



Whytrig Middle School

Reading Strategy

At Whytrig Middle School, we strive to promote a lifelong love of reading and are proud of the reading culture we have within our school. We want to create curious, independent and fluent readers in order to prepare our pupils for every stage of their education and future.

The aims of our Reading Strategy are:

- To provide structured opportunities for all, but especially our struggling readers, to develop their phonic knowledge, fluency and comprehension.
- To develop necessary reading strategies that can be applied to all areas of the curriculum and skills that will enable them to be successful in the future.
- To provide pupils with a range of resources and opportunities to stimulate their desire to read and make their own decisions about topic preferences and genres and areas of interest.
- To instill a culture of 'reading for pleasure' and provide readers with opportunities to read and discuss texts that are age appropriate and interesting to them, but also texts from a variety of genres.

Curriculum and class novels are chosen to support and supplement topics explored in other curriculum areas. Interventions use texts that link with the curriculum and further children's understanding of different topics. Our curriculum is designed so that pupils are immersed in fiction, non-fiction and poetry which links directly to the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar and leads to high-quality, engaging and relevant writing outcomes across all year groups.

When designing the reading curriculum (both within English lessons and across other subjects) we have used educational research including the DFE's ['The Reading Framework \(2023\)'](#) and the Education Endowment Foundation's [Improving Literacy in KS2](#). The following strategy outlines our strong purpose and goal, how it is implemented and how we ensure that our learners are confident readers with secure life-equipping literacy skills.

It is essential that our reading strategy is closely aligned to Seaton Valley High School to ensure that effective support is maintained where necessary. We have worked as a Federation to discuss how we can implement a reading framework that supports both the middle school and the high school and equips the children with the skills that are necessary for all years of education in the Seaton Valley Federation. The main aim is to provide a coherent educational journey for the children in our federation, and this is particularly important when supporting children who are struggling to read fluently.

Ambition for all Learners

Our ambition is to ensure that all learners, regardless of their starting point, understand the value of reading and the opportunities it brings. We want our pupils to love visiting the library and to love both reading with their peers, hearing their teachers read, reading with family members or reading independently. We understand that reading is important for future success and we have a thorough approach to supporting struggling readers (and when possible, their parents) to develop their skills and confidence.



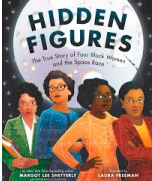
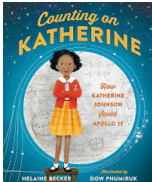
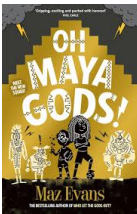
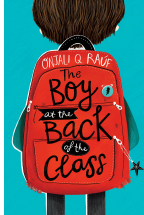
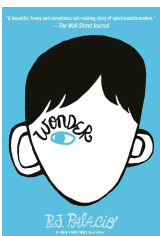
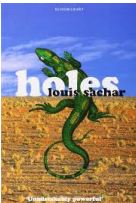
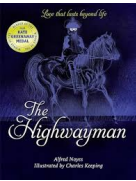
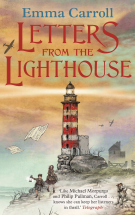
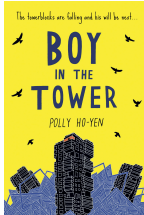
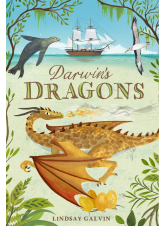
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For pupils with additional learning needs (SEND), our staff understand the needs of individual students and ensure that the curriculum is adapted to enable all pupils to succeed. Teachers have detailed information about all pupils' reading assessments and know how to target support particularly in line with a child's SEND profile.

We want all children to read with phonic accuracy and automaticity - we know that these are essential components in developing fluency and confidence in reading. Where children cannot read with such automaticity, we know that they will struggle to access texts across the curriculum and their learning will be hindered. To combat this, pupils read aloud regularly both in whole class reading sessions and if in interventions. Repeated oral reading (echo reading) is used throughout reading lessons every week, intervention sessions and registration sessions to ensure that speed is increased and that pupils develop the confidence they need to face unfamiliar vocabulary.

