

Reading Policy (Secondary Schools)

September 2023

The White Horse Federation

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The trust champions and promotes all aspects of literacy: reading, writing and speaking. These are not only fundamental skills for adult life, but also integral to academic success across the curriculum.

All secondary schools adopt a common approach to promoting reading. This policy sets out the core tenets of that approach. However, it does not seek to provide an exhaustive list of strategies and schools may use additional strategies that are not detailed here.

An evidence-based approach

This policy builds on recent research findings into what constitutes effective reading strategies in schools. In particular, it draws on the findings of Ofsted's 2022 research project into struggling readers in secondary schools¹ and the findings of Lemov et al. (2006)², Westbrook et al. (2019)³, and Baye et al. (2019)⁴

Ofsted's 2022 research review highlighted the importance of:

- Prioritising reading through a well thought out curriculum and a wider school reading strategy for all pupils
- Using diagnostic assessment and targeted help to address specific gaps in reading
- Sharing information about struggling readers with staff, to support a consistent approach and to inform lesson planning
- Reading aloud to help with the decoding of language
- Raising the visibility of reading across the school
- Creating a culture in which everybody believes it is their responsibility to improve reading for all students
- Training staff who support reading
- Using a primary-qualified teacher to lead reading intervention
- Ensuring that secondary staff are knowledgeable about the early stages of reading
- Having skilled librarians, and them having an active role within the school strategy
- Putting in place clear monitoring procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies
- Continuing the reading strategy into key stage 4

Lemov et al. (2016) found that:

'Reading aloud is important for letting students hear fluent readers, so that they have a model of what expressive reading sounds like and can work to emulate it.'

¹ *'Now the whole school is reading': supporting struggling readers in secondary school*, Ofsted (2022)

² Lemov, et al. (2006)

³ Westbrook, J., Sutherland, J., Oakhill, J. and Sullivan, S. (2019) 'Just reading': the impact of a faster pace of reading narratives on the comprehension of poorer adolescent readers in English classrooms

⁴ Baye, A., Slavin, E.R., Lake, C., Inns, A., Haslam, J. (2019). A Quantitative Synthesis of Research on Reading Programmes for Secondary Students. London: Education Endowment Foundation.

Westbrook et al. (2019) found that:

‘Simply reading challenging, complex novels aloud and at a fast pace in each lesson repositioned ‘poorer readers’ as ‘good’ readers, giving them a more engaged uninterrupted reading experience over a sustained period.’

Baye et al. (2019) found that:

“Programmes that provide a daily extra period of reading and those utilising technology were no more effective, on average, than programmes that did not provide these resources. The findings suggest that secondary readers benefit more from socially and cognitively engaging teaching than from additional reading periods or technology.”

Leadership

Each school will have a Reading Lead, who will be a member of the Leadership team. The Reading Lead will have responsibility for implementing the policy within their school and for bringing about improvement in reading capability for their students.

The Reading Lead will establish a working group to implement the reading policy across the school. This may include members of the leadership team, members of staff with a literacy responsibility, the librarian and the SENCO.

There will be termly network meetings between school Reading Leads to evaluate progress and share best practice.

Assessment

All children in Years 7-10 will sit New Group Reading Tests (NGRT) twice a year: in Autumn Term 1 and Spring Term 2. These tests are designed to diagnose reading skill deficits and to identify students who would benefit from targeted intervention. The second round of tests will indicate progress in reading age and identify any additional students that require intervention. Students who receive targeted intervention will be assessed at the end of their programme to measure improvement.

Reading age data will be analysed centrally and a summary will be provided to local governing bodies and the trust board.

Intervention

Schools will provide all students identified as having a reading age significantly below their chronological age with time-limited, intensive intervention. This intervention will be designed to address the specific reading skill deficit, as identified by data from the NGRT test.

All staff involved in delivering reading intervention will receive appropriate training.

Intervention sessions will take place before school, during Tutor Time or after school, to ensure that students do not miss timetabled subject lessons.

If, at the end of the intervention cycle, a student has made less than the expected improvement in reading, a referral will be made to the SENCO so that any potential additional needs can be explored.

Reading in class

Our ambition is that students will read 5,000 words each day. In English, science and humanities, students should read a challenging piece of writing in the vast majority of lessons. This should be provided in hard copy to every student, so that they can follow it and refer back to it.

Often, the teacher will read aloud to the class. When they do, they will model confidence, pronunciation and intonation. Sometimes, students will be selected to read aloud or may be asked to read independently. When reading a text together, students will be directed to track the text using their ruler. When necessary, teachers will prepare students for new vocabulary or concepts by pre-teaching definitions. Students’ comprehension of what they have read should be assessed through pre-planned questioning.

Reading material should challenge students, exposing them to ambitious vocabulary and ideas that support their understanding of the subjects they are learning and the world around them. Relying on students reading from a powerpoint presentation is not appropriate, as the complexity of the text will be inherently limited and students will be unable to refer back to the text after the slide has been removed from the board.

The library and reading culture

All schools will have access to a well-stocked library, that is readily available to all students before school, at lunchtime and after school. This will include copies of books from the trust's 'Literary Canon': a list of 100 books that every child should read, including great literary works that students might not otherwise encounter.

All schools will use well-trained librarians to support the implementation of the reading policy, to oversee the functioning of the library and to nurture a love of reading.

One tutor time session each week will be dedicated to reading. Students will bring their own books to read, and tutors will be responsible for checking that these are suitably challenging. During this reading session, students will be selected to read 1:1 with their tutor to develop fluency. Tutors should prioritise listening to the reading of pupil premium students.

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- *Teaching and Learning Policy*
- *Curriculum Policy*
- *Data and Assessment Policy*