



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

*'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'*



St. Aidan's Catholic Academy  
Developing Literacy  
through Vocabulary,  
Comprehension and Reading  
2023-24



## St. Aidan's Reading Journey

'Books expose children to more facts and to a broader vocabulary than virtually any other activity; people who read for pleasure enjoy cognitive benefits throughout their lifetime'

Daniel Willingham



British Values	
	Democracy
	Rule of Law
	Individual Liberty
	Mutual Respect
	Tolerance

Curriculum Links			
	Science		MFL
	English		ICT
	P.E/ Sport		RE
	Geography		Careers
	Art		History
	DT/ Engineering		PHSE/ Citizenship
	Music		Maths

9 Protected Characteristics	
Age	
Gender	
Race	
Disability	
Religion or belief	
Sexual orientation	
Gender reassignment	
Marriage or civil partnerships	
Pregnancy & maternity	



## Intent:

*'Reading, writing, vocabulary, speaking, listening, debate...the complex tapestry of great teaching, enacted in every lesson, in every phase and subject domain, by every teacher' Alex Quigley*

We believe for all pupils to succeed they must be well equipped with enough language to access the pleasure of reading, the excitement of writing and to explore new subjects, unlocking the potential to learn and grow as individuals. A strong command of language is not only essential in the wider academic world but it can also affect a pupil's self-esteem and confidence.

Research suggests that pupils who read more frequently tend to have more academic success and go on to have better career prospects after they leave school than those who read less frequently. Further to this, reading has been proven to help lessen anxiety and improve wellbeing (Clark and Rumbold 2006).

## At all phases of education, we will develop:

1. A love of reading, for pleasure, with a rigorous approach to develop learners' confidence and enjoyment of reading, writing and communication.
2. A language-rich environment, in relation to the different tiers of vocabulary.
3. A rigorous approach to develop learners' confidence and enjoyment of reading, writing and communication.
4. Reading materials closely matched to learners' phonic knowledge, ensuring sequential development.
5. A highly targeted support programme for pupils who have gaps in reading, writing and communication.
6. All staff to confidently model excellent reading habits in reading, writing and communication.
7. A seamless transition between key phases.
8. Ensure access to high quality stimulating reading materials for both pupils and parents.
9. Regular opportunities to develop writing across the sequenced curriculum.

## Implementation:

*'Comprehension floats on a sea of oracy' Alex Quigley*

Learning to read is a highly complex undertaking that is underpinned by two fundamental processes:

1. Word reading through the decoding of words and recognition of words.
2. Comprehension of texts through a range of knowledge and skills.

It is the skilled combination of these two dimensions that facilitates **all** reading success (EEF).

## At all phases of education, we will embed/ensure:

1. A highly considered reading canon, promoting challenging debate and enjoyment of reading
2. Prioritisation of frequent (Tier 2) and complex (Tier 3) vocabulary across the taught curriculum.
3. Explicit and systematic teaching of phonics through a DfE validated programme\*, to quickly ingrain word recognition/spelling by developing pupils' ability to hear, identify and manipulate phonemes to apply this in writing.
4. Reading aloud with accompanying guided oral reading instruction by all staff to develop fluency.
5. Pupils can articulate and debate ideas verbally; teachers model high quality oracy.
6. Structured interventions help pupils struggling with literacy fluency through accurate, early diagnosis.
7. Reading and writing are combined. Reading helps pupils gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen pupils' understanding of ideas. (Reading Like a...)
8. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught explicitly to improve pupils' reading and writing.
9. Parents/carers are encouraged to help their children become confident, fluent readers and writers.
10. That we explicitly celebrate success in reading and writing.



## All subjects will have:

1. Carefully selected texts built into curriculum planning, linked to subject specific writing and communication.
2. Scholarly reading and extended writing integrated into sequences of Learning and short-term teacher planning.
3. Structured questioning to develop reading comprehension.
4. Appropriate etymology and morphology strategies embedded.
5. A framework ensuring pupils recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing.

## Monitoring Progress

Pupils' development in literacy will be monitored through the following strategies:

1. Calendared quality assurance opportunities: pupil voice, planning, progress data, work sampling and observation of teaching.
2. Regular reading age tests from arrival in Year 7 and at regular intervals throughout a pupil's school career.
3. Regular screening of reading requirements and phonic needs. \*
4. Monitored progress of structured reading, one to one reading and interventions. \*
5. Pupils' participation in the reading canon and reading aloud.
6. Pupils' academic performance in extended writing assessments and acquisition of knowledge - Surface, Deep and Transfer.
7. Writing moderation at Trust level.

## Professional Development:

1. All teachers will be supported to understand how to teach pupils to read, write and communicate effectively in all subjects.
2. School leaders will support teachers by ensuring training related to literacy priorities.

