



READING POLICY

Lead Head of Teaching & Learning

Reviewed by staff November 2025

Reviewed by students N/A

Reviewed by Governors November 2025

Next Review November 2027

1. Aims and Objectives

- To develop skilled, fluent and engaged readers, enabling all students to approach reading strategically and achieve successful outcomes that prepare them for future learning.
- To ensure reading is prioritised as the key to curriculum access, so that every student, regardless of starting point or need, makes strong progress towards age-related expectations.
- To identify and address reading needs swiftly and effectively, ensuring that targeted support and intervention enable every student to make rapid improvement where required.
- To broaden students' reading experiences, promoting enjoyment and engagement with a diverse range of texts both within and beyond the curriculum.
- To provide ambitious and inclusive text choices, developing confidence, fluency and cultural awareness, and equipping students to be informed, educated citizens.

2. Strategy

We have a Collegiate-wide approach to ensure that our students become confident and fluent readers, over time. The strategy involves four distinct strands:

Riddlesdown Readers

Our reading programme aims to develop students' fluency, comprehension, and enjoyment of reading, while broadening their vocabulary and cultural capital. It is designed to ensure that all students, regardless of starting point, engage regularly with high-quality texts that support both academic and personal development. Text choices complement and enhance the Personal Development curriculum, reinforcing themes such as empathy, identity, resilience, and global awareness.

Structure and Frequency:

- Years 7–10: Reading takes place twice weekly during tutor time.
- College VI: Reading takes place once weekly during tutor time.
- Each session lasts approximately 15–20 minutes.

Delivery:

- Tutors read aloud to the group to model fluency and expression.
- Students follow along to support word recognition and engagement.
- Texts are selected at the upper end of the group's reading range to provide stretch and challenge.

Focus Areas:

- Fluency: Regular exposure to confident, expressive reading.
- Vocabulary Development: Tier 2 vocabulary is annotated and explored through synonyms and context to support understanding.
- Comprehension: Sessions include structured questioning to promote inference, analysis, and reflection.
- Cultural Capital: Texts are carefully curated to expose students to "the best that has been thought and said," broadening their worldviews and knowledge of diverse voices.
- Reading for Pleasure: Encouraging reading beyond the curriculum to nurture a lifelong love of reading.

The Reading Toolkit

A curriculum wide pedagogical approach sets out the expectation that all teachers, in every subject, actively consider how to teach reading explicitly through their subject content. High-quality texts are embedded as standard practice across the curriculum, ensuring all students have opportunities to engage with challenging material.

Teachers follow four strategic approaches to support student reading, maintaining consistency while allowing for subject-specific nuances:

1. Teacher Read-Aloud for Fluency
 - Teachers model fluent, expressive reading of subject texts.
 - Tricky words are sounded out and discussed to support word recognition and decoding skills.
2. Metacognitive Reading Approach
 - Teachers make explicit the processes of reading using a before / during / after structure.
 - Students are guided to think about their thinking and reflect on understanding throughout the reading process.
3. Decoding and Comprehension Modelling
 - Teachers demonstrate decoding strategies to help students unlock word meaning and build vocabulary.
 - Students are supported in developing independent reading skills.
4. Structured Discussion and Contextualisation
 - Lessons include planned Think-Pair-Share opportunities for students to discuss and clarify understanding.
 - Teachers make explicit links between texts and their cultural, historical, and social contexts, deepening comprehension and relevance.

Bookworm Lessons

Bookworm lessons are designed to promote reading for pleasure beyond the assessed curriculum, helping students develop fluency, comprehension, and a lifelong love of reading. These lessons also support tracking of individual student progress and identification of those requiring additional support.

- Fortnightly lessons are delivered within English lesson time for all KS3 students.
- These lessons are complemented using Spark Reader for homework, allowing granular tracking of reading engagement and progress.
- At the start of the year, every KS3 class visits the school library, where the librarian guides students in selecting and borrowing books.
- College VI students benefit from the STAMP initiative, where staff read individually with students to support engagement and fluency.
- Lessons reinforce skills that underpin comprehension across the curriculum, complementing the wider Reading Toolkit and tutor-time reading programme.

The Catch-up Programme

The Reading Interventions framework ensures that students who are below expected reading levels receive targeted support to accelerate progress. Interventions are structured to provide individualised, evidence-based teaching that complements classroom learning.

Targeted students are identified via NGRT data as having reading ages significantly below chronological age in KS3. They will then follow a path most appropriate to their needs:

- Tier 1 – Customised Support Programme
 - Delivered one-to-one by higher-level Teaching Assistants.
 - Programmes are tailored to individual student needs, adapting to specific learning requirements.
- Tier 2 – 12-Week Literacy Programme
 - One-to-one support with a Teaching Assistant following a phonics-based programme of study.
 - Designed to close gaps in reading and literacy skills over a 12-week period.
- Tier 3 – Mentor-Led Reading Programme
 - One-to-one sessions delivered by trained sixth-form mentors for students with below-expected reading ages.
 - Supports sustained engagement and progress tracking across KS3.

Catch-Up Literacy Programme:

- A structured, one-to-one intervention for students who find reading difficult.
- Evidence shows that participants achieve more than double the progress of typically developing readers.
- The programme uses a book-based approach, activating both dimensions of reading:
- Word recognition processes (including phonics)
- Language comprehension processes

Tracking and Integration:

- Progress is tracked using NGRT assessments at three points across the year.
- All interventions and strategies are recorded on tracking sheets accessible to classroom teachers.
- Teachers use this information to personalise in-class support and reinforce learning.
- This ensures continuity between interventions and classroom teaching, maximising progress for students receiving additional support.

