



Kingsmead School Literacy Strategy

1. Reading lessons

2. Reading for pleasure

3. Vocabulary Development

4. Extended and creative writing

5. Tutor time programme

6. Intervention programme

7. Specialist intervention and support

- Weekly hour-long reading lessons for all Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 students
- Discussion, comprehension activities, including inference, deduction, prediction and evaluation, modelling of effective reading strategies and sustained periods of extended reading of complex and enriching texts where students will read out loud, in pairs, in groups and individually
- Vocabulary development activities built into the lesson with explicit focus on etymology and morphology of words
- Our well stocked 'Potter' themed library has an open- door policy where students are encouraged to sit, work or simply just read
- Our 'Reading for Pleasure' programme recommends exciting and challenging new texts and encourages students to read at home independently
- All teachers are supported to provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access both Tier 2 and Tier 3 subject specific vocabulary
- Teachers are supported to ensure effective modelling of speaking and listening, writing and reading supports pupils in developing their language and vocabulary.
- Bedrock Core Programme allows students to access challenging vocabulary and develop grammar skills through non -fiction and fiction texts
- Bedrock Mapper provides explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access Tier 3 vocabulary in all subjects and allows teachers and leaders to consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning and mapping
- Teachers are supported across the curriculum to guide student practice in extended and creative writing, including modelling and scaffolding, the stepped approach, explicit instruction, live writing and 'I do, we do, you do' used throughout the school
- Young writers and Debate club are examples of enrichment activities that foster the love for extended writing
- The Room of Curiosities is truly unique space to stimulate creative writing ideas for students
- Our tutor time literacy programme allows us to catch and close gaps with grammatical and functional literacy skills in the form of basic spelling, punctuation and grammar, which are then assessed through half-termly quizzes
- Reading tests allow us to identify students not reading at their chronological age. Intervention is implemented in a variety of ways incusing Sixth form support, enrichment intervention and more specific 1:1 or small group support
- Specialist intervention is identified again through reading test data and progress data. Specialist teachers are trained in using Ruth Miskin's 'Fresh Start' for phonics intervention and further intervention is focussed on reading comprehension and reading fluency, including supporting weaker readers with their reading accuracy, automaticity and prosody.



Kingsmead School Literacy Strategy

Context:

The Hednesford area has high levels of historical socio-economic deprivation, with the Multiple Deprivation index ranking Cannock Chase as the most deprived district in Staffordshire. Several Cannock Chase wards which surround the school have also been identified as falling within the most deprived national quintile. The district has the highest number of adults in receipt of working-age benefits in Staffordshire; only 35% of residents work in a role associated with higher skills and earnings, compared with the national figure of 46%.

Adult literacy levels are low, with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills estimating that as many as 19% of 16-64 year-olds had literacy skills that were entry level and below in 2011. This is well-below the national average of 15%, placing the district in the second lowest quintile.

Aim of this policy:

To ensure that all students who attend Kingsmead School read and write at a level that is above their chronological age.

Our Reading Strategy

The research makes clear that reading is the hallmark of almost all professional jobs, it is the master skill of secondary school and the greatest tool any school has to unlock social mobility and move children and their families out of poverty. The problem for students is their vocabulary: students can only write as well as they can speak and need to know 95% of words on a page in order to properly comprehend a passage of text. As a direct result, “vocabulary at 5 correlates directly with attainment in English and Maths at 16” – Alex Quigley¹

At Kingsmead we have weekly hour-long reading lessons for all Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 students to address precisely this need. 60 minutes of reading per week puts each Kingsmead student in to at least the 70th percentile of readers nationally, before it is even then supplemented by their own reading for pleasure and reading in tutor time. 60 minutes of curriculum time dedicated to reading each week is the equivalent of 1800 minutes in the average school year and exposes students to over 564,000 new words – Nagy and Herman, 1987.²

¹ Closing the Vocabulary Gap, Alex Quigley, 2018

² Breadth and Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge: Implications for Acquisition and Instruction, Nagy and Herman, 1987



Kingsmead School Literacy Strategy

For many Kingsmead students, reading is the highlight of their week, however for some we know it is the only reading they get. As a direct result of what Geoff Barton calls *The Matthew Effect*, “the word-rich get richer and the word-poor get poorer”.³ For this reason and this reason alone, the essentiality of curriculum time dedicated solely to reading and the development of reading skills cannot be understated. Reading is vital, it is life-giving, and it is the key to enabling our students to confidently take the next steps on their chosen career path when they eventually leave us.

Strand 1- Reading Lessons:

Students will read 3 whole-class readers throughout the school year, 1 per term and in addition, they will also be encouraged to read further books each half-term as part of their own reading for pleasure. Each set of whole-class readers has been specifically chosen by members of the English Department and SLT to ensure the highest levels of challenge and most importantly, that all students in each respective year group read at a level that is consistently 2-3 years above their chronological age. Kingsmead reading lessons are characterised by discussion, comprehension, including inference, deduction, prediction and evaluation, modelling of effective reading strategies and above all, sustained periods of extended reading where students will read out loud, in pairs, in groups and individually. As EEF research notes, “reading comprehension strategies are high impact and add an average of 6 months”⁴ on to the progress of students and in addition, oral language approaches such as reading out loud “have a high impact on pupil outcomes of 6 months’ additional progress”.⁵ Vocabulary development activities are also built into each lesson through our student reading booklets, with explicit focus on etymology and morphology of words and spelling.

