



POPE FRANCIS
CATHOLIC MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Established by the Archbishop of Liverpool

JOY • MERCY • SERVICE • DIGNITY • SOLIDARITY

2025 – 2026

Foundational Literacy

The Pope Francis Way

Reading, writing and oracy — three interconnected strands of a single foundation, each supporting the others.

THREE STRANDS • ONE FOUNDATION

Reading

Decoding, fluency
and comprehension

Writing

Transcription, composition
and disciplinary craft

Oracy

Speaking, listening
and reasoning

“The word of God illuminates our lives, guides our steps and transforms our hearts.”

POPE FRANCIS

2025–26

POPE FRANCIS CMAT



PART ONE

Reading

The foundation of everything — decoding, fluency and comprehension, held as a sacred responsibility.

- 1 Why Reading Matters
- 2 Pillar 1 · Identification & Assessment
- 3 Pillar 2 · Systematic Phonics Intervention
- 4 Pillar 3 · Reading Lessons & Intervention
- 5 Pillar 4 · Whole-School Reading Culture
- 6 Pillar 5 · Reading for Pleasure
- 7 Quality Assurance of Reading



Pupils reading together
or [browse files](#)

PART ONE · READING

Why Reading Matters

Reading is the foundation of everything. It is the single skill upon which all other learning depends.

A pupil who cannot read with confidence cannot access a history textbook, decode a science question, or understand a religious education passage. Difficulty with reading travels with a child through every classroom, every lesson, every year. We believe in the God-given dignity of every child, and so we have a profound obligation to ensure every pupil can access the gift of language. **Closing that gap is not just good education — it is an act of justice.**

WHAT WE MEAN BY READING

Decoding

The ability to accurately read words on a page, using phonics knowledge and sight recognition to translate print into meaning.

Fluency

The ability to read with appropriate speed, accuracy and expression, so that cognitive effort can be directed towards comprehension rather than decoding.

Comprehension

The ability to understand, interpret and respond to texts: to retrieve information, make inferences, identify vocabulary meaning, and think critically about what has been read.

PART ONE · READING

The Trust's Approach to Reading

Each school holds its own reading policy. This framework does not replace those policies — it sets out the shared commitments and minimum expectations every school is held to. The approach rests on **five pillars**:

01 **Identification & Assessment**
Knowing every pupil's reading level through rigorous, timely screening and diagnosis.

02 **Systematic Phonics Intervention**
For those who need it — addressing the root cause of reading difficulty, not its symptoms.

03 **Reading Lessons & Structured Intervention**
Deliberate, explicit teaching of fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and confidence.

04 **Whole-School Reading Culture**
Reading made visible, valued and celebrated — for every pupil, every day, across every subject.

05 **Reading for Pleasure**
Building a love of reading that lasts a lifetime, connected to the Catholic tradition of reflection.

THE READING LEAD

Every school has a designated Reading Lead, responsible for knowing the reading profile of every pupil and coordinating assessment, intervention, professional development and reading culture. They lead a team of English teachers, reading TAs, form tutors and the SENDCo, and meet termly with other Reading Leads across the trust.

01 PILLAR 1

Identification & Assessment

We cannot support what we have not identified. Assessment serves two purposes: **universal screening**, so that we know the reading level of every pupil, and **diagnostic assessment**, so that we understand what support those struggling most need.

THE READING COLOUR SYSTEM

All schools use a four-colour banding system based on reading stanine from standardised assessments. This shared language allows trust-wide comparison and clear communication with staff and parents.

RED

STANINE 1-3

Significant reading difficulty. Requires immediate structured intervention. SENDCo informed. Progress monitored every 6 weeks.

AMBER

STANINE 4-5

Below age-expected reading. Targeted support provided. Progress monitored termly.

GREEN

STANINE 6-7

Reading at or close to age-expected level. Universal provision. Monitored annually.

PURPLE

STANINE 8-9

Reading above age-expected level. Challenge and enrichment through wider reading and oracy.

Reading colour is shared with all teaching staff through the school's information system and with parents through reports. RED readers who move up a band stay on a watchlist; those who make insufficient progress are referred to the SENDCo.

PILLAR 1 • ASSESSMENT

Year 7 Entry: Identification

The Year 7 identification process runs from before pupils arrive in September through to the end of Autumn Term, using a layered approach: transition data to flag known concerns, a rapid universal screen in the first two weeks, and detailed diagnostic assessment by the end of Autumn 1 for those who need it.

