



# St Mary's Catholic College - Reading



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The introduction to St. Mary's Catholic College's approach to reading outlines a comprehensive and structured strategy for improving reading skills across the school.

## 1. Whole-School Priority

Reading is always a priority across the entire school, with a clear emphasis on ensuring that students can fully access the curriculum. By focusing on reading, the school aims to support students in achieving their full potential in all subjects.

## 2. Assessment and Skill Development

The school ensures that students' reading abilities are regularly assessed, allowing for targeted support. Programs are in place to help develop reading skills systematically, ensuring that each student can improve their level of attainment.

## 3. Implementation Activities

A range of activities have been introduced to support this priority:

- YARC testing to further identify areas of need
- CPD (Continuing Professional Development): Training for staff around NGRT and the development of reading skills.
- Reading Plans created for students and shared with staff
- Reciprocal Reading: Implementation of this strategy to improve comprehension and engagement.
- Investment in Resources: Purchase of new texts and improvements to the library to promote reading.
- Explicit Expectations: Clear expectations for reading across all subjects, with CPD for subject leaders to lead reading initiatives in their areas.
- Time for Reading for Pleasure: Time built into the school day for students to read for enjoyment.
- Wave approach to intervention
- NGRT (New Group Reading Test): Regular use of NGRT, followed by analysis to assess students' reading levels and track progress.

# St Mary's Catholic College- Reading



## 4. Outputs and Outcomes

- The strategies aim to achieve the following outcomes:
- Reciprocal Reading Strategies: Training for staff in these strategies is intended to accelerate pupil understanding and progress. Key elements of this strategy include:
- Oral Language Approaches: Targeted reading aloud, book discussions, and structured questioning to extend vocabulary and reading comprehension.
- Curriculum-Focused Dialogue: Purposeful interaction around texts to deepen understanding.
- WAVE Approach: Through CPD, this approach is introduced to further support reading development.
- Big Read Strategy: This initiative involves focused, collective reading activities designed to boost student engagement and progress in reading.

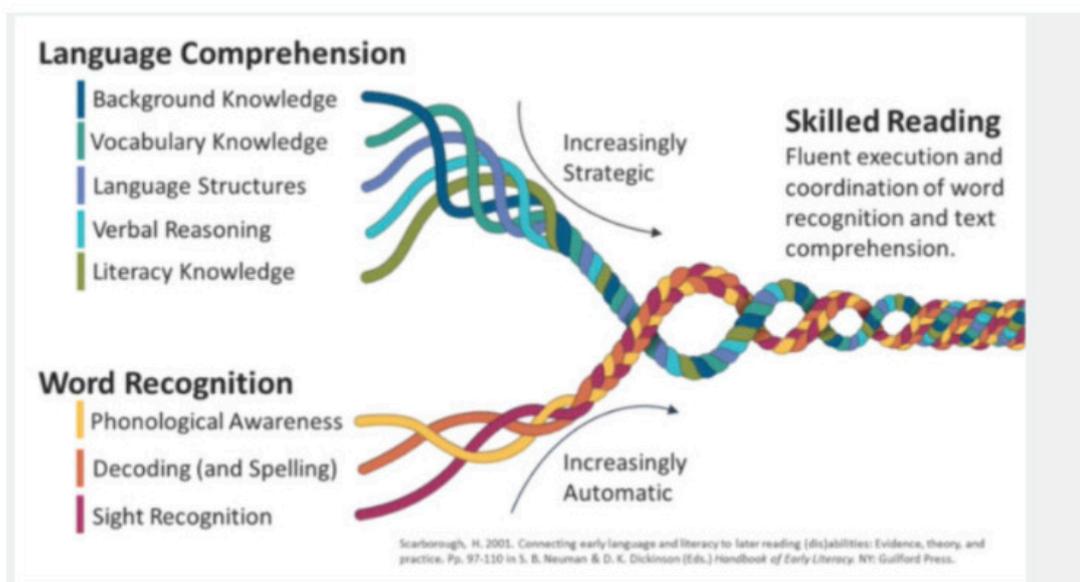
This approach reflects a well-rounded and multi-faceted effort to improve reading across the college, encompassing staff development, resource investment, and targeted strategies to engage students in reading both for academic and pleasure purposes.

