



## Discovery Special Academy Comprehension Progression

At Discovery Special Academy, we know that comprehension, the ability to understand something, begins before a child can read letters or words. Pupils are taught to acknowledge and appreciate their environment and the wider world through their chosen means of communication by offering valuable learning experiences in and outside the academy. From Nursery onwards, language development is priority and taught through a literature rich environment with the sharing of stories, rhymes, poems and songs at its heart. We know that cultural experiences and knowledge of the world improve spoken language and can empower pupils as readers and as a result, improve well-being, happiness and mental health. Our wider subject curriculum ensures pupils learn about subjects before they are expected to discuss or write about them and educational visits support them in being able to retrieve knowledge, use related vocabulary and link it to new contexts.

This learning is key throughout a pupil's time in EYFS and for those pupils who transition to the informal phase. Comprehension continues to focus on understanding the world around them through learning to communicate and interact using alternative and augmentative communication methods. It also allows pupils to comprehend that they can be their own agent of change and influence their world.

Before those pupils who are able, become fluent readers, that is they can read with accuracy, automaticity and prosody, comprehension is taught through familiar focus texts during English lessons. This approach allows new vocabulary to be correctly modelled by the adult, allowing understanding of new words to be recalled using contexts. New words are explained, displayed and then used in the Talk for Writing approach. This also allows previously learnt vocabulary to be retrieved and re used in new stories and genres. Story characters are described and compared and when ready, pupils can begin to use written methods to show their comprehension of texts, for example, use labelling skills to show their understanding of the diversity of characters. Adult led discussions for example, relating to an author's intent, help pupils to understand that reading commands communication between a writer and their audience. This knowledge is essential as pupils begin to see themselves as authors.

As pupils' reading becomes fluent, comprehension is taught using whole class texts where pupils take ownership of their own copy. Adults read aloud and this helps pupil's understanding of texts through prosody and thinking out loud questions, for example, characters feelings and anticipation. When ready, pupils can show their understanding of the text using written methods such as sequencing, summarising, comparing and explaining using inference and deduction skills.

### Comprehension for all Learning Pathways

Visual timetables  
Choosing boards  
Makaton  
Labels and photographs  
Symbols  
Routines and structures  
Social stories  
Facial expressions and body language  
Repetition  
Songs  
Stories and rhymes  
Making choices  
Developing independence