



Improving Literacy at Headlands School

Rationale

At Headlands School, we believe that reading and literacy development should be central to our curricula. The acquisition and mastery of reading skills not only empowers individuals with the ability to comprehend written information but also enables them to engage with the world in profound ways. For many of the students joining the school, a deficit in this area poses a significant barrier to learning - one which we should relentlessly endeavour to remove.

First and foremost, reading instils a sense of **pride** in our students. As they navigate through texts, deciphering words and extracting meaning, students experience a growing sense of accomplishment. Success in reading builds their self-confidence and self-esteem, fostering a positive self-image that extends beyond the realm of literacy. By cultivating pride in their reading abilities, we help students recognise their own capabilities, encouraging them to take on new challenges and pursue their goals with enthusiasm.

Furthermore, reading nurtures **aspirations** and opens doors to countless opportunities. Proficiency in literacy equips students with the tools necessary to access a wealth of knowledge, ranging from classic literature to scientific research, historical accounts, and contemporary ideas. Through reading, students gain exposure to diverse perspectives, cultures, and ways of thinking. This exposure broadens their horizons, sparks their curiosity, and fuels their aspirations to explore new fields, engage in critical thinking, and contribute meaningfully to society. By integrating reading into the educational fabric, we can inspire students to dream big, set ambitious goals, and strive for personal and academic excellence.

In addition, reading and literacy development cultivates **respect**, both for oneself and others. By immersing students in literary works, they develop empathy and an understanding of different lived experiences. Literature serves as a window into the lives of characters from diverse backgrounds, promoting empathy and compassion. Students learn to appreciate the power of words, recognising that everyone's voice and story are worthy of respect. Reading and discussing texts in a collaborative environment also encourages respectful dialogue, where students learn to value differing opinions and engage in thoughtful exchanges. In this way, we are able to foster a culture of respect that extends beyond the classroom, empowering students to become compassionate and considerate citizens.

Ultimately, by making reading and literacy development central to education, we can provide students with the foundation they need to succeed academically, personally, and as responsible members of society.

“Reading is the master skill of school. Skilled reading, writing and talking is crucial for our students to succeed.”

Alex Quigley

Phase One (Current Practice)