## Reading, Writing, Vocabulary and Oracy

As subject knowledge is communicated through specific academic language, both written and verbal, pupils must develop a secure understanding of the specialist vocabulary and literary skills needed to succeed in each subject across the curriculum. Below are the five key ingredients of explicit literacy teaching that form our non-negotiable practices for literacy.



# St Mary's Catholic College- Reading



## TEACHING READING SKILLS Skimming and scanning

### What is skimming?

Skimming is reading a text quickly to find out the general theme, topic or meaning.

It's useful for pre-reading tasks or texts that don't need a lot of detailed attention.

There's no need to read every word.

### What is scanning?

Scanning is reading a text quickly in order to find specific information e.g. figures or names.

It's useful for answering exam type questions which ask for True/False or to discover facts, etc.

The objective is to search out relevant words, collocations, etc.



# St Mary's Catholic College- Reading



## Prosody in oral reading fluency

In recent years, discussions about the science of reading have focused on early reading. Phonological awareness, decoding, and sight reading, most educators agree, are the fundamental building blocks for literacy success.

As we know, the science of reading goes well beyond phonics. As shown in Scarborough's Reading Rope, mastering oral reading fluency (ORF) and text comprehension are integral to helping children achieve reading proficiency.

Cue prosodic reading! When a student reads with expression, they unlock a crucial component of fluent reading. Students are expected to read with a high degree of prosodic proficiency.

### 1. Expressiveness

Expressiveness is a measure of how much a student's pitch modulates while reading.

High expressiveness can indicate interest, understanding, and fluency of a passage; while low expressiveness can indicate a student is struggling or has yet to fully grasp the material.

### 2. Timing of punctuation

Another important aspect of prosody is ensuring that a student pauses at appropriate points in a passage, typically demarcated by punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks, and exclamation marks).

### 3. Expression of punctuation

Ensuring that a student varied their intonation at appropriate points in a passage is another important prosody measure.

Proper intonation points are typically demarcated by question marks, where intonation is expected to rise, and periods, where intonation is expected to fall.

# The Big Read.



## The Big Read was introduced in 2022.

- Whole School Reading Programme (Y7-Y11)
- Reading Time - every morning
- 15 minute teacher-led reading sessions of a selected text. Students have voted on the texts selected.

*“Reading aloud and discussing the text was a crucial strand of the Reading For Pleasure pedagogy identified in the The Teachers as Readers research. It enabled children to access rich and challenging texts, prompted the children’s affective engagement and created a class repertoire of ‘texts in common’ to discuss.”*

## The Open University- Reading for Pleasure

- Teacher Led, 15 minute sessions
- Selected full texts to be read on a rota basis
- Introduction presentation to introduce text
- Vocabulary quiz at prior to and after reading the text
- Vocabulary Presentation to keep track of vocabulary learnt
- Staff Knowledge Organiser to pinpoint vocabulary and discussion questions

Each book will come with resources to aid you in your delivery of The Big Read

## Year 7



## Year 8



## Year 9



## Year 10



## Year 11



# Reading Aloud



All staff have been trained how to read aloud to students.



## Performance:

- **Your voice can do a lot of things.** It can be loud and soft, fast and slow, high and low, harsh and sweet. Its the modulation in your voice, the rhythm of the words, the pause and the emphasis, that is like music to the ears of the students. If you read a sentence like "then he whispered..." in a hushed low voice, even a student who did not know the meaning of 'whisper' would understand it.
- **Changing the tone of your voice** a little with each character in the text also brings in the details in the story and feel the words as you read them as your voice will naturally echo the mood of the text.
- **While reading a story aloud,** let its emotional value show through your eyes. Our eyes are the most expressive features on the body, don't let a curtain fall over them whilst you read. Try and read with your eyes, express the wonder suspense, excitement or fear that the character is feeling.

