

At Ark Charter, we recognise the importance of reading fluently to access all aspects of the curriculum. Students need to become confident readers to successfully communicate both within their school lives and outside of school. By reading more often and broadly, students develop the ability to access different types of text, as well as their written and spoken literacy. We encourage students to read in many different areas of school, outlined below.

Literacy Lessons

In Key Stage 3 reading is developed across all subjects, through a text rich curriculum but also through specific Literacy lessons, which are taught weekly on age-appropriate texts. Within these lessons students are explicitly taught vocabulary, and the sessions end with written comprehension tasks, but the majority of the session is given to reading, with the teacher acting as a coach and guide to monitor and feedback on reading. The sessions actively focus on the teaching of key tier 2 vocabulary, with the guidance of reading targeting fluency and prosody. All tutors and Literacy teachers have been trained in how to identify key vocabulary with the texts and in how to identify fluency and comprehension issues when students read.

Class Reader programme

During form time, we run the Class Reader Programme across all Key Stages. Form classes will read together, guided by their Form Tutor, for 30 minutes, twice a week. The classes read a range of classic and modern books, fiction and non-fiction, and books from varying cultures and traditions. We believe it is important to model good reading skills to the students and encourage discussion of books, as well as show students the enjoyment of reading. Below is a selection of the books each year group is currently reading:

Year 7 – Lost (Ellie Fountain), The Island at the end of everything (Kiran Millwood Hargrave), Alone (D J Brazier), Dodger (Prattchett), The Lie Tree (Francis Hardinge), Boy (Dahl)

Year 8 – A Monster Calls (Patrick Ness), Wolf (Gillian Cross), Treasure Island (RL Stevenson), The Hate U Give (Angie Tomas), Hitchhikers guide (Douglas Adams) The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (John Boyne), The Book Thief (Marcus Zusak).

Year 9 – Flowers for Algernon (Daniel Keyes), Looking for JJ (Anne Cassidy), Lord of the Flies (William), Maladapted (Richard Kurti), A Separate Peace (John Knowles), The Children of Blood and Bone (Tomi Adeyomi)

Year 10 – Of Mice and Men (Steinbeck), The Perks of being a Wallflower (Stephen Chobsky), 13 Minutes (Sarah Pinborough), To Kill a Mockingbird (Harper Lee), The Old Man and the Sea (Hemmingway), A Short History of Nearly everything (Bill Bryson)

Reading Interventions

In Key Stage 3 we run the Fresh Start intervention program, targeting students that are two or more years below their chronological reading age. The programme is run daily 25 minute sessions in line with the Ruth Miskin training and all staff delivering the sessions have had additional training from Read Write Inc during the Autumn term. The program is a rolling one, due to the needs of our students with new students being added as students graduate, in order to cover the students who are below reading age. In addition to this, in Year 7 we run 1-1 reading interventions for the least confident readers, with HLTA and primary trained teacher support. These also occur on a weekly basis, on top of Fresh Start (Smart Talk).

For those that have graduated from Smart Talk/Fresh Start but remain significantly below chronological reading age we have invested in an increased number of Lexia licenses, so that from January 2021 teacher monitored intervention classes will run, with students following the Power Up route. All students reading below their chronological reading age in Y7-10 will have access to this through their Chromebook as a home learning tool in addition to interventions.