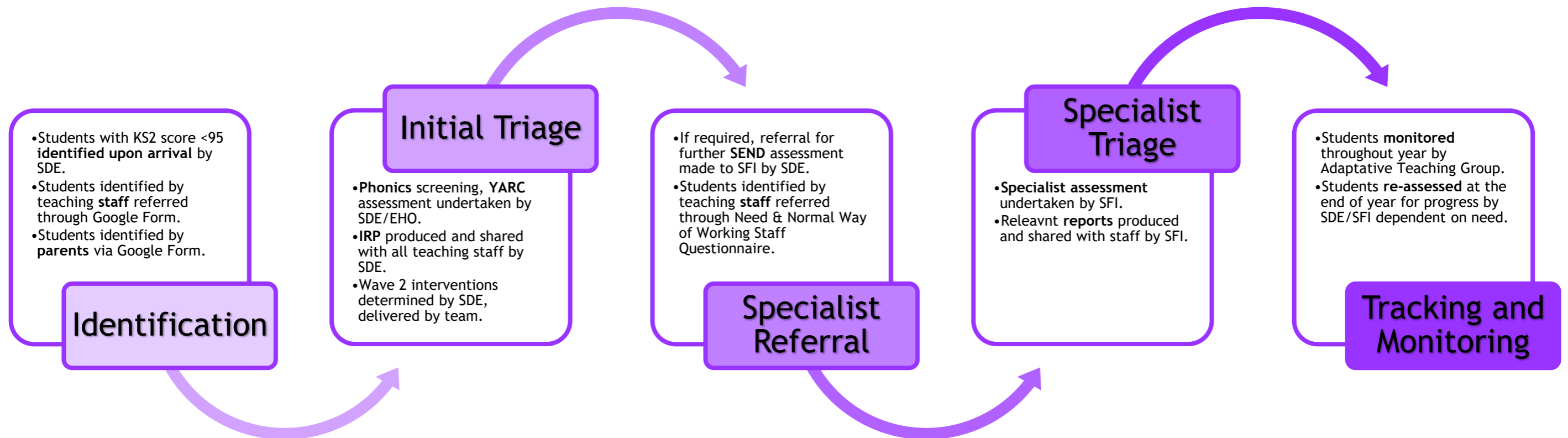
Priority	What do we do?	How do we do it?	Why do we do it?
Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum	<p>Students are given opportunities to explicitly engage with Tier 3 vocabulary in all subject areas. This is driven through two key stratagem: Rapid Reads and Lexicons for Learners.</p> <p>Additionally, Reading Like a... documentation sits behind each curriculum area's literacy planning, where key aspects of disciplinary literacy are defined, explored and outlined.</p>	<p>Rapid Reads are administered one per half term in all subject areas. Texts are chosen to be matched to expected reading ages, with adapted questions offered to allow readers at all levels to access the material.</p> <p>Tier 3 vocabulary is presented as Lexicons for Learners. Each curriculum area has determined a list of ten words for each KS3 year group which are essential in unlocking the curriculum. Activities for elaborative rehearsal of these key terms are planned in to the curriculum.</p>	<p>Disciplinary literacy goes beyond general reading and writing abilities by focusing on subject-specific literacy practices and strategies. By prioritising disciplinary literacy, we can help students understand and engage with the specialised texts, language, and processes of various subjects, enabling them to navigate disciplinary content, analyse complex information, and communicate effectively within each academic domain. This approach fosters deep content knowledge, critical thinking, and prepares students for academic and career success in specific fields.</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2002), <i>Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction</i>. EEF (2021), <i>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools (Guidance Report)</i>. Quigley, Alex (2020), <i>Closing the Reading Gap</i>. Shanahan, T & C (2012), <i>What is Disciplinary Literacy and Why Does it Matter</i>
Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject	<p>Staff create explicit opportunities within the curriculum where key Tier 2 & 3 vocabulary is taught. These are mapped into MTPs with a conscious effort for them to be relevant. A range of strategies and methods for this are utilised across the school. Make it Stick activities used to promote retention of all words taught.</p> <p>In addition to this, Forensic Reading is delivered once a week for one hour to all KS3 students. This provides an excellent vehicle for targeted vocabulary instruction - particularly in terms of incidental practice.</p>	<p>Strategies for the explicit teaching of Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frayer models; Quigley approach - Select, Explain, Explore, Consolidate; Incidental practice (words in context) mapped into the curriculum; High quality oral language; Shared definitions of key Tier 2 vocabulary to encourage a shared lexicon across the school; Explicit, direct instruction (particular focus in Forensic Reading); Cultivating 'word consciousness' - discussing patterns, etymology, exposure in context; The 4 Ps of vocabulary - plan, pre-teach, provide direct instruction, provide opportunities for wider reading. <p>Lexia is used to support further development of students' vocabulary knowledge.</p>	<p>Targeted vocabulary instruction helps students acquire and use specialised terms and concepts specific to each subject, enabling them to grasp and articulate complex ideas effectively. To thrive personally and academically, learners need the vocabulary to express themselves appropriately in both contexts. This is a pivotal life skill as well as one which accelerates academic progress.</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2002), <i>Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction</i>. Milton & Treffers-Daller (2013), <i>Vocabulary size: revisited</i>. Murphy, James and Diane, (2018) <i>Thinking Reading</i>. Oxford Language Report 2020 Coxhead, Averil (2006), <i>The essentials of teaching academic vocabulary</i>.
Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts	<p>The main vehicle for developing reading of complex texts is that of Forensic Reading. The texts here offer a high level of challenge but are taught with a high level of scaffolding, allowing learners to access complex concepts as well as complex language. This is further supported by age-appropriate disciplinary Rapid Reads throughout year.</p> <p>There is a conscious effort to consider how word reading and language comprehension work together to build reading comprehension and that this encompasses everything from phonology to inference at word and text level and to prosodic features such as fluency and tone.</p>	<p>Strategies for developing the ability to read complex texts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality teaching of Forensic Reading; Mapping of reading rich curriculum; Reading skills (corner stones) defined; Consider the 'Arduous Eight' when planning opportunities for reading (Quigley); Rewordify to consider how complex ideas can be expressed more simply; Specific activities intended to activate schema prior to reading. 	<p>Reading complex texts challenges students to analyse, synthesise, and evaluate information, fostering critical thinking and deepening their understanding of complex concepts. It is a way for us to accumulate and share essential information and knowledge of our culture, providing a database for humankind, one which everyone can tap into. Exposure to complex texts also expands students' vocabulary, enhances their reading fluency, and develops their ability to extract meaning from challenging passages. By developing proficiency in reading complex texts, we can empower students to navigate academic, professional, and personal endeavours with confidence and intellectual agility.</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Murphy, James and Diane, (2018), <i>Thinking Reading</i>. Quigley, Alex (2020), <i>Closing the Vocabulary Gap</i>.
Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students	<p>Upon arrival at the school, students with scaled scores of less than <95 are identified and considered for assessment and subsequent intervention.</p> <p>Those who are identified as requiring intervention beyond QFT are placed into one to one, or small group intervention, which takes place during their Forensic Reading lesson, or tutor time dependent on need and age group. These sessions focus on developing inference and comprehension skills, as well as phonics where necessary and are targeted at stage not age.</p> <p>Students may also be referred by staff members who have identified issues within lessons. This is done via a Google Form (link below).</p>	<p>The process for supporting struggling students is detailed below. In addition to this, the responsible SLT member leads CPD and development of the staff team, encouraging inter-disciplinary as well as disciplinary development for all students, particularly this cohort, who are deemed to be those working at the lowest levels.</p> <p>See page 4 for further details.</p>	<p>By providing high-quality literacy interventions for struggling students we can ensure equitable access to education and support their academic growth. These interventions target specific reading and writing difficulties, addressing skill gaps and helping struggling students develop foundational literacy abilities. Through the implementation of tailored interventions, we can prevent learning gaps from widening and provide struggling students with the necessary tools and strategies to improve their reading and writing proficiency. High-quality literacy interventions not only boost students' confidence and motivation but also enhance their overall academic performance and future opportunities.</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DfE, (2015) EEF (2021), <i>Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools (Guidance Report)</i>. McLaughlin et al, (2014), <i>OECD</i>. World Literacy Foundation (2015)

Phase Two (Next Steps)