## Body Language:

- **Make yourself present,** try not to hide yourself behind the book. If you sit/stand nearer the students, they might feel more engaged as you're reading
- Show expressions with your face and eyes

## Climate for Learning:

- Have an efficient routine for distribution of books
- Pre-planned seating
- Take the register before the reading begins
- Create the feeling of pace with your reading

## Pleasure:

- It's important to show students that you are enjoying the book
- Be enthusiastic
- Generate conversations about the book
- Use phrases like 'lets see what will happen next' rather than 'right, we've got to read now'

## Pause:

- A pause can be used very effectively whilst reading aloud. It is a great tool for introducing a change in the story and build tension.
- A pause before the character's speech is also necessary, use this affectively and it will make students eager to listen to what comes after it.
- When you pause take the opportunity to ask questions: What do you think will happen?, you can use those suggested in the staff knowledge organiser.

## Pace:

- Read slowly and clearly so that the children can listen and understand well.
- Varying the pace is an important part of bringing the dramatic effort of a story
- All suspenseful portions of the narrative a soft and slow voice helps to build the suspense
- The ending of the story is better if read very slowly savouring every word.

# The Wave approach.



At St. Mary's all staff are aware of the wave approach to reading interventions.

## Wave 3

GL Dyslexia screening, Senaat Testing, Ed Psych involvement.  
Precision teaching

## Wave 2

English Boot Sessions. Reciprocal reading groups.  
Intervention in English for identified students, Reciprocal Reading Intervention, Access to Recharge, Aim/ Gas discussion

## Wave 1 - Reading Waves

NGRT Testing, Reciprocal Teaching, Informed Data Analysis, Key Vocabulary, The Big Read, Library Lessons KS3, Library Access, Progressive English, KS3 Curriculum with reading focus, Inspire Curriculum, Creative Curriculum



# Interventions for reading



At St Mary's we have a large number of highly trained and skilled TAs who carry out various interventions to support literacy.

**Precision Teaching** - Is led by the teaching assistant team, it takes place as part of the student's timetable. It is a short (15 minute) intervention regularly held once or twice weekly. This supports students who have difficulties with phonics, fluency or accuracy.

**Reciprocal Reading** - Is led by the Library team. This intervention is used to support students who have difficulties with comprehension and is held during reading lessons within the English curriculum. This is being expanded into an after school intervention.

**Talk Boost** - This is a teaching assistant led intervention. It is targeted support for small groups of Key Stage 3 students to improve their communication and literacy skills. The teaching assistants as well as the students are supported by a speech and language specialist.

## **Faster Reading at KS3**

The Sussex study found that when using the Faster Read approach with readers, on average, students made 8.5 months progress during their 12-week term, but most surprisingly, poorer readers made an average of 16 months progress compared to the average readers. We introduced Faster Reading in the Autumn Term of 2024 for KS3 English.

## **Reciprocal Teaching**

Reciprocal Teaching is a wave 1 teaching strategy. All staff and students have been trained to use Reciprocal Teaching methods in order to access texts and ideas within a lesson.

**Reciprocal Teaching** is a student centred approach to **teaching reading comprehension** in which students adopt a range of different roles in groups to decode and understand text. **(Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar and Ann L. Brown)**

Reciprocal teaching is based on Vygotsky's theory of the fundamental role of social interaction (dialogue) in the development of cognition. It is an instructional procedure designed to teach students cognitive strategies that might lead to improved reading comprehension through **Summarising, Questioning, Clarifying and Predicting**.

