



# Buddy Reading scheme

## TEACHER'S GUIDE



### Intention

Establishing a Buddy Reading scheme, in which older children are paired with a younger pupil to enjoy reading together, will help to promote a whole school culture of reading for pleasure. By implementing a Buddy Reading scheme, you're not just promoting reading skills – you're nurturing a community of passionate readers who support and inspire one another.

- **Modelling** – older buddies model reading skills and positive attitudes towards a variety of texts. Buddy Reading helps children to develop a greater motivation to read as they gain self-esteem and begin to understand the intrinsic joys gained from reading.
- **Confidence** – younger children experience a sense of accomplishment as they develop their reading fluency through regular reading sessions with their supportive older buddy.
- **Community** – regular Buddy Reading sessions cultivate relationships among students across different year groups, contributing to a whole-school reading culture.
- **Identity** – buddies can explore a wide range of reading materials, including books, magazines, graphic novels, websites, poems... This freedom to explore encourages children to foster their own reading identities and habits.
- **Connections** – by exploring and discussing a range of texts, children begin to make connections across the whole school curriculum.



### Implementation

Equip your reading buddies with the skills to confidently carry out their roles by following these guidelines:

- **Follow our teaching PowerPoint** – go through our Buddy Reading scheme teaching PowerPoint with your older buddies to prepare them for their new roles! Some slides in the PowerPoint can be used again for the first session between buddies as a way for them to get to know each other.
- **Text selection** – prepare a variety of texts suitable for the younger buddies. This could include storybooks, comics, recipes, and leaflets. Arrange these as a 'book blanket' across the desks to be accessed during the first task in the teaching PowerPoint.
- **Consistency** – to ensure lasting impact and progress, schedule Buddy Reading sessions regularly, ideally once a week or fortnight for 15-20 minutes.
- **Pairing** – consider your pupils' communication confidence, reading attainment, personalities and shared interests when pairing buddies to enhance collaboration.
- **Empower choice** – allow buddies to choose their reading materials collaboratively, promoting engagement.
- **Levels** – older buddies can encourage their younger partner to select texts with approximately four new words per page, striking balance between challenge and comfort.
- **Celebrate** – consider involving the reading buddies in sharing book recommendations during assemblies and updating reading displays. This not only encourages student ownership but also fosters a 'book buzz' within the school community.



### Set up tips

You may wish to follow these tips when organising your Buddy Reading groups. Please feel free to adapt the sessions to best suit your school's needs.

- **Year group pairings** – pairings often work best when there is a big enough age gap for the young pupils to see their buddy as a mentor, but not so big they'd find them intimidating! Key Stage 1 children paired with Lower Key Stage 2 works well, or pairing Year 5 and 6 with Year 3 and 4. If possible, have the class teachers discuss their pupils together to arrange the most suitable pairings.
- **Who to involve** – you might have whole classes involved, target reluctant readers to help them gain confidence and take responsibility, select children who don't get to read at home, or allow children to apply to be buddy readers... the choice is yours!
- **Organising your pupils** – you could split two classes in different year groups in half, swapping one young group with one older group. Keeping your buddy pairs as consistent as possible helps the children to build a relationship and grow in confidence together.
- **Room space** – you might wish to have the pupils go to the library, take turns going to each other's classes, go outside, or break into smaller groups. Wherever you decide, try to find a quiet and comfortable space.
- **Book organisation** – setting aside specific books for buddy reading time in your chosen spaces may help to maximise your session time. You could also have the older buddy keep chosen texts in a wallet or a tray with their reading log and prompt.
- **Set expectations** – we recommend that you use our teaching PowerPoint with your older buddies and spend a small amount of time explaining the Buddy Reading scheme with the younger pupils. It's important to set expectation and share how this time should be used.
- **Add to your timetable** – try to set a scheduled time that remains consistent, as this helps ensure the longevity of the scheme. Once you've decided when these sessions will run, consider making a Buddy Reading visual timetable prompt to add to your class calendar – this will really boost excitement for reading!



### Impact

- **Peer collaboration** – pupils are encouraged to practise reading aloud in pairs, providing constructive feedback and supporting one another.
- **Develop skills** – through collaborative reading, children not only enhance their reading skills but also develop their communication, teamwork, and empathy.
- **Boost confidence** – regular reading aloud with a supportive peer helps students feel more relaxed communicating with others.
- **Ignite joy** – reading buddies are exposed to a variety of reading materials which spark their creativity, imagination and nurture a lifelong love for reading.
- **Strengthen comprehension** – by working in mixed aged pairs, children learn from each other and make connections.
- **Mentoring** – older students are provided with opportunities to serve as role models for their peers and develop a sense of responsibility.

