



Reading Policy

2023-24

We will provide a learning environment that empowers, challenges and encourages individual success and social responsibility.

St Matthias Academy actively promotes the principles of equality and inclusion for all its students.

Written: September 2022

Review: September 2024



School Name: St Matthias Academy

READING POLICY

Intent

What do we want to achieve and why do we want to achieve it?

“Reading is the gateway skill that makes all other learning possible” Barack Obama.

At St Matthias we know that reading is essential for all aspects of learning. It is a vital skill that will support our students in their future placements, but also to become successful citizens of the modern world. The National Curriculum states that “schools should do everything to promote wider reader; teachers should develop pupils’ reading and writing in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge and pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose (both fiction and non-fiction) and be encouraged to read for pleasure.” As a school, we endeavour to ensure all our students are taught to read with fluency, accuracy and understanding through a variety of targeted and cross-curricular learning opportunities. Above all, we want children in our school to become enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers.

Reading is arguably the most crucial literacy skill for cross-curricular success in school and preparing young people for the rest of their lives. The curriculum continues to be dominated by text, both in print and on screen, and our learners need to be able to read effectively in order to understand, make sense of and take meaning from the wide range of texts presented to them. For a significant number of learners who enter our schools with a reading age below their chronological age, the reading demands of the secondary curriculum in particular prove extremely challenging. This is often a significant barrier to learning for student who are referred to our academy. Secondary school pupils who continue to have difficulty accessing text have already struggled with learning to read for up to seven years. We aim to support those students to make rapid progress in their reading so that they can move on to their next placement with the tools required to succeed.

Through our whole school approach to teaching reading, small group targeted literacy sessions and individually targeted phonics intervention programme, we aim to:

- Inspire students to develop a love of reading that lasts long beyond their school years; share with them an enthusiasm for literature and help students to recognise the value of reading as a life skill.
- Enable our learners to read confidently, fluently, accurately and with understanding.
- Allow opportunities for students to experience success with reading, develop confidence and build a positive attitude to reading.
- Close the gap so that all learners make progress and achieve their best.



- Expose students to a variety of high-quality texts and experiences that inspire and inform progress in reading.
- Ensure that students are exposed to a range of texts from different cultures, times and experiences to help develop their cultural capital and aid their understanding of the world around them.
- For reading, comprehension skills and vocabulary to be developed and promoted across the school in all areas of the curriculum so that learners' can see its importance to all aspects of life and for all staff to have the knowledge and tools to enable this.
- Provide pupils with the tools to access written English in a variety of contexts including phonological awareness, decoding skills, narrative, understanding and comprehension etc.

Implementation

A multi-faceted approach to serve a multi-faceted community

"Reading is to the mind what exercising is to the body" Richard Steele.

Reading Environment

Reading is taught throughout the whole school. At St. Matthias, we strive to give pupils a stimulating environment, where reading materials are presented in an attractive and inviting way. Each classroom has key words displayed in it and texts available for students to access. We have a well-stocked library, reading boxes for literacy and as well as a selection of texts available in the English classrooms for study.

The role of the teacher in developing reading skills

All teachers at St Matthias are teachers of reading and this is taught in all subjects. This is enhanced by personalised programmes of literacy intervention taught in small groups daily. Each teacher has responsibility for their own literacy groups, but resources are provided by the literacy lead.

In order to support and enhance pupils' reading skills, it is essential that teachers across the curriculum provide opportunities for learners to do the following:

- read and engage with a variety of different texts both in print and on screen
- learn how to sift and select information appropriate to the task
- question and challenge printed information and views
- Use reading to research and investigate.
- Be supported to access and understand age appropriate texts.

Teachers will aim to:

- Facilitate reading development through their subject.
- Present reading tasks at a suitable level and with suitable differentiation.
- Help pupils to skim, scan or read intensively according to the task.
- Teach pupils to select or note only what is relevant.
- Support pupils who are at the early stages of reading.



- Use images, pre-teaching of vocabulary and other strategies to support students to access different texts.

Lessons will provide:

- Opportunities to facilitate the assessment of reading either formally or informally
- Activities which focus on reading and reading skills
- Opportunities to understand and use specialist vocabulary (key words)

By encouraging teachers across the curriculum to develop reading skills in their lessons we can develop reading confidence in our learners, enabling them to access new and unfamiliar texts.

Reading Activities

Across the curriculum, pupils will have the opportunities to:

- Use reading to research the subject area.
- Use ICT to support subject learning.
- Be as independent as possible through reading to learn.
- Read for pleasure.
- Read a range of non-fiction text types.
- Read texts in different media e.g. web pages.
- To locate and retrieve information.
- To select and make notes from a text.
- To use a range of reading skills such as skimming, scanning, reading for meaning.

Phonics

“Phonics is an approach to teaching reading, and some aspects of writing, by developing learners’ phonemic awareness. This involves the skills of hearing, identifying and using phonemes or sound patterns in English. The aim is to systematically teach learners the relationship between these sounds and the written spelling patterns, or graphemes, which represent them. Phonics emphasises the skills of decoding new words by sounding them out and combining or ‘blending’ the sound-spelling patterns” (EEF toolkit). We use the Read, Write Inc scheme, at the appropriate developmental stage, across all our sites. This ensures consistency and best progress in learning. Phonics intervention is delivered by teachers and TAs who have had specific Ruth Miskin training.