Vygotsky believed that students learn best somewhere between their ability to perform a task under adult supervision and their ability to solve a problem independently. His theory of ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) is critical to identifying appropriate text and scaffolding activities to support student success (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Galloway, 2001).

In [John Hattie's](#) book, [Visible Learning, A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-analyses Relating to Achievement](#), reciprocal teaching ranked  $d = 0.74$  which indicates that this teaching method is extremely effective in improving student achievement ([Hattie, 2009, pg. 203](#)).

Text must be at a level that can be effectively shared, not too easy and not too difficult. Appropriate support and feedback must be given to facilitate learning during reciprocal teaching activities (Oczkus, 2003). To do this, Reciprocal Teaching suggests that teachers and students collaborate in learning and practising four key skills: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarising.

### **Prediction**

Ask students to predict what they think the reading may be about. Get them to think about what is going to happen by asking questions as a detective might do.

### **Question**

Remind students to generate questions as they listen and read. Remind them of the three levels of questions:

- Right-there questions (answer in the text)
- Between-the-lines questions (inference needed)
- Critical Thought questions (require their opinion)

### **Clarify**

As students listen and read, they ask themselves what words and phrases are unclear to them. These clarifications may take the form of the following questions:

- How do I pronounce that? Have we seen a word like this anywhere before?
- What does the word mean?
- I think the author is saying...
- I'm guessing or inferring that 'pie-in-the-sky' means...

### **Summarise**

Students summarise verbally, within pairs, and then share with their assigned small group or record their summary and read it aloud to their small group. Each small group could then create a semantic map with major points of significance shared by each group member.

**PREDICTING**

**QUESTIONING**

**CLARIFYING**

**SUMMARISING**

## Reciprocal Teaching procedures and principles: two teachers' developing understanding

The effectiveness of Reciprocal Teaching, a reading comprehension instructional technique, has been repeatedly demonstrated. According to Brown and Campione (Innovations in Learning, Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, pp. 289–325, 1996) “lethal mutations” are abundant because of teachers’ focus on how to do the procedures of Reciprocal Teaching and lack of understanding of the learning principles upon which the method is based.

Helps students to develop **comprehension strategies** in a supportive context

Makes **explicit** what readers do - *predict, clarify, question and summarise*

Develops students’ content **knowledge** and topic **vocabulary**

Fosters meaningful **dialogue** among students including extended talk about texts

Helps students to develop skills in locating, recording and organising information in preparation for writing.



# Promoting Reading for Pleasure



Staff at St Mary's see the value in Reading for Pleasure and host a number of activities and events to help students find the joy in reading. Examples of offers include:

- Students are able to access the library before and after school, as well as during break and lunchtimes. They can borrow up to 2 books at a time (increasing to 6 books in sixth form).
- Pupils can request books they would like to have added to the library catalogue.
- Volunteer student librarians assist library staff.
- Open Evening events including Harry Potter Shelfie stations, free bookmarks for prospective pupils and opportunities to engage with the Library clubs.
- National competitions such as Christopher Salmon Poetry Competition and Design a World Book Day token.
- Author visits - this year, author Robert Goodale hosted workshops for year 8 students in which he read extracts from his novel and answered pupil questions.
- Library newsletter sent to parents at the end of each half term detailing the events that had been hosted in the library and including photographs of pupils who engaged in activities.
- Jacqueline Wilson Book Club hosted every Thursday lunchtime for KS3 pupils.
- Harry Potter Book Club hosted after school, with the annual Harry Potter Book Night being a huge party celebrating the joy of J.K. Rowling's Wizarding World.
- Wirral Book Awards club, which allows students to engage in author visits, read work from local authors, vote for the novel they think should be 'Wirral Book of the Year' and discuss their favourite YA fiction with like-minded students.
- Staff displaying 'Miss/Mr — is reading —' posters on classroom doors.
- Competitions involving books, where books are amongst the prizes that are available to be won. For example: 'Write a short story beginning with a line from a famous novel'; 'Design a new front cover for your favourite book' and 'Decorate a paper egg (at Easter) or pumpkin (at Halloween) to represent a book'
- Interactive, engaging library displays that encourage the students to discuss literature with staff and peers. For example: 'Guess which staff members these 'shelfies' belong

to'; 'Match each romantic figure to their literary valentine' and 'Bookish would you rather?'