Priority	What do we do?	How do we do it?	Why do we do it?
Break down complex writing tasks	<p>The Writing Sequence provides a structure for sequencing extended writing tasks. This ten stage process is taught and modelled, and provides a scaffold to increase students' confidence as well as their performance.</p> <p>In addition to this, a bank of strategies from across the curriculum has been collated and all staff have access to this for use in their classrooms. Emphasis is placed on use of these, and implementation of other strands, when QA cycle is completed, with particular attention given to metacognitive teacher modelling.</p>	<p>Strategies for breaking down complex writing tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking down of the question (linked with Tier 2 vocabulary teaching). • The Writing Sequence; • Oral composition leading on to transcription; • Single paragraph outline - topic sentence, supporting details, conclusion sentence; • Essay frames; • Expanding boxes; • Structure strips; • Chunking; • Dual coding; • • WAGOLLS; • Mapping of writing skills into English curriculum and shared with school • Considered for when and how scaffolding is removed. 	<p>By breaking down complex writing tasks into manageable components, students are provided with a clear roadmap and scaffolded support that promotes their ability to comprehend, plan, organize, and execute their writing effectively. This approach not only reduces the potential of feeling overwhelmed and frustrated, but also fosters a deeper grasp of writing concepts, enhances critical thinking, and promotes student autonomy and confidence in tackling complex writing assignments.</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hochman & Wexler (2017), <i>The Writing Revolution</i>. • Quigley, Alex (2020), <i>Closing the Writing Gap</i>. • Rosenshine, B. (2012), <i>Principles of Instruction</i>.
Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject	<p>Through high quality CPD, staff are equipped with a number of stratagem for development of this strand. However, all stratagem provide a focus upon “during reading” activities which are tailored to specific subject disciplinary needs.</p> <p>Again, emphasis is placed upon metacognitive teacher modelling of these kinds of writing tasks through I Do, We Do, You Do. This is to ensure that the covertly complex process of writing can become more explicit to students.</p>	<p>Strategies for combining writing instruction with reading include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During-reading activities which encourage active engagement; • Top Ten Grammar Moves (Quigley); • Think, Pair, Share, Write • Sentence Crafting: combining, expanding, shrinking, signposting; • The (Not So) Simple View of Writing: Explicit teaching of text generation (ideas, words and sentences), transcription (spelling, typing and handwriting) and executive function (attention, planning, reviewing and monitoring); • Sedita's ‘Writing Rope’ • Writing about what you read (and modelling how this is done): personal reactions, personal interpretations, summaries, note taking, creating questions, answering questions; • Cornell note-taking; • LEAD process. 	<p>Research demonstrates that “reading and writing works best when one process fuels or informs the other”. Therefore, by giving explicit consideration of decoding and encoding we can establish a kind of overlearning which catalyses progress. Additionally, by providing opportunities for students to write about what they’ve read, we can amplify motivation, ensure active engagement, allow time for clarification and make visible the comprehension which has been established.</p> <p>More than any other strand, this allows learners to build literacy skills that are relevant beyond the classroom and long into their lifetimes.</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham & Herbert, (2010), <i>Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading</i>. • Halliday & Webster, (2010), <i>On Language and Linguistics</i>.
Provide opportunities for structured talk	<p>MTP planning makes specific reference to oracy skills which are being developed. Opportunities to cover the seven main strands (recitation, exploratory, Socratic, dialogic, accountable, metacognitive, self-talk) are provided across the course of a year in every subject area.</p> <p>Voice 21 provides a framework for the planning, delivery and assessment of oracy activities, which focuses on four key areas: physical, linguistic, cognitive and social & emotional. By demarcating the different skills required, learners can be more confident and successful.</p>	<p>Strategies to provide opportunities for structured talk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality teacher oracy; • Whole school mechanisms for setting expectations; • Oral composition (also supports previous strands); • Specific scaffolding of oral activities e.g. sentence stems, discourse markers etc. • Before, during and after writing talking tasks; • Cue cards to stimulate discussion; • Voice 21 success criteria; • Voice 21 Talking Points; • Debate lessons; • ABC feedback - agree with, build upon or challenge; • Harkness models; • Reciprocal Reading; • Listening Triads; • Accountable talk; • Repeat correct phrasing; • Upgrade learner talk; • Paraphrasing others' responses; • Images to structure talk. 	<p>Through structured talk, students engage in purposeful conversations, collaborate with peers, articulate their thoughts, and actively listen to others. These interactions promote deeper understanding, encourage diverse perspectives, and foster the development of empathy and respect. By participating in structured talk, students gain valuable skills for effective communication, problem-solving, and social engagement, preparing them for success in academic, personal, and professional contexts. In addition, oracy has shown to be particularly beneficial for low-attaining learners.</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander, R., (2008), <i>Towards Dialogic Teaching: Rethinking Classroom Talk</i>. • APPG, (2021), <i>Speak for Change Report</i> • Jay T, Willis B, Thomas P, et al. (2017) <i>Dialogic Teaching: Evaluation report and executive summary</i>. • Mercer, N. (2015), <i>Why Oracy Must be in the Classroom</i>. • Vygotsky, L. (1934/1986), <i>Thought and Language</i>.

Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students.

If a student has received a **scaled score of <95**, it indicates that they are working **significantly below the expected standard** and are very likely to need some additional help. At this level, students are **initially triaged** using the *York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension* and a *Fresh Start: Phonics Screening*. Following this, an **Individual Reading Plan** is drawn up to inform **QFT strategies**, and details student voice and staff observations (example included below). Subsequent **intervention** is then **planned and implemented** based on the **area of need**. If required, referral for **specialist triage** is submitted alongside. A **collaborative approach** alongside SEND specialist staff allows for each individual to receive tailored support.



