

RT Readers for Life – Alderwood Academy

Engage Pathway

Origins of the Curriculum

The Readers for Life curriculum is a bespoke model developed specifically for the Raedwald Trust to promote oracy and teach vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. A defining feature of this curriculum is its agility; texts are carefully selected to reflect current issues and themes that resonate with students' interests, ensuring relevance and engagement.

The Readers for Life reading programme is designed to foster excellent progress and provide a rich, diverse, and aspirational range of reading experiences. At its core is a literature spine that prioritises diversity and relevance, helping pupils to better understand the world around them. This approach nurtures social and emotional literacy, builds cultural capital, and offers students both mirrors to see themselves and windows into the lives of others. The literature spine is thematically organised, enabling staff to select texts that are developmentally appropriate and aligned with the needs and interests of individuals or groups. This thematic structure supports meaningful exploration of contemporary and timeless issues through literature.

Research highlights that fluency is a critical factor in students' future success. The curriculum draws on key educational research, including findings from HfL (formerly Herts for Learning), Rosenshine's principles of explicit instruction, and Fiorella and Mayer's work on cognitive science and task design. These foundations ensure that students have regular opportunities to revisit and internalise key routines and oracy tasks. Lesson planning incorporates both scaffolding and challenge to support all learners effectively.

At Key Stage 4, the curriculum aims to cultivate a deep appreciation for the English language and the global literary heritage. By inspiring a love of reading, we aim to broaden students' horizons and empower them to become culturally aware, emotionally intelligent, socially responsible, and spiritually reflective individuals. Our curriculum not only prepares students for academic achievement but also supports their development as articulate, thoughtful members of society who understand and value the transformative power of language.

Content and Sequencing

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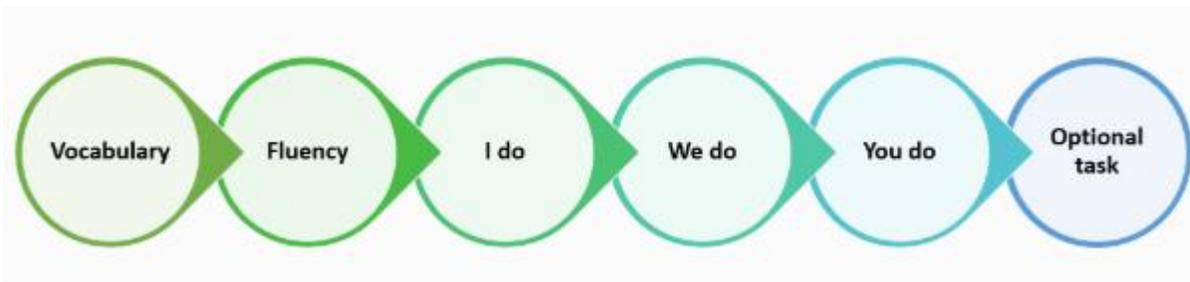
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The fundamental areas of our Reading curriculum include explicit vocabulary instruction, reading fluency, with a particular focus on prosody, and reading comprehension. Learning objectives are carefully sequenced to ensure the progressive development of these skills, while also incorporating regular opportunities to revisit and consolidate prior knowledge. This cyclical approach supports long-term retention and mastery.

The curriculum is structured around a literature-based model, anchored by a thematic literature spine that ensures coherence, progression, and rich opportunities for cultural and emotional enrichment. Texts are thoughtfully chosen to both reflect the lived experiences of our students and expand their worldviews, fostering empathy and critical thinking.

Instruction is tailored through scaffolding, modelling, and purposeful task design, drawing on evidence-based principles from cognitive science, including the work of Rosenshine and Fiorella & Mayer. This ensures that every lesson is accessible, intellectually stimulating, and appropriately challenging for all learners.

The format of the lessons is:



It is important to note that this policy is written to reflect the fractional curriculum offer of this pathway. Dependent on a student's prior educational experiences, refinements or adaptations may be made to the curriculum content using the programmes of study to ensure it remains appropriate and responsive to their individual needs and circumstances.

Overview of units of study:

