

Forensic Reading

“Reading will prove the master skill of school, unlocking the academic curriculum for our pupils.”

We recognise, first and foremost, that there is a moral imperative to supporting students to develop as readers. We know that so much of what happens in education is underpinned by reading and that ‘reading will prove the master skill of school, unlocking the academic curriculum for our pupils.’¹ Indeed, it is no surprise that there is such strong correlation between student reading ability and eventual performance at GCSE.^{2 3}

We know also about the cruelty of the Matthew Effect and the problem that ‘while good readers gain new skills very rapidly, and quickly move from learning to read to reading to learn, poor readers become increasingly frustrated with the act of reading, and try to avoid reading where possible.’⁴ Within this fact is the further knowledge that disadvantaged students and boys are more likely to be amongst those ‘poor readers’ at the start of secondary school, and that – partly because of the Matthew Effect – this reading gap will grow over time.^{5 6 7}

Far from being purely an abstract or theoretical problem, analysis of standardised reading assessments within the trust highlights a number of issues to address. In Y7, for example, 13% of students are below-average readers compared to their peers nationally while both boys and disadvantaged students are more likely to be weaker readers (-1.4 and -4.6 mean standard-age scores (SAS) respectively). If we are to meet our stated vision of ‘all students reading at – or above – an age-appropriate level’, this is clearly something that we need to address. While the reading profile of the whole cohort is ‘average’ compared to the national picture, meanwhile, the correlation between outcomes and reading ability suggests that there is work to do here if we are to realise the ambitions we have for our students.

WeST Forensic Reading is not intended to solve these problems in isolation. However, as part of a multi-faceted approach to the teaching of reading, it has been designed as one piece of the jigsaw that will allow us to raise reading attainment for students so that they experience the benefits of being capable readers both in education and beyond.

Aims of Forensic Reading

WeST Forensic Reading is designed to support the vision within the trust of **‘all students reading at – or above – an age-appropriate level’**. It is intended to support the mission of getting students to **read more, read better and read for pleasure**. It has the following specific aims:

- Develop background knowledge and cultural capital
 - Develop vocabulary
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- Provide opportunities to meaningfully practise comprehension (and to a lesser extent decoding) by providing exposure to multiple texts
- Encourage students to extend their reading and to read independently for pleasure
- Develop oracy through structured talk
- Provide a model for teaching reading across the curriculum

Subject curricular categories

<u>Forensic Reading</u>			
Women, Suffrage and Misogyny	Ethics and Morality	Fragile Earth	Power

<u>What will you see in Forensic Reading lessons?</u>	<u>What will you see in pupils books?</u>
<p>1. Structured reading: Control the Game</p> <p>The programme will include numerous opportunities for reading. Reading – in whatever form – will be made accountable by following the principles of ‘Control the Game’ (<i>Reading Reconsidered</i>).</p> <p>2. Structured vocabulary teaching: SEEC</p> <p>Vocabulary teaching will be guided by the principles of SEEC: Select, Explain, Explore, Consolidate. This will be seen in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explicit teaching of keystone vocabulary through adapted Frayer models and consolidation questions. - Light-touch vocabulary teaching when reading texts. - Systematic revisiting of vocabulary through low-stakes quizzing and half-termly vocabulary tests. <p>3. Structured talk: Accountable Talk</p> <p>Oracy will be developed through the use of Accountable Talk. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will be explicitly taught what accountable talk is. - The principles of accountable talk will be referred back to frequently (reasoning, knowledge and community) - Discussion will be supported through the use of A-B-C and sentence stems. <p>4. Exploration of background knowledge (cultural capital)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion will support students to explore sophisticated concepts central to their understanding of the world and their place in it. <p>5. Opportunities for extended reading</p>	<p>Although Forensic Reading is predominantly promoting oracy, all exercise books should have weekly retrieval starters as part of the school’s silent starter policy. All of which will be purple panned so students always make progress. This is to help students recall knowledge that they have learnt from previous lessons.</p> <p>Exercise books should also have evidence of keystone and light touch vocabulary being used in different sentences.</p> <p>Teachers may use them for specific tasks linked to that particular lesson.</p>

**What formative assessment will you see
Forensic Reading?**

Formative Assessment

- Students will self-assess their understanding of keystone and light touch vocabulary at the start, mid - point and end of a unit.
- Students will also self-assess their own personal beliefs and values on the topic which will be reviewed halfway and at the end of the unit.

Summative Assessment

- Students will complete an end of unit assessment based on the vocabulary and general knowledge they have learnt during that topic.

What is the department currently discussing?

Teachers of Forensic Reading are currently discussing how to help students of a varied Reading Age in their mixed set groups.