

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.

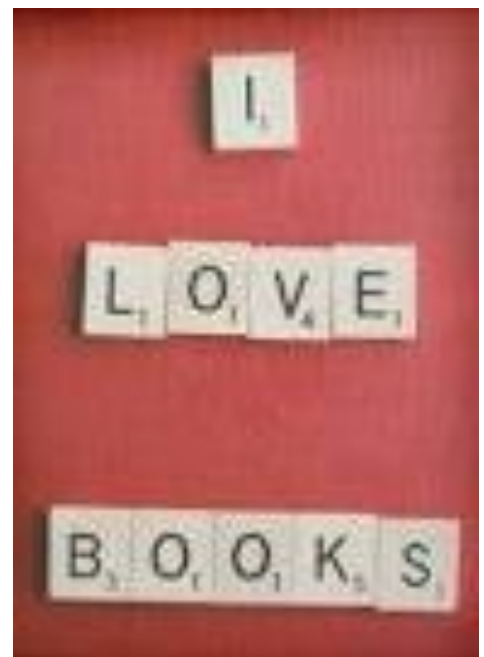
The average reading age of a GCSE paper is 15 years and 9 months which means that your child needs to be at their chronological reading age by the time they do their exams in year 11. Many questions are inaccessible to students with a low reading age.

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

**See over for 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?

- Accelerated reader
- Reading and spelling logs for year 7 and 8 homework
- Reading Buddies
- Access to the Library during break times
- Word of the Week with form tutors
- World Book Day
- Recommended reading list
- A range of interesting and challenging texts in class, including full novels during the summer term.





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5 strategies to support your child's reading

1. Read to your child

Hearing a fluent reader helps children to develop their understanding of words and punctuation, as well as their comprehension of the text.

2. Read with your child

Hearing your children read aloud develops their confidence with pronouncing and deciphering new words and punctuation marks.

3. Talk at the dinner table

The more you talk about reading—fiction and non-fiction texts—the better! This helps foster children's love of reading and vocabulary.

4. Ask them questions about their books

Use the questions overleaf to get children talking about their favourite stories and characters.

5. Be positive!

Coming across new vocabulary can be scary and challenging; help your children to work out the meanings of new words by looking at them in the whole sentence or looking up their meanings. It's okay to get the pronunciation wrong!

Questions to ask when reading:

- *What has happened so far/in the section that you have just read?*
- *Who is your favourite character and why?*
- *How do you feel towards the main character(s) and why?*
- *Can you describe a scene that you have read in your book today?*
- *What do you think will happen next and why?*
- *What is the most important part of the story so far? Why?*
- *Are you able to connect with one of the character in the book? How so?*
- *What questions would you want to ask the author at this point?*
- *From the pages that you have just read, would you have reacted in the same way as the character? Why? How might you have acted differently to them?*
- *What advice would you give one of the characters in the book? Why? Do you think they would be receptive to the advice? Why or why not?*
- *Do you think there is a lesson to learn from the story? What do you think it might be?*