If you are concerned that your child has issues with their reading, please click the link and complete the referral form:

Parent Referral Link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdpC_iX9CNjNB4PtYg4elxQQYjTVdC4WN_RDti4ai0Dcl0jzw/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0

IRP Glossary of Terms

addition	Adding in words where they do not appear in the text.
Alan Peat sentences	A set of specified sentence structures which can be taught to students in order to improve their composition.
composition	The process of composing from word, to sentence, to text level.
context	The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood.
decoding	Decoding is the process of translating print into speech by rapidly matching a letter or combination of letters (graphemes) to their sounds (phonemes) and recognizing the patterns that make syllables and words. There is an area in the brain that deals with language processing and does this process automatically.
DRTA	The Directed Reading Thinking Activity is a comprehension strategy that guides students in asking questions about a text, making predictions, and then reading to confirm or refute their predictions.
dual coding	Dual coding is the idea of using different types of stimuli to help learners encode information in their brains more effectively, enabling it to be more easily retrieved later. In the classroom, the main two types of stimuli that are used are visual and verbal.
etymology	The origin of a word and the historical development of its meaning.
inference	A guess that you make or an opinion that you form based on the information that you have read; sometimes known as “reading between the lines”.
mispronunciation	Incorrect pronunciation of a word.
morphology	The study of the forms of words, in particular inflected forms, which are modified by prefixes and suffixes.
omission	The action of skipping over or leaving out words when reading a text.
paraphrasing	Express the meaning of (something written or spoken) using different words, especially to achieve greater clarity, or simplification.
refusal	Refusing to read the word, even when prompted.
retrieval	Retrieval is a reading skill and often one of the first skills to be developed by a child in school. Children have to pick out information from a text in order to answer questions about it. Retrieving and recording information and identifying key details from fiction and non-fiction is an important skill for students to learn.
reversal	Writing or reading letters backwards, or switching letters in a word.
scanning	Scanning is reading rapidly in order to find specific facts.
schematic knowledge	All the knowledge we have relating to a topic, its surrounding context and everything it encompasses. We can activate pre-existing schematic knowledge to help us make sense of new knowledge within that schema.
skimming	Skimming is reading rapidly in order to get a general overview of the material.
substitution	Using the wrong words or letters when they are reading or spelling.
SWRT	The Single Word Reading Test provides standard scores and age equivalent scores for single word reading skills.
transcription	Transcription is the process of copying a segment of text. The text may be offered orally, or in print. Differs from composition in that its main focus is spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting.
YARC	The York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension is a one-to-one, diagnostic reading assessment that enables teachers to assess students’ reading and comprehension skills, from an early age through to the end of secondary school.

Name: Student A
Date of Assessment: 26/09/2024

Initial Triage

Information Gathering:																
Chronological Age at Assessment: 11:10																
Fresh Start Assessment: Part 4																
YARC Standard Scores: SWRT = <70, Reading Rate = <70, Comprehension = 97, Accuracy = 72, Fluency = <70																
Pupil Voice: Student A is very vocal around her reading ability and will regularly state that she cannot read. She does not read outside of school and often. Her spare time is mostly spent at dancing and she thinks that she would perhaps like to read some texts, or stories, that are about this topic. She cannot recall any examples of texts she has read, either personally or in a school setting, where she feels she enjoyed/understood them.																
Comments/Observations: Student A's perceptions of her ability do not seem to pose a barrier to her ability to develop; she is keen to improve and sees that this will help her across the board. I have often observed that she will try to avoid any activities which require her to read in lessons (potential use of toilet pass or time out). Her resilience is incredibly low and instead of even trying to sound out words, she will simply skip them/refuse them. However, if supported and really encouraged she can sound out simple words she is unfamiliar with.																
Issues:																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student A is reading at the level of a 7-year-old, this places her in the bottom 2% of readers for her age group. ACEs have almost certainly affected her primary schooling and she has large gaps in her knowledge. Additionally, Student A's SEMH needs could be affecting her executive functioning skills such as organisation, planning, and time management, which are essential for effective reading. Phonic screening suggests anything beyond single letter sounds is posing an issue – even most common digraphs (sh, th, ch, qu, ng, ck) were not secure. Accuracy score is incredibly low – in a text of 179 words, Student A was unable to read 44 words, equating to around 25% of the overall text. Her accuracy is affected by problems as noted in the table. These all contribute to a significant issue with her ability to read even simple texts. Student A's comprehension score was much better when reading a simple fiction text about a family on holiday, as opposed to a simple disciplinary text about bees. When she can decode words, she generally understands meaning. As she does not present with obvious behaviour issues, Student A's lack of ability can sometimes go under the radar. 																
<table border="1"> <caption>Analysis of reading errors (Supplementary passages only)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Total error type (summed across passages)</th> <th>Mispronunciations</th> <th>Substitutions</th> <th>Refusals</th> <th>Additions</th> <th>Omissions</th> <th>Reversals</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>% of total errors</td> <td>10.5%</td> <td>12.3%</td> <td>54.4%</td> <td>14.0%</td> <td>8.8%</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Total error type (summed across passages)	Mispronunciations	Substitutions	Refusals	Additions	Omissions	Reversals	% of total errors	10.5%	12.3%	54.4%	14.0%	8.8%	0.0%
Total error type (summed across passages)	Mispronunciations	Substitutions	Refusals	Additions	Omissions	Reversals										
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Intervention:																
Wave 1 (QFT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celery coloured overlay issued by SFI and should be used. Give Student A ample time to sound out words. Frequent "check ins" to establish understanding. Re-writing of text to aid understanding where possible (Rewordify – could be useful, Quillbot for paraphrasing also helpful). Pre-teaching of vocabulary essential to understanding. Gap fill exercises for recall of key vocabulary. Re-reading texts – first for general understanding then careful reading for meaning. Repeating back questions and instructions for clarity. Modelling of phonic decoding. Providing glossaries with simple definitions and/or visual cues. Provide multiple choice answers for comprehension questions. 	Wave 2 (Intervention) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part 1 phonics and subsequent modules – whilst Student A could name letters, sounds were insecure. Explicit teaching of the alphabetic code and dictionary skills. Drilling of sight words and common exception words. Reading practice with an adult – selection of "high/low" books for confidence. Lexia Power Up and supporting activities. 	SEND – SEMH Strategies to support Student A with her SEMH needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting clear targets based on amount of reading, or time spent reading. Small periods for each is best. Positivity and praise with persistent reinforcement of achievements (no matter how small). Use a timer to promote attention for a set amount of time. Discuss the task and the reading you are about to undertake before beginning the activity. Make the rationale for the reading clear – how will it support his learning/progress. Integrate social-emotional learning activities into reading instruction to help students develop self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, and empathy. For example, discussing characters' emotions and perspectives in a story can promote empathy and emotional understanding. 														