## Impact

*"Books expose children to more facts and to a broader vocabulary than virtually any other activity; people who read for pleasure enjoy cognitive benefits throughout their lifetime" Daniel Willingham*

We consider the greatest impact of the curriculum to be high rates of pupil progress and engagement.

## Progress in:

1. Development of reading, writing and communication in relation to starting points.
2. The development of values, motivation, aspirations and the moral imperatives enabling them to flourish.
3. The acquisition of the emotional, cultural and powerful knowledge that exposure to literature brings.
4. Reading fluency so that all can access the richest of curriculums with minimal cognitive load.
5. Pupils' love of reading and writing for pleasure.
6. Academic excellence in writing in all subjects and ability to succeed in their next phase of learning.
7. Outcomes such as creativity, empathy and pupils understanding more about themselves and others.
8. Relationships: pupils sharing their enjoyment of reading with family and friends.
9. Communication skills: pupils' drawing on their knowledge of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary in their verbal explanations and written communication.
10. Pupils having the skills to confidently express themselves to a range of audiences.
11. Social outcomes such as eliminating the impact of early life literacy disadvantage and ultimately closing the reading gap between the 'word poor' and the 'word rich'.
12. Pupils' self-esteem: pupils identifying as readers and recognising the benefit of regular reading to their physical and mental health.

\* For example:

- Sounds Write
- Reading Plus
- Accelerated Reader
- Lexia
- Rapid Reading
- Rasinski Fluency Development Lessons



## Reading:

*'Fluent reading supports comprehension because pupils' cognitive resources are freed from focusing on word recognition and can be redirected towards comprehending the text'. Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)*

Pupils will participate in four Reading Canon sessions in Form Time each week. The **'Reading Canon'** programme aims to encourage our pupils to develop confidence in reading voice and to share the joy of reading a text with others. In **'Reading Canon'** sessions tutor groups in Years 7-13 share the communal reading of three books per year from the **St Aidan's Reading Canon**. Part of pupils' entitlement at St Aidan's is to read at least fifteen books through the Reading Canon programme by the end of their time at the school. Exposing pupils to a culture where storytelling is valued and rich, aids all of us: it enables older pupils to look to anecdotes to help them understand new concepts; it helps younger pupils assimilate ideas; and it encourages us all to think about our curriculum as a collection of great stories of world culture. The range of books have been picked for their interest and challenge, introducing pupils to new vocabulary and developing pupils' confidence and strength in reading. The books that make up the prescribed Canon come from a range of cultures, timelines and genres, with the intention of promoting inclusivity and diversity, allowing our pupils to become citizens of the world (9 protected characteristics).

The prescribed Canon is as follows:

Year 7			Year 13			
The Curious Incident of the Dog	The Kite Runner	Kes	Of Mice and Men	The Bookseller of Kabul	Mythos	The Great Gatsby
Northern Lights	Knife of Never Letting Go	Noughts and Crosses	Woman in Black	The Road	Oranges are not the Only Fruit	My Name is Why *
I am Malala	Bill Bryson Short History of Nearly Everything	Oliver Twist	To Kill a Mockingbird	Animal Farm		Tattooist of Aufschwiz *

- Three Reading Canon sessions in Form Time each week.
- In **'Reading Canon'** sessions tutor groups in Years 7-13 share the communal reading of three books per year from the **St Aidan's Reading Canon**.
- Form tutors will set reading reviews to gauge pupil appreciation and understanding on completion of a text.
- Pupils will use their reading Canon placeholder to follow the text, it is part of their equipment.

\* additional texts for 2023-24

## Developing fluency to enhance comprehension through the Reading Canon

Reading fluently and reading aloud is a gateway to comprehension; fluency mediates and underpins the entire curriculum and beyond. To support our pupils on their reading journeys every teacher should create regular opportunities for pupils to become confident and proficient in the following oracy skills:

- Expression and volume – the varying of expression and volume to match the interpretation of the passage being read.
- Phrasing – the reading of words and clauses with appropriate pauses, with an awareness of reading mostly in clauses and sentences over individual words.
- Smoothness: any breaks or difficulty in reading are resolved with self-correction.
- Pace – an even, conversational reading rhythm.



There are key supportive strategies that must be embedded within Years 7-11 Reading Canon time.

Every Thursday, teachers will devote the session to developing fluency. The principles from 'Rasinski's' 'Fluency Development Lesson' should be used:

1. Identify a short, exciting passage from an area of the Reading Canon Book you have already covered. Focussing on an area which deals with key themes or dilemmas would be most appropriate for pupil engagement (9 characteristics).
2. Read the passage whilst the pupils follow along.
3. Discuss the content and the quality of your reading (e.g. reasons for pausing or reasons for stressing or intonation).
4. In small groups (e.g. a row in the room) pupils then read the passage chorally (all perform in unison) or antiphonally (you read a sentence, then pupils echo it).
5. An alternative is to group pupils into pairs, with each pupil reading the passage 3 times to their partner. Ask individuals/pairs to perform to the class.
6. At the end of the session pupils could take the passage home to perform to parents/caregivers.