Strand 2- Reading for pleasure:

Our well stocked ‘Potter’ themed library has an open- door policy where students are encouraged to sit, work or simply just read. Furnished with comfy chairs and sofas, we are constantly working to update and refresh our space with new, exciting and challenging texts for all abilities and interests. The library is also home to our book vending machine where ‘Subject Stars’ across the curriculum are treated to choose a book from the machine. The books for the machine are chosen by subject staff across the curriculum and there is a wide variety of non-fiction and fiction texts that cover all subject areas. Our ‘Reading for Pleasure’ programme recommends exciting and challenging new texts and encourages students to read at home independently through the use of ‘Bookflix’, accessed through the Blended Learning Platform and recommendations of texts linked to Schemes of Learning. Regular house competitions with a reading focus are coordinated throughout the year.

³ Don’t Call it Literacy, Geoff Barton, 2013

⁴ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies>

⁵ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/oral-language-interventions>



Kingsmead School Literacy Strategy

Strand 3: Vocabulary Development:

The importance of vocabulary cannot be overstated. All teachers are supported to ensure effective modelling of speaking and listening, writing and reading supports pupils in developing their language and vocabulary. Subject-specific tier 3 vocabulary is taught in all subject areas enabling students to master the nomenclature of each distinct academic discipline. These words are explicitly taught and referred to as an integral part of all lessons. Vocabulary development is taught in all reading lessons and through the use of the Bedrock Core Programme, allowing students to access challenging vocabulary which is personalised to their ability and needs and which allows students to also develop their grammar skills through non-fiction and fiction texts. Bedrock Mapper is a whole school vocabulary tool and provides explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access Tier 3 vocabulary in all subjects whilst simultaneously allowing teachers and leaders to consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning and mapping.

Strand 4: Extended and creative writing:

The craft of writing is taken very seriously at Kingsmead and as a result, is practiced often. Extended writing tasks are regularly completed as part of assessments in all appropriate subject areas, but at Kingsmead we also use a range of strategies to help students to develop their writing skills. Teachers are supported across the curriculum to guide student practice in extended and creative writing, including the use of modelling and scaffolding, the stepped approach, explicit instruction and 'I do, we do, you do,' strategies all used throughout the school. Staff members are experts in their field and so, will regularly use "live" writing to model the process of composition with students. Students are also encouraged to write creatively at Kingsmead and are encouraged to join the Creative Writing, Debate Club and Young Writers enrichment activities. These clubs enter students into competitions each half-term, where they have their skills tested against other students at both the regional and national level.

The Room of Curiosities:

In 2019, the Room of Curiosities was conceived and created as a truly unique space to stimulate creative writing ideas for students. The room contains a great range of curious, genuine, historical artifacts such as skeletons, swords and shields, preserved animals and fossils, a typewriter and even a mermaid's hand and is regularly booked by staff to use in conjunction with lessons where extended and creative writing is completed. The artefacts themselves each come with their own unique story that sparks the imagination and are displayed alongside etymology cards that explain the origins of words and phrases associated with each artefact. All subject areas utilise the RoC in their medium-term plans and it has inspired many pieces of original extended and creative writing undoubtedly enhanced by the experience.



Kingsmead School Literacy Strategy

Strand 5- Tutor time programme:

In tutor time, students are taught functional literacy skills in the form of basic spelling, punctuation and grammar, which are then assessed through half-termly quizzes. The programme allows us to catch and close any basic gap in literacy skills taught through a non-confrontational way in a familiar tutor setting.

Strand 6- Intervention:

At the end of each half-term progress in reading is measured by students taking a sophisticated online reading age test called Literacy Assessment Online, which uses a series of multiple-choice comprehension questions to accurately assess the precise reading age of students, between the ages of 9 and 16. Students who push themselves to consistently achieve a reading age that is above their chronological age receive a range of rewards. Students who are found to be below their expected reading age receive a range of small group support and intervention as is appropriate for their need:

1. Peer-tutoring – some students are coached by members of the 6th form student body, who come alongside them for a period of time, listening to them read and supporting their development
2. Direct Reading Support – most students who are below expected receive additional specialist reading support from members of the English Department, who specifically focus on developing key aspects of pronunciation, reading for meaning and how to make sound inferences from text with small groups of students from each year group
3. Enrichment intervention- Some select students will receive further intervention and take part in our ‘Reading Adventure’ programme which is small group based and aimed at encouraging and fostering a love for reading

As EEF research notes, “small group tuition has an average impact of four months’ additional progress over the course of a year” and “Small group tuition is most likely to be effective if it is targeted at pupils’ specific needs.”⁶

⁶ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition>



Kingsmead School Literacy Strategy

Strand 7- Specialist intervention

Some students may arrive at Kingsmead struggling to read effectively and will be immediately identified as needing specialist support and intervention. Careful monitoring of our reading age data and progress data will also identify any other students in the school who may benefit. Some of our staff are trained in the delivery of Ruth Miskin's 'Fresh Start' programme and identified students will receive specialist phonics intervention. Some teachers are also specialised in conducting further intervention focussed on reading comprehension and reading fluency, including supporting weaker readers with their reading accuracy, automaticity and prosody.