Reading in the KS2 English Curriculum

KS2 novels are mapped out for the whole year: one novel drives the English lessons and the class novels supplement the whole curriculum. A variety of reading styles is implemented and encourages pupils to be fluent, confident readers. Pupils read a wide range of texts in KS2 in WMS and the novels explore a variety of different cultures, lifestyles, issues and stories. Pupils enjoy listening to their teachers read.

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 5	   	 	  
Year 6	   	 	 



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- **Weekly Reading Lesson**

On a weekly basis, KS2 classes engage in a well-planned and sequenced reading lesson linked to a whole class text. This immersive, little and often approach ensures that the essential reading skills are being continually developed. It is at this time that some children who are reading 1-2+ years below chronological age, will be taken out for a bespoke reading intervention for a block of 5 weeks before rejoining their class.

1. VIPERS comprehension questions based on the English novel or an unseen text. For example, children may read extracts of war poetry while studying Letters from the Lighthouse, or may read newspaper articles whilst reading Holes.
2. Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary - children are taught the meanings of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary and then are asked to read the words from a fluency grid before accessing the text.
3. Focus on prosody: Echo reading - the teacher reads a sentence out and pupils text mark to show intonation, accentuation, tone, pace and volume. Pupils then read the same sentence, 'echoing' the teacher.
4. Focus on fluency: Timed read. The teacher reads a specific amount of text. Pupils then aim to read the same text for the exact same time.
5. Focus on comprehension: teacher models a question, class shares a question, then independent questions based on specific VIPERS focus.

- **Reading Skill Development: VIPERS**

We know that to improve reading comprehension skills, teaching staff must model and teach effective strategies. Teaching staff at WMS incorporate well-planned VIPERS lessons to develop the following key areas/skills:

- Vocabulary
- Inference
- Prediction
- Explanation
- Retrieval
- Summarising/sequencing

During English lessons, pupils are explicitly taught the VIPERS skills based around a class novel and linked texts. This allows pupils to develop their skills using a familiar text and then apply these skills to unseen linked texts. The VIPERS skills may be taught individually or in groups.





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• Reading Speed Development

We know that, in order to read fluently, pupils need to read with speed and accuracy. As part of reading lessons, teachers use echo reading as a teaching strategy to encourage reading aloud and build pupils' confidence and resilience when facing unknown and unfamiliar vocabulary. Teachers model the reading of a short piece of text and pupils repeat this modelled reading as a class. Reading aloud develops confidence and allows teachers to continually assess pupils and target further support where required. Pupils who are struggling with reading speed and fluency will be asked to read aloud with adults on a regular basis (either 1:1 or in a small group).

After analysing pupils' reading profiles, children whose fluency scores are below 125 wpm are put on a reading pathway and are intervened for blocks of 5 weeks with specific focus on fluency.

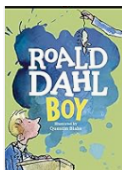
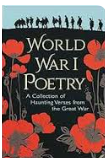
Reading in the KS3 English Curriculum

In English lessons, pupils will study a range of classic, modern, fiction and non-fictional texts. The year 7 curriculum starts with Roald Dahl's semi-autobiographical novel 'Boy' and a short unit on advertising. In year 8, pupils begin with Michael Morpurgo's 'Private Peaceful' and study a range of World War One poetry alongside the novel, including the works of Rupert Brooke, Jessie Pope and Wilfred Owen.

In the autumn term students in year 7 move onto Gothic Fiction and study excerpts from 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley and 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker, as well as gothic short stories including: 'The Red Room' by H.G. Wells, 'The Monkey's Paw' by W.W. Jacobs and 'The Signalman' by Charles Dickens.

Children in KS3 also study Shakespeare: 'Macbeth' in year 7 and 'Romeo and Juliet' in year 8. The historical and social context of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras are explored alongside both texts, enabling students to understand what life may have been like when these plays were performed. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud and perform in groups or as a class. Teachers will also encourage discussions on different interpretations of the reading of lines, stage directions and performance.

In the summer term, pupils in Year 8 study 'Trash' by Andy Mulligan, while year 7 students move on to the modern spy story 'Stormbreaker' followed by a non-fiction unit on travel writing.

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 7		 	 
Year 8	 		



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- **Poetry and Non-Fiction (in English)**

WMS believes it is important that pupils are immersed in all text types and, although lessons are planned around whole class texts, poetry and non-fiction are interwoven using linked texts. VIPERS skills are developed using these text types. Model texts are used to identify key presentational and language features which the pupils can then transfer into their own writing during writing lessons.