- Book sales take place sporadically, with donations and old library stock being available to buy for bargain prices (pay what you can, with suggested donations being from as little as 10p). This means that even students with limited funds are able to own books that they have chosen themselves.
- Free non-fiction books are available to take home every day.
- Bookmarks are available for students to keep for free. These include World Book Day bookmarks, World Poetry Day bookmarks, and ones that the students can decorate themselves - as well as Reciprocal Reading bookmarks which are included with the Big Read books.
- Examples of braille and a huge selection of audiobooks are available in the library, showing our commitment to showcasing accessible literature. Everybody deserves the opportunity to read for pleasure.
- Seasonal makeovers take place throughout the year, with romance books spotlighted during Valentine's Day and winter books showcased near Christmas. Library displays are also made to match the time of year.
- Whole school activities such as life-size 'Where's Wally', in which students were invited to find 19 Wallys that had been hidden around the school. during World Book Week.
- Student anthologies compiled of creative writing submitted by students. Literary Chameleons Volume 1 and 2 were published in 2022 and 2023 respectively, making around 50 students into published authors. Book launches were hosted to celebrate

this incredible achievement and every author received a complimentary copy of the book, a bookmark and a badge.

- Reading challenges:
  - 100 books challenge, in which participating students can colour in posters to track the number of novels they read in a year.
  - Reading passports, which are made available to every year 7 student and older pupils who wish to participate. They collect stickers by reading and reviewing books from different genres in the library.
  - Book bingo during Non-Fiction November.

### Assessment

Year 7 complete the NGRT during the first week at St. Mary's. They are then tested again at the end of year 7. The rest of the year groups are all tested at the end of the year until the end of year 10 to give us an up to date picture of each year group. All data is shared with staff on Arbor. Students who are placed in stanine 1 or 2 on the NGRT tests are the tested by trained TAs to complete the YARC testing.

**YARC assessments** - This provides a diagnostic assessment of a student's reading ability and is then able to access reading fluency, accuracy, comprehension and phonics. This gives information to teachers and students on how to improve the student's reading ability.

