

# Reading Strategy: South Axholme Academy

Our goal is for every child to be able to read at an age-appropriate level, with fluency and without barriers, to ensure that they can access the full curriculum and experience the joy of being able to read for pleasure. This strategy is designed to support and challenge students of all reading abilities, with a particular focus on closing gaps in chronological reading age.

This strategy is in place for students to help them read under the three main categories below:

- Reading Culture
- Reading in Subject
- Reading Interventions

## Reading Culture

We use SAX Reads at South Axholme Academy as a weekly tutor read aloud programme for pupils to access a canon of high quality, highly challenging texts which are read to them twice weekly.

The profile of our disadvantaged cohort means some of our children are unlikely to be able to access some of the texts that we might consider important cultural capital for our children. For example, *I am Malala* has a reading age of 13. Nationally, 25% of 15 year olds have a reading age of below 12, so some of our students couldn't easily access these books independently.

Many books in the Canon were written as important comment on society: the books were not meant to be exclusive. By reading these books aloud we model reading fluency from staff from subjects' disciplines and uphold a prominent reading culture.

Our book list for SAX reads list is as follows:

Year group	All students will read	Students will be able to read a selection from
7	'A Monster Calls' by Patrick Ness	Skellig, The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, Cirque Du Freak, Coraline, Harry Potter.
8	'Refugee Boy' by Benjamin Zephaniah	Artemis Fowl, Holes, Small Steps, Underground to Canada, Ruby in the Smoke.
9	'The Things We Leave Behind' by Claire Furniss	Hound of the Baskervilles, Oliver Twist, Heroes. Of Mice and Men, Stone Cold

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Alongside SAX Reads, we expose students in Years 7 to 10 to a weekly text through our RnR programme. These texts include a balance of fiction and non-fiction and are designed to develop both students' reading comprehension and their cultural capital. As part of the programme, students are explicitly taught key Tier 2 vocabulary before reading. They are introduced to each word through a clear definition and an example sentence to support understanding. After reading the text, students summarise the main ideas and answer a series of comprehension questions using mini whiteboards, enabling teachers to check understanding and provide immediate feedback.

As well as a focus on reading in tutor time, at South Axholme Academy we make extensive use of the library facilities available to us at the leisure centre which is next to the academy building. All KS3 students attend the leisure centre on a termly rota to take out and swap books. The space affords various opportunities for our students, whether that be joining the library to take out books after school, attending book clubs run at the centre, or simply using the space during weekends and holidays to research and revise. Many of our students will pursue higher education when they leave South Axholme's doors, therefore, it is critical that these opportunities are available to students as they will be relied upon in later life.

Promoting the importance of reading is also built into the wider fabric of school life. At South Axholme Academy, age-appropriate table-top articles are updated weekly and placed around the canteen for students to engage with at break and lunchtimes. These non-fiction texts have ranged from Joe Wicks promoting mental health wellbeing to celebrating David Attenborough's achievements in the natural world. All articles explicitly highlight key words and give a definition, so we are constantly promoting tier 2 vocabulary. These strategies ensure our whole school community are sharing the same messages regarding the importance of reading for pleasure.

## Reading in Subject

Disciplinary literacy underpins all aspects of the curriculum at South Axholme, with dedicated CPD built in each year focused around the EEF literacy strands, including reading fluency. All staff understand the importance of pre-teaching Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary to aid reading fluency, and this is embedded by subject leaders in both their long- and short-term planning. Staff also consider how explicit vocabulary instruction can be taught explicitly, incidentally and consciously (Quigley) and ensure that these approaches are set at the heart of their practice. These strategies are regularly quality assured by the academy's dedicated literacy champion and Assistant Principal, both of whom conduct regular learning walks to quality assure our literacy provision.

As a whole-school expectation, staff are instructed to read all texts to students to model reading fluency. Students follow the text with their rulers and are frequently asked about the content they are reading to assess comprehension and any gaps in vocabulary knowledge or cultural capital.