Supporting struggling readers

At Whytrig Middle School, we have a comprehensive approach to identifying pupils who are struggling to read. When pupils join our school, they are screened to check their phonic awareness, fluency in reading and their comprehension ability. A range of comprehensive assessments of reading and literacy skills take place to give teachers and staff members a holistic overview of a child's current security of learning.

This data is then analysed and used to decide if a child needs to be placed on a 'pathway' of intervention, which is led by our Academic Support member of staff.

- **In Key Stage 2**

1. Pupils join year 5 (or any year group through in-year transfer) and sit a STAR Test and a paper NFER Reading Age Test.
2. Should a low reading age be identified (2 years or more behind chronological age) a phonics screening will be given.
3. Data is reviewed and pupils are identified as needing one of three reading pathways.

Pathway	A	B	C
Focus	Significant weaknesses and gaps in phonics.	Gaps and weaknesses in fluency	Developing comprehension skills and understanding.
Who	Pupils with significantly low reading ages (2 years or more behind chronological) or who have low stanine (1-2) and SAS. Children who struggle to decode text.	Pupils who are between 1 and 2 years behind their chronological age but have no phonic issues.	All other pupils who have a slightly lower reading ages than chronological age but no phonic or fluency issues.
Targeted approach	Pupils begin the Fresh Start Phonics programme in place of English lessons with our Academic Support staff. Reading books may be given from the SEN department to support their reading ability. Read aloud 1:1 with a member of staff Pupils are continually assessed during Fresh Start sessions to progress through the phonics modules. When pupils 'graduate', they will be transferred to Pathway B academic support. If pupils continue to struggle, external Literacy support will be considered.	Pupils are placed in a rapid intervention for 5/6 weeks. Sessions are 10-minutes long and pupils develop fluency by reading aloud 1:1 to our Academic Support staff. Pupils practice echo read and timed read. Targeted comprehension skills support students to learn reading strategies.	Pupils are placed in a small group intervention once weekly where they focus on targeted comprehension skills.(Y6 Spring Term) All pupils receive a weekly 'Comprehension Crusher' Reading lesson. Pupils are given a Reading Knowledge Organiser to help with exam style questions and remind children of how to answer and meaning of focus.



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Reading Pathways

1. Pupils join WMS in either Y5 (from first/primary schools) or in other year groups (as in year transfers). WMS receive academic and pastoral information from the feeder school as well as any other academic or other support in place.

2. All pupils joining WMS sit a reading age test (STAR) and a baseline reading comprehension assessment.

3. Outcomes from the initial assessments are reviewed. Struggling readers are identified and pupil information is shared with staff. Students whose reading age is 2 years below chronological age are assessed on fluency and phonics and then are set on a pathway.

Pathway A: Significant weaknesses and gaps in phonics

- Pupils are referred for a phonics assessment and may commence the Fresh Start Phonics programme (4 sessions per week)
- AR books are chosen based on Book Level (which match the reading level)
- Read aloud 1:1 with a member of staff

Pupils are continually assessed during Fresh Start sessions to progress through the phonics modules.

When pupils 'graduate', they will be transferred to Pathway B academic support.

If pupils continue to struggle, external Literacy support will be considered.

Pathway B: Gaps and weaknesses in fluency

- Pupils are placed in a rapid intervention for 5 weeks.
- Pupils develop fluency by reading aloud 1:1 to a member of staff.
- Pupils practice echo read and timed read.
- Targeted comprehension skills support students to learn reading strategies.

Pupils are continually assessed during intervention and small group sessions.

Data is tracked and shared with staff. If necessary, pupils will join the next wave of Pathway C.

Pathway C: Developing comprehension

- Pupils are placed in a small group intervention once weekly where they focus on targeted comprehension skills.
- AR books are appropriate lexical level and are quizzed on regularly.
- Reading lessons weekly in ENGLISH lessons which focus on specific question types and skills.

Class teachers continually assess pupils through reading lessons, whole class reading and planned assessments..

Pupils in intervention groups receive 5 weeks of 1 hour supported comprehension intervention. Data is tracked and shared with English teachers.