Rapid Reading

Rapid Reading is our **whole-school strategy** for explicitly developing reading skills and **disciplinary literacy** across all subject areas. Each half term, every curriculum area delivers a short, subject-specific text - known as a Rapid Read - designed to build students' confidence and fluency when engaging with academic reading.

Rapid Reads are deliberately **low-stakes but high-impact**: they typically take just 10-15 minutes of a lesson and are organised around the **cornerstones of reading skill** - understand, retrieve, sequence, analyse, infer, personal response, and context comprehension.

Questions are carefully crafted to develop these skills progressively, with tasks adapted to suit different reading levels.

Texts are selected to **“read around” the curriculum**, helping students encounter new disciplinary vocabulary and ideas in accessible, engaging ways. This both strengthens reading fluency and deepens subject knowledge, supporting students to make links between topics and build schema.

Staff are encouraged to scaffold Rapid Reads initially using “I do, we do, you do” modelling and glossaries, gradually reducing support as students grow in confidence. The approach is designed to be sustainable and impactful: it builds **regular reading into lessons** without displacing curriculum content, while nurturing students' comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and critical thinking

Through Rapid Reading, every subject becomes a space where reading is valued, practised, and made visible - helping all students to access, understand, and thrive in the rich texts of the curriculum.

Rapid Reading

(A Christmas Carol)

The Poor Law of 1834 was a law passed in Britain to deal with **poverty**. Before this, each parish (local area) helped poor people by giving them money or food. But many people believed that this system was too generous and made the poor lazy. The new Poor Law changed this by setting up **workhouses**, where poor people had to go if they wanted help.

Workhouses were **harsh places**. People had to work long hours doing difficult jobs, such as breaking stones or picking apart old ropes. Families were separated, and conditions were designed to be unpleasant to discourage people from seeking help unless they were truly desperate. The idea behind the workhouses was that people would only turn to them as a last resort.








Charles Dickens **strongly opposed** the Poor Law. In his novel *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens **uses the character** of Ebenezer Scrooge to show his feelings about how the poor were treated. In Stave One, when two men visit Scrooge to ask for donations to help the poor, he refuses and says, "Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?" This reflects his cold attitude towards the poor and his belief that the workhouses are enough to support them.

Dickens wanted readers to see Scrooge as a symbol of the uncaring attitudes many rich people had during that time. He uses **Scrooge's words** to **criticize the Poor Law**, showing how it lacked compassion for those in need. As the story progresses, Scrooge changes his view and becomes kinder, which shows how Dickens believed that people could learn to care for others and help the poor in a more humane way.

In summary, the Poor Law of 1834 is important in *A Christmas Carol* because it highlights how society treated poor people during Dickens' time, and Scrooge's initial attitude reflects those harsh views.

The Poor Law

(A Christmas Carol)

Skill	Timing	Question
 UNDERSTAND	3 mins	What was the Poor Law of 1834, and how did it change how poor people were treated in Britain?
 SEQUENCE & ORGANISATION	3 mins	Place the following events in the order they appear in the text: 1. Scrooge refusing to donate to charity. 2. The introduction of the Poor Law of 1834. 3. A description of workhouse conditions. 4. Scrooge mentioning prisons and workhouses.
 RETRIEVE	2 mins	Name two conditions that made workhouses unpleasant for the poor.
 ANALYSE	5 mins	How does Dickens use Scrooge's reaction to the charity collectors to show his attitude toward the poor?
 INFER	5 mins	What does Dickens think about the Poor Law of 1834, based on Scrooge's attitude in Stave One?
 PERSONAL RESPONSE	5 mins	Do you think Scrooge was right to say that the workhouses were enough to help the poor? Why or why not?
 CONTEXT COMPREHENSION	5 mins	How do the social and historical factors of the 1830s help explain Dickens' criticism of the Poor Law in <i>A Christmas Carol</i> ?

Forensic Reading: Deep Texts, Rich Talk, Broadened Horizons

Forensic Reading is our approach to reading that goes well beyond simply understanding texts—it purposefully develops students’ **oracy**, **vocabulary**, and **cultural capital**. Over KS3, students engage with complex, high-quality texts through thematic strands (e.g. Power & Conflict; Women, Suffrage & Misogyny; Journeys & Futures; Fragile Earth; Secrets & Lies; The Spirit of Life), each chosen to challenge and inspire.

- **Oracy:** Students are given structured opportunities to discuss, debate and analyse reading material. Planned talk within lessons supports listening skills, confidence, and the ability to articulate ideas with clarity.
- **Vocabulary:** The chosen texts are rich in sophisticated language, grammar and syntax; students are supported to notice, explore and use Tier-2 and Tier-3 vocabulary. Contextual glossaries, discussion of authorial choices, and close reading help embed new words and refine students’ precision in reading and writing.
- **Cultural Capital:** Forensic Reading exposes students to a broad range of human experiences, perspectives and global issues they might not otherwise encounter. This expands students’ understanding of the world, helping them to become more informed, empathetic, and reflective citizens. We believe this knowledge and awareness form part of what students need to succeed not just academically, but socially and culturally.