Students in stanine 1 and 2 have a Reading Plan, you will find this on Arbor

# Reading Data September 2024



## **Year 7: Standard age score increased from 98.7 to 100.0**

Boys increased from 99.1 to 100.7

Girls from 98.1 to 99.1

Above average 7 and 8 increased from 19% to 25%

Above average stanine (8) increased from 6% to 12%

Very high stanine (9) from 2% to 4%

## **Year 8: Standard age score increased from 96.9 to 101.8**

Boys increased from 94.3 to 101.3

Girls from 96.3 to 102.8

Very low stanine (1) reducing from 14% to 8%

Below average stanines 2 from 8% to 5%

Above average stanines (7 and 8) increased from 16% to 28%

Very high stanine (9) from 1% to 7%

## **Year 9: Standard age score increased from 93.8 to 101.4 (above national.)**

Boys increased from 93.5 to 100.9

Girls from 94 to 100.8

Very low stanine (1) reducing from 18% to 6%

Below average stanine (2) reduced from 11% to 6%

Above average stanines (7 and 8) increased from 15% to 23%

Very high stanine (9) 2% to 3%

## **Year 10: Standard age score increased from 93.4 to 101.9**

Boys increased from 94.9 to 105.6

Girls from 90.8 to 95.3

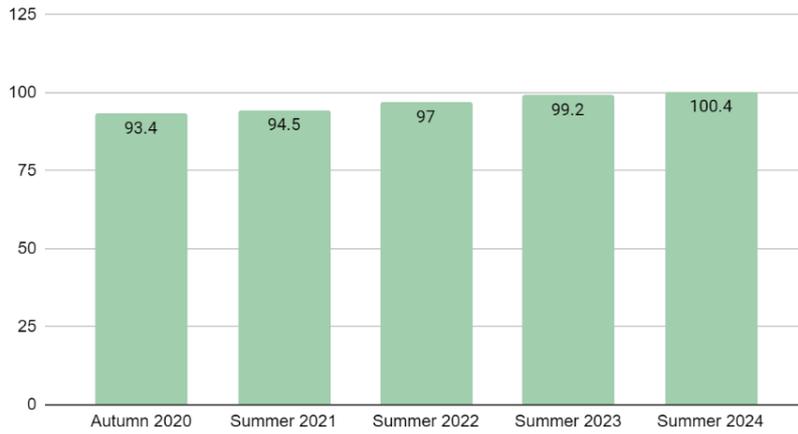
Very low stanine (1) reduced from 18% to 9%

Below average stanines (2 and 3) from 22%-14%

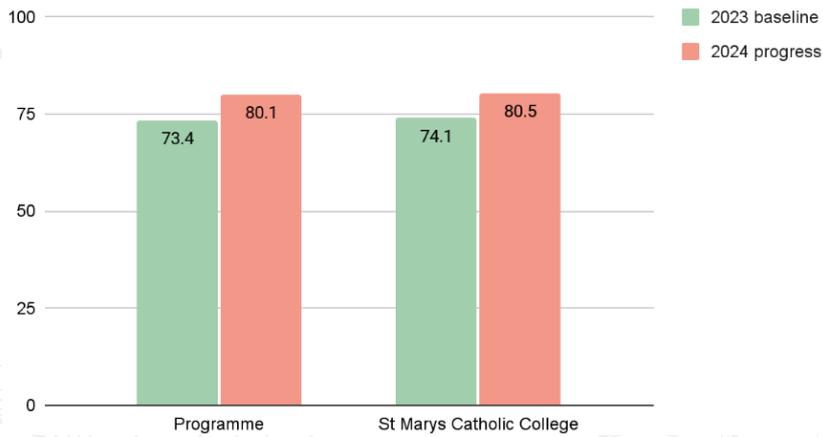
Above average stanines (7 and 8) increased from 15% to 27% (above national)

Very high stanine (9) increased from 2% to 5% (above national)

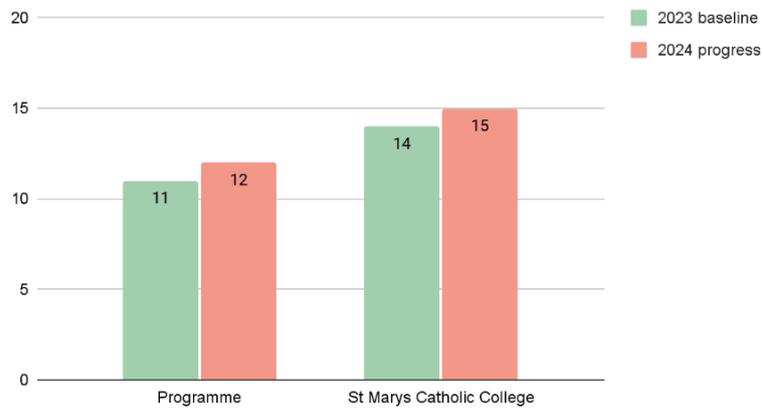
Average SAS score at each test point, 2020-2024



Reading Ability - pupils in Stanine 1 and 2 (Standard Age Score)



Proportion (%) of pupils in Stanines 8 and 9



### Staff literacy audit progress

This slide shows the year-on-year improvement in staff confidence in literacy teaching and learning across the programme and in St Mary's Catholic College, from 2020-2023.