It should be noted that the principle above is an evidence-based approach to developing fluency and comprehension in the classroom. The principles can therefore be transferred into subject areas to develop disciplinary literacy. There may be some disfluent readers in form classes – to break down barriers to reading aloud we recommend that initially these readers be asked to read aloud only during fluency sessions. Disfluent readers require practice time to familiarise with a text before reading\*. By being measured in our approach with these readers, and sensitive to, and aware of needs we can avoid the vicious cycle of 'frustration and failure.' (Alex Quigley 2020). This approach can also be used on completion of a text to explore key themes. Use the Reading Canon Key Questions to structure your discussions.

*\* additional fluency support (including Fluency Development Lessons) is offered through Reading Plus during Reading Canon time for hesitant, less confident readers who have significant barriers with reading fluency. This is an entitlement for hesitant readers from Years 7-13.*

Further details on this evidenced based approach can be found here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/why-focus-on-reading-fluency>

## **Independent Reading:**

In addition to the Reading Canon programme, pupils are expected to read independently at home:

1. Year 7, 8 and 9 have one Accelerated Reader period per fortnight in their English Language curriculum time where they will read independently. All books in the Reading Room have been labelled with a colour label according to reading age. Pupils can still read material which is outside their reading age but they should be reading texts which they can access and, over a period of time, texts which challenge them. Alongside this, we encourage pupils to attend our Morning Reading club.
2. All pupils from Year 7 to Year 13 complete an NGRT reading age test at the start of the year. This information is recorded in SIMS. All staff have access to pupils' individual NGRT profiles. The profiles offer guidance as how to best support pupils in the reading elements of the curriculum.
3. Pupils take further tests throughout the academic year to measure their reading age progress.
4. Those with reading below the expected standard or with reading ages significantly below their chronological age, receive extra intervention.



## Scholarly Reading:

Within each key concept subject teachers plan for scholarly reading which enhances and broadens their curriculum. Each subject must identify these high-quality texts on their sequences of learning (SOLs) and use the following explicit teaching when implementing:

- **To begin this process**, every time a Scholarly Reading text is introduced, the teacher should begin the learning with *Connect 4*.
- **Before** reading the teacher should always activate pupil prior knowledge and encourage pupils to predict what the text will be about.
- **During** reading it is good practice to continue to ask questions to monitor pupil understanding and to update and make new predictions about the text. Teachers should always encourage pupils to read the text with a disciplinary lens using 'Reading Like a...'.<sup>1</sup>
- **After** reading pupils should be encouraged to seek coherence by summarising the key concepts and opinions from the reading – this could be achieved by bullet pointing three key ideas.
- The post-reading discussion should also focus on revisiting and revising the predictions made from the pre-reading and then generating any further questions. Although the Scholarly piece is to challenge, the reading age should be considered prior to the lesson. This can be done using the Word tool. It is vital that Scholarly Reading is inclusive and accessible.

## Reading Interventions:

Within the curriculum, literacy support is rigorous and sequential to support the needs of individuals with particular attention on pupils who do not meet the national expectation at KS2. All pupils are screened at key points during the year to guarantee that their individual literacy requirements are met.

Our goal is to ensure that all pupils have secure phonic knowledge, such as alphabet code knowledge, and secure phonic skills, such as segmenting, blending and phoneme manipulation. Mastering these skills helps pupils to read with accuracy and automaticity, which further allows reading comprehension and fluency. Ultimately, secure phonic knowledge and skills gives pupils a way of decoding any unfamiliar word, ensuring that all pupils can access the full richness of the curriculum.

Data is regularly interrogated to assess pupils' progress towards this goal. Our intervention programme aims to provide sufficient quality and quantity of practice, which will aid the pupils' progressive fluency throughout their time at St Aidan's and beyond. Our current literacy team is experienced in supporting a wide range of needs including EAL and comprises of Miss Sansom, Miss Underbjerg, Mrs Naile and Mrs Wheeler.

