

# Reading and Literacy at Oldfield School



*“Let us read and let us dance – these two amusements will never do any harm to the world.”*

*Voltaire*

Skilled reading, writing and talking is crucial to form the foundation of our students' success. We want to ensure every member of staff and every student value the power of reading and literacy, not only in their learning and teaching but also in their ability to communicate effectively and to make sense of the world.

At Oldfield School, our **ambition** is for all of our students to be reading at or above their chronological age by the end of Year 9. This will allow students to confidently access the KS4 curriculum and undertake their external exams, whilst also ensuring that they leave equipped with reading skills for life beyond school.

## Research-informed

We use research to inform our approach to reading and literacy. Our intent is that our strategy is rigorous and comprehensive enabling students to develop the reading fluency to flourish at school and in future employment.

Studies show us how essential reading skills are when it comes to students making connections between their subjects and we know that the average reading age required to access GCSE level texts and examination papers is 15 years and 8 months. As a result, we understand that a school wide strategy is essential.

Our literacy strategy is based on the 7 recommendations to improve literacy in secondary school from the Education Endowment Foundation:



### IMPROVING LITERACY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Summary of recommendations

<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum</p> 	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject</p> 	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts</p> 	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Break down complex writing tasks</p> 	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject</p> 	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Provide opportunities for structured talk</p> 	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.</li> <li>Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.</li> <li>All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.</li> <li>School leaders can help teachers by ensuring training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity over general approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.</li> <li>Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words.</li> <li>Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech.</li> <li>Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training focused on teaching reading is likely to help secondary school teachers teach their subject more effectively.</li> <li>To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.</li> <li>Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning can improve students' comprehension.</li> <li>Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.</li> <li>Teachers can break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and can support students by modelling each step.</li> <li>Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality.</li> <li>Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and paired writing, to motivate students to write.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.</li> <li>Reading helps students gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen students' understanding of ideas.</li> <li>Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.</li> <li>Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve students' writing, particularly when focused on meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning.</li> <li>High quality talk is typically well-structured and guided by teachers.</li> <li>Accountable talk is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality, and emphasises how talk can be subject specific.</li> <li>Teachers can support students by modelling high quality talk, for example including key vocabulary and metacognitive reflection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7.</li> <li>Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach.</li> <li>Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.</li> <li>Creating a co-ordinated system of support is a significant challenge requiring both specialist input and whole school leadership.</li> </ul>

## Lifelong Readers

*“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies . . . The person who never reads lives only one.”* George R.R. Martin

We aim to ensure that at Oldfield School every student reads widely, regularly and for enjoyment. Reading routinely will help boost students’ vocabulary, increase cultural capital and develop their empathy and imagination. Knowing this, we offer the opportunity for students to read a diverse range of texts from different time periods offering multiple perspectives on the world. Furthermore, reading for pleasure has been found to improve self-esteem, providing the grounding we need to pursue our goals and make life decisions. Reading can also aid our sleep, reduce feelings of loneliness and increase our emotional intelligence.

## Whole School Reading Strategy



### Read Like A Champion (RLAC)



Read Like A Champion (RLAC) is Oldfield’s school-wide reading strategy which has been designed to support students in the development of their reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition

by focusing on four core reading skills: Predicting, Summarising, Engaging and Evaluating. In addition, this unique strategy enables the consistent practice of key behaviours for learning, including independence, resourcefulness, questioning and resilience.

An essential component of RLAC is the Reading Ruler, a tool that is available in every classroom and which students use to track what they are reading. The habitual use of Reading Rulers is having a hugely positive effect on engagement and focus. All teachers have been trained to use RLAC to support learning and understand that the consistent use of these methods is useful for all students and essential for some.


### Reading and Literacy: Curriculum Implementation

Reading is integral to our whole curriculum. If our pupils can’t read well, they can’t access the knowledge that our curriculum has to offer: *“Young people who leave school without good literacy skills are held back at every stage of life. Their outcomes are poorer on almost every measure, from health and wellbeing to employment and finance.”* (Education Endowment Foundation, EEF).

