

Regular reading impacts a child's success at school.
If not addressed early the educational gap widens...

Child A



Reads 20 minutes
per day

3,600 minutes
per school year

1,800,000 words
per school year



Scores in the
90th percentile

Child B



Reads 5 minutes
per day

900 minutes
per school year

282,000 words
per school year



Scores in the
50th percentile

Child C



Reads 1 minute
per day

180 minutes
per school year

8,000 words
per school year



Scores in the
10th percentile

Standardised Test Scores

BHA: A Reading School

A Guide to our Library 2023-24



Why is Birches Head Academy a 'Reading School'?

Recent research has shown that currently, only 48% of people in Stoke-on-Trent will have achieved a GCSE grade of 4-9 in English by the time they reach adulthood. This figure drops to just 31% for the most disadvantaged students in our city. In comparison, the national figure is 57%. Taking this into consideration, I believe we all need to work together as one community to help improve outcomes for our young people.

Equally (or perhaps even more) crucial than outcomes is my firm belief that reading should be enjoyable for children. I want students to want to read, which is why I encourage their input into the books that are stocked in the library and why we run such a wide range of activities and events throughout the year to bolster the notion of reading as a hobby.

It is now widely acknowledged that reading for pleasure helps to broaden children's cultural horizons. It helps them to develop empathy for others, confidence and personal ambition. In short, once a young person discovers their love of reading, they allow themselves to dream big and they start to really fly. There are also strong and clear links between reading for pleasure and positive mental health – particularly vital in today's pressured society.

A range of measures and interventions are in place in school, both to help individual identified students and to inspire reading for pleasure across the school as a whole – but we can only succeed with the help of parents and families.

In the first instance, I would like to enlist the help of yourselves, as parents and guardians, to encourage all students to read for a minimum of ten minutes per day at home. Research has shown that regular independent reading improves a child's performance in all subjects; however, for children who do not read regularly the educational gap widens rapidly if this is not addressed.

Childrens' reading 'diets' should include a range of both fiction and non-fiction texts that is age and ability-appropriate, yet still challenging and engaging.

There is lots of support in school to help parents and children make good reading choices and I welcome students to come and discuss the process of selecting suitable reading texts with me either during their library lessons or during social times. I am also more than happy to speak to parents directly to offer support and advice on fostering a love of reading at home.

I would like to thank you in advance for helping us to transform Birches Head Academy into a school of readers, in which literacy and reading is the thread that binds us all together.

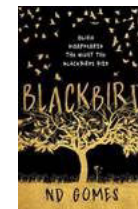
Mrs. A Sanders and Mrs. C Watson

School Librarians

Blackbird by N.D. Gomes

Interest age: 12-16

Reading age: 11+



S.C.R.E.A.M: Carnival of Monsters by Andrew Beasley

Interest age: 10-12

Reading age: 10-12



Ghost by Jason Reynolds

Interest age: 10-14

Reading age: 10+



The Girl in Wooden Armour by Candy Gourlay

Interest age: 10-16

Reading age: 12+



The Beast Player by Nahoko Uehashi

Interest age: 12-14

Reading age: 10+



When the Sky Falls by Phil Earle

Interest age: 11-14

Reading age: 10+



Further information on each title can be found on
Amazon.co.uk

Year 7 Recommended Reading list Autumn 2022

Big Bones by Laura Dockrill

Interest age: 12-16

Reading age: 12+



What Would She Do? by Kay Woodward

Interest age: 9-14

Reading age: 10+



Witch Born by Nichola Bowling

Interest age: 12-16

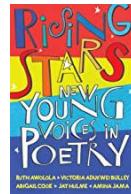
Reading age: 10+



Rising Stars: New Young Voices in Poetry by various

Interest age: 10-16

Reading age: 10+



The Extinction Trials by SM Wilson

Interest age: 11-14

Reading age: 10+



Horror Heights: The Slime by Bec Hill

Interest age: 11-13

Reading age: 10+



About the Library

The library is open to all students during break and lunchtime every day, as well as after school. You may use the library for reading or quiet work/study, or for a quiet game of chess or draughts. Students wishing to use the library during social times must obtain a Library Pass from one of the library staff.

What facilities does the Library have?

- Kindles with lots of books downloaded onto them – available for all students to use
- Amazon Fire tablets for games and study
- Laptops which can be used for schoolwork
- Books! Lots of books, both fiction and non-fiction
- Magazines and newspapers
- Audiobooks

Can I borrow books to read at home?

Yes! You may take out 1 or 2 books home at a time and can keep them for two weeks. If you haven't finished reading them after the two weeks, ask Mrs. Sanders or Mrs. Watson and they will renew them for you.

What happens in the Library after school?

The library is open daily after school (except for Tuesdays) and there will also be extra-curricular clubs for you to take part in throughout the year.



What else is happening in the Library?

