

Accelerated Reader at St Katherine's!

As part of our continuing drive to improve standards across the school, we are excited to be continuing a scheme for our Yr7 & 8 students called Accelerated Reader. This personalised scheme challenges students to read books that are suited to their individual reading ability, whilst giving school staff flexible tools to support, manage & monitor this. The ultimate aim is to see reading growth for each and every student, regardless of their individual ability. All the research into the area of young people's reading clearly shows the lasting and lifelong benefits of regularly reading for pleasure, across all subjects, and this scheme should really help us to embed this with our students.

What the students have been doing

The students all take an initial Star Reading test to give them their individual reading range, and then start choosing titles from within our normal LRC stock that we know are just right for their ability. Because students are directed to a range of titles, they still have a huge freedom of choice in terms of challenge level and genre. The fiction stock in the LRC is so wide-ranging that within an individual's reading range there will always be plenty to choose from!

Once a student has read a title, they then return to a computer in the LRC to complete a quiz on their book. Scoring 60% or above will give them points for each quiz taken, which will gradually build-up over time. Students should try to quiz as soon after finishing their book as possible, so computers will always be available during break & lunch for this, as well as in library lessons. The quiz checks that the student has actually read the book, as well as how well they have understood it. It also keeps a record of the total number of words read, and there will be rewards for those who reach a million, as well as those who do really well in their quizzes. One of the appeals of this scheme is that it works at each student's individual ability level – allowing us to recognise and reward progress at an individual level as well, which we hope is a hugely motivating factor.

How staff are using this

Staff will have access to a wide range of information about students' reading generated by the system. This will allow us to set individual targets, and regularly monitor progress. The students will all be tested at three points during the school year, which will highlight progress made, and allow us to plan interventions if necessary.

Your role

As a parent/carer you have a role to play here too! We know that regular, wide-ranging reading really helps an individual develop those essential skills, and at the same time gives students access to all the benefits that reading for pleasure brings such as relaxation, developing imagination, improved vocabulary, empathy and enjoyment to name just a few. Take an interest in your child's reading, talk to them about their book, the characters and the storyline. Ensure your child has the time and a relaxing atmosphere in which to read and concentrate for at least 20 minutes every day, and be seen reading yourself! Don't forget, reading material doesn't have to be just books – encourage e-readers, non-fiction books such as biographies, newspapers & magazines as well!

We really see this as an opportunity for all our Yr7 & 8 students to make real progress in their reading skills, whatever their ability, and to be recognised for their achievements and hard work. At the same time, they will also be gaining all the benefits that come with reading for pleasure, and we really look forward to sharing their progress with you!