

Literacy - Intent

At Queen Elizabeth's, we promote a literacy community where every individual emerges as a lifelong communicator, empowered with the confidence to express themselves through reading, writing, and oracy.

Grounded in the value of hope, we believe that literacy opens doors to endless possibilities, fuels curiosity for the world, and enables our students to imagine and shape brighter futures. We recognise that resilience is built through language - the ability to persevere, reflect, and grow through communication - and we strive to equip our learners with the tools to navigate an ever-changing world through words.

At QE, it is our priority that all teachers embrace their role as teachers of literacy. All departments have a responsibility to promote oracy, reading and writing in relation to their subject, so that our students may learn to (for example) write like historians, speak like geographers, or examine as mathematicians. We are committed to cultivating a strong sense of community through shared literacy practices, where staff and students collectively celebrate the power of language to connect, collaborate and create.

We recognise the importance of fostering an environment where enjoyment and excitement for reading are paramount, encouraging students to explore literature as a source of pleasure, comfort and inspiration. Through a varied reading curriculum, we proudly promote empathy and respect for diverse voices, creating a safe space where all learners can express their identity and engage with the richness of human experience.

Together, we commit to nurturing readers for life—resilient, hopeful and compassionate individuals—who are inspired to engage meaningfully with the world around them and become confident, articulate communicators in all aspects of their lives.

Reading at QE

Reading for Pleasure: Library

The mission of our library is to foster a love of reading, inspire intellectual curiosity and allow students to become critical thinkers and lifelong learners. The library supports the academic, social and emotional growth of all students, providing an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and respect for different perspectives with material that allows students to explore a wide range of ideas and voices. As well as regularly surveying students for their book recommendations, we have a small group of student librarians who support the LRC Manager to select books that represent the interests of our community. We use the knowledge and expertise of our staff across departments to create a collection of academic non-fiction to support our young learners with their studies, as well as a growing number of resources to aid emotional wellbeing. Students are also invited to attend a weekly book club to promote the joy of reading and discussing the written word.

Reading for Pleasure: DEAR

DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) is a dedicated reading initiative designed to foster a school-wide culture of reading for pleasure. By setting aside a daily twenty-five minute, protected time during the school day when all students and staff stop their usual activities to read, DEAR encourages reading as a valued and enjoyable habit.

Its core aim is to improve literacy, concentration, and empathy by encouraging students to immerse themselves in sustained reading. DEAR also helps to normalise reading as part of everyday life, creating a shared, community-focused experience that supports wider academic success and personal development. In DEAR, tutors also provide a focus on vocabulary instruction, discussing new and interesting words and phrases as reading evolves.

At QE, we have a growing number of books that are available for students to read with their tutors for the duration of the academic year. We have used library loan data and researched top-rated fiction in the wider community to carefully select books that are engaging, relevant and up-to-date across a range of genres. Students can engage in discussions around themes found within their books, challenging them to reflect on all aspects of our complex society in a safe environment.

A copy of our current DEAR reading list can be found here: [DEAR Reading List 24-25](#)

The DEAR curriculum complements and extends the thematic focus of our English provision, centring on universal ideas such as identity, society, relationships, and power. This coherence reinforces students' ability to make meaningful connections across their learning while promoting a broader appreciation of literature beyond set texts.

In Year 9, we prioritise building positive reading habits through whole-class novels such as Noughts and Crosses, selected to echo and enrich the study of Romeo and Juliet. Later in the year, I Am Malala introduces real-world issues of justice, voice, and resilience, deepening students' awareness of global narratives. In the summer term, students take part in a reading competition and engage with diverse texts that explore themes such as race, grief, and oppression—laying the groundwork for confident, empathetic reading.

In Year 10, students are given greater autonomy to explore fiction within thematic frameworks, allowing them to develop genre preferences and sustained reading habits. In Year 11, DEAR supports GCSE study with targeted texts including Gothic short stories, helping students access key themes in their studies while introducing them to genre conventions that link to A-Level English Literature.