BEFORE ARRIVAL • JUN/JUL

Transition Data

- KS2 Reading scaled scores obtained from primary schools
- Pupils flagged as high concern shared with Reading Lead before September

WEEKS 1–2 • SEPTEMBER

Universal Screening

- GL New Group Reading Test (NGRT) or equivalent online assessment
- Produces reading stanine, reading age and standardised score
- All pupils assessed — RED / AMBER / GREEN / PURPLE bands assigned
- Results shared with all staff and parents

RED PUPILS

- ◇ Proceed to SSRT (or similar face-to-face diagnostic) by end of Autumn 1
- ◇ Referred to Synthetic Phonics Programme (SSP) individual assessment
- ◇ SENDCo informed of RED pupils immediately

AMBER / GREEN / PURPLE PUPILS

- ◇ Universal provision via form time & whole-school programme
- ◇ Reading for Pleasure programme and events
- ◇ Annual NGRT/SRA reassessment each Summer

END OF AUTUMN 1

Diagnostic Assessment (RED)

- Salford Sentence Reading Test, SSRT (or similar face-to-face diagnostic)
- Diagnostic data: retrieval, inference, vocabulary, phonics, fluency, confidence, vision
- Intervention programme planned and commenced

ONGOING MONITORING

- ◇ Teacher assessment weekly; SSP tracking every 6 weeks
- ◇ SSRT (or similar face-to-face diagnostic) at the end of Spring term for intervention pupils
- ◇ Standardised reassessment at the end of Summer for all pupils
- ◇ Parent or staff concerns trigger additional assessment at any point

PILLAR 1 • ASSESSMENT

Years 8–11: Annual Re-Assessment

Every pupil in Years 8–11 is re-assessed annually using the school’s standardised reading assessment. This ensures reading need does not go undetected as pupils move through the school, and that pupils who were previously GREEN or PURPLE are not missed if their reading development stalls. Any pupil who joins in Years 8–11, for any reason, follows the Year 7 identification process in their first week.

WEEK 1 • EACH YEAR

Annual Standardised Assessment

- School’s standardised reading assessment (e.g. Sparx Reading Assessment, NGRT)
- Reading stanine, reading age and standardised score generated
- Bands updated — RED / AMBER / GREEN / PURPLE
- Updated reading profile shared with all staff and parents

RED PUPILS

- ◇ SSRT (or similar face-to-face diagnostic) assessment
- ◇ Synthetic Phonics Programme (SSP) assessment if not already graduated
- ◇ Intervention reviewed & recommenced
- ◇ SENDCo informed; external referral if progress stalled

AMBER / GREEN / PURPLE PUPILS

- ◇ Universal provision: form time reading, whole-school programme
- ◇ Reading for Pleasure events and activities
- ◇ Annual re-assessment the following academic year

02 PILLAR 2

Systematic Phonics Intervention

For pupils who have not secured phonic knowledge, all other reading instruction builds on sand. A pupil may appear to be reading when they are guessing from context and memory. Every school has a Synthetic Phonics Programme (SSP) designed for older learners; alternative programmes are agreed with the Reading Lead network.

— SYNTHETIC PHONICS PROGRAMME (SSP): HOW IT WORKS

ENTRY Individual assessment identifies specific gaps in phonic knowledge; entry point onto the programme set accordingly.	FREQUENCY 3 sessions per week, 30 minutes per session.
STAFFING Delivered by trained Reading TAs or teachers with specific phonics expertise.	MONITORING Pupil tracking every 6 weeks using the programme’s own tools.
EXIT SSRT (or similar face-to-face diagnostic) on completion. Pupil placed on a watchlist for continued monitoring.	SEND CO LINK All RED pupils on the SSP referred to SENDCo, who monitors progress alongside the Reading Lead.

The SSP is a **catch-up intervention, not a permanent placement**. The goal is always graduation and full access to the mainstream curriculum, without pupils consistently missing the same subject.

03 PILLAR 3

Reading Lessons & Structured Intervention

SUPPORTED READING LESSONS

Pupils with the lowest reading levels typically receive 1 hour of protected supported reading per week, grouped by need. All lessons include:

- ◇ **Modelled reading** by the teacher — demonstrating fluent, expressive reading
- ◇ **Choral and paired reading** — building fluency and confidence
- ◇ **Vocabulary instruction** — explicit teaching of word meaning in context
- ◇ **Targeted comprehension questioning** — retrieval, inference and evaluation
- ◇ **Individual reading** — monitored by the teacher with purposeful support

PEER READING

Several schools run peer reading programmes in which trained sixth form or older pupils support younger readers, typically 1 hour per week in 6-week blocks.

FORM TIME READING

Every pupil in every year group reads in form time. **This is non-negotiable.** Sessions run for 20 minutes, at least once a week for identified pupils and at minimum twice per week for all pupils. Form tutors model reading, ask questions and keep the session purposeful.

