



Hazel Wood
High School

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How We Develop
Students' Reading,
Writing and
Communication
(RWC) at
**Hazel Wood
High School**

Our Intent

Reading has the power to shape and develop minds, both in the classroom and outside of it. Of all the subjects that are taught in school, it is first among equals – the most singular in importance because all our other subjects rely on it. Excellence in all our academic subjects requires strong reading skills and we know that reading, writing, and communication are all intrinsically linked; with progress in each area developing success in the others. Therefore, whilst most of our bespoke intervention relates to developing reading, we are clear that development in all areas of reading, writing and communication (RWC) will support our students.

Knowing our students

Our gathering of information and data relating to students' reading ages is continuous throughout their journey with us. At the start of year 7, every Hazel Wood student is assessed using the National group reading tests (NGRT) to identify their starting reading and spelling ages. This testing is also supported by analysis of the SATs Reading papers and baseline tests that assess students' ability to read for meaning; to deduce and infer; and other higher order reading skills. All this data provides us with an indication of reading ability and allows us to identify those students who may not be able to access the full Key Stage 3 curriculum. We then establish the curriculum pathway for every child. All students that join us at any point in their school journey are also assessed in the same way. At the end of year 7, we assess our students again using the NGRT tests, to measure the impact of their first year with us and to ensure that, if continued support is required, we act accordingly. At the end of every academic year, we also gather the reading ages of all students, in all year groups, to identify any potential students who need further support and to share the reading ages of students with teachers. This is to help teachers to plan accordingly for the needs of the students that they teach.

All students benefit from our Whole School Approach:

It is our intention that students whose chronological age is in line with their reading age will know how to, and be able to:

1. read 'harder' texts
2. 'close read' texts rigorously and intentionally
3. read more non-fiction more effectively
4. write more effectively in direct response to texts
5. use subject specific disciplinary literacy i.e. know how to read and write like a Scientist / Historian etc.





To implement our intention, our whole school approach consists of the following:

- 1) Every subject curriculum has defined the keywords (Keystone words) that students must know for success in that discipline. These are included in all curriculum plans.
- 2) Every lesson, in every subject, has a vocabulary focus where we highlight and explain language at the start of lessons. Research shows us that, as students vocabulary develops, so does their academic success.
- 3) Students have glossaries at the back of their books that they use to support them in each subject area.
- 4) Every subject has a glossary included on their book covers to help students to navigate any subject discipline.
- 5) Reading aloud is a core feature in every lesson; students are expected to read aloud with fluency and are supported to do so.
- 6) Cooperative learning strategies are embedded in curriculum implementation. These have a key focus on using talk for writing and using cooperative learning strategies to help to define ideas and theories.
- 7) There are subject specific libraries in each faculty which facilitate students' disciplinary reading
- 8) The whole school library has specific non-fiction areas designated to each subject area and there are a wide range of books in place to suit all ages and abilities.
- 9) Subject areas are currently developing their own reciprocal reading strategies, to enable students to read harder texts, 'close read' texts rigorously and intentionally, read more non-fiction more effectively and write more effectively in direct response to texts.
- 10) All teachers have access to the reading ages of students and have been trained in how reading ages impact on students' ability to access the curriculum and how to support students who may need it.
- 11) Teachers and teaching assistants have all been trained in phonic sounds and can help to spell out difficult words.
- 12) Teachers use example texts, and subject discipline texts, to demonstrate disciplinary writing. Students then deconstruct examples to reconstruct them.
- 13) All teachers use dyslexia friendly screens (font and colour) to support all learners.
- 14) Every student engages with the books in the HWHS cannon, designed to improve cultural capital, skills of empathy and skills of enquiry. Each of these books has been deliberately chosen to help students to engage with reading for pleasure.
- 15) We use a RWC toolkit for curriculum implementation in all subject disciplines. Our toolkit consists of:
 - a. The use Think Pair Share to help students to shape writing
 - b. The use of prompts and sentence starters to help students to share in Standard English.
 - c. The use of whiteboards, where we specifically help address errors in spelling (explaining spelling rules / tricks to support students)
 - d. An expectation that 'talk' and communication are essential in class – no opt out!