Here, our Subject Leaders outline how they approach reading texts within their subjects:

### **English:**

The South Axholme English curriculum is designed to ensure that all students experience a rich, diverse and ambitious range of literature. Pupils study challenging, high-quality texts, including both canonical works and contemporary writing that broadens perspectives and encourages critical thinking about the world and their place within it. As a result, students develop a genuine appreciation of reading, recognising both its intellectual value and its capacity for enjoyment and escapism.

The curriculum is carefully sequenced to build knowledge over time, enabling students to engage with increasingly complex ideas, themes and contexts, including different historical periods, cultures and belief systems. Through this, students deepen their cultural literacy and are well prepared for further academic study.

Teachers prioritise reading comprehension and disciplinary literacy. They routinely check students' understanding using strategies such as mini whiteboards, which ensure that all students participate actively and misconceptions are identified and addressed in real time. There is a strong emphasis on the explicit teaching of Tier 2 vocabulary, with teachers regularly modelling, checking and clarifying vocabulary to ensure students can access challenging texts and articulate their ideas with precision and confidence.

Students are supported to see reading as part of a wider dialogue. They explore connections between texts, developing an understanding of intertextuality and recognising how themes and ideas recur and evolve across different works. This enables them to engage thoughtfully in literary conversations and develop more sophisticated interpretations.

As a result of this well-structured and carefully delivered curriculum, pupils are increasingly confident readers who can independently navigate complex fiction and non-fiction texts. They are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in further education and beyond.

### **History:**

Literacy is at the heart of success in secondary history. Through reading, students gain access to the stories, sources, interpretations and debates that shape our understanding of the past. The National Curriculum for History emphasises the importance of pupils knowing

and understanding significant events, analysing evidence, and developing historically valid enquiries. To achieve this, students must be able to read confidently, comprehend complex texts and engage critically with a range of historical sources.

We fully recognise that effective learning requires disciplinary literacy—the ability to read, write and think like a historian. The Education Endowment Foundation identifies disciplinary literacy as a key factor in improving outcomes across the curriculum, with explicit teaching of reading, vocabulary and comprehension strategies helping students access challenging subject content and develop deeper understanding.

In history, reading enables students to evaluate sources, consider different interpretations and construct evidence-based arguments. By engaging with a rich range of historical texts, students not only strengthen their literacy skills but also develop critical thinking, curiosity and the ability to make informed judgements about the world around them. Research into history education suggests that students benefit most when literacy practices mirror the work of historians, encouraging them to interrogate evidence, analyse perspectives and build coherent explanations of the past.

At South Axholme, we are committed to fostering a culture of reading and literacy within history, ensuring that all students develop the confidence and skills to access challenging historical texts, think critically about evidence, and become independent, knowledgeable learners.

### **Geography:**

The use of language is an integral part of learning geography and good literacy skills are important to enable geographical understanding.

The word geography derives from *geo*, meaning the Earth, and *graphos*, meaning to write about. So, the purpose of geography is underpinned by the importance of literacy.

It is through language that students understand geographical concepts, develop their geographical thinking and communicate geographical ideas.

Students need a wide-ranging vocabulary, including a knowledge of geographical terms, good subject specific vocabulary enables students to reflect, revise and evaluate geographical thinking.

Geography lessons offer great scope for developing students' literacy and provide plentiful opportunities for students to develop effective reading and writing skills and communicate orally.

The geography department at South Axholme has the responsibility to teach students how to read, write and speak like a geographer. Geographers always strive to balance different

perceptions and viewpoints and to be precise in their descriptions and draw reasoned conclusions.

Research shows that the more complex the text, the more a reader will rely on visual representations. Geography already uses a more well-rounded and comprehensive definition of text. In geography, text includes maps, diagrams and other pictures (static or animated), graphics, charts and graphs, and geo-spatial representations of information.