- Ongoing phonics training will take place with all staff in school so that all staff can support learners to develop their phonological awareness including knowledge of phonemes and decoding, blending and segmenting skills, recognition of syllables and root words as well as strategies for spelling.
- The teaching of phonics is based on Read Write Inc scheme. All learners are assessed using the YARC reading age test on entry to St Matthias and at 6/12 weekly intervals (dependent on stage of development) which are used for



intervention sessions with those students who have met the threshold for reading intervention.

- As part of whole Academy practice, there is word level focus work in reading sessions and key vocabulary is taught in all lessons This may be identifying syllables, phonemes or working on root word understanding for example.

Phonics Teaching

- To teach pupils aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and syllable/rhyme awareness in order to encourage good spelling.
- To encourage repetition and consolidation, so that spelling becomes automatic.
- To encourage pupils to segment and blend.
- To learn to read and write all 44 phonemes in the English language.
- To teach pupils specific strategies to help them remember tricky words.
- To ensure that the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.
- To encourage learners to apply their phonic skills in all curriculum areas through independent reading.

Monitoring Progress

- York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC) used to assess pupils' reading age and to reassess to measure progress.
- Group and Guided reading tasks in lessons.
- Literacy development focus in Monday meeting.
- Weekly differentiated news reading tasks. Assessed through differentiated questions on texts. Recorded in literacy logs.
- Independent reading opportunities weekly to encourage reading for pleasure. Questioning to assess understanding. Recorded in literacy logs.
- English leads to monitor progress in English, using progress trackers.

Associated Staff Training

Intervention staff and English leads are trained in the Fresh Star or Phonicst: Read, Write, Inc phonics programmes for students who have not successfully learned phonics in their prior education. All staff have also been trained in phonics by the Driver Youth Trust and received training in strategies for supporting reading in the classroom. In line with EEF research on teaching reading across the curriculum.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks2>



<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4>

Strategies for supporting reading in the classroom

Pre-read the selected text: This is essential in enabling you to spot any problems that your pupils may have accessing the text. Is the text suitable for all your pupils? What are the issues? (Vocabulary, layout, density of text, etc.)

Give regular reminders: During any reading activities, remind your pupils about the reading prompts and strategies they can use to access the text.

Create a context: When we read any new text we use our prior knowledge from the texts we have already read and the world around us to help us to make sense of the information. By creating a context using group discussion, diagrams, charts and summaries you help to support learners with limited prior knowledge and experience of reading a wide range of texts.

Model reading skills: This is a crucial strategy and helps to make the skills of effective readers explicit. Modelling reading demystifies the reading process. When modelling reading, share with your pupils what you are doing and thinking as you read. Explore the key features of the text. What do you notice about the text? Is it written in a particular style? What kind of text is it? (Instructional, descriptive, evaluative, etc.) Share the reading strategies you are using. What do you do when something doesn't make sense or you meet a new word or phrase?

Check pupils' understanding through questioning: Direct questions to students to help ensure that students have understood texts, prior to moving on.

Provide a range of reading opportunities: In order to widen the reading repertoire, it is essential that we provide opportunities for pupils to read a variety of different texts both in print and on screen. Include daily reading for pleasure, including reading a carefully selected range of quality texts to the whole class. Evidence suggests that there is a positive relationship between reading frequency, reading enjoyment and attainment (Clark 2011; Clark and Douglas 2011). Reading enjoyment has been reported as more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status.

Use reconstruction and analysis activities: DARTs (Directed Activities Related to Texts) are group and individual activities that encourage pupils to read actively by engaging in reconstruction and analysis activities.

Check the presentation of your own resources: This is particularly important for struggling readers and pupils with dyslexia. Consider the following when presenting text:

- Use short sentences where possible.



- Do not use elaborate fonts.
- Select font size 12 or 14.
- Leave spaces between lines.
- Bulleted or numbered points are easier to interpret
- Use headings and sub-headings.
- Use bold font to highlight words (italics and underlining can make words run together).
- Print on pastel-coloured paper, e.g. cream.
- Avoid light text on dark backgrounds

Provide glossaries/displays: Glossaries and displays provide useful support for unfamiliar vocabulary and key words. Try to include a visual representation alongside the selected word definition and provide a context for using the word, e.g. within a sentence.

Monitored By

The Head and the Deputy Head teacher will:

- Provide support by encouraging staff and sharing best practice.
- Monitor learning and teaching throughout the school.
- Monitor planning and assessment.
- Support staff development through in-service training and provision of resources.

The Literacy Leader for Reading will:

- Ensure continuity in assessment throughout the school and lead termly staff meetings and training to support this aim.
- Monitor Reading in school.
- Keep up to date with new developments in reading and keep the staff informed.
- Play a key role in formulating, maintaining and reviewing the Reading Policy.
- Lead colleagues and at all times be supportive.
- Audit resources regularly.

The Class teacher will:

- Endeavour to read to their class on a daily basis
- Be responsible for the teaching of reading as set out in this policy.
- Provide work samples to the literacy leader.
- Use evidence from the teaching and assessment of reading in order to inform future planning.
- Monitor pupil progress in reading using assessment data and refer any concerns.

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Policy Owner: Felicity Russell (Reading Lead) Will Kennedy (English Teacher) Karen Darnton (Primary Teacher)