- e. Use of Standard English in all class-talk, ensuring that students speak in full sentences, and use of the HWHS Art of Discussion prompts.
- f. The 'Reading for Life' sessions continued in Form time sessions for years 7,8 and 9.

Our unique Approach in Year 7:

Our Year 7 students are taught by Primary trained teachers who are transition specialists. All three of these teachers are currently undertaking National Professional Qualifications to support their continued research. These teachers teach our students almost half of their curriculum, leading their learning in English, Maths and PHSE. For our most vulnerable students (those who join us with significant gaps in education; or who are below their age-related expectations; or who have a special educational need or plan for support in place), they are also their form tutor. This means that our team know our students well and know how they perform across different subject disciplines

Our Year 7 Curriculum has been designed with a keen eye on the KS2 and 3 expectations and builds quickly on what has been learnt in Primary schools. Learning is led by teachers who know the Key Stage 2 curriculum explicitly. The impact of this is well supported by pupil voice, as our students tell us how safe they feel to learn.

Our Approach at Subject Level:

Alongside all that is detailed herein, our teachers and leaders have been working with the National Literacy Trust to develop their own strands of disciplinary literacy. Each subject area has their own set of subject specific guidelines in place for reading and, over the 2022 – 2023 academic year, they will be defining how they teach students writing and communication skills that are specific to their subject discipline.

Reading for Life:

At HWHS, we use every opportunity to develop reading for pleasure. World Book Day is an annual celebration in which we celebrate the day by highlighting a genre and all our competitions and celebrations relate to the genre. We also collect the National Book tokens and work with a local bookstore to ensure every child is given their own book, on that day, in school. In 2022, we celebrated the Murder Mystery genre with our very own school murder and crime scenes. In 2023, we will celebrate the Fairy tale.

We also celebrate the birthday of Shakespeare and National Poetry day. Our own school poem, written by groups of students, has pride of place on our website and in our Atrium.

Every Christmas, we work with the National Elf Service to provide books for our year 7 students, as a gift from school.



Our School Library is currently under reconstruction, and we are aiming to have this fully completed with an array of fiction books by the end of the academic year. Also under construction is our online Library – allowing students to read any books at home, in their own time. In Key Stage 3, students all read ‘class reads’ together with their teacher – for the experience of reading socially and to help students to understand how reading can engage and support them. Our books are part of the HWHS cannon, chosen deliberately to help build empathy, cultural capital and improve students’ ability to navigate increasingly ‘difficult’ texts.

Our extra-curricular offer:

We offer a myriad of extra-curricular activities related to RWC. As well as our celebration of key dates related to our literary heritage, we have a Manga Club as part of our Extra-Curricular offer. In 2022, we entered teams to the ‘Magistrates Mock Trial’ and to the national ‘Big Book Quiz’, as well as the Rotary ‘Youth Speaks’ competition. Students who support our extra-curricular clubs and act as Librarians are awarded with ‘Reading Ambassador’ badges.

On our annual ‘Competition Day,’ a Spelling Bee and reading competition are an integral part of our offer.

When our Library is fully updated, we will base our lunchtime and after-school Homework Club back in the library, giving every student free access to our books in their social times.

Our Canon:

What students read matters. At HWHS, we have established a cannon of books that every student will read and engage with over their five-year learning journey. We believe that structured exposure to certain types of texts will support students in their next steps and will develop their cultural capital - to help them to navigate the world around them, with empathy and enquiry. The following books are read in full, either through the English Curriculum or through our ‘Reading for Life’ project in Key Stage 3.