A copy of our DEAR curriculum map can be found below:

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 9	Noughts and Crosses		I Am Malala		Choice of: Animal Farm, Refugee Boy The Princess and the Hustler, 1984, Anita and Me, To Kill A Mockingbird, The Book Thief, The Woman in Black <i>Completion of summer reading challenge within tutor groups</i>	
Year 10	Choice from: 57 Bus, Songlight, Impossible Creatures, Salt to the Sea, The Power, Northern Lights, Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, The Great Gatsby				Choice from: 57 Bus, Songlight, Impossible Creatures, Salt to the Sea, The Power, Northern Lights, Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, The Great Gatsby <i>Completion of summer reading challenge within tutor groups</i>	
Year 11	Gothic Short Stories Use of Sparx Reader to reread A Christmas Carol and Macbeth				Public Examinations	

Reading Interventions

Lexonic - Lexonik Leap is a teaching programme that covers essential areas of literacy required across the curriculum and at every level. The programme develops students' ability to detect and manipulate sounds within the English language and develop their oracy, reading and spelling. A student is eligible for a diagnostic screening if their reading age is 18 months lower than their chronological age. Students work in small groups to work on any gaps in their literacy skills over a maximum period of 6 weeks (meeting for 2 sessions a week). It is our aim that engagement with this programme will develop literacy skills and improve their reading age and confidence.

Paired Reading Programme - As part of our commitment to ensuring no child is left behind with literacy, we have a group of dedicated sixth form students who deliver 1:1 reading support to a select group of Year 9 and 10 students. This intervention takes place in the library during morning tutor time and selected students are able to select an age appropriate book of their choice to enjoy with their reading mentor.

Reading in the Classroom

Sparx Reader - Sparx Reader is an adaptive reading platform that supports literacy development by linking student engagement with reading for pleasure. This enables us to measure progress through baseline testing and reading age tracking. In the autumn terms, students sit a baseline assessment to determine each student's reading level, which then offers a personalised reading journey (via the programme itself), recommending texts matched to student ability and interests. As students read and answer comprehension questions, the platform tracks their progress and adjusts the challenge level accordingly. The English department sets weekly homework targets - 300 Sparx Reader Points (SRP) - to build consistent reading habits, while the wide range of texts encourages autonomy and enjoyment in reading. Within the platform, "Gold Reader" status provides an aspirational reading goal for students, recognising high levels of commitment and comprehension through a rewarding opportunity to select the texts that are read more freely.

Writing

At Queen Elizabeth's, we believe that high-quality writing is not just a skill - it's a vital part of learning across every subject. That's why we prioritise frequent, well-structured opportunities for writing as a key feature of our teaching and learning approach.

Through extended writing, students learn to organise and articulate their thinking, make sense of complex ideas, and express themselves with clarity and purpose. These skills are essential for academic success, but they also prepare young people to engage confidently with the world beyond the classroom.

Our approach to writing is grounded in evidence-based practices and aligned with the Walkthrus teaching framework developed by Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli. Teachers across departments follow the following principles for explicit writing instruction. This includes:

- Modelling high-quality examples
- Scaffolding tasks to support every learner
- Providing targeted feedback to help students refine and improve their work

By embedding these strategies into our daily practice, we ensure that all students, regardless of their starting point, can complete extended written tasks. Whether writing up a science investigation, analysing a poem, or crafting an argument in history, our students are supported to communicate via the written word with confidence.

Oracy

At Queen Elizabeth's, we believe that the ability to speak clearly, confidently, and thoughtfully is essential for success in school and in life. That's why oracy (learning through talk) is embedded in our curriculum.

We provide structured opportunities for students to discuss ideas, debate important issues, and articulate their thinking out loud. These experiences not only help students develop strong communication skills but also deepen their understanding of subject content.

Through classroom talk, students build vocabulary, practise respectful listening, and learn to express their views with clarity and confidence. Our school promotes a culture of purposeful discussion where every student is encouraged to take part and every voice is valued.

Whether sharing ideas with a partner, contributing to class discussions, or preparing for formal presentations, students at QE are supported to become articulate, thoughtful communicators ready to engage with the world around them.