

Reading at Teesdale School and Sixth Form

A 'reading-rich curriculum', supported by high-quality teaching of reading:

Reading remains a crucial skill throughout secondary school: it is the gateway to both the curriculum and academic success. The stronger the reader a pupil is, the more likely they are to attain strong grades in *all* subjects (not just English) at GCSE and beyond. Here at Teesdale School, we recognise – and promote – that reading *is* the curriculum.

Our ambitious curriculum is supported by ambitious texts and our pupils are enabled to 'read to learn' as they begin their secondary journey in Key Stage 3. Curriculum leaders across the Trust have collaborated to integrate a range of rich, purposeful texts with the aim of:

- bringing their subject disciplines to life
- enhancing and deepening pupils' knowledge of the subject studied
- developing the breadth of background knowledge and cultural needed for full curriculum access.

We take our commitment to our 'reading-rich' curriculum seriously. With this in mind, 'reading for knowledge' is a core strand of our professional development offer, including:

- the core components of reading, including word recognition, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.
- reading to learn, known as 'Read to Succeed', focusing on *why* reading is required to access knowledge and the importance of prior knowledge in when reading.
- disciplinary reading (how to read effectively in specific subject disciplines).
- anticipating – and overcoming - barriers for pupils in texts.
- oracy – and language – to support reading.
- explicit vocabulary instruction.
- strategies to develop reading fluency.

Language development underpins reading. That's why effective oracy is a cornerstone of our teaching. Teachers encourage pupils to express their ideas across the subject range, using taught vocabulary, to deepen their understanding of the subject as well as develop their confidence in language use.

Further, all Year 7 and 8 pupils receive a fortnightly reading lesson in English, designed to enable them all to become fluent – and well informed - readers. This lesson explores a range of rich texts, with a focus on repeated reading for fluency and knowledge enhancement. This is supported by our registration programme for Y7-9 pupils, where pupils participate in our 'Vocabulous' course. The course involves students learning Latin and Greek root words to learn word patterns. Students use these roots to work out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary, so that by the end of the course, they have the skills they need to decipher new words on their own.

Interventions and support for struggling readers:

At Teesdale, we understand the critical role that reading plays in our pupils' academic success. We recognise that when pupils struggle with reading, it can have a profound impact on their ability to comprehend and engage with texts across all subjects, and the curriculum as a whole. We have a longstanding history of impactful reading interventions, all designed in-house, to support pupils at various stages of their reading journey.

Further, we work closely with Shotton Hall Research School, who are experts in the fields of reading, assessment and interventions, and lead work on these areas nationally and regionally.

Assessment of pupils' reading follows a staged process:

1. Y7 pupils are assessed using NGRT standardised reading assessments. This data provides a starting point for analysis to identify the lowest quintile of the cohort.
2. Pupils identified undertake a range of one-to-one diagnostic reading assessments. Some are led by our SEND department, and dedicated intervention teachers, others are led by our Research School. All diagnostic assessments are efficient and designed to pinpoint the specific aspects of reading that each pupil finds challenging across four key areas: phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension. Purposeful assessment and precision underpin everything we do.
3. Our SEND department coordinates more in-depth diagnostic assessment, such as detailed phonics assessment or suspected speech and language issues, for the few pupils who might need it.
4. Once pupils' reading issues have been identified, we carefully match pupils to the interventions they need. Reading interventions take place at various times in the school day, depending on reading need. All interventions are quality assured to ensure they are led with fidelity.
5. Interventions are carefully quality assured. Further they are evaluated for impact using GL standardised tests and other appropriate measures, such as accurate words per minute counts or fluency rubric scorings and other standardised reading and spelling tests, such as the WRAT.

Reading interventions offered include 202020, Moving Up, more recently, our Research-School designed 'Fluency for All' programme.

Eyesight can be a common unidentified issue that hinders reading. More recently, to support reading and any interventions we offer, we have designed and led visual acuity screening for our Year 7 cohorts.

This process involves:

1. Asking parents if their child wears – or has ever worn – glasses, as well as their consent to screening.
2. Screening pupils using our Trust Research School designed process to identify those who may benefit from an eye test. As well as visual acuity screening, this process involves asking pupils if they struggle to see the board in any lessons and if they experience any common indicators of vision problems, such as headaches.
3. Pastoral staff contacting parents to advise them to take their child for an eye test, and then following up results. Last year, we took a range of pupils to Peterlee Specsavers ourselves.
4. Sharing key information with staff.
5. Building what we have learned into our quality assurance procedures so we can check that those pupils who should be wearing glasses, are wearing them.

At Teesdale, we are committed to helping every pupil become a successful reader. We seek to innovate by designing precise and efficient diagnostic assessments to identify pupils' needs in different areas of reading and eliminating common barriers such as vision. Doing so allows us to provide the personalised support necessary to help our pupils overcome their challenges and unlock their full potential as readers and learners.

Developing a whole-school culture of reading:

Reading plays a key role in cultivating pupils' learning, their personal development and their understanding of the subjects they study. As they prepare for the crucial exams that will shape their future paths, we strongly encourage all pupils to read widely to expand their vocabulary, hone their writing skills, and enhance their language and communication abilities. Engaging with a diverse range of texts from various authors and genres will support our pupils to develop into confident, articulate, and knowledgeable communicators.

Reading is more than the gateway to knowledge and understanding; it plays a vital role in fostering pupils' social and cultural capital. Wide reading exposes young people to new ideas and experiences, encouraging them to develop empathy for people and characters from diverse backgrounds. Further, it supports pupils to discover intriguing and inspiring characters, relatable plots and genres that they love; ultimately, it fosters the lifelong passion for reading that we regard as an entitlement for all.

That's why, at Teesdale, we are committed to celebrating and promoting a love for reading among our pupils. We never miss an opportunity to promote reading, be it 'World Book Day'; regular whole-school reading challenges; our well-stocked library; Scholastic book fairs and recommended subject reads. We hope that by immersing themselves in the world of books, our pupils will enhance their academic performance, broaden their horizons, develop into well-rounded, confident young people and become lifelong lovers of reading.

Reading glossary

Oracy - the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language.

Fluency - the ability to read easily and articulately.

Cultural Capital - The essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for a successful future in society and in their career.

NGRT tests - The New Group Reading Test (NGRT) is a standardised assessment to measure reading skills of students aged 5-16 years against the national average.