In sum, Forensic Reading helps us ensure that students don’t just read - they encounter challenge, develop voice, broaden their understanding, and leave KS3 better prepared for the reading, discussion and comprehension demands of GCSE, A Level and life beyond school.



	Secrets & Lies	Power & Conflict	Journeys & Futures	Women, Suffrage & Misogyny	Fragile Earth	Spirit of Life
Year 7	The Lie Tree - Hardinge	Jane Eyre - Brontë	There Will Come Soft Rains - Bradbury	Of Mice and Men - Steinbeck	Human Universe - Cox	A Long Way Home - Brierley
Year 8	The Sniper - O'Flaherty	The Book Thief - Zusak	Pedestrian - Bradbury	My Last Duchess - Browning	Scourge of the Oceans - Harvey/Attenborough	Iqbal - D'Adamo
Year 9	The Darkness Out There - Lively	Extracts from Speeches - Biden, Harris, Yousafzai	Life of Pi - Martel	At Home with Mr Sticky Fingers - Long	A Song of Myself - Whitman	The Fault in Our Stars - Green



READ ALL ABOUT IT!



SEPTEMBER

This month, step into Roald Dahl's world of mischief, magic and marvellous stories! From Matilda to Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, we're bringing his books to life with golden ticket reading challenges, revolting rhyme performances and twisted tale writing fun.

Get ready for a scrumdiddlyumptious celebration of all things Dahl!



WHAT: ROALD DAHL DAY
WHEN: 13TH SEPTEMBER 2025

OCTOBER

BLACK HISTORY MONTH
WHAT: BLACK HISTORY MONTH
WHEN: ALL MONTH

This Black History Month, we're shining a spotlight on powerful voices, past and present. From gripping novels to inspiring true stories, discover books by Black authors that celebrate culture, courage and change.

Take part in our reading challenge, explore untold stories, and join the conversation through books that matter.

NOVEMBER

NON-FICTION NOVEMBER
WHAT: NON-FICTION NOVEMBER
WHEN: ALL MONTH

This month, we're diving into the world of non-fiction – from brave soldiers on the front line to bold changemakers who shaped the world. Explore real lives, true stories and powerful voices that help us remember, reflect, and learn.

Take on the non-fiction reading challenge and discover that truth is often just as gripping as fiction.



DECEMBER

FESTIVE READING CHALLENGE
WHAT: FESTIVE READING CHALLENGE
WHEN: ALL MONTH

This December, open a door to reading joy every day with our Festive Reading Advent! Behind each date is a new surprise - book recs, mini challenges, author quotes or mystery extracts - all designed to warm your winter and spark your imagination.



JANUARY

EVERY STORY STARTS SOMEWHERE...
WHAT: NATIONAL STORYTELLING WEEK
WHEN: LAST WEEK IN JANUARY 2026

Join us throughout January and get ready to share your voice during National Storytelling Week!

WHAT: NATIONAL STORYTELLING WEEK
WHEN: LAST WEEK IN JANUARY 2026

FEBRUARY

LUNAR NEW YEAR
WHAT: LUNAR NEW YEAR
WHEN: 17TH FEBRUARY 2026

Dive into tales of strength, speed and spirit, and discover stories from around the world where horses gallop off the page.

WHAT: LUNAR NEW YEAR
WHEN: 17TH FEBRUARY 2026



MARCH

NATIONAL CAREERS WEEK
WHAT: NATIONAL CAREERS WEEK
WHEN: 2ND - 7TH MARCH 2026

This month, we're celebrating inspiring women and ambitious futures! Discover powerful female voices in fiction and real-life trailblazers through biographies, articles and short stories. Explore big dreams—and the stories behind them.



WHAT: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
WHEN: 8TH MARCH 2026

APRIL

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY
WHAT: SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY
WHEN: 23RD APRIL 2026

This April, we're bringing the Bard to life! Celebrate Shakespeare's birthday by exploring his unforgettable characters, famous quotes and timeless stories. Whether you're reading a scene, watching a clip, or writing your own modern twist, there's something for everyone.

Join us in discovering why Shakespeare's words still wow the world today!



MAY

EUROVISION
WHAT: EUROVISION SONG CONTEST
WHEN: EVENTS THROUGHOUT MAY

Pick your favourite entry and write a review. Or discover words the English language has borrowed from around the continent.

Take time to read, reflect and recharge.

WHAT: MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK
WHEN: 11TH - 17TH MAY 2026

JUNE

PRIDE MONTH
WHAT: PRIDE MONTH
WHEN: EVENTS THROUGHOUT JUNE

We're celebrating stories that champion identity, love and acceptance. From joyful fiction to powerful real-life journeys, explore LGBTQ+ voices that inspire, educate and empower.



Discover new perspectives, share recommendations, and take pride in every page you read.

JULY

WORLD CUP OF BOOKS
WHAT: WORLD CUP OF BOOKS
WHEN: EVENTS THROUGHOUT JULY

Get ready for the ultimate literary showdown! This month, books will go head-to-head in a tournament of student votes. Will your favourite make it through to the final? Read, debate, and champion the titles you love as we crown our school's top book.

Only one can lift the trophy—who will you back?



AUGUST

READ IT YOUR WAY
WHAT: READ IT YOUR WAY
WHEN: SUMMER HOLIDAY CHALLENGE

This summer, we want to see where your reading takes you! Whether it's a beach abroad, your local park, or your nan's garden, take a book with you and snap a photo of yourself reading in a fun or unusual location.