For some pupils, literacy is a barrier to learning; these pupils will receive an individualised programme from the following interventions:

Need	Support	Year
To develop independence in reading; tracking reading ages across the year and identifying reading needs.	Reading Programmes	Yr 7-13
To support comprehension in the GCSE years	GCSE Catch-up	Yr 10-11
To develop independence in silent reading pace and comprehension	Reading Plus	Yr 7-11
To support fluency in reading aloud, and to develop comprehension	1:1 Rasinski Fluency Sessions every Thursday	Yr 7-11
**To develop the phonic knowledge required to read and access the curriculum	1:1 Small group – 'Sounds Write'	Yr 7-11
To develop the phonic knowledge required to read and access the curriculum	Lexia	Yr 7-9
To support literacy across the curriculum	1:1 bespoke support from Sounds Write/English trained specialists Yr 7-9	Yr 7-9
To develop cursive handwriting	Handwriting Group Yr 7-11	Yr 7-11

\*\* For Sounds Write Support the first step is a diagnostic test which identifies the specific area of segmenting, blending and phoneme manipulation which requires support.



## Responsibilities: Pupils

Pupils need to take responsibility for developing their reading skills by:

- Participating fully in the Reading Canon programme ensuring that they take their turn to read aloud, and answer and engage with the questions raised through communal reading.
- Engaging with discussion around the themes and issues that arise from the study of the Reading Canon. (especially the 9 Protected Characteristics)
- Participating fully in developing their oral fluency within fluency sessions.
- Using their Academy placeholder throughout their Reading Canon session.
- Completing Microsoft Teams reading reviews and engaging maturely with the questions set.
- Selecting independent reading material which interests them and that is appropriately challenging for them.
- Respecting their reading material and treating it with care.
- Using reading lists and taking on board teacher suggestions when selecting reading material. Selecting a variety of different genres and authors throughout the year.
- Discussing their reading habits with their teachers and parents.
- Reading independently for 20 minutes at least three times a week.

## Responsibilities: Parents

We recognise that to truly ensure that every pupil succeeds, whatever their background or circumstance, we must work closely with parents and carers also. To support parents/carers in this, we provide regular opportunities throughout the school year such as Literacy Nights, Newsletter Support, access to the Canon online, and parent/teacher book groups. We invite parents/carers to join us every 4th Wednesday of the month for a parent/teacher book club where parents/carers read the same books as pupils in our reading Canon. The timetable for our parent/teacher book club is outlined on our website.



## Writing

*'Writing is challenging and pupils in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve'. Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)*

### Developing Effective Communicators through Writing

Writing is challenging, for teachers and pupils alike. Writing tasks, including high stake questions in exams, can require pupils to recall and marshal large quantities of information, communicate with accuracy and group ideas in structured ways. All stakeholders understand how complex writing tasks, including essays and extended answers, can be broken down through modelling and scaffolding to help our pupils succeed across the curriculum. Pupils must be provided with regular opportunities within every subject's curriculum to transcribe, that is, physically write or type and compose, generating ideas and translating them into words, sentences and structured texts. Pupils must be given explicit instruction from subject teachers in the 'rules of writing' in their subject discipline.

Throughout every cycle, and for all core subjects, pupils must be provided with the opportunity to write two extended pieces (non-core subjects will complete one). The 'Extended Writing' pieces are opportunities for pupils to consolidate their knowledge on threshold concepts and are designed to aid pupils in fostering and refining ideas, whilst also developing composition and effect in writing so that they write like Geographers, Scientists, and ultimately subject specialists.

Pupils must be provided with, and explicitly taught, an extended writing scaffold within lessons allowing pupils to take more of an active role in their learning and allowing for meaningful and dynamic ideas to be discussed. Pupils must use this extended writing scaffold in conjunction with Scholarly Reading and vocabulary acquired. To enable this:

- Concept driven extended writing opportunities are built cohesively into Sequences of Learning (SOLs), encouraging pupils to refer back to their Scholarly Reading and other pre-reading they have encountered in their learning journeys.
- Within all SOLs pupils are explicitly taught to plan, evaluate and proofread their writing. Pupils should track their development in composition and effect once per cycle using the 'How well can you write?' form.
- The 'Extended Writing' template should be given to pupils at the beginning of each assessment so that they are aware of how they are being assessed. The subject template should be pre-populated by subject teams with key Tier 3 vocabulary and indicative subject content prior to assessments so that there is consistency in approach.
- Regular socialisation and practice for both staff and pupils must be built into the timetable.
- Extended Writing assessment must be moderated and standardised in department forums to ensure a common approach to judgements using the subject template.

### Writing Interventions:

- We recognise that pupils with difficulties with transcription – for example, related to dyslexia or dyspraxia – may not be able to demonstrate their true knowledge of a topic through written work unless extra support is available. Providing a computer or scribe can help improve the length and quality of composition and effect from pupils identified as weaker writers, particularly when instruction in typing is also provided
- Using pre-writing activities that ensure pupils have secure background knowledge related to the topic they are writing about is essential. For example, recapping key ideas before beginning a writing task will help pupils use them in writing more successfully.
- Individualised writing support programmes for SEND/targeted pupils, including VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives, Opening and Punctuation).
- Pupils will be supported with frequent, discreet and direct teaching of handwriting – Frostig.