



St Christopher's

Reading and Literacy Bulletin

Term 1 | September 2025

'As someone whose love of reading was sparked in childhood, I know just how powerful books can be in shaping young lives. Reading holds the keys to so much of children's education, so the decline in reading for pleasure among young people should sound alarm bells loud and clear.

This can't be just a government mission. It needs to be a national one. So, it's time for all of us to play our part, put our phones down and pick up a book.'

Bridget Phillipson, speaking at the announcement of the National Year of Reading 2026, July 2025

This academic year we will be focusing on a deliberately concentrated list of classroom priorities around reading, literacy and oracy. Many of these have been trialled in our school over the past couple of year, showcased through CPD, and adapted to suit each subject, but are fundamental to the effective teaching of our pupils.

Classroom Strategies: Reading, Literacy and Oracy Priorities 2025 - 2026	
Reading	Classroom Strategies Ensure reading comprehension is prioritised through the model of pre/during/after reading questioning . This should involve skimming or scanning to answer the comprehension questions.
Vocabulary	Use of the Frayer Model for key vocabulary acquisition and retrieval. The four key areas are: Definition, Characteristics, Examples, Non-examples.
Writing	Sentence signposts to help structure answers: E.g. Because...But...So or First...furthermore...finally Sentence signposts to transition beyond this to more complex analysis or evaluation: E.g. However, the opposing viewpoint suggest... or Consequently, this led to...
Oracy*	Developing a culture of enquiry through questioning. Cold and Hot calling questions or Basketball Questioning or Questioning pyramids (initiating through to evaluate)

*A CPD focus for 2025-26

In addition, we should be mindful of the recent publication of not only the new [Ofsted Framework](#) (Nov 2025), but also previously the [Ofsted Reading Framework](#) (July 2023) and the [Ofsted Writing Framework](#) (July 2025).

As with everything we do, we cannot cover every angle, but understanding **what** areas are being highlighted, **why** it makes such a difference to children's lives, and **how** we can have a positive impact through our day-to-day teaching, should be an important part of our pedagogy.



National Year of Reading 2026:

Over the summer, the government outlined its plans for a National Year of Reading, to begin in January 2026. This is part of their educational plan for change and is a welcome support to our own progress around reading and literacy but comes against a backdrop of challenging statistics.

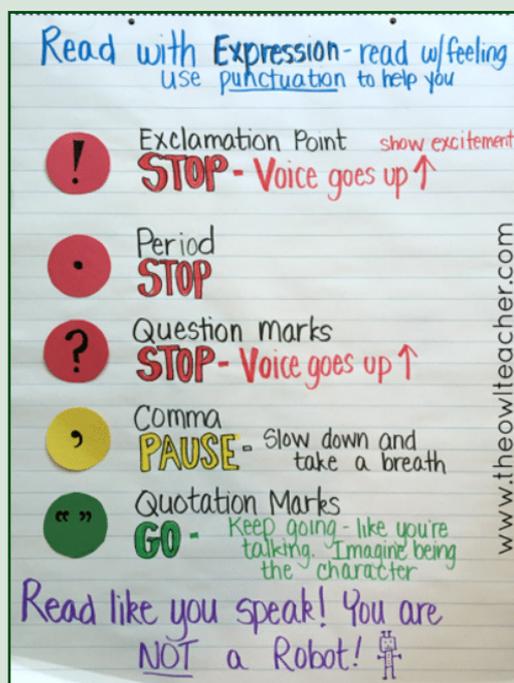
According to the National Literacy Survey, which we took part in at KS3, there has been a 36% drop in reading for pleasure amongst 8-18 year olds since the survey first took place in 2008 and is particularly pronounced amongst boys aged 11-16. Two statistics that stand out are that the gender gap of regular daily reading for girls versus boys is 6.2%, whilst FSM pupils also have a lag of over 4%. Find out more ways to get involved [here](#).

Writing Stamina:

'Whether it is lots of notes on a science topic, an essay in history, or a substantial story writing task in English, many pupils are undertaking regular writing marathons. And they are struggling to muster the stamina to be up to the task.

By the time it gets to pupils having to edit and revise their writing, it is the tired 'final mile' of their writing. Is it any surprise this goes awry?' So says [Alex Quigley](#) in a blog posted last year.

His solution? Introduce **editing stops**. Moving the editing and self-assessment part of the writing process to within the activity rather than the end, trains pupils to edit and revise their work in a continuous, purposeful fashion.



Be Loud and be proud!

One part of our schools' commitment to supporting a rich reading and writing culture is our emphasis on form time reading.

If you are new to our staff, or just curious as to why we do it, take a look at this article from the Greenshaw Research School on form time reading [Tutor Reading: The challenge of... | Greenshaw Research School](#).

One key takeaway is the idea of **'reading aloud with expression, and at a fast pace, has been shown to improve secondary school pupil's reading comprehension'** ['Just reading': the impact of a faster pace of reading narratives on the comprehension of poorer adolescent readers in English classrooms](#), so with this in mind, be brave in your delivery next time you are reading to your pupils, in form time or in a lesson, it might just be the missing ingredient to your teaching!

Latest News:

- On Friday 25th September Schools Week reported that the government is intending to implement a national reading test at the end of YR8, with school data to be reported nationally, and is looking to introduce this at some point in the 2028/29 academic cycle. Read more about it here: [Reading test for year 8s planned in schools white paper](#)

Further reading:

- Six key findings from the English Subject Report from Ofsted about how teaching 'reading' has improved but writing and speaking are 'less effective' [Ofsted: Six key findings from its English subject report](#)
- Report on reading trends over the past year, and historic trends on reading and literacy [Children and young people's reading in 2025 | National Literacy Trust](#)
- For more on the challenge of editing writing, see this post by Alex Quigley [The Challenge of Editing Writing](#)

Check out our Library resources:

[Recommended Reading for KS3](#) | [Challenging Reading for KS3](#) | [A Guide to Support Reading at Home for Parents](#)