From treehouses to tents, buses to the beach - anywhere goes! So get reading, get roaming, and read your way this summer.



Reading for Pleasure: Nurturing a Love of Reading

When it comes to reading for pleasure, we are committed to nurturing a lifelong love of reading. Our Read All About It calendar provides a vibrant, year-round framework designed to spark curiosity, celebrate diversity, and build a culture of joyful reading across the school community. Each month spotlights a different theme or event – from Roald Dahl Day and Black History Month to National Storytelling Week and World Book Day – offering students opportunities to explore new genres, discover inspiring voices, and connect through shared stories.

Through engaging challenges, author spotlights, creative activities, and cross-curricular links, the calendar helps students experience reading as an exciting, communal, and enriching activity. It also encourages them to see reading not only as a tool for learning but as a source of imagination, empathy, and enjoyment.

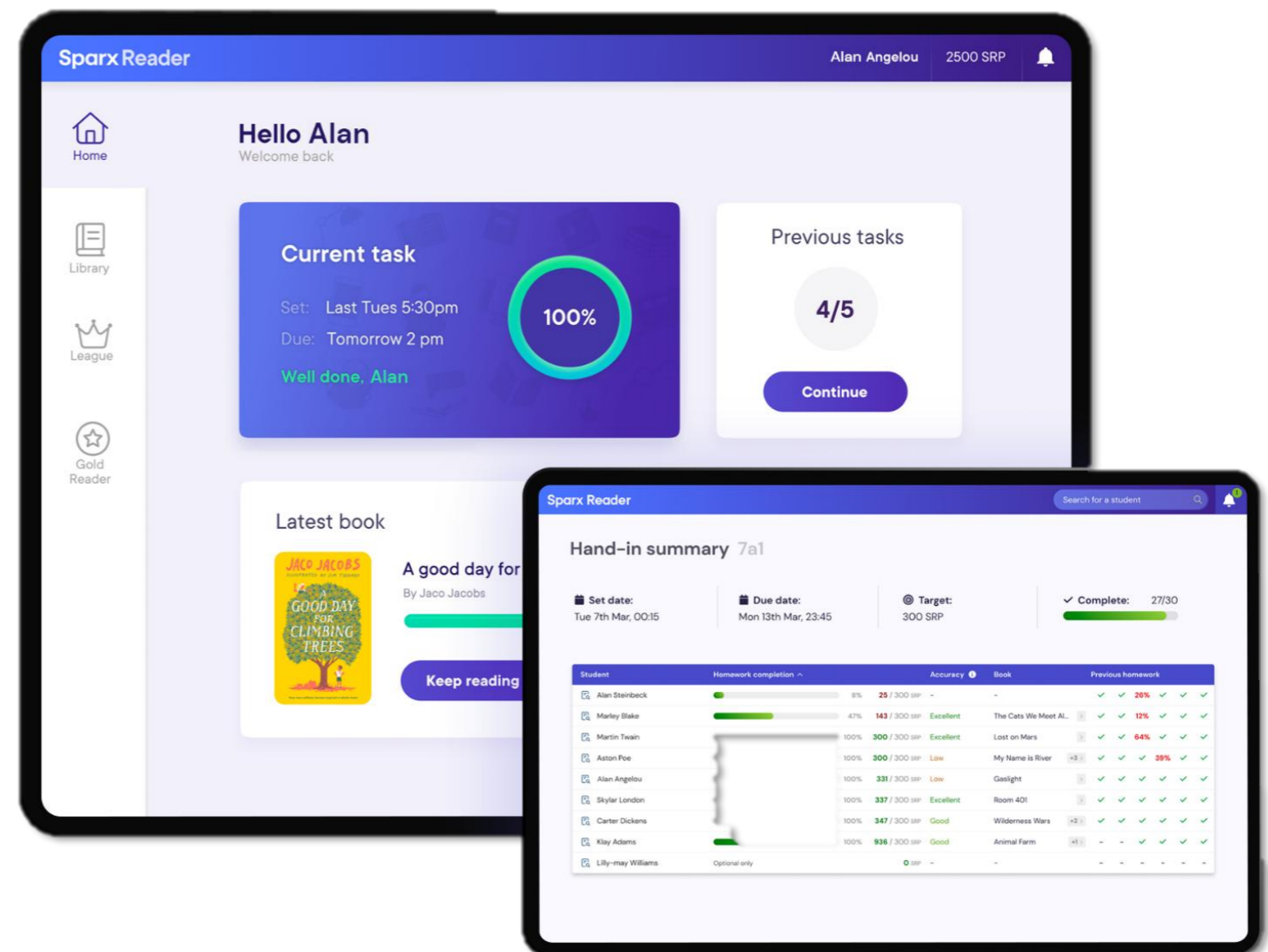
This initiative is central to our wider reading strategy, ensuring every student can find something that speaks to them, broadening their horizons while developing fluency, confidence, and a lifelong habit of reading for pleasure.

Sparx Reader: Building Habit, Confidence and Understanding

At Headlands School we believe regular, structured reading is at the heart of developing fluent, confident, and curious readers. Sparx Reader is our chosen tool to support students in **Key Stage 3** to read for pleasure *and* purpose for **30 minutes each week**.