Geography at South Axholme looks at these three aspects of literacy:

1. **Reading and Graphicacy:** Geographers must decode not just written texts, but visual and spatial "texts" like maps, charts, and diagrams. Literacy skills allow students to select, interpret, and evaluate information to distinguish between fact and opinion, recognize bias, and make connections between local and global scales
2. **Structural Writing:** Good geographical writing requires students to sequence hypotheses logically, look at the connection between cause and effect, and explain complex events.
3. **Decision-Making:** The goal of geography is geo-literacy—using geographic understanding to make reasoned, real-world decisions.

## **RE:**

Literacy is at the heart of high-quality Religious Education (RE). Through reading, discussion, writing and oracy, pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to explore religious beliefs, practices, worldviews and ethical issues in a thoughtful and informed way. Effective literacy teaching enables pupils to access a wide range of religious and non-religious texts, including sacred writings, stories, teachings and contemporary viewpoints, while developing the vocabulary necessary to engage with complex theological, philosophical and ethical concepts.

The National Curriculum states that all teachers have a responsibility to promote high standards of literacy across the curriculum. In RE, this includes supporting pupils to read with understanding, analyse different perspectives, communicate ideas clearly and justify opinions using evidence. As pupils encounter increasingly sophisticated texts and concepts, strong literacy skills allow them to make connections, ask meaningful questions and engage in respectful dialogue about matters of belief and identity.

Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) highlights the positive impact of reading comprehension strategies and disciplinary literacy approaches across all subjects. RE provides rich opportunities for pupils to develop these skills by interpreting texts, evaluating sources, comparing viewpoints and constructing reasoned arguments. Through exposure to diverse voices, cultures and traditions, reading in RE also promotes

empathy, critical thinking and cultural understanding.

By embedding purposeful reading and literacy activities throughout the RE curriculum, pupils deepen their understanding of religion and worldviews while strengthening the communication skills that underpin success across all areas of learning. Literacy in RE therefore plays a vital role in helping pupils become reflective, informed and respectful members of a diverse society.

### **Art & Photography:**

Developing students' ability to read, interpret and use subject-specific language is a fundamental part of our teaching in art and photography. As students progress through the curriculum, they encounter increasingly complex vocabulary and concepts that are essential for analysing, discussing, and evaluating creative work.

To ensure students are confident and articulate in their use of this language, we embed a range of structured literacy strategies within our lessons. These approaches support students in moving from simple description to more sophisticated, scholarly responses, enabling them to engage with artists' work in a meaningful and informed way.

The following strategies outline how we explicitly teach, reinforce and develop reading and vocabulary skills across the key stages.

1. **Key vocabulary** - Each lesson has the key vocabulary indicated and defined for the students. We recognise that students will need this knowledge to decipher language moving through the course - so we frequently refer to this when introducing new vocabulary. This key vocabulary runs across 3 tiers and will increase in complexity from year 7 upwards to year 11.
2. **Retrieval** - Students are frequently quizzed on key vocabulary in the retrieval tasks at the beginning of lessons. This includes both identification of key terms and their definitions.
3. **Right is right** - We support students to use precise technical vocabulary and we show them the difference between the facile and the scholarly. We build on verbal responses for accuracy and depth and build these in to well thought out and in depth written responses.
5. **Annotating** - Teachers regularly model and scaffold structures to support students with annotation. Simple evaluative skills in year 7 turn in to more complete analysing and deciphering skills in year 10 & 11. Students are encouraged to read about artists and photographers work at GCSE to encourage them to select relevant and informative key points that they will then build in to their annotation.

6. **Call and response - Repeat** - When introducing new vocabulary students are expected to repeat the word that the teacher has introduced. Reinforce - We reinforce new information or a strong answer by asking the class to repeat it.

### **Food Preparation and Nutrition:**

Reading is an essential part of Food Preparation and Nutrition. Students are required to read and interpret recipes, food labels, nutritional information, scientific explanations, and food-related articles. Developing strong literacy skills enables students to understand key concepts, use specialist vocabulary accurately, and make informed decisions about food, nutrition, and health. We follow the National Curriculum and AQA GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition specification and embed reading strategies throughout our curriculum.

