulties with communication
- Difficulties with concentration and attention
- Difficulties with abstract concepts
- Difficulties with short and long term memory
- Difficulties with sequential memory
- Limited working memory
- Poor general knowledge
- Difficulties with problem solving
- Difficulties with generalising understanding.

Imray and Colley (2017)

APPENDIX 3 – Blanks Levels of Questioning- Visual (Elklan –Training to Support Children’s Language and Learning)

https://www.elklan.co.uk/Shop/blank_poster

Think about questions

Blank Level 1 - Naming

Find another one like this.

What is this?

Show me a ...

Pick up ...

Blank Level 2 - Describing

Function - Show me something you eat? - I eat an apple with a ...

Things together - ?

Sorting - Tell me another fruit

Who? What? Where? Why?

What - thing? Where?

Describing words

Colour? Size? Texture? Shape? Quantity?

Blank Level 3 - Re-telling

Recall event/story - what happened?

What will happen next?

beginning middle end

Follow/give me a direction.

What did ... say? How did ... feel? When did ... ?

Blank Level 4 - Justifying

Solve problem

Why?

How do you know ... ?

Justify

Blank - developing verbal receptive skills

training

describing

re-telling

justifying

APPENDIX 4 – TIERS OF VOCABULARY

