

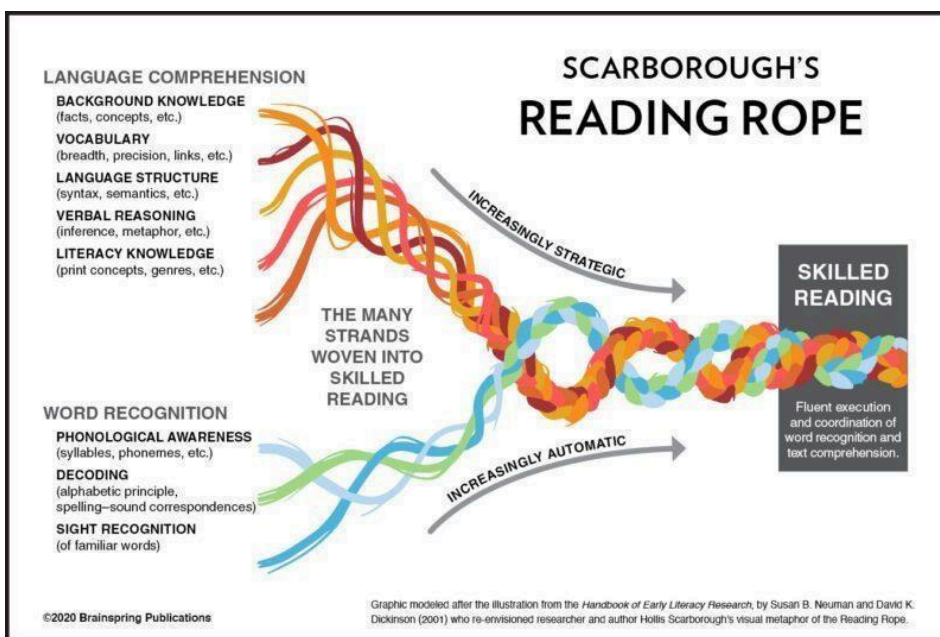
Reading and Literacy at St George's: Driving Progress



Rationale and Philosophy

At St George's Academy, we recognise that reading is not natural, but a **complex, acquired skill** encompassing a **wide range of cognitive processes**.

Scarborough's 'Reading Rope' model illustrates the complexity of reading, helping us move **beyond a monolithic understanding** of reading as just the ability to produce **grapheme-to-phoneme (G2P) conversion**:



Reading is a **strong predictor** of future **academic success**, while **poor reading** is associated with **deprivation** and the likelihood of entering the **criminal justice system**. Ensuring that all students are **pushed to improve** their reading, whether at the level of **decoding** or more complex language **comprehension**, is perhaps the single most important activity schools can engage in. At St George's, we use **technology** and **teacher specialisms** to **identify reading ability, determine** appropriate **reading interventions** and ensure all students become **fluent, skilled** readers of texts **across a range of genres** and **text types**. To achieve this goal, we have adopted a **multi-stage** and **multi-layer** approach to **reading instruction and intervention**.

Reading Plus – a rigorous, supportive approach to reading instruction

At St. George's, we have adopted the **Reading Plus programme** to drive reading **improvement** and **development**. Based on the maxim that 'if you can measure it, you can manage it', **every child across Key Stage 3** and **identified pupils in Key Stage 4** will receive **one hour** of Reading Plus lesson time. During these lessons, students will complete a series of **reading exercises**, culminating in **short comprehension assessments**. These assessments will then allow our **highly-trained staff** to deliver **bespoke intervention sessions** within lesson time to drive progress and tackle any areas for improvement. Moreover, students at St. George's are expected to complete **weekly reading assignments** as part of their **Reading Plus lessons** with **homework** dedicated to **reading for pleasure** every week using books selected from our library. As the programme runs from **primary** through to **higher education level**, we know that all readers, regardless of their starting points, will be pushed to succeed.

For a detailed introduction to Reading Plus, please watch the following 10-minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJaOfCyYzeE>

Intervention – a multi-stage approach

We also recognise that there will be a **wide range of reading levels and abilities** within **Key Stage 3 and 4**. However, we cannot allow any student to be held back in their reading. With this in mind, we have adopted a **comprehensive, responsive** and **detailed** approach to **reading intervention**. Below is a table outlining the **intervention levels** and **associated responses**. As Reading Plus allows **constant assessment and understanding** of every student's **specific areas of strength and development**, movement between the levels is expected and necessary.

Waves of Intervention	Focus
Wave 4	Highly Individualised and Intensive support through Specialised Programmes (Direct Instruction)
Wave 3	Targeted Intervention Support (Classroom Teacher and Drop-In Support from Expert Staff where Appropriate)
Wave 2	Classroom Intervention Support (Classroom Teacher)
Wave 1	Foundational Instruction (All Pupils)

Criteria for Intervention	Assigned wave of intervention	Summary of Support Provided
<p>Identified through KS2 data. Communication with feeder primary schools.</p> <p>Age-related expectations are substantially below.</p>	Wave 4	<p>Students will participate in a highly individualised and intensive support programme using specialised programs designed to meet the unique needs of the student.</p> <p>Pupils selected for this group undertake Direct Instruction in place of their English lessons.</p>
<p>Identified through initial reading plus assessment and additional reading data</p> <p>Age-related expectations significantly below.</p>	Wave 3	<p>Students will be targeted specifically to receive timely in-class interventions delivered by their class teacher. Designated reading support staff will visit key classes, using specific strategies to close gaps in their reading skills as highlighted by the Reading Plus programme.</p>
<p>Age related expectations below.</p>	Wave 2	<p>Students will further enhance their reading proficiency by engaging in the Reading Plus programme during their reading lessons.</p> <p>Students will receive timely whole group in-class interventions delivered by their class teacher.</p>
<p>Equal to or above age related expectations</p>	Wave 1	<p>Students will further enhance their reading proficiency by engaging in the Reading Plus programme during their reading lessons</p> <p>Pupils will be given recommendations to extend their range of reading and supported to develop further independent reading strategies when reading more challenging texts.</p>

In Key Stage 4, we adapt the wave intervention system to aid key pupils identified in Key Stage 3 as still requiring support accessing curriculum content effectively.

"Direct Instruction: Supporting Vulnerable Learners to Access Reading Plus Rationale and Philosophy

At St George's School, we understand that reading is a **foundational skill** essential for **academic success** and **future opportunities**. Yet, reading is not an innate ability; as mentioned previously, it is a **complex, acquired skill** that requires **explicit** and **carefully structured teaching**. For our most **vulnerable learners**, who face **significant barriers to learning**, developing reading proficiency is both a **necessity** and a **priority**.

Research consistently shows that **poor literacy** is closely linked to **wider societal challenges**, including reduced life chances and an increased likelihood of economic hardship. At St George's, we are committed to **closing the literacy gap** for these students, ensuring that every learner has the tools needed to succeed **academically and beyond**. To achieve this, we have embedded evidence-based and **targeted interventions**, with **Direct Instruction (DI)** forming a **cornerstone** of our approach.

Direct Instruction allows us to focus **intensively** on students whose reading ability is **significantly below age-related expectations**, equipping them with the **essential skills** they need to progress and ultimately access **Reading Plus**, our **whole-school reading development programme**.

Our Intervention Approach

Recognising the **diverse range of reading abilities** across **Key Stage 3 and 4**, our intervention strategy is **tailored to meet the needs of each student**. At the **highest level of support** (Wave 4), we employ **Direct Instruction** to provide **intensive, highly individualised programmes** for learners who require the most help.

Delivered by **specialists trained in the methodology**, Direct Instruction ensures that these learners receive **precise, targeted teaching** to address **specific gaps** in their reading **fluency, decoding, and comprehension**. This **evidence-based approach** is delivered with fidelity, ensuring **maximum impact on student outcomes**.

What Makes Direct Instruction Effective?

Direct Instruction is a **structured, teacher-led** approach designed to **eliminate ambiguity** and **accelerate progress**. Its key features include:

- **Scripted and clear lessons**: that focus on **reducing confusion** and ensuring **consistency in delivery**.
- **Incremental learning**: allowing students to **master** one skill **before progressing** to the next.
- **Continuous assessment and immediate feedback**: enabling **targeted support** and ensuring no child is left behind.

Extensive research has demonstrated the effectiveness of **Direct Instruction** in **improving reading outcomes**, particularly for students with **significant literacy difficulties**. It is a method that **prioritises mastery**, ensuring students develop the **confidence and competence** to tackle **increasingly complex texts**.

Integration with Reading Plus

Direct Instruction provides the foundational skills needed for students to **transition successfully** into our **Reading Plus programme**. Reading Plus builds on these skills by allowing learners to **practise and apply** their reading abilities across a **wide range of genres and text types**. Together, these programmes ensure a **seamless progression** for students, enabling them to:

- Engage with **age-appropriate reading materials**.
- Build **reading stamina** and develop **comprehension** through **scaffolded practice**.
- Foster a **lifelong love of reading**.

Impact and Outcomes

At St George's, the **integration** of **Direct Instruction** within our **intervention strategy** is already making a **measurable difference**. By prioritising this approach, we aim to:

- **Narrow the literacy gap** between **disadvantaged** students and their peers.
- Provide **vulnerable learners** with the tools they need to access the **broader curriculum**.
- Develop students' **independence, confidence, and enjoyment** of reading.

Direct Instruction is not simply a method; it is a **lifeline** for our **most vulnerable learners**. It **empowers** them to **overcome barriers, realise their potential**, and open doors to future **academic and personal success**.

Literacy: Rationale and Philosophy

- We understand that literacy is the **expression of pupils' understanding of ideas, concepts, facts and skills.**
- We also understand that **oracy** underpins the development of **reading** and **writing** as well as supporting the **strengthening of long term memory.**
- **All staff** are trained and have a responsibility to **explicitly teach new vocabulary** in their subject.
- **Bespoke CPD** is offered to departments who have been identified needing support on **reading strategies** and **introducing new vocabulary.** This includes support and training on the teaching of **extended written responses across the curriculum** where leaders work collaboratively with subjects to ensure the **progression** and **development of pupils' extended writing.**
- **Oracy** is improved and strengthened through the **building up of verbal responses** through '**quick-fire**' **questioning**, with the expectation that pupils upscale their answers, leading up to a **developed and extended verbal response. (S.H.A.P.E answer).**
- **Specialists** trained in the delivery of the **Direct Instruction Literacy Programme** teach identified cohorts of pupils who are **significantly below the expected reading age** for secondary school. This has been introduced to **support lower ability pupils** to **progress** with their **reading fluency** and **comprehension** and **writing** skills, thus contributing to **closing the gap** between the **disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged** cohorts so they can more easily access our **knowledge-rich curriculum**
- St George's has a growing number of colleagues who are **examination markers for the GCSE boards** in order to support **personal individual development** of the **knowledge** and **skills** needed within a range of curriculum areas, particularly with regards to accessing the training and models of **extended written responses.** This is **modelled** in **departmental CPD** and supports subject **curriculum development.**
- The teacher, as the expert in the room, **models** the **reading aloud in class** in order to demonstrate accurate **pronunciation** and **enunciation**, building more **fluent comprehension** for a wide range of pupils
- The **library** has its own **full time librarian** – pupils are encouraged to visit and regularly change their books; it has a **rich, varied** and **up-to-date** supply of texts. **All pupils in Key Stage 3 and selected pupils in Key Stage 4** also have a weekly reading lesson with the librarian where they are guided on appropriate book choices, engage very competitively in **reading competitions**, and have the opportunity to **read aloud** on a **one-one level** to improve their own **fluency**
- The **community pupil leadership team** writes for its own '**St. George's Bugle**' newspaper as part of the **elective co-curricular programme**, thus encouraging pupils to engage in the reading and writing of **local events, book reviews, interviews** and **Christian values.**