BOOKS WE READ (Whole Texts Only)	BIG IDEAS
YEAR 7	
<i>Stay Where You Are And Then Leave</i> by John Boyne	Family and Identity Theme of War- cross curricular links with History Reading for pleasure
Why we study this text: One of our main objectives when reading whole texts is to encourage reading for pleasure. This text has been selected as it is beautifully written, and it has a number of similarities with our partner primaries KS2 readers. This allows students to enjoy the story whilst already being familiar with the content and some of the key themes.	



<i>Oliver Twist</i> by Charles Dickens	Theme of childhood Victorian Society- cross curricular links with History
Why we study this text: Throughout their five years at Hazel Wood High School, students will study a range of classic literature from the British canon. In KS4, students will look at another of Dickens most famous novellas, <i>A Christmas Carol</i> . We study <i>Oliver Twist</i> as part of our exploration into the ways childhood has been depicted in literature throughout time. This text also allows us to consider themes of poverty and justice which then allow us to appreciate how rules and laws are made; and what is 'right' and 'wrong'. Another aspect of this text that is especially pertinent to our readers is masculinity and peer pressure.	
Boy Everywhere by AM Dassu	Childhood Migration and immigration Homelessness Settling into a new country Asylum seeking.
Why we study this text: This book is part of our 'journeys' topic. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme with the theme of journeys. When students read our books about journeys, we are looking to develop empathy with the characters, allowing pupils to identify with the characters and their choices; explore the world around them and world/local issues such as war and conflict, modern day slavery, global warming. We are aiming to help students to develop their social and emotional skills.	
The invisible by Tom Percival	Child Poverty, Taking things for Granted, Feeling Sad, Feeling Invisible, Community Hope.
Why we study this text: This book is part of our picture book series. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme, that is a specific picture book so that we can demonstrate that reading takes all forms. These books can be accessed by every child, regardless of ability, and help to promote reading. They provide the opportunity to explore the illustrations, vocabulary, and themes in more detail. We find that the illustrations enhance the story, with our students noticing new things, emotions, and sometimes a sub plot to the story. Our picture books encourage conversation and discussion; strengthen visual thinking skills and help pupils to make connections and words. They also allow pupils to interact with the story – asking questions and make links to the wider world.	
When life gives you mangoes by Karen Getten	Family Community Grief The complexities of childhood



Why we study this text: Why we study this text: This book is part of our 'identity' topic. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme with the theme of identity. When students read these books, we are aiming for the students to identify with the characters, allowing them to explore social issues that they might encounter through the eyes of the character. As with all of our reading books, we focus on introducing new vocabulary in a context and use these stories to explore family issues, social issues, and conflict; and how we can deal with them.

Each of our books in the identity series, explores friendships and relationships.

Year 8

The Bone Sparrow by Zana Fraillon

Family, Home, and Identity
Refugees
Protest
Reading for pleasure

Why we study this text: We read ***The Bone Sparrow*** in Year 8 because a number of our students have shared experiences with the main narrator, Subhi. It allows us to explore the themes of immigration and asylum in a way that is different enough to not be too 'triggering,' as the novel is set in an Australian Refugee Camp. The text also allows us to consider how friendships are formed and the significant role friends and families play in our lives. Another aspect of the text that is relevant to young people is the experience of prejudice and protest. Reading this text helps to develop empathy in our students. This text has also been selected as it is a beautifully written story which helps our students to enjoy reading the whole text. It is part of our focus on encouraging students to read for pleasure.

Frankenstein (The Play) by Phillip Pullman/ Mary Shelley

Family- Nature Vs Nurture
Science and Invention- Cross curricular links with Science
Otherness/Prejudice

Frankenstein is another classic text that we want our students to be familiar with. Students enjoy the creation of the monster. Studying the play, alongside extracts from the original novel, allows us to enjoy the story and appreciate a modern reworking of it. It also allows us to discuss modern scientific advances and how we feel about them.

This text is significant for lots of our students. We examine the role of parents and caregivers and make the text relatable by looking at what happens in society when a parent does not act in the way society expects. We discuss the care system and diverse types of families and the importance of these to nurture.