04 PILLAR 4

Whole-School Reading Culture

Many schools use an online reading programme across all year groups. Whatever is in use, it is implemented consistently, its data is reviewed by the Reading Lead, and it **supports rather than replaces** good reading teaching.

SPARX READER

An adaptive platform that matches pupils to appropriately challenging texts and checks comprehension through targeted questions. Gives the Reading Lead real-time data.

BEDROCK LEARNING

A structured vocabulary and reading programme that builds academic language through sequenced activities. Used as homework and in reading time.

LEXONIK ADVANCE

A targeted small-group intervention that improves reading age through explicit teaching of decoding, syllabification, morphology and vocabulary.

READING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Every teacher in a Pope Francis school is a teacher of reading. Subject teachers are expected to:

- ◇ Know the reading levels of pupils in their classes and adapt their teaching
- ◇ Model fluent reading of subject-specific texts
- ◇ Explicitly teach the vocabulary of their discipline
- ◇ Build comprehension through targeted questioning about the texts pupils encounter

05 PILLAR 5

Reading for Pleasure

Young people who read for pleasure have wider vocabularies, stronger empathy and better outcomes across all areas of education. Fostering a love of reading is **a serious educational priority**. Every school provides:

- ◇ A school library or reading space that is welcoming, well-stocked and actively used
- ◇ Events celebrating reading — World Book Day, author visits, reading challenges, book clubs
- ◇ A diverse, curated reading list for each year group, reflecting the lives and identities of pupils
- ◇ Senior leaders who read with pupils and talk publicly about what they read
- ◇ Pupil voice in book selection, recommendations and displays

CATHOLIC TEXTS & SPIRITUAL READING

The RE and English departments work together so that pupils encounter texts of spiritual significance and moral depth, including Scripture, Catholic literature and stories from across traditions. Reading and reflection form part of the spiritual life of the school through Chaplaincy, retreats, assemblies and the liturgical year.

PART ONE · READING

Quality Assurance of Reading

WHAT THE TRUST MONITORS

READING ASSESSMENT DATA

Termly data showing the proportion of pupils in each band by year group, disaggregated for PP, SEND and key groups.

INTERVENTION IMPACT

Numbers on phonics intervention; rates of progress; graduation rates; SSRT (or similar face-to-face diagnostic) exit data.

FORM TIME READING

Observation of form time reading; discussion with pupils and tutors about reading culture.

READING LEADS NETWORK

Termly network meetings: data review, sharing of practice, and challenge and support.

BOOK SCRUTINY

Evidence of reading instruction in English books; vocabulary work across subjects; reading data in planning.

PUPIL VOICE

Conversations with pupils about what they read, whether they feel supported, and their attitudes to reading.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Reading Lead is accountable to the headteacher for the effectiveness of reading provision. The headteacher is accountable to the trust for implementing the framework and improving reading outcomes. The Secondary School Improvement Team provides support, challenge and quality assurance.



II

PART TWO

Writing

The neglected R — transcription, composition and the disciplinary craft of every subject.

- 1 Why Writing Matters
- 2 Pillar 1 · Identification & Diagnosis
- 3 Pillar 2 · Intervention for Struggling Writers
- 4 Pillar 3 · The Seven Shared Commitments
- 5 Disciplinary Writing & Moderation



Pupils writing in class

or [browse files](#)

PART TWO • WRITING

Why Writing Matters

Writing is not simply a record of what pupils know. It is the means by which they come to know it more deeply.

Yet writing is, as Alex Quigley argues in *Closing the Writing Gap*, ‘the neglected R’. Pupils who cannot write confidently cannot demonstrate what they know or achieve examination success. **Every teacher is a teacher of writing**, and our primary and secondary schools share one framework so that writing development continues without a reset at transition.

WHAT WE MEAN BY WRITING

Transcription	Handwriting fluency and spelling accuracy. Without automaticity here, pupils’ effort is consumed by transcription rather than composition.
Composition	Generating, organising and communicating ideas in writing — sentence construction, paragraph structure and genre-appropriate choices.
Disciplinary Writing	Writing in the conventions of each subject: the evaluative essay in History, the method write-up in Science, the analytical argument in English.

01 PILLAR 1

Identification & Diagnosis

Many struggling writers disguise their difficulties through short answers or ‘safe’ simple sentences. Systematic identification in Year 7 runs across the first half term.

PHASE 1 · WEEKS 1–2

Universal Screen

- KS2 writing teacher assessment reviewed (Working Towards / Expected / Greater Depth)
- Any pupil below Expected Standard flagged immediately to English lead and SENDCo
- Handwriting fluency observed in first written tasks
- