

# Literacy in Action

Welcome to our first edition of Literacy in Action. Reading is a key focus in our school; we want to share why literacy is so important, provide ideas about how to encourage pupils to read, and recommend books they may enjoy. It is globally recognised that the biggest barrier to raising achievement and attainment is literacy. To define literacy is simple: it is **reading, writing, speaking and listening**. It is our aim to ensure that all pupils can flourish; without these basic competencies, our pupils will struggle to fulfil their academic potential. We know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic, and more creative; they also do better at school. If children can read and understand a word, they can say it; if they can say it, they can write it. Simply put, reading matters. And together, we can really make a difference.

## Reading Support at Home

### Some simple ways to support literacy and reading at home.

- Let your child see that you're reading. Talk about what you're reading with them.
- If your child is in years 7 to 9, check they have a suitable reading book with them every day.
- Talk to your child about what their reading ZPD is. This should be written in the front of their planner on the Accelerated Reader pages.
- Talk to your child about what stories they enjoy, what TV shows they like, and what films they find interesting. This will help you both to understand the genre of books that would be most suitable.
- Logon to MyON together (our online library): <https://www.myon.co.uk/login/>
- It is important to read to your child in your home language if your first language is not English. Experience shows that using your home language will help your child to learn to read in English.
- Join the local library.
- Discuss the news with your child. Look at daily news websites together.
- Read the sports news together.
- Ask your child to read instructions, recipes and directions.
- Listening to audiobooks is great for struggling readers and those with dyslexia, but it is also an option for more confident readers. Much like having parents read aloud, audiobooks encourage visualisation, imagination, and the development of oral comprehension. There are many free audio book resources available online – including many local libraries.

### 7 Top Tips to Support Reading at Home

Shared reading is a great way to develop children's language and communication and to boost their reading skills. Regular reading routines can offer lots of opportunities for learning during school closures.

- 1 Concentrate on reading quality (it isn't all about reading lots!)**  
Don't worry too much about the 'what' and 'how' of reading each day. Books are great—but leaflets, comics, recipes and instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Following a recipe to make some cupcakes is valuable reading. Be on the lookout for reading, wherever it is!
- 2 Ask your child lots of questions**  
All reading matters. Shared reading is about 'reading with', not just 'reading to' (even for older children). So, ask lots of 'Wh' questions, such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? Try them when talking about books: for example, 'what do you think Harry is feeling?'
- 3 Ask your child to make predictions about what they have read**  
If it is a book, look at the front cover—or the last chapter—and talk about what might happen next. Look for clues in the book and be a reading detective! For example, 'can you see the bear on the front cover? Where do you think he will go?'
- 4 Ask your child to summarise what they have read**  
When you've finished reading, talk about what happened. Acting out the things that happened in the story or describing the big idea of a chapter is really fun and maximises learning. For example, 'can you remember all the things that happened on the bear hunt?'
- 5 Ask your child to write about what they have read**  
Write, or draw pictures, from anything you've read! Big writing and pictures are even more fun. For example, use an old roll of wallpaper to make a treasure map with clues from the stories you've read together.
- 6 Read and discuss reading with friends or family**  
Make books a part of the family. Encourage your child to share them with a relative or friend, over a video call. Laugh about them when you are making meals together. For example, 'I hope the tiger doesn't come to tea today!'
- 7 Maintain the motivation to read**  
Talk about the joy of reading whenever you can. Your child is on an amazing journey to becoming a reader. Put them in the driving seat and have fun on the way! For example, 'choose your favourite story for bedtime tonight.'

You can find a link to our Recommended Reading Lists on our school website:

[www.ems.bhcet.org.uk/recommended-reading-list](http://www.ems.bhcet.org.uk/recommended-reading-list)





Hello everyone, I'd like to take a moment to introduce myself as the Whole-School Literacy Co-ordinator at English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College. I have taught English across all Key Stages at English Martyrs for fifteen years. If you have any questions relating to anything Literacy related, or if you have queries relating to anything printed in our newsletter, please feel free to contact me via email at [efox@ems.bhcet.org.uk](mailto:efox@ems.bhcet.org.uk). **Mrs. Emma Fox**, Literacy Co-ordinator and Teacher of English.

### Priority 2: Providing Reading Support and Intervention at English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College

It's been a very busy start to the year. Most of our students at Key Stage 3 have now completed their first Renaissance Star Reading Assessment and an additional NGRT reading test. The aim of the assessments is to ascertain how our students are reading. Not only do the assessments give students a reading age and appropriate reading book ZPD (zone of proximal development), but they can also identify our struggling readers, our confident readers, and can tell us what type of intervention individual students may require whether that be decoding, comprehension, inference skills, or phonics.



Parents of students requiring additional support with their reading will be contacted and their child will be offered a place on one of our reading support programmes. Some programmes take place before or after school in the Learning Resource Centre, some intervention is timetabled throughout the school day.

Form tutors have issued students with their ZPDs to ensure that students are reading a book of a suitable level.



**Reading Books Are Compulsory Equipment**  
All Key Stage 3 students should have a reading book with them every day. This book should be linked to their ZPD.

**Why not try out other recommended reading lists?**  
<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/category/secondary-ks3-ks4-reading-lists/>

### Priority 2: Providing Reading Support and Intervention at English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College



We are delighted to announce the launch of our **Key Stage 4 & 5 Reading Support Mentor Programme!** We have secured the support of twenty of our older students who have given their time before and after the school day to help our younger readers. Our mentors will each support a specially selected group of students with their reading in the Learning Resource Centre.

Training has already started and will be ongoing over the term. Our next session will focus on how to help young readers through questioning.

Mentors will also help to support students with Accelerated Reader quizzing and accessing MyON online (plus harnessing their hot chocolate making skills!).

### Priority 3: Promote Independent Reading and Reading for Pleasure

This week saw the launch of our online library, **MyON**. MyON reader personalises reading for students by recommending books based on their interests, reading level, and ratings of books they've read. In one week, year 7 have read a total of 71 books!





**Priority 3: Promote Independent Reading and Reading for Pleasure**

We had a fantastic response to our first ever Year 7 English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College Virtues Poetry Competition. Mrs. Healey, Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. McLintock had a hard task deciding on the winners. Our winners were invited to read their poems at the Head’s Coffee Morning and will be invited to read their entries at year 6 Open Evening. Students were asked to write a poem focusing on one or more of our Virtues. Here is one of our winning entries from Ellie Bell:

**Resilience**

*Stand up to the fury*

*Let the torrents rage*

*Keep things moving forward*

*Stand firm and turn the page*

*This strength reveals resilience*

*To deal with what lies next in store*

*Facing each day’s challenge*

*Then coming back for more*

*This is a lesson you should heed*

*Try and try again*

*If at first, you don’t succeed*

*Then try and try again*

*Tomorrow brings another*

*And more each passing day*

*It’s all about how we get through it*

*And how we find a way.*



**Priority 3: Promote Independent Reading and Reading for Pleasure**

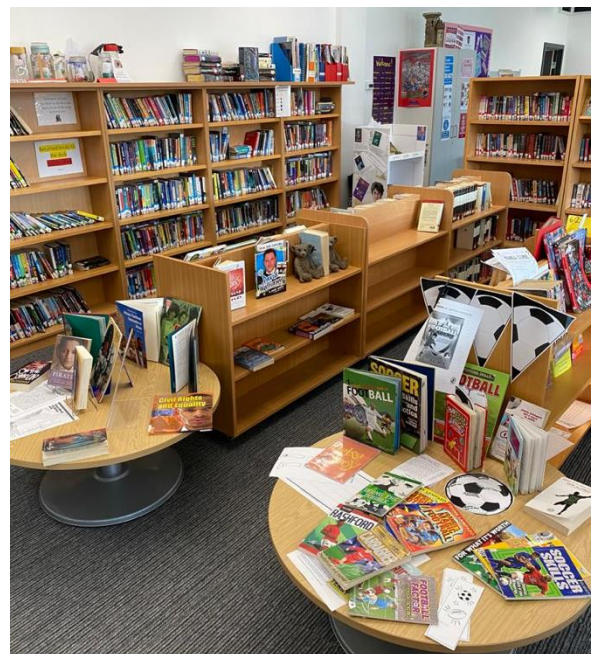
The Learning Resource Centre (LRC) is in full-swing this half-term. Mrs. Healey has been very busy preparing the new shelving and stocking them with plenty of new literature.

**What can the LRC offer?**

- Fiction and non-fiction books for all Key Stages
- A place to read
- 8 computers available for use before school, after school, break times and lunch times
- Quizzes and puzzles
- Newspapers and magazines
- Access to MyON and Accelerated Reader online
- Subject specific reading
- Recommended reading lists

**When is the LRC open for use?**

The LRC will be open EVERY morning from 8am. It is open at break time, lunch times and after school from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October until the Christmas holidays.



The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) defines the readability range within which pupils should read to best develop their reading, while avoiding frustration. The ZPD is especially useful for pupils using Renaissance Accelerated Reader, which lists readability levels for all quizzed books.



### Priority 3: Promote Independent Reading and Reading for Pleasure

Meet some of our Young Librarians: Abigail, Amy, and Maddison. Our year 8 & 9 students have been working with Mrs. Healey before and after school to learn about the successful running of a library. The programme runs throughout the year, and all students are welcome to join in. If you know of anyone who may be interested, ask them to come along to the Learning Resource Centre and speak to Mrs. Healey who will give them further information.



At Key Stage 3, students will read for 20 minutes during tutor time three times every week. All students have been tested via the Star Reading Assessment and have been given their results. Students choose a book within their ZPD and once completed, will

log on to the Accelerated Reader website to take a short, multiple-choice quiz. The quiz can be taken online at home, or during break times and lunch times at school. Students will gain points for the number of questions they answer correctly. Leaderboards will begin in school after Christmas!

Students have recorded their ZPDs in the front of their planners. There is also a space here for students to list the title of books they've read so far.

[www.arbookfind.co.uk](http://www.arbookfind.co.uk)

Students can use this website to find the ZPD of a book they've brought from home. Look under 'BL' for Book Level.

The screenshot shows the Accelerated Reader Bookfinder website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Type the name of your book here" and a pink arrow pointing to the search input field containing "The boy at the back of the class". Below the search bar are navigation tabs for "Quick Search", "Advanced Search", and "Collections".

On the left side, there is a sidebar with "AR BookBag™" and a "Keycode" section. Below that, there is a "Refine Your Search" section with filters for "Interest Level" (Middle Years, Lower Years, Upper Years, Middle Years Plus, Middle Grades, Lower Grades).

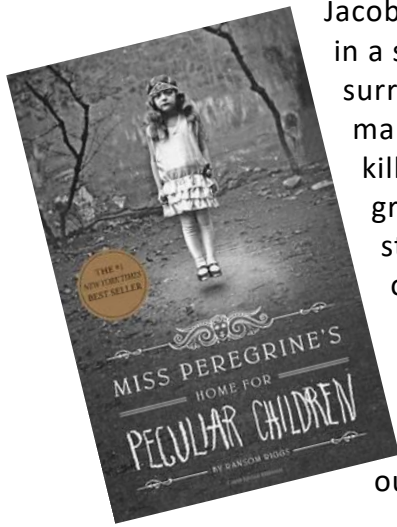
The main content area shows "Search Results" for "Titles 1 - 20 of 3868". There are navigation links for "Previous", "Page 1 of 194", "Next", "Go to Page", and "Go". A "Sort By" dropdown menu is set to "Relevance".

The first search result is "The Boy at the Back of the Class" by Rauf, Onjali Q. The ZPD information is circled in pink, with a pink arrow pointing to it and the text "This is the ZPD of the book". The ZPD information is: "IL: MY BL: 5.4 - AR Pts: 9.0".