- **Visible Reading:** Teachers can monitor how much each student is reading—giving a clear picture of engagement and enabling strong conversations about progress.
- **Personalised & Accessible Texts:** Students are matched with books at their level, offered dyslexia-friendly fonts, colour overlays, and glossaries of unfamiliar vocabulary. This ensures all readers, regardless of starting point, can engage meaningfully.
- **Active Reading with Understanding:** Quizzes interspersed through the reading help students read carefully and reflect on what they've read. Contextual definitions support vocabulary building.
- **Motivation & Community:** Through features like Sparx Reader Points, leaderboards, and choice of texts, Sparx Reader fosters healthy competition and encourages ownership of reading.
- **Supporting Teachers:** The platform comes with CPD materials, strategies for productive use and ongoing training, so staff can integrate the tool well, making reading part of the rhythm of learning, not an add-on.

In sum, Sparx Reader helps us achieve our reading strategy goals: to build habits, improve comprehension, broaden vocabulary, and make reading both visible and enjoyable across Key Stage 3.



Tutor Time Oracy: Exploring Modern British Values

At Headlands School, we are committed to developing students' confidence, fluency and sophistication in spoken communication. To achieve this, our **Oracy in Tutor Time** programme provides a structured, progressive opportunity for every student in Years 7-11 to practise oracy skills each week, while deepening their understanding of the **Fundamental British Values (FBV)**.

Each week focuses on one of the British Values - such as Democracy, Rule of law, Individual liberty, and Mutual respect and Tolerance - and explicitly teaches key disciplinary vocabulary. Scenarios are age-appropriate and increase in complexity through the year groups.

Each session follows a consistent structure: students **think individually**, **discuss respectfully in pairs or small groups**, and **share ideas as a class**, supported by sentence stems to scaffold their speech. Definitions of key terms are revisited in increasingly sophisticated forms each year, creating a **hierarchical oracy curriculum** that builds precision, confidence and critical thinking (examples below).

This approach ensures students leave school able to **articulate their opinions with clarity, respect, and evidence**, equipping them with the communication skills needed to thrive as informed, active citizens.

Year 7

Democracy (n.)
Democracy means everyone has a chance to share their opinion and **vote** to help make decisions.

What does it mean to vote?

Pride | Aspire | Respect

Year 8

Democracy (n.)
Democracy is when people choose leaders or representatives by voting, so decisions are made **fairly**.

What does it mean if something is fair?

Pride | Aspire | Respect

Year 9

Democracy (n.)
Democracy is a system where citizens have the right to vote for who represents them, and those chosen must listen to the people.

What does it mean if something is your right?

Pride | Aspire | Respect

Year 10

Democracy (n.)
Democracy is a form of government in which power belongs to the people, who elect representatives to make laws and decisions on their behalf.

What is meant by the word government?

Pride | Aspire | Respect

Year 11

Democracy (n.)
Democracy is a political system based on equality and freedom, where citizens have the right to vote, influence decisions, and hold leaders accountable.

**What is meant by the word equality?
What about the word accountable?**

Pride | Aspire | Respect

The school canteen is planning to add a new meal to the menu. Students are given three options and get to **vote** on which one should be chosen.

Structuring your Speech
Try to use some of the sentence stems to express your ideas:

- "I think it is fairer because..."
- "One person deciding isn't fair because..."
- "If we all got to choose then..."
- "If only one person got to choose then..."

Why is it fairer to use a vote rather than letting one person decide?

- Think about your answer.
- Discuss in **pairs**.
- Share with the class.

Pride | Aspire | Respect

The student council is discussing whether the school should introduce more after-school clubs. Representatives from each year group bring forward ideas and vote together on what should be prioritised.

Structuring your Speech
Try to use some of the sentence stems to express your ideas:

- "I think it is fairer because..."
- "To make sure it is fair we should..."
- "It could be unfair if..."
- "Asking everyone would be difficult because..."
- "Another democratic way to do it would be..."

How does electing representatives help to make decisions fairer and more manageable than asking every student individually?

- Think about your answer.
- Discuss in **pairs**.
- Share with the class.

Pride | Aspire | Respect

In the UK, local councils are elected to make decisions about services like libraries, roads, and recycling. These councillors are voted in by people who live in the community.

Structuring your Speech
Try to use some of the sentence stems to express your ideas:

- "I think it is important because..."
- "This helps people to..."
- "Everyone should have a say in their community because..."
- "If we don't vote then we don't get a say in how our community is run because..."

Why is it important that local people get to vote for who makes decisions in their community?

- Think about your answer.
- Discuss in **pairs**.
- Share with the class.

Pride | Aspire | Respect

During a general election, people across the country vote for Members of Parliament (MPs). Each MP represents their local area (constituency) in the House of Commons and helps shape national laws.

Structuring your Speech
Try to use some of the sentence stems to express your ideas:

- "I think this does/doesn't give people enough power because..."
- "I can see how some people might think..."
- "On the other hand it is possible that..."
- "Alternatively, something that would give people more power would be..."
- "We are lucky to be able to vote for who represents us because..."

Does voting for a local MP give people enough power to influence how the whole country is run? Why or why not?

- Think about your answer.
- Discuss in **pairs**.
- Share with the class.

Pride | Aspire | Respect

Some countries do not allow free elections, or restrict who is allowed to vote. In the UK, democracy means that everyone over 18 has the right to vote, regardless of gender, race, religion, or background.

Structuring your Speech
Try to use some of the sentence stems to express your ideas:

- "I think this isn't the best system because..."
- "I can see how some people might think..."
- "On the other hand it is possible that..."
- "Alternatively, something that would be more effective might be..."
- "We are lucky to be able to vote for who represents us because..."

Is democracy the best possible system of government, or are there limits to how fair and effective it can be?

- Think about your answer.
- Discuss in **pairs**.
- Share with the class.

Pride | Aspire | Respect