Sept 23 – Celebration event for Y7s who completed the Summer Reading Challenge

6th Oct – Mad Hatter's Tea Party

23rd—26th October—Spooky Stories and Bonfire Tales

30th Jan—5thFeb—National Storytelling Week celebrations

7th March – World Book Day events all day

21st March – World Poetry Day celebrations

23rd April—World Book Night event

Activities, competitions and events also take place at other times during the school year – keep your eyes and ears open in assemblies, on Facebook and in the library itself.

Key library words to remember:

Loan means to borrow a book to take home with you

Return means to bring the book back when you have finished it

Renew means to extend the amount of time you are allowed to keep the book for, if you haven't finished reading it

All loans, returns and renewals MUST be completed via library staff – please don't take books home without having them scanned or return them straight back to the shelves – they must be scanned through the computer first!



The Reading Cloud



Here at Birches, we use software called The Reading Cloud to manage our library system. As well as allowing us to check books in and out so that students can take them home to read, The Reading Cloud offers a host of interactive features so that students can get involved from home. From searching the library catalogue, to reserving those books they are yearning to read, there really is something for everyone to have a go at. Students also have the opportunity to write their own reviews for their favourite books and we publish one of these to the site each week for everyone to read!

<https://www.readingcloud.net/>

Book Bingo

This one is optional, so please don't feel you have to take part!

All you have to do is grab your bingo card from one of the librarians, find the Book Bingo section of the library and select the first book you would like to read from there. Each time you finish a book from the selection, cross it off on your bingo card, fill in a page of your reading journal and then work towards crossing off a whole line of books. Students who have crossed off the most books by the end of the year will be in with a chance to attend our amazing library trip (venue TBC).

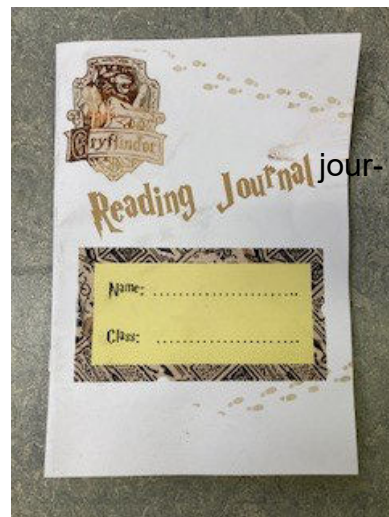


Library Lessons

Every student in KS3 will receive at least one library lesson each fortnight. Individual reading ages will be assessed at three key points during the school year, with parents being updated on their child's current level and progress between the tests as a matter of course. The results of the reading tests will act as a guide for us, as library professionals, to be able to recommend age and ability-appropriate reading material for each child. This ensures students are receiving the bespoke support and guidance that they will need to really fly with their reading here at Birches.

What will my library lessons look like?

During the course of the year, you will work towards completing your very own reading journal. Each time a book is finished, you will choose one of the activities inside the journal to fill in as evidence that you have read and understood the book. You will be able to work towards bronze, silver and gold awards, for which a certificate and a prize will be awarded at each milestone. Gold award holders will also have the chance to join us on an exciting trip at the end of the school year!



Reading Houses

On arrival at Birches, you will be allocated to one of our 4 reading houses, each named after a famous author: Deborah Ellis, David Walliams, J.K. Rowling or Benjamin Zephaniah. This will be your house for your whole time at Birches. Each term, we hold a competition to see which house has read the most books between them (all the teachers and staff are involved too!) and there is a small prize for every member of the winning house that has contributed at least one book during that term (plus the glory of being in the winning house!)

Library Assistants

For the first time this year, we are offering 10 selected students the chance to become Library Assistants, helping out in the library during lunchtimes. This is sure to be an exciting opportunity, with a special Christmas trip planned for successful students.

For parents - some simple ways to encourage your child to read more:

- ◆ Turn the subtitles on when watching TV and films from time to time
- ◆ For gaming fans, choose games with wordy instructions and/or lots of text popping up on the screen
- ◆ Leave lots of reading material lying around – even a favourite takeaway menu, or a recipe card, is still reading!
- ◆ Sports fans will enjoy the sports pages and match reviews from the newspaper
- ◆ Begin with your child's hobbies and interests and help them to choose a book containing these themes
- ◆ Lots of popular TV shows, films and games have book tie-ins – this can be a great place to start
- ◆ Let your children see you reading as often as possible and talk to them about what you, and they, are reading
- ◆ Sign the family up to your local library
- ◆ Graphic novels, comics and magazines can all be great ways to encourage more reluctant readers
- ◆ Try to avoid phrases like “You should be reading something more challenging.” Trying to be too prescriptive with reading can deter children from reading
- ◆ Gentle encouragement and allowing children to choose their own books tends to work best – never belittle their book choices!
- ◆ Read together - sharing a book with parents and siblings doesn't have an age limit. Schedule in a weekly story, maybe with a hot chocolate and cosy lighting – what a treat!