Reading age tests (STAR) to assess reading skills/age are administered for all year groups at the start of the year. They are then repeated every half term (unless it is necessary for a pupil to complete a star test based on AR quiz results. Y5 and Y6 sit a baseline practise test at the start of the year to assess comprehension ability. Reading is assessed continually in weekly reading lessons using echo/timed reading, targeted skill questions and ongoing comprehension assessment.

• In Key Stage 3

In KS3, we screen pupils' reading ability using the NGRT online reading test. Those pupils who have reading ages below their chronological age, score below age related expectations in either sentence completion or passage comprehension, or those who did not meet the expected standard at the end of KS2 receive 1 hour of focussed phonics or fluency interventions per week. Their reading age will be regularly monitored to ensure that the interventions have had the intended impact.

Assessing Reading (end points)

In Year 5, reading ability is assessed throughout the academic year using both Star Tests and termly comprehension tests. In the summer term, Year 5 students sit a Year 6 SAT test to ascertain which intervention they may need in preparation for Year 6. Throughout the year, staff give Teacher Assessments for reading grades.

Year 6 students are assessed every half term for comprehension in preparation for their end of Key Stage 2 Assessments. Data is tracked consistently throughout the year and Teacher Assessments are given every term from staff, using test results as a guide of ability. All Year 6 students (who sit the tests) receive official data, marked externally for reading.



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In addition to the NGRT test, each term, Year 7 and 8 are assessed on their reading through retrieval and inference style questions, with a particular focus on the writer's use of language, techniques and sentence structure to convey an impression, effect or theme (similar in style to AQA English Language Paper 1 Question 2). Support is given to all students as they learn how to develop these skills.

In the final term of Year 8, students will complete a bespoke English language style reading paper on the novel 'Trash', which assesses the students' ability to retrieve information (resembling Q1 on the English Language paper), make inferences on the writer's use of language, techniques and sentence structure (Q2) and make critical evaluations on a text (Q4). All of these questions are discussed and planned as a class, and careful scaffolding and support is offered to students who may find these questions challenging.

Reading for pleasure - The Reading Challenge

The Reading Challenge is a fun, attractive and accessible way of promoting reading for pleasure. We have carefully chosen 10 texts for each year group from a range of genres, authors, subjects and cultures, and challenge all pupils to read as many as they can through each academic year. The texts have been specifically chosen to develop reading stamina, widen pupils' reading experience and foster a love and respect for reading and books. The Reading Challenge books for each year group are displayed on posters around school and on specially designed pages in pupil planners. Books are discussed in assembly via 'Book of the Week' and also in form time 'book talk' sessions. Prizes are awarded to pupils who complete the challenge.

Pupils are expected to read for 20 minutes per day in school and four times a week for 15 minutes at home. The expectation is that pupils read two Reading Challenge books per half term. Students are welcome to read their own books alongside the Reading Challenge books, should they wish to. Most pupils access these texts independently, however some pupils access the reading challenge in small groups, supported by an adult or via audiobook or by the E-book Immersive Reader feature provided by the library service.



Our reading areas in school contain a selection of high quality, age appropriate texts that pupils can access. We also have a well resources school library situated by the dining hall that all pupils can access



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daily and during lessons. Our SEN department also hosts a wide range of texts to suit lower ability readers.

We continue to use Accelerated Reader to monitor and manage pupils' reading progress. Every time students have finished reading one of the Reading Challenge books, or one of their own choice, they complete an Accelerated Reader quiz and their score is recorded in their planner. Form teachers will monitor scores to check understanding of the novels.

Cultural Capital and Personal Development

At Whytrig, the selection of texts for English lessons and our Reading Challenge is guided by our commitment to promoting cultural capital and embracing diversity. We understand that stories are powerful tools that open pupils' minds to different experiences, perspectives, and real-world issues. Through carefully chosen books, we aim to spark thoughtful discussions around important themes, values, and morals, including both cultural and real life issues in Modern Britain.

Each text is selected to support both academic progress and personal development, helping pupils build the knowledge and understanding they need for the next stage of their education. Our curriculum features a rich variety of genres and literary styles—from classic and seminal literature to contemporary, modern texts—ensuring a broad and balanced reading experience.

We also choose texts that connect to wider cultural opportunities, such as theatre visits, historical learning, and educational trips, enriching our pupils' learning beyond the classroom.