 Read Like A Champion 

	<b>Predict</b> When we make predictions about a text, we use existing knowledge to think about what might come next.
	<b>Summarise</b> When we summarise a text, we reduce the whole thing into a simpler form.
	<b>Engage</b> When we engage with a text, we identify parts that are new or unfamiliar to us and try to work them out.
	<b>Evaluate</b> When we evaluate a text, we identify and assess the key parts and consider why they matter.

Your Reading Ruler 

- ✓ Have it every day
- ✓ Use it in all subjects
- ✓ Improve your skills
- ✓ Read Like a Champion 





Students come to us with a range of reading histories, so our curriculum is designed to provide opportunities to stretch and develop readers of all abilities, with expertly designed scaffolds enabling access to suitably challenging texts.

## **A Reading Culture**

In Years 7 and 8, reading for pleasure is embedded within the curriculum. For an hour each fortnight a dedicated reading lesson in the library allows students to immerse themselves in a book. In collaboration with our librarian, teachers help to guide and inspire students' reading choices. To support this process, we use NGRT Reading Age data to select appropriately challenging reading material and offer support and intervention for those pupils that are below Age Related Expectations.

In addition, in year 7 and 8, students spend the first 10 minutes of each of their six classroom-based English lessons (excluding the library lesson) reading for pleasure. They then spend 5 minutes adding to their Reading Journal: this involves them using RLAC skills to respond to what they've read that day. Within the journals, students also keep a record of the books that they've completed, building towards the achievement of Reading Awards (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond), each of which is earned when ten books have been read. These routine practices help to engender a reading culture and give students the freedom to choose what they read alongside their study of the English curriculum.

## **Sixth Form Reading Buddies**

Our brilliant sixth form students volunteer in the library lessons alongside our KS3 students to support reading and engagement with reading. They have been trained in using RLAC strategies and safeguarding and they are invaluable support, role models and inspiration to some of our struggling readers.

## **KS4 Reading**

As students move into GCSE, we continue to employ RLAC strategies to support the reading of more complex texts, as well as signposting our most able students to wider reading lists which will develop their own critical interpretation of texts. We also take every opportunity to enable students to develop their understanding of voice, audience and the subtleties of tone, whilst preparing them for the unseen elements of both the language and literature GCSE. They leave school confident in their own ability to read and decipher the multiple layers of meaning that will be presented by any text they encounter in their wider life.

Reading Curriculum	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Library Reading lesson	Once a Fortnight	Once a Fortnight			
Reading Plus	7 lessons/ fortnight	5 lessons/ fortnight			
Tutor Time Reading Programme 'Oldfield Reads'	Once a Week	Once a Week	Once a Week	Once a Week	Once a Week
Tutor Literacy Programme 'Word of the Week'	Once a Week	Once a Week	Once a Week	Once a Week	Once a Week

## Reading Plus

As part of our reading intervention strategy, selected pupils follow a Reading Plus curriculum which balances reading intervention strategies and wider literacy skills. Pupils are selected in Term 1 of Y7 following their NGRT test and those pupils that are identified as being in Level 4 in terms of significant need then follow a bespoke curriculum that instils their confidence in reading, builds a positive reading culture and continues to develop their wider literacy skills. These classes have more timetabled time within the library to ensure that the balance between motivation and support is integral to their reading experience at Oldfield.

As pupils progress into Y8, they return to mixed ability classes and those that remain in need of significant intervention remain in Reading Plus and this runs alongside their main English curriculum whilst continuing to build on the aims in Y7. These lessons focus on shared reading, with our whole school reading strategy RLAC embedded to ensure that pupils are accessing the reading material whilst also developing their independent reading strategies.

## Tutor Literacy/Reading Programme

*“Think before you speak. Read before you think”*

Educational research shows that, for students to most effectively develop in their reading confidence and ability, they should be reading as frequently as possible. So, we have allocated time

within our busy tutor programme to ensure that reading is a regular occurrence at Oldfield and helps encourage strong habits of reading for pleasure. All students will read a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts across the year. These texts have been carefully selected to encourage a love of reading as well as well as engaging with current issues affecting our young people and addressing British Values, key social, moral, cultural and spiritual issues. We encourage all students to apply RLAC methods and we offer opportunities for students to read aloud or enjoy listening to reading modelled by tutors. This confirms for our students that all adults are readers and normalises reading as a regular occurrence.

