



**St. Matthew's**  
Roman Catholic High School  
VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

# SMRCHS Reading

We **Pray**  
We **Care**  
We **Achieve**



# SMRCHS Reading

## Our vision

At St Matthew's we recognize that the ability to read well has a hugely positive impact on our students' life chances and their wider cultural appreciation of life. A strong reader has full access to the planned curriculum and research shows that the higher a student's reading age, the more likely they are to succeed in their studies. John 10:10 guides us to encourage all our school community to 'live life to the full', and in line with our curriculum intent statement we want our students to experience all facets of God's creation. We know that this will only be possible if a student is a capable reader.

## Frequently asked questions

### **What do you do to help students improve their reading skills?**

The reading skills of all students at St Matthew's are tested twice per year using the National Group Reading Test (NGRT). This is a nationally recognised assessment which provides us with accurate information about a child's ability to decode words and understand sentences and longer passages. The NGRT is produced by GL Assessments and more information on this can be found here: [Using NGRT in secondary schools - GL Assessment \(glassessment.co.uk\)](https://www.glassessment.co.uk)

Once students have been tested we then use the results to decide which students need more help to improve their reading skills. We have a team of staff who have completed specialised training to carry out support and intervention using the Lexonik programmes.

### **Why does St Matthew's use the Lexonik programmes of reading intervention?**

The Lexonik programmes are used by over 350 schools nationally, with a strong evidence base to show that they are highly effective in improving the reading ability of a student. The Lexonik programmes are also aimed at secondary school children (unlike a number of other phonics programmes which



are aimed at primary-aged children). Consequently, the Lexonik resources use KS3 curriculum vocabulary which is useful for our students to be regularly exposed to.

### **If my child is selected for the Lexonik programme of intervention, what help do they receive?**

Lexonik is a strategically designed programme to support students in their knowledge of phonology, vocabulary and literacy.

The first intervention is Lexonik Leap which identifies where exactly students may be struggling with their phonological knowledge. Once gaps in knowledge are identified, highly trained staff deliver tailored interventions to support students in developing their reading skills. The 20-minute Leap intervention sessions take place three times a week.

The further intervention is Lexonik Advance. This programme supports students in phonology, decoding and automaticity (reading a word without needing to break it down), and helps students who may have already completed the Leap intervention and require further support, or students who we have identified need some additional reading support to access all aspects of our curriculum. The 60-minute Advance intervention sessions take place once a week for a six-week period.

The National Literacy Trust have completed an evaluative study into the validity of the Lexonik claims and the report is below:

[Evaluation of Lexonik Advance | National Literacy Trust](#)

### **How long will my child remain on the Lexonik intervention programme?**

Students are regularly tested to check on their progress. We use the results of these tests to decide whether the student has progressed far enough to move on to the next stage of support, or whether the student no longer needs specific reading intervention. How long this takes is individual to each child. The benefits of the Lexonik programme are that it is bespoke to each child's reading ability and once they complete the intervention, they will be at age-expected reading ability or above.



### **What do you do to help other students improve their reading?**

Reading forms an essential part of our entire curriculum at St Matthew's and students are regularly exposed to texts in their English lessons and beyond. Our English curriculum has been carefully planned to expose students to a range of forms and genres at KS3. Every topic looks to reflect the experiences of our students while allowing them to study some of our most traditional, challenging and inspiring texts.

Students have a library lesson once per half-term at KS3 as part of their English lessons. Here they can borrow a book from our well-stocked library and read independently with the support of our librarian and their English teacher. Library access is not limited to this time: all students are able to access their library before school, break and lunch time and after school.

Reading across the curriculum is also a priority for our school. All subject teachers are trained in supporting students with reading in their lessons so that they can access the curriculum. Students are provided with regular opportunities for reading in all of their subjects.

Furthermore, we have a robust Form Time Guided Reading programme. All students in Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 read in Form Time twice a week. The books in our Literary Canon have been selected to promote reading for pleasure, covering a wide range of themes and genres. We pride ourselves on our diverse and dynamic book offering for our students.

### **What can I do as a parent/carer to help my child to improve their reading?**

It is an expectation that students have a book with them at all times in school as it is a requirement for them to read for twenty minutes per day. This is part of our 'RRR' homework policy (Retrieval, Repetition and Reading). Your support and encouragement of independent reading will greatly assist in our reading vision.

We know that not all students are avid readers (yet!) As a parent/carer of a reluctant reader, you can: have discussions about what they're reading at school; prompt them to visit the school library, and allow them to read whatever interests them. If they are unsure of where to start, you can encourage them to complete the SMRCHS Ultimate Reading List. This specially curated list consists of three books per year group which are available in the library. The completion of these books goes towards the SMRCHS Learner Awards (at KS3) and achievement points.