Another key aspect of this text that is important for our students is the role of the outsider and what happens to people when they are bullied or discriminated against. Students continually show incredible empathy with the monster and an understanding of his need for love and support.

In student voice surveys, a large number of our students rated this as their favourite text studied in Year 8.

Face (The Play) by Benjamin Zephaniah

Identity
Disfigurement



	Peer Pressure/ Right Vs Wrong Prejudice
We study Face , following Frankenstein, as it takes the same play format and considers several the same themes but in a modern context. Face considers the actions and consequences of a young boy choosing to get in a stolen car. The resulting crash leaves the boy with a serious disfigurement and the play centres around how he copes with this and other people's reactions to him. We consider the role of the outsider in literature again, alongside peer pressure and discrimination.	
The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare	Prejudice Religion and Judaism- Cross curricular links with RS Family/Love
The Merchant of Venice has been chosen as a deliberately challenging text. Bury has a large Jewish community and studying this text allows us to discuss how Jewish people have been discriminated against at different points in history. Our own students follow a number of different faiths and this text allows us to explore the relevance of religious discrimination and the importance of challenging it in society. Also, we explore marriage and expectations which may be relevant to some of our students. Our students are passionate about equality and everyone having their human rights met and this text highlights these areas.	
Freedom by Catherine Johnson	Slavery in Britain Family and home History of Slavery Freedom
Why we study this text: This book is part of our 'journeys' topic. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme with the theme of journeys. When students read our books about journeys, we are looking to develop empathy with the characters, allowing pupils to identify with the characters and their choices; explore the world around them and world/local issues such as war and conflict, modern day slavery, global warming. We are aiming to help students to develop their social and emotional skills.	
One wave at a time by Holly Thompson	Childhood grief Loss Healing Dealing with powerful emotions
Why we study this text: This book is part of our picture book series. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme, that is a specific picture book so that we can demonstrate that reading takes all forms. These books can be accessed by every child, regardless of ability, and help to promote reading. They provide the opportunity to explore the illustrations, vocabulary, and themes in more detail. We find that the illustrations enhance the story, with our students noticing new things, emotions, and sometimes a sub plot to the story. Our picture books encourage conversation and discussion; strengthen visual thinking skills and help pupils to make connections and words. They also allow pupils to interact with the story – asking questions and make links to the wider world.	



Black Flamingo by Dean Atta	Race Sexuality Homophobia Abuse
<p>Why we study this text: Why we study this text: This book is part of our 'identity' topic. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme with the theme of identity. When students read these books, we are aiming for the students to identify with the characters, allowing them to explore social issues that they might encounter through the eyes of the character. As with all our reading books, we focus on introducing new vocabulary in a context and use these stories to explore family issues, social issues, and conflict; and how we can deal with them.</p> <p>Each of our books in the identity series, explores friendships and relationships.</p>	
Year 9	
Animal Farm by George Orwell	Politics and Protest- Cross curricular links with History
<p>Studying this allegorical tale, allows our students to learn about political structure and regimes in this country and around the world. Gaining political awareness is something our students really enjoy in KS4 and this text allows an introduction to this. We encourage open discussion – without prejudice or bias. This text also allows us to continue with our explorations of power and the abuse of power by some. Reading this text allows our young people to know that their voice is valued and important and that it can be used for good.</p>	
War of the Worlds by HG Wells	Range of texts read- including fantasy and science fiction Science and technology War and Conflict
<p>War of the Worlds by HG Wells is a fantastic classic text about conflict that feels as though it could have been written last year. It continues with our themes of raising political awareness and gaining an appreciation of the way writers represent real situations allegorically in fiction. We explore the theme of conflict through this science fiction text and the effects of war on individuals and society. Some of our students have experience of conflict, and studying this text can be sensitive. The alien invasion allows the theme to be examined without making it about student's own lived experiences.</p> <p>HG Wells is also mentioned in one of the texts we study at KS4 and knowing about this author and his politics helps students to appreciate this reference and see the literary cross references.</p>	
Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare	Diverse types of love Relationships Parenting Conflict
<p>As part of the National Curriculum requirement to study two full Shakespeare texts, we have selected Romeo and Juliet for the end of Year 9.</p>	