### Example of reading texts in one term at Oldfield School:

	Text	Genre and Themes
Week1	Malala Yousafzai speech at the United Nations.	<b>Non-Fiction</b> Themes about equality, persecution and freedom of speech.
Week 2	Opening Chapter of <i>Mrs Frisby and the Rats of Nimh</i> by Robert O Brian.	<b>Fiction</b> Themes about animal testing, community and friendship.
Week 3	“Women in Science” – Rachel Ignotofsky.	<b>Non-Fiction</b> Celebration pioneering women who lead the way in STEM.
Week 4	An extract from an interview with the famous runner Mo Farah. <i>National Geographic</i> magazine.	<b>Non-Fiction</b> Themes about resilience, learning to celebrate failure and hard work! In celebration of the Bath Half Marathon.
Week 5	An extract from <i>Jurassic Park</i> by Crichton	<b>Fiction</b> Themes about environment and teamwork.
Week 6	What is a General Election? BBC News online	<b>Non-Fiction</b> To support students’ understanding of the law, democracy and political systems.
Week 7	“Making the best chocolate brownies.” Good Food Recipes online.	<b>Non-Fiction</b> To inspire our students to join our afterschool “Let’s get Cooking” club.

### Word of the Week

Alongside the teaching of Tier 3 (subject specific) vocabulary in all curriculum areas, we teach Tier 2 (challenging and ambitious) vocabulary via Word of the Week. Delivered as part of the weekly tutor programme, WOTW employs expert strategies that maximise student participation and involve the immediate application of new vocabulary. By exploring synonyms, antonyms, etymology and exemplification, WOTW enables students to forge links between existing and new vocabulary,

developing the range, precision and sophistication of their language, leading to more confident communication. Students are rewarded for using the WOTW in their lessons, with an average of more than 100 Achievement Points awarded each week.

### English Curriculum Set Texts – Key Stage 3

At Oldfield, we pride ourselves on a delivering a KS3 English curriculum that strikes the balance between support and challenge in all aspects. Our curriculum allows students to read and engage with a wide range of challenging texts that offer both literary and cultural value. Whilst our text choices are rooted in the National Curriculum, we also value the wider SMHC attributes to our texts as we believe English as a subject can deliver a more holistic education to our young people.

For example, our KS3 curriculum is structured around core universal themes such as:

	Texts	Themes/ historical context
<b>Year 7</b>		
The Power of Stories	A Monster Calls Skellig	Coming of Age Grief
Caught in Conflict	Running on the Roof of the World Supplementary Poetry	International Conflict Diversity
All the World's A Stage	The Tempest Hamlet	Shakespeare Power Individualism
<b>Year 8</b>		
Citizens of the World	The Bone Sparrow Trash	Diversity Injustice
Visions of the Future	Ray Bradbury Short Stories	Power Dystopian Fiction
United We Stand	Animal Farm The Book Thief	Liberty Unity Injustice Democracy
<b>Year 9</b>		
Brawling Love	Romeo and Juliet War Poetry	Coming of Age Love Pride Response to War
The Darkness within	Gothic Literature	Individualism Psychology
I have a Dream	Of Mice and Men	Social Injustice Prejudice Individual Liberty

## English Curriculum Set Texts – Key Stage 4

Whilst maintaining our core values that underpin our Curriculum, The KS4 English curriculum is taken from the choice of texts offered in the AQA English Literature and English Language GCSE specification. Within that however there is a wide range of options from which we have chosen texts which we believe are relevant, educational and (most of all) engaging for our context of students. Parents are encouraged to be aware of the expected reading list at KS4 English and very much invited to read these texts along with their child to promote discussion and a shared reading experience.

	Texts	Themes/ purpose
<b>Year 10</b>		
Nineteenth Century Prose	Jekyll and Hyde or A Christmas Carol	Individualism Social Injustice
Modern Texts	An Inspector Calls	Social Injustice and Social Responsibility
Poetry Anthology	Power and Conflict Cluster	Power Conflict Injustice
<b>Year 11</b>		
Shakespeare	Macbeth	Power Individualism

### Links to AQA English Websites

- ❖ English Literature AQA: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-8702/specification>
- ❖ English Language AQA: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-8700/specification>

### Reading Ages and Intervention

At Oldfield School there is a robust process for identifying, measuring and supporting reading for all students in all year groups. Our intention is that all our students are enabled to develop from novice readers to expert readers. Our experienced and specialist SEND Literacy team work alongside our teaching staff to ensure all our students are accessing the curriculum.