Reading Across the Curriculum

At Whytrig, we believe that developing strong reading skills is the responsibility of all teaching staff—not just within English lessons, but across every subject. Our aim is to ensure that pupils engage regularly with high-quality texts throughout the curriculum, enabling them to practise and apply reading strategies in a wide range of contexts.

Pupils are given frequent opportunities to read aloud and read independently. Across the curriculum, we use reciprocal reading techniques and active reading techniques. These approaches help our pupils become more confident and fluent readers, while expanding their exposure to different text types, genres, and subject-specific vocabulary.

All subject teachers are encouraged to include challenging texts in their lessons. We recognise that some pupils may find this difficult, so teachers adapt their resources and strategies to meet the needs of every learner, regardless of reading level or ability.

Across all subjects, pupils read regularly and purposefully. Teachers carefully plan subject-specific reading materials and use strategies such as:

- VIPERS – to check for understanding and develop comprehension skills
- Buzzwords – focusing on key Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary in each subject
- Book Talk – regular discussions during form time to promote reading for pleasure



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- 'Book of the Week' - Shared in assembly and via Google Classroom

With some learners, we are also beginning to embed pre-reading strategies, particularly in Key Stage 3, to help pupils feel more prepared and confident when approaching subject-specific texts.

At Whytrig, reading is at the heart of learning—empowering pupils to access the full curriculum and succeed across every area of school life.

Staff development

At Whytrig, we believe that reading is central to success across all subjects. While the English team plays a key role, the responsibility for developing pupils' reading skills lies with every member of staff. To support this, we have a dedicated Reading Lead, whose role is to share effective strategies and provide guidance for embedding reading into all areas of teaching, including reading for pleasure.

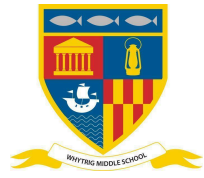
We ensure consistency and quality through regular staff training on literacy across the curriculum. Our Federation curriculum intent 'LINC' (Literacy, numeracy, independence and culture) ensures that all curriculum lessons incorporate an element of literacy. Teachers are also highly aware of pupils whose reading ages are below their chronological age and apply a range of differentiated strategies to make learning accessible and meaningful.

Our reading lead and literacy coordinator also share ongoing professional development across KS2 and KS3 to strengthen reading instruction school-wide. We are committed to supporting all learners, including those with SEND, by offering targeted frameworks, scaffolds, and personalised support where needed. Teachers clearly explain the purpose behind every reading, writing, or communication task and ensure that texts are accessible, meaningful, and challenging for all pupils.

A consistent focus on literacy means pupils are regularly exposed to subject-specific vocabulary. By the use of 'Word of the Week'—key Tier 2 and 3 terms displayed and taught across classrooms.

Our whole-school approach to reading includes:

- Encouraging pupils to read for both understanding and enjoyment
- Activating prior knowledge before reading new material
- Teaching key reading strategies such as annotation, summarising, skimming, and scanning
- Using VIPERS question stems to develop comprehension
- Including pre-reading and reading tasks as appropriate homework
- Promoting critical thinking about texts in all subjects
- Highlighting subject-specific vocabulary in all classrooms
- Providing support for pupils who struggle with reading, including small group work, word banks, and 1:1 reading opportunities



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Parent/Carer Engagement with Reading

At Whytrig, we know that a strong partnership between school and home plays a vital role in developing confident and enthusiastic readers.

To support families, we provide a detailed **Reading** section on our school website, offering practical guidance and resources to help parents encourage and support their child's reading development:

 [Reading at Home](#)

 [Supporting Learning at Home](#)

Our website includes a range of helpful resources for families and tips and strategies for supporting reluctant readers

We expect all pupils to read **every day for at least 20 minutes**. This should predominantly be their Reading Challenge book, although we highly encourage all forms of reading. Pupils record all daily reading in their diaries. This is signed by a parent weekly and is checked weekly by their form teacher.

For pupils who need extra support, we maintain **regular communication with parents and carers**. We hold supportive in-school meetings to share strategies that can be used at home, helping to ensure consistency and confidence in reading routines. We also work with families to ensure every child has access to suitable, enjoyable reading materials at home.

Together, we aim to nurture a love of reading in every child.