<p>This text allows us to consider many diverse types of relationships which may also be relevant to our students. It also allows a continued examination of choices and consequences through the impetuous nature of the key characters.</p>	
<p>Floodland by Marcus Sedgewick</p>	<p>Gang culture Human cruelty and Frailty How people cope and respond How and why society changes</p>
<p>Why we study this text: This book is part of our 'journeys' topic. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme with the theme of journeys. When students read our books about journeys, we are looking to develop empathy with the characters, allowing pupils to identify with the characters and their choices; explore the world around them and world/local issues such as war and conflict, modern day slavery, global warming. We are aiming to help students to develop their social and emotional skills.</p>	
<p>The Wisp by Zana Fraillon</p>	<p>Refugee status Finding beauty and promise Hope</p>
<p>Why we study this text: This book is part of our picture book series. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme, that is a specific picture book so that we can demonstrate that reading takes all forms. These books can be accessed by every child, regardless of ability, and help to promote reading. They provide the opportunity to explore the illustrations, vocabulary, and themes in more detail. We find that the illustrations enhance the story, with our students noticing new things, emotions, and sometimes a sub plot to the story. Our picture books encourage conversation and discussion; strengthen visual thinking skills and help pupils to make connections and words. They also allow pupils to interact with the story – asking questions and make links to the wider world.</p>	
<p>Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes</p>	<p>Racism and prejudice Honesty and Compassion Gun Violence Bullying Justice Privilege</p>
<p>Why we study this text: Why we study this text: This book is part of our 'identity' topic. Students read a book in year 7, 8 and 9 through our 'reading for life' programme with the theme of identity. When students read these books, we are aiming for the students to identify with the characters, allowing them to explore social issues that they might encounter through the eyes of the character. As with all our reading books, we focus on introducing new vocabulary in a context and use these stories to explore family issues, social issues, and conflict; and how we can deal with them.</p> <p>Each of our books in the identity series, explores friendships and relationships. This book introduces gang related issues and bullying allowing students to further develop understanding of the importance of social and emotional skills.</p>	



KS4	
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens	Society and Poverty Celebrations/ Christianity
A Christmas Carol has been chosen as one of our GCSE English literature texts because it considers many aspects of life that are relevant to our students – including actions and consequences, how we treat others, the importance of family and how we can change for the better. For many of our students, this raises their cultural capital by exploring the history of Christmas celebrations in this country. As many of our students are not Christian, or do not celebrate Christmas, this allows a better understanding of other faiths and traditions.	
An Inspector Calls by JB Priestley	Politics and Society Family Responsibility Law and Justice
An Inspector Calls explores key themes of social responsibility, age, class, and gender. These are all relevant to our young people. With a high number of students accessing FSM, we examine the effects of wealth and class and discuss whether this is still an issue today. We work incredibly hard to raise the aspirations of our young people and hope that this text gives them an insight into what discrimination based on wealth and class looks like and the impact it can have on individuals and society.	
Macbeth by William Shakespeare	Power and Conflict The Supernatural
Macbeth has been chosen as another of our KS4 English Literature texts as it is dramatic and engaging. We explore how gender is viewed and how Shakespeare exploits 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits. Identity and gender is something some of our students are concerned with and exploring how these constructs have changed over time is something that they find interesting and informative. This text also allows us to continue to consider power, actions and consequences and political landscapes over time.	



Our Pathways, as part of our RWC Journey:

For students who join HWHS with NGRT diagnosed (indicative) reading ages below their chronological age, we have a series of pathways in place which are designed to help students to catch up. All students have access to the curriculum detailed above and the following pathways are additional support.