**1. Key Vocabulary** – Each lesson includes key subject-specific vocabulary that is explicitly taught and defined. Vocabulary is identified on lesson resources and knowledge organisers. Students are taught scientific terminology linked to food science, nutrition, health, food provenance, and practical food preparation, ensuring they can confidently use technical language in both written and verbal responses.

**2. Retrieval** – Students regularly revisit and review key vocabulary and concepts through retrieval activities at the start of lessons. This supports long-term retention of subject knowledge and helps students confidently recall definitions and apply terminology in different contexts.

**3. Right is Right** – Students are encouraged to use accurate and precise subject-specific language when discussing food and nutrition. Teachers model and reinforce correct terminology, challenging misconceptions and supporting students to distinguish between everyday language and technical vocabulary.

**4. Linking Learning** – Staff make explicit links between topics studied throughout the curriculum, including connections to Science, Design and Technology, Geography, and Health Education. Students are encouraged to recognise how knowledge and vocabulary can be transferred across different areas of learning.

**5. Annotating** – Students are taught how to annotate recipes, food labels, articles, and exam-style texts to identify key information. Annotation strategies support comprehension, retention, and the development of analytical skills required for GCSE study.

**6. Call and Response** – New vocabulary is introduced through repetition and discussion. Students are expected to repeat and use new terminology regularly, helping to develop confidence and accuracy when communicating subject knowledge.

**7. Guided Reading** – Teachers model reading strategies when exploring recipes, case studies, food investigations, and nutritional information. Students are supported to identify key details, interpret information accurately, and develop their understanding of specialist texts.

**8. Interpreting Information and Data** – Students are explicitly taught how to read and interpret nutritional data, food labels, graphs, charts, and investigative results. Teachers model how to analyse information and draw evidence-based conclusions.

**9. Command Words** – Students are taught to recognise and respond appropriately to examination command words such as describe, explain, analyse, compare, and evaluate. This supports students in applying their knowledge effectively within assessments and examinations.

**10. Further Reading** – Students are encouraged to engage with wider reading opportunities linked to food, nutrition, health, sustainability, food science, and current food industry developments. This helps to broaden their understanding of the subject beyond the classroom and develop curiosity about the role of food in society.

### **Spanish:**

In our MFL classrooms, before becoming silent and interiorised, reading is first an oral activity. Reading aims to be a joyous collective endeavour where the foreign sounds are noticed, practised, celebrated through choral vocalisation, and where the meaning is brought to the fore through both clear dual-coding and the modelling of prosodic reading.

One of the ultimate functions of our MFL KS3 curriculum, is to grow learners who can decode and articulate new words in the foreign language with a degree of competence and confidence, as well as demonstrate phonological awareness when listening to the foreign language. Another function is to help all learners automatize a core of foundational linguistic structures. Finally, our inclusive curriculum also aims to build all learners' confidence and resilience when dealing with long foreign texts.

With these aims in mind, our approach to reading is informed by recent research in both SLA and cognitive science. Therefore, our curriculum and pedagogy predominantly feature:

1. Comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) always precedes output in our learning sequences and so reading will precede and model writing.
2. The phoneme-grapheme correspondence is taught systematically in Years 7-8 and revisited in Years 9-11 – this is to secure confidence and high success rates when decoding new words independently, as well as resilience when hearing a string of spoken words. (Coates et al., 2017)

3. The discovery of new words, phrases and texts in the foreign language is conducted with the close translation in English and/or unambiguous imagery – this dual-coding helps ensure all students are included and initiates the semantic encoding which promotes deeper levels of processing than would pure visual or acoustic encoding alone ( Craik and Tulving, 1975).
4. Reading aloud collectively as a class after teacher’s modelling, and before being asked to read to peers – choral reading provides safe, inclusive initial practice (McCauley, 1992) , while reading out loud to peers facilitates memorisation, that is semantic and acoustic encoding, through vocalising and self-reference effect (Rogers, Kuiper & Kirker, 1977 and Boucher & Lafleur, 2015).

