

'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free' – Frederick Douglas



Knowledge

As a Trust we believe that reading is the cornerstone of education. It is the gateway to accessing information across subjects, enabling students to comprehend instructions, absorb new concepts, and engage with the curriculum effectively. By teaching reading to pupils, we provide them with a fundamental skill set necessary for academic success and lifelong learning.



Character

We ensure that pupils develop their own character attributes by engaging with challenging and thought-provoking literature from a range of genres, social, cultural and historical contexts. Through empathetic engagement with fictional characters, our pupils will develop a deeper understanding of what it is to be human and will develop key characteristics like empathy, tolerance and respect for other people, their cultures and beliefs.



Creativity

We show pupils that reading can offer an escape from reality and provides entertainment in the form of real and imaginative worlds, captivating stories and intriguing characters. Reading also stimulates our pupils' own creativity and expression.



Innovative Thinking

We know that reading stimulates cognitive processes such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical reasoning. By ensuring that pupils engage with various texts, we ensure that they develop their cognitive flexibility and learn to approach information from different perspectives. This equips them with the tools necessary to tackle complex challenges both inside and outside the classroom.



Transform

By teaching pupils to read and encouraging them to develop a habit of reading for pleasure we are ensuring that our pupils become lifelong learners who are empathetic, resilient, can acquire new skills, stay informed, effectively communicate and think critically. They are well prepared for the world of work and for their future.

At Bolton Impact Trust we have a Reading Charter which outlines our commitment to prioritise reading for every pupil in Youth Challenge and throughout the curriculum in the following ways:



Displaying and promoting subject specific ways of reading to ensure that pupils understand the 'disciplinary literacy' of each subject and can use subject-specific reading strategies.



Explicitly teaching subject specific vocabulary across the whole school curriculum



Promoting a love of reading by providing time to read for pleasure both collectively and independently



Providing carefully curated collections of reading materials which are accessible to all pupils



Ensuring that reading materials used in class are accessible for each pupil



Teaching pupils to read using a DfE approved phonics scheme



Providing reading and phonics interventions to pupils whose reading ages fall well below their chronological age



Regularly assess and measure individual pupils' progress in reading



Provide opportunities for pupils to experience reading outside of the classroom and immerse themselves in the narrative



Encourage and celebrate reading using our rewards schemes

The majority of the pupils at Youth Challenge have a reading age which is lower than their chronological age when they join us. Research shows that low achievement in reading is the most common denominator in school discipline, attendance and juvenile crime and a likely reason for the problems that some of our pupils have experienced prior to joining us. It is our mission at Youth Challenge to make sure that all our pupils make progress with their reading, that it is no longer a barrier to accessing the curriculum or a cause for low self-esteem. Reading will empower our pupils and open up a world of new opportunities and experiences to them.

Testing and Screening

In order to gain an accurate understanding of our students' profile, a series of diagnostic assessments are conducted on entry to Youth Challenge. These include the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test 2nd edition (KBIT2) and the Wide Range Achievement Test 4th edition (WRAT 4). The KBIT furnishes us with a standardised score relating to verbal, non-verbal intelligence, these then provide a composite IQ score. The WRAT4 provides standardised scores for numeracy, single word reading, sentence completion and spelling. By analysing this full data set, we are able to identify patterns that may help us to identify potential underlying learning needs and identify students who may benefit from targeted intervention. If data analysis suggests that further investigation is needed then referrals are made to other professionals. We will also conduct further assessments and screening for Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia, Irlen syndrome or dyscalculia, by our qualified in school practitioners.

For students identified as requiring additional academic support with reading or associated SpLDs, we have a three-tiered intervention programme ranging from whole school initiatives for inclusive learning to specific targeted interventions in which identified pupils can access intervention either individually or in small groups.

Wave 1 intervention is what Youth Challenge delivers to all learners this is designed to re-engage learners in education, focusing on quality first teaching, in-class support, meta cognition and adaptive teaching to support areas of missed learning by a highly skilled team. Subject specific vocabulary is prominently displayed in all subject areas and key vocabulary is identified in curriculum planning to ensure that it is specifically taught as part of a unit of study.

Wave 2 interventions are delivered in very small groups, or sometimes one to one, to address specific barriers to learning and is delivered by Youth Challenge staff and target additional literacy and numeracy needs; this may take the form of Dockside reading programme delivery, for example.

Wave 3 is our highest and most bespoke level of intervention and is delivered by skilled professionals; for example, this may take the form of one-to-one teaching of early phonics via a dyslexia specialist through the delivery of a recognised dyslexia programme.

Tutor Time Reading

Youth Challenge students are encouraged to read at form times and this can take many different shapes. Students are encouraged to read their own choice or text or whole class 'form readers'; students own texts can take the form of novels, biographies, newspapers or magazines. The aim of these sessions is to promote a love of reading by exploring texts that are engaging and diverse. The texts are carefully chosen to match the pupils' reading ability and interests. Tutors read aloud to their pupils and pupils are encouraged to read aloud to the group. Pupils have their own copy of the text and are encouraged to track it along with the reader. Tutors model fluent and performative reading to the pupils which helps pupils to develop their own fluency and confidence.

In other sessions, tutors often display television news during form times and use these as opportunities for reading, vocabulary development and discussion. We believe it is very important that our pupils are aware of national and global issues and also that they are exposed to reputable news sources providing reliable information. Additionally, once per week all forms are furnished with a Picture News e-pack each week that focuses on a prominent current issue, associated facts and opinions, plus discussion prompts.

Bedrock Learning

To further support reading, all pupils in the school engage in an online learning programme called Bedrock Learning. This platform explicitly teaches vocabulary and grammar through original and engaging prose. Pupils read a diverse range of high-quality texts both fiction and non-fiction to develop their literacy for reading, writing and oracy. Bedrock teaches all of the tier 3 vocabulary specifically from the subjects that we deliver, ensuring that our pupils can fully access the curriculum in our school. Some students also access Bedrock Learning from home. High levels of engagement with Bedrock Learning are rewarded via a bespoke rewards system and celebrated in assemblies in which certificates and postcards are presented.