Pathway One: for students who are significantly below age related expectation

When NGRT tests for students in year 7, 8 and 9 reveal that there is a significant disparity between reading age and chronological age, students are assessed using the Ruth Miskin 'Fresh Start' Read, Write, Inc. (RWI) phonics assessment. Those who are not yet able to use phonics sounds and blending are then given two extra hours of literacy per week during curriculum time. This means that English lessons for these students equate to seven hours per week and the English curriculum is delivered using phonics interventions. Students in this core group will also benefit from following the Lexia online package that they can access at home, and in school, to support their reading progress.

As an addition to this, the students who are diagnosed to have serious gaps in phonics knowledge are placed on the full after school tuition programme with 'Fresh Start,' where they receive four thirty-minute intervention sessions on the alphabetic code and phonics sounds. For a very few students that are unable to stay after school, we deliver this programme during form-times. This is to help catch them up, so that they can access the extra intervention in English lessons.

Pathway Two: For students with no gaps in phonics knowledge but who struggle to read:

Where students in all years are diagnosed as having a reading age significantly below their chronological age, but they do not have gaps in phonics knowledge, they are supported with access to the Lexia Programme of intervention. Lexia is an online package that identifies the reading needs of students and sets about teaching (and continually assessing) our students on a set and bespoke pathway. Where teacher intervention is required for success in this programme, pupils are supported in our SEN base, through Homework club or in our Inclusion Centre (Reflect). Lexia can be accessed at home and, if students require a computer to do this, we will lend one to a child.

Pathway Three: For students who have EAL but can read and write close to age related expectations:

We have an experienced bilingual HLTA who runs our in-class provision and interventions for our students with EAL. We continue to develop our support for our many students who need support to read and write English using technology. Many of the students who have EAL will be in Pathway 1 or 2, depending on their own personal acquisition and stage of learning English.

Pathway Four: If children join HWHS and have difficulty in reading for meaning:

Our early baseline testing, and analysis of SATs results, help us to identify students that can read but not with fluency, so struggle to find meaning. We have an intervention programme newly formed that supports these children, based on research from the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning. Our Year 7 teachers and teaching assistants also support these students in class.

Pathway Five: Children that need to gain confidence in reading:

This year, we are establishing our 'Buddy reading' programme and we will set up partnerships in which these students can practice reading aloud to peers, under supervision from teaching staff.

Pathway Six: Our Talented Readers

We have a significant amount of children in HWHS who read well above their chronological age. With these students, we encourage strong engagement with our extra-curricular offer and train them as Buddy Readers and Reading Ambassadors. These are new opportunities that will be rolled out in Term 2 of this academic year.

Who we work with to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information and research to support our students.

- **The National Literacy Trust** to train all staff on how to ensure that literacy in every subject discipline is appropriately taught to support all our students. This is a two-year project that began in September 2021.
- **Words for All** on our strategies to support students to develop their vocabulary and reading skills. Our Director of KS3 is currently working alongside this organisation on a project designed to improve the reading ages of year 7 students, using phonics intervention, with a full programme designed specifically for KS3 students.
- **Voice 21** to develop bespoke strategies, and opportunities, when developing all students' communication skills.
- **GL Assessments** so that we can use diagnostic software to identify the needs of every student and analyse the impact of our reading, writing and communication interventions. We also use their suite of assessments to indicate potential special educational needs.
- **Oxford University Press** in order to provide early reading intervention for students that join us, who are significantly below age related expectations; or are international new arrivals.
- **Ruth Miskin Training** so that every teacher and teaching assistant will understand how to use phonic interventions to support learning.
- **Lexia** to support students with bespoke intervention programmes, once their phonics knowledge is secure.



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- Our work is also significantly aligned with, and based on, recommendations from the **Education Endowment Fund**: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4>
- **Hertfordshire Grid for Learning** to develop a programme for reading fluency – for intervention post RWI.

