



St Bede's

Catholic School
& Sixth Form College

Serving Families in North West Durham

Why Reading Matters!

Research shows that a student needs to join secondary school with a knowledge of around **25,000 words** to manage the demands of the curriculum but many students start with less than 12,000 words.

The average reading age of a GCSE paper is 15 years and 9 months which means that your child needs to be at their chronological reading age by the time they do their exams in year 11. Many questions are inaccessible to students with a low reading age.

Your child's reading age is not fixed—it can easily go up.

**Read about what we are doing in school to help,
and what we're asking you to do at home!**

The most efficient readers employ a range of strategies which are acquired in the following ways:

- they enjoy watching and listening to someone else read with enthusiasm;
- they discover the world of reading themselves;
- they are taught how to read effectively—we explain, we demonstrate, we instruct, they practise, we listen and respond.



Every year, several high quality new books are nominated for the Carnegie Award and we have copies of these in the Library.

We also have a Librarian who is able to help students to choose books which relate to their interests and ability.



What can you do at home?

1. Read to your child
2. Read with your child
3. Talk at the dinner table
4. Ask them questions about their books
5. Be positive about reading.

What is Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated Reader is a programme we use in Library lessons which aims to encourage students to read a wide variety of books. This will help them to progress in their reading and it allows us to monitor students' individual reading needs and provide guidance for improving their reading.

- Students take part in a STAR test to determine their reading age which is compared to their chronological age. This determines their AR level.
- This indicates which books the students should choose from.
- Students take quizzes on their books once they have read them.
- Once they have passed two quizzes at 100% they go up to the next.
- Students retake their STAR test near the end of each term so that we can monitor their progress and support them if their reading age isn't going up.
- Once a student's test shows their reading age is securely above their chronological age they are 'free readers' and can choose any book from the Library.

What are we doing in school to support reading?

- Everyone a Reader — find out more [here](#)
- Accelerated reader
- Reading and spelling logs for Y7 & 8 homework
- Reading Buddies
- Access to the Library during break times
- World Book Day
- World Poetry Day
- Recommended reading list
- A range of interesting and challenging texts in class