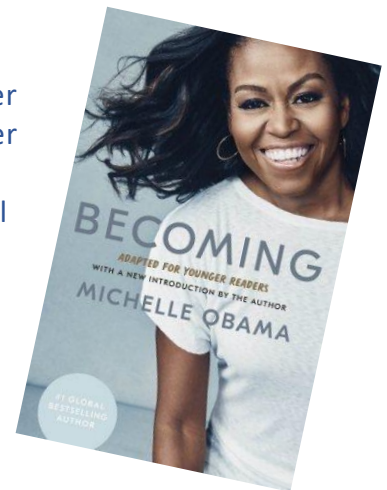
Priority 3: Promote Independent Reading and Reading for Pleasure

Recommended Reading lists can be found on our website and in the Learning Resource Centre.



Jacob Portman thinks nothing extraordinary will ever happen to him, growing up in a sleepy, backwater, Florida town. The most interesting things in his life surround his beloved grandfather Abraham, an inveterate storyteller with all manner of unbelievable tales from his childhood. Then Abraham is violently killed, and Jacob's life is plunged into grief and doubt. He is left with his grandfather's unique collection of black-and-white photographs and the stories Abraham bequeathed to Jacob, stories that he can't seem to put out of his mind. As Jacob's grief compels him towards an isolated Welsh island, he finds himself confronted with an ever-deepening mystery around the ruins of *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, the place Abraham grew up. As Jacob wanders the crumbling corridors and dust-soaked rooms, he realises that everything, including time itself, may be slipping out of place.

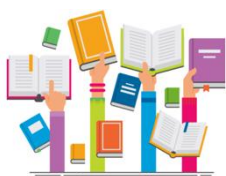
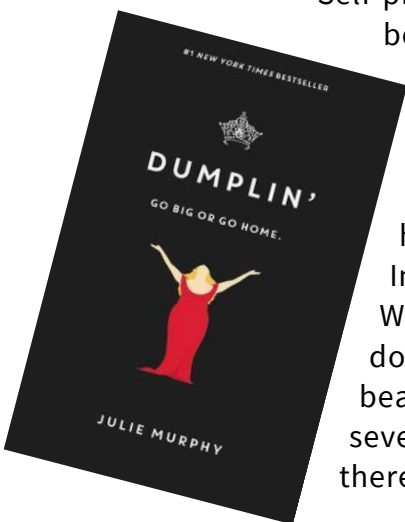
Michelle Robinson started life sharing a bedroom with her older brother Craig, in their family's upstairs apartment in her great-aunt's house. Her parents, Fraser, and Marian poured their love and energy into their children. She would go on to become Michelle Obama, the inspirational First Lady of the United States of America. Now adapted for younger readers, with new photographs and a new introduction from Michelle Obama herself, this memoir tells a very personal, and completely inspiring, story of how, through hard work and determination, the girl from the South Side of Chicago built an extraordinary life



The New York Times bestseller and feel-good YA novel of the year-about Willowdean Dixon, the fearless, funny, and totally unforgettable heroine who takes on her small town's beauty pageant.

Self-proclaimed fat girl Willowdean Dickson (dubbed "Dumplin'" by her former beauty queen mom) has always been at home in her own skin. Her thoughts on having the ultimate bikini body... put a bikini on your body! With her all-American beauty best friend, Ellen, by her side, things have always worked... until Will takes a job at Harpy's, the local fast-food joint. There she meets Private School Bo, a former jock. Will isn't surprised to find herself attracted to Bo. But she is surprised when he seems to like her back. Instead of finding new heights of self-assurance in her relationship with Bo, Will starts to doubt herself. So, she sets out to take back her confidence by doing the most horrifying thing she can imagine entering the Miss Clover City beauty pageant-along with several other unlikely candidates-to show the world that she deserves to be up there as much as any girl does. Along the way, she'll shock the hell out of

Clover City-and maybe herself most of all.



Thank you for reading!