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	Block 1 (2 wks)	Block 2 (2 wks)	Block 3 (2 wks)	Block 4 (2 wks)	Block 5 (2 wks)	Block 6 (2 wks)	Block 7 (2 wks)	Block 8 (2 wks)	Block 9, 10, 11 (6 wks)	Block 12, 13, 14 (6 wks)	Block 15, 16 (4 wks)
KS2	Rise Up Amanda (Anthology of biographical narratives) Extraordinary stories	The Lost Thing Shaun Tan (Picture book) Humour Additional study - poems: Emotional Menagerie	Greek Myths Marcia Williams (Cartoon style narratives) Essential cultural capital	The Wolves of Currumpaw William Grill (Picture book) Beautiful and captivating	Climate rebels Ben Lerwill (Anthology of biographies) Environmental responsibility	The great foodbank heist Onjali Q. Rauf Poverty, use of food banks	The Journey Francesca Sanna (Picture book) Refugees and loss Additional study - poems: Emotional Menagerie	Break the Mould Sinead Burke (Guide to life) Inclusion and difference	The boy who met a whale Nizrana Farook Environmental responsibility, inclusion, gentle thriller	Girl Savage Katherine Rundell Living on the edge of society, conforming Additional study - poems: Emotional Menagerie	A Kind of Spark Ellie McNicoll Autistic perspective, Manningtree witches story
KS3	Oranges in No Man's Land Elizabeth Laird (Short narrative) Modern conflict	Can you see me? Libby Scott (Narrative - first person) Autistic perspective	Earth Heroes Lily Dyu (Anthology of biographies) Environmental responsibility	Young, Gifted and Black Jamia Wilson (Anthology of biographies) Race and inclusion	The Boy Who Made Everyone Laugh Helen Rutter Inclusion and acceptance, aspiration	Make More Noise Various (Anthology of narratives) Suffragettes, female voice	Stories of WW1 Various (Anthology of narratives) Historical conflict	Rhythm and Poetry Karl Nova (Poetry collection) The thinking behind poems	The Windrush Child Benjamin Zephaniah Inclusion, social issues, historical issues	The Light Jar Jia Thomson Joyful narrative - friendship, trust	Goldfish boy Lisa Thomson OCD, SEMH, bullying, bereavement
KS4	Silence is not an option Stuart Lawrence (Guide to life) Inspiration, hate crime, racism	Hurricane Child Kacen Callender LGBT+, abandonment, natural disaster	The List of Things that will not change (Narrative) LGBT+, divorce, change, families, relationships	Quest Stories of journeys from around Europe (Anthology of narratives) Broadening horizons	What is Race? Claire Heuchan & Nikesh Shukla (Non-fiction) Factual perspective about race and racism	Gold from the Stone Lemn Sissay (Poetry collection) Powerful poetry	A Change is Gonna Come Various (Anthology of narratives) New voices, black representation	Once Upon a Sleightman Historical conflict, persecution, Holocaust	Where the River Runs Gold Sita Brahmachari Climate change, environmental responsibility, bereavement	Things the Eyes Cannot See Penny Joelson Blind female protagonist, mystery, organised crime, gentle thriller	When the Sky Falls Philip Earle Historical narrative - evacuees, dyslexia, bullying, animals
Key: Inspirational figures; Celebrating diversity; Environmental responsibility; Historical issues; Joyful literary experience; Poetry; Female representation; Current issues; Seminal British authors and heritage literature from anthologies											

Overview of units of study: Table

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Year 1	Make More Noise Can You See Me When the Sky Falls	The Boy Who Made Everyone Laugh Where the River Runs Gold The Windrush Child	What is Race? Once Earth Heroes Rhythm and Poetry
Year 2	Silence is Not an Option Hurricane Child Change is Gonna Come Oranges in No Man's Land	Goldfish Boy Quest The List of Things That Will Not Change	WW1 Stories Things the Eyes Cannot See Gold From the Stone

Assessment and Outcomes

Formative assessment will be completed on an ongoing basis to inform practice and to identify any further fluency and comprehension difficulties that may otherwise have not been identified via the RT induction

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Formative assessment is embedded throughout all aspects of Reading teaching. Teachers continuously monitor students' progress in reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension through a range of activities, discussions, and observations. These ongoing assessments provide immediate feedback and inform responsive teaching. Progress is tracked systematically, and assessment data is used diagnostically to support reintegration, personalised support, and sustained progression. The intended outcomes of the curriculum extend beyond measurable reading gains to include enhanced confidence, creativity, cultural awareness, and self-expression. Assessment data is used both to evaluate individual student progress and to inform broader curriculum development and instructional practice.

Reading and the Wider Curriculum

Our Reading curriculum is designed not only to develop pupils' literacy and communication skills but also to deepen their understanding of the world and prepare them for life beyond the classroom. Through carefully curated texts and thematically rich units, we embed British Values, including democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance, into literary exploration and classroom dialogue.

Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development is interwoven throughout the curriculum. Students are encouraged to reflect on moral dilemmas, engage with diverse cultural perspectives, participate in meaningful social discussions, and explore spiritual themes within literature. These experiences foster empathy, ethical awareness, and a sense of global citizenship.

By exposing pupils to a broad spectrum of voices, genres, and contexts, we actively build their cultural capital, equipping them with the knowledge, critical thinking skills, and emotional intelligence needed to navigate and contribute to modern society with confidence, compassion, and integrity.

Careers education is meaningfully embedded throughout the Reading curriculum to help students make connections between their learning and the world of work. This is achieved through:

- Exposure to a range of texts and genres that reflect different career paths, and industries.
- Development of key employability skills such as communication, critical thinking, analysis, presentation, and collaboration—skills that are essential across all career sectors.
- Literature spine that explores themes of ambition, identity, and societal roles, encouraging students to reflect on their own aspirations and values.



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- Targeted support and differentiation to help students understand how reading skills apply to specific vocational pathways, including media, law, education, publishing, and business.