3. Testing & Assessment

- Riddlesdown Collegiate uses the *New Group Reading Tests* (NGRT), to assess and monitor student reading ages. This is a standardised test that reliably measures against national averages and offers detailed and granular insights into students' reading capacity
- The Collegiate tests every Year 7 student in Half Term 1; this data is used to ascertain the students who will need additional support, and they then begin the *Catch-Up* programme.
- Students who meet or exceed the expected standard for their reading age, will then be tested in HT5 of Year 7 and then again in HT1 of Year 9.
- Students who fall below the expected standard for their reading age, are tested in Half Term 1 and Half Term 5 of Year 7 and will continue to be twice a year across KS3, unless they begin to systemically achieve their expected reading age, and then they will be tested in line with their peers.
- NGRT reading scores and/or KS2 reading scaled scores are made available for teachers. Detailed records that monitor tracked students are also available so that teachers can personalise for students below expected reading progress in their classes,

4. Text Choice

The choice of texts for the *Riddlesdown Readers* programme were carefully selected to ensure they addressed the following key priorities:

- **Ambition and challenge for every student.** In line with robust research, books are pitched the year above a groups' ability to ensure students are exposed to sophisticated and rich vocabulary they wouldn't necessarily be able to access without teacher guidance. This supports students with word recognition; fluency and reading for meaning.
- **Diversity and inclusion.** Significant time was spent researching texts that were written by and/or about a wide range of authors/characters, from different backgrounds; cultures; religions; ethnicities; gender and sexual orientation. It is important to us, as a Collegiate, to ensure that all our students see themselves represented in texts and are also exposed to a world beyond the local or national community; encouraging students to become empathetic, knowledge-rich and moral citizens of the world in which they live.
- **Encouragement of personal development and growth.** As well as being representative, texts were also chosen to enhance our 'Personal Development' curriculum and embody the Collegiate's VALUES.
Every text chosen reflects our ethos and beliefs, where themes such as discrimination; prejudice; grief; ambition; resilience; sexuality; class; respect; crime and gender are all covered, allowing for important and powerful discussions surrounding these key issues to be explored in a safe and nurturing environment.
- **Examples of 'the best that has been thought and said'.** The chosen books are representative of some of the 'best' examples of literature available; where we have included Classical Literature; world renowned writers; Nobel-prize winning authors; texts written by victims of life-changing crimes as well as canonical texts. We firmly believe students having access to such examples of Literature allows them opportunities to appreciate human creativity and achievement more fully.

APPENDIX A

Riddlesdown Readers Text Choice

Books have been chosen by a wide range of stakeholders across the Collegiate: English subject community, the students, teachers, and senior leaders. There has been fierce debate and discussion but with a clear focus on breadth of coverage, appropriate levels of challenge and a focus on diversity. Ultimately, these are all powerful and exemplary instances of literature which students wouldn't necessarily be able to access independently. Therefore, this programme provides an excellent platform for broadening cultural understanding; developing tier two vocabulary and igniting a passion for reading – further supporting students to become empathetic, knowledge-rich and moral citizens of the world in which they live.

YEAR 7

Ghost Boys – Jewell Parker Rhodes
Stormbreaker - Anthony Horowitz
You are a Champion - Marcus Rashford
Homer's Iliad and Odyssey - Gillian Cross
Wonder - R J Palacio
I am David – Anne Holm
The Disconnect - Keren David
A Monster Calls - Siobhan Dowd/Patrick Ness
No Ballet Shoes for Syria - Catherine Brunton
The Giver - Lois Lowry
Now is the Time for Running - Michael Williams
The Breadwinner - Deborah Ellis
Good Enough - Jen Petro-Roy

YEAR 8

Revolver - Marcus Sedgwick
The House of Silk – Anthony Horowitz
A Good Girl's Guide to Murder - Holly Jackson
Black and British - David Olusoga
I am Malala – Malala Yousafzai & Christina Lamb
A Change is Gonna Come - Bello. Mary
The Book Thief - Markus Zusak
Speak - Laurie Halse Anderson
Glimmer of Hope - March for Our Lives Founders
One of the Good Ones - Maritza Moulite
One of Us is Lying - Karen M McManus
The Boy Who Steals Houses - C G Drews
The End and Other Beginnings - Veronica Roth

YEAR 9

I Will Not Be Erased – Gal Dem
The Last Girl - Goldy Moldavsky
Purple Hibscuis - Chimamanda Nogozi Adichie
Psych Investigations: Episode 1 – Kevin Weinberg
Things a Bright Girl Can Do – Sally Nicholls
Tales from the Hinterland - Melissa Albert
Bog Child - Siobhan Dowd
Rise Up - Stormzy
Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury
The Gilded Ones - Namina Forna
A Long Way Gone - Larry Buttrose & Saroo Brierley
I Am Thunder - Muhammad Khan
All Quiet on the Western Front – Erich Maria Remarque

YEAR 12 & 13

Fahrenheit 451 – Ray Bradbury
Beekeeper of Aleppo – Christy Lefteri
A Thousand Splendid Suns – Khaled Hosseini
City of Thieves – David Benioff

YEAR 10

Touching the void – Joe Simpson
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings – Maya Angelou
Full Disclosure - Camryn Garrett
Hidden figures – Margot Lee Shetterly
The Perks of Being a Wallflower – Stephen Chbosky
Good Immigrant - Nikesh Shukla
More than This - Patrick Ness
Brick Lane - Monica Ali
Enemy - Charlie Higson
Lore - Alexandra Bracken
Song of the Achilles - Madeline Miller
White Teeth - Zadie Smith
The Penelopiad - Margaret Atwood