### PE:

Reading plays an important role in Physical Education. Students develop their understanding of sport, fitness and healthy lifestyles by engaging with a range of texts, including articles, rules and regulations, coaching guides, match reports and sports science research.

In lessons, students read and interpret information to analyse performance, understand tactics, evaluate training methods and explore the social and cultural impact of sport. They are encouraged to use subject-specific vocabulary confidently and to think critically about the information they encounter.

By developing reading skills in PE, students become more informed, independent learners who can apply their knowledge both in practical activities and in wider discussions about health, fitness and sport.

### Performing Arts:

Knowledge in Performing Arts is cumulative and draws upon a range of cultural, historical, social, and artistic influences. Across dance, drama, and music, students encounter specialist vocabulary, performance conventions, practitioner theories, and contextual knowledge that deepen their understanding of artistic work. Reading in Performing Arts enables students to access this disciplinary knowledge, interpret artistic intentions, and develop the language required to discuss, analyse, and evaluate performance confidently.

### **Key Stage 3:**

At Key Stage 3, Performing Arts is delivered on a carousel model, with students receiving one 50-minute lesson per week for one term each academic year. As curriculum time is limited, reading opportunities are carefully selected to maximise their impact on students’ practical learning and vocabulary development.

Students engage with short, purposeful texts including practitioner biographies, performance reviews, scripts, song lyrics, programme notes, historical sources, and contextual information. These texts provide essential background knowledge and introduce the subject-specific language required to understand and participate in practical activities.

Teachers explicitly model the reading and interpretation of these materials, supporting students to identify key information, clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, and make connections between what they read and what they perform, compose, choreograph, or create. Reading activities are supported through questioning, discussion, annotation, retrieval practice, and summarising to ensure comprehension and retention.

To support disciplinary literacy, students are encouraged to:

1. Identify key information, vocabulary, and artistic ideas.
2. Clarify unfamiliar words, concepts, and references.
3. Connect reading to practical work and performance outcomes.
4. Summarise the most important knowledge and understanding gained from the text.

This approach ensures that reading complements practical learning and develops the vocabulary and cultural knowledge necessary for successful engagement in dance, drama, and music.

#### **Key Stage 4:**

At Key Stage 4, students studying GCSE Dance, Drama, or Music receive three 50-minute lessons per week, allowing for more sustained engagement with subject-specific reading and disciplinary literacy. Reading plays an increasingly important role in supporting both practical and theoretical learning, as students are required to analyse, evaluate, interpret, and discuss professional works using increasingly sophisticated subject vocabulary.

Students engage with a wider range of texts, including scripts, practitioner theories, critical reviews, programme notes, set work materials, historical and cultural context, examination resources, and scholarly commentary. Through regular exposure to these texts, students develop the knowledge and language required to access examination content while deepening their understanding of artistic practice.

Teachers explicitly model how expert performers, directors, choreographers, composers, and critics engage with texts. Students are taught how to identify key information, infer meaning, analyse artistic choices, and evaluate the effectiveness of performance and creative intentions. Reading activities are integrated into practical and theoretical learning to ensure meaningful connections between classroom study and artistic application.

To support comprehension of increasingly complex texts, students are encouraged to:

1. Identify key terminology, concepts, and artistic intentions.

2. Clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, contextual references, and technical language.
3. Analyse how practitioners communicate meaning and achieve intended effects.
4. Evaluate artistic choices using evidence from both practical work and written sources.

Through regular reading, discussion, annotation, and written reflection, students develop the disciplinary literacy required to succeed in GCSE Performing Arts qualifications and to communicate confidently as subject specialists.

### **Science:**

Reading plays a crucial role in helping students develop their understanding of scientific ideas and is also an essential part of the work undertaken by scientists. Science uses precise and specialised language, making the accurate use of terminology vital. Many scientific terms are often used incorrectly in everyday life; for example, scales measure mass rather than weight. To help students develop confidence and accuracy in their scientific vocabulary, we use a range of strategies:

1. Key vocabulary - At the start of each topic in KS3, a key word list is provided and students are expected to research the scientific definitions of each word, to use as a reference point throughout the topic. We also explicitly teach root words, prefixes and suffixes starting from Year 7. We recognise that students will need this knowledge to decipher language moving through the course - so we frequently refer to this when introducing new vocabulary. This includes the key vocabulary of practical work - accuracy, reliability, repeatability, reproducibility.
2. Retrieval - Students are frequently quizzed on key vocabulary through retrieval task. This includes both identification of key terms and their definitions.
3. Say it again better – We support students to use precise technical vocabulary in the correct context of sentences. We maintain high expectations for accuracy in our classrooms and actively encourage students to use correct scientific language and reasoning in both their spoken and written responses.
4. Linking learning - Staff are explicit with students about the links between the units and the different sciences. Students are encouraged to identify commonalities in language and where concepts and prior knowledge is being applied in a different context.
5. Interpreting data - Students are explicitly taught how to interpret and describe trends and patterns in data. There are frequent opportunities for staff to model responses and support students when inferring conclusions from the data.
6. Command words - The modelling of extended response is embedded in the curriculum to ensure that students can correctly use their knowledge by identifying how that knowledge needs to be applied in the question from the command word. This helps to develop key understanding in preparation for GCSE exams.

## Design Technology:

Reading in Design Technology extends far beyond books and written text, in fact we rarely study books, it is more about practical application of reading skills to be able to create manufactured products. Students develop the ability to interpret, understand and apply the specialist language, symbols and technical information that they will encounter throughout their education and in future careers within engineering, construction and manufacturing.

Throughout the year, students will build a strong foundation of subject-specific vocabulary, starting off in year 7 with the basics and getting increasingly technical as they move towards KS4. They will regularly encounter and use key technical terminology relating to construction, engineering, materials, manufacturing processes, health and safety, and design principles. Explicit teaching of this vocabulary ensures students become confident using professional language accurately in both written and verbal communication.

Students will also develop the ability to read like an engineer or construction professional. This includes interpreting engineering drawings, orthographic and isometric projections, CAD models, construction blueprints, technical specifications, risk assessments, method statements, diagrams, symbols, dimensions and manufacturers' information. They will learn that successful reading in Design Technology requires understanding visual and technical information as well as written text.

Where appropriate, lessons will expose students to authentic industry resources, enabling them to become familiar with the language, phrases and terminology used by engineers, designers, architects, technicians and construction professionals. Students will be encouraged to discuss their work using accurate technical vocabulary and to explain design decisions using the language expected within industry.

By embedding disciplinary reading into every project, students will become increasingly confident at interpreting technical information, communicating professionally and understanding the documentation they are likely to encounter in further education, apprenticeships and future employment.

## Reading Interventions

Every child is assessed with Bedrock/Lexia termly at KS3. This data is analysed and some pupils will have follow up assessments to determine/diagnose barriers to their reading to inform interventions.

Generally, students will be categorised as follows:

**Wave 1:** These students will enjoy universal approaches to reading support through our reading culture strategy and our reading in subject strategy. They are unlikely to need further intervention but will continue to be tested termly.

All year 7 students will have access to Bedrock weekly via their English lessons. Bedrock can provide stretch and challenge for all students and develop their vocabulary further, regardless of their starting point.

**Wave 2:** These students will receive targeted intervention through Bedrock to get them up to age expected reading levels as soon as possible.

**Wave 3:** These students will be tested with a further diagnostic test to determine more accurately the barrier to learning. These student will then benefit from intensive phonics intervention through Lexia to support them in getting up to age related expectations. This intervention is delivered in Horizon by the Horizon Manager and supported by the SENDCo.

**\*The bottom 10% of each year 7 cohort will benefit from being in small nurture class during core lessons from 2026/27. They still follow the full national curriculum, but this is scaffolded, and their reading intervention is supported by the Inclusion Manager. Once students achieve a score above 85 on the Lexia testing and/or staff feel they are ready, they are integrated back into CORE lessons. They are heavily supported with this transition by the SEND team and Subject Leaders.**