We follow an annual timeline to identify, measure and support reading and literacy.



## Process of testing Reading ages

- ❖ All Students complete an online NGRT reading test at the beginning of every academic year to determine their reading age. All Year 7 students also complete the WRAT tests.
- ❖ Following initial testing, students are placed into 1 of 4 Reading levels, set by results against age related expectations (ARE)
- ❖ Test results in Year 7 are screened by the Leadership and SENCO using KS2 data to ensure struggling readers are identified and fully supported. Level 4 students who are considerably below their Age-Related Expectation are supported directly by our Learning Support Department under the guidance of the SENCO, where direct intervention by trained specialists in Literacy support and phonics will target and rapidly address areas of need.
- ❖ Each Level is given targeted intervention, support or challenge to promote meaningful progress in reading age regardless of their ability - see examples of support in the table below.

Reading Level	Challenge/Support/Intervention
Level 1 – Students are significantly above ARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students directed to higher challenge texts/books.</li> <li>• RLAC strategies used to challenge, support and develop reading skills.</li> <li>• Class teachers ensure texts and vocabulary are challenging, encouraging disciplinary literacy.</li> <li>• Monitored and supported in tutor literacy activities.</li> </ul>
Level 2 – Students are on or above ARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students directed towards more ambitious texts/books which add extra challenge.</li> <li>• Monitored and supported in tutor literacy activities.</li> <li>• RLAC strategies used to challenge, support and develop reading skills.</li> </ul>
Level 3 – Students are just below ARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short interventions for fluency, phonics and comprehension where required.</li> <li>• Closely monitored and supported through Read like a Champion.</li> <li>• Supported by Sixth form buddy system.</li> </ul>
Level 4 – Students are significantly below ARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct reading, literacy and phonics support led by Learning Support Team.</li> <li>• Regular testing to monitor progress.</li> <li>• Reading Plus and Functional Skills.</li> <li>• CORE Classroom. Work focuses on phonics and literacy skills.</li> <li>• Closely monitored and supported through Read like a Champion.</li> <li>• Supported by Sixth form buddy system.</li> </ul>

## Supporting reading through literacy intervention

### How are the children identified?

Students quickly identified in year 7 as requiring intensive support with their reading from their KS2 reading scaled scores. Further diagnostic assessments, in the form of NGRT and WRAT screening are then done to pinpoint the specific gaps in the children's knowledge, for example spelling, phonetic decoding and comprehension.

### Literacy Intervention

Interventions include:

- Reading – scanning, predicting, highlighting key words, inference, finding evidence to support answers.
- Writing – revision of grammar, (full stops, capitals, commas, apostrophes), sentences construction, editing, word classes, adding interest with descriptive language, (similes, metaphors, adjectives, adverbial phrases)
- Spelling/ phonics - We play phonics games to revise spelling patterns to close sessions; look at syllabification, prefixes and suffixes to aid spelling of topic words; and practise key word spellings (Y5/6 list).

### CORE Classroom

To support the children in Year 7 and 8 with the lowest scaled scores, a small CORE class has also been set up taught by a primary trained teacher. The children attend the class during their timetabled English and MFL lessons. In these classes, the children will work towards securing Functional Skills English Entry Levels in reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Once the children successfully secure Entry Level 3, or the teacher deems they are ready, they will be filtered back into the main classes. If Entry Level 3 is not secured by the end of year 9, the children continue to work towards functional skills qualifications, progressing from Entry Levels, to Level 1 – 3.

The CORE lessons focus on overlearning key comprehension skills essential for everyday life (reading and understanding timetables, taking part in discussions/interviews) as well as, grammar, spelling and punctuation and lay the foundation for progression to further study or employment. The teacher takes a bespoke approach to learner's needs by listening to the pupils about the issues they identify as barriers to learning and helping them to overcome them (overlay, reading pen, laptop, confidence).

### Implementation of Phonics intervention (Lexonic Leap and Lexonic advance)- February 2025

To support phonics teaching we will be implementing a phonics programme across the whole school over the next two years. In February 2025 our plan is to further support phonics gaps by implementing Lexonic. Initially, core members of staff will be trained in delivering Lexonic Leap with our students identified as requiring phonic intervention. We will then introduce whole staff training on how to support phonics within the classroom across the whole curriculum.

Lexonic Leap improves students' phonics (phoneme sounds/ digraphs/ trigraphs as a means of helping with spelling and memory) whilst Lexonic advance leverages metacognition and trains learners to develop phonological awareness and make links between unknown words using common prefix, stems and suffix definitions.

## Celebrating Reading

We pride ourselves on the fact that our students enjoy reading and this is because we celebrate it.

Every year the school celebrates **World Book Day**. This is a themed day dedicated to a love of reading where teachers and students alike share their favourite reads, complete a range of activities such as trails, quizzes and competitions 'dress up' and book swap, creating a real buzz around reading.

### Some other ways we celebrate reading include:

**Author Visits** – Often in collaboration with the Bath Literature Festival. These visits allow authors to share their passion for reading and writing and impart their expert knowledge to our students. They also get the opportunity to ask questions about the writing process and take part in workshops after the talk. Our Librarian, Mrs Pearce also organises creative writing workshops, historian visits, and a young editor's group.

**Big Library Events** – Every year we host a big library event based on popular novels such as Harry Potter or The Hunger Games. Students dress up and take part in several challenges and finish with a banquet.

**The BookBuzz reading programme** – Run by the Reading Agency, this scheme allows our year 7 students to choose their own book to take home and keep. For some, this is the first time they have owned a brand-new text. This scheme continues throughout the year including prizes for completing the BookBuzz reading challenge, a book club and swap. In the library a display based on the texts is created and a 'If you liked that, why not try this' display as well as lots of displays based on the Book Buzz books.

Every year, we seek new opportunities to celebrate reading, working alongside the library to ensure that students develop a life-long passion for books.

## Oldfield Library

### Why Should Children Read?

Our Librarian, Mrs Pearce is a passionate advocate for reading for pleasure and encouraging a lifelong habit for reading. Students are encouraged to choose books they will enjoy whether it's a thriller, romance or murder mystery, science fiction, fantasy, or humour. Students have access to

over 14,000 books which they can borrow for free. Students can borrow up to three books at a time for two weeks (renewing if they take longer).

Accessing the library is easy – it is open from 8.15 until 3.15 every day for all students including break, lunch time and after school. Year 7 & 8 have fortnightly reading lessons in the library, and these are focussed on reading for pleasure.

The library is a beautiful, creative, and inspiring room where students can learn, enjoy, and contribute. There's plenty of space, soft seating, desks, and computers so students can browse, read, or study in comfort.

Research shows that reading regularly improves literacy and language skills. Reading comprehension, reading fluency, and decoding benefit from a regular reading practice. At Oldfield School students read during their English lessons, during their library lessons and during tutor time. Students are encouraged to read in the library during break and lunch time.

Teenagers who read in their spare time know 26 per cent more words than those who never read. Teenagers from book-loving homes know 42 per cent more words than their peers who have grown up with few or no books.

A lot of research into teenagers' reading has focussed on achievement outcomes. However, research shows that reading fiction books (and more importantly reading for pleasure) has many benefits for teens including well-being, calmness, escape, empathy, empowerment, imagination, and creativity.

## **What's So Good about Oldfield School Library?**

### **1. Sense Of Safety**

Oldfield School Library is a safe, friendly, and welcoming space where children feel comfortable and can be themselves without judgement.

### **2. Inclusion**

The Oldfield School Library book collection reflects the wide variety of experiences and backgrounds of our students, helping to build empathetic, literate, and well-rounded young adults. We stock books at all levels including quick reads, dyslexic-friendly, middle grade, teen, young adult, and adult. Oldfield School Library is an inclusive space where all children are represented and are welcome here.

### **3. Positive Life Experiences**

Oldfield School Library brings important events and experiences to students like author visits, extra-curricular clubs, and a feeling of ownership over the space. Students can volunteer as Library Helpers or be part of Book Club which allows students to feel empowered, confident, and gives them a voice. These activities allow children to feel part of the school community, experience responsibility and gain confidence.

#### **4. Improved Academic Outcomes**

School libraries are proven to combat poverty through improved academic outcomes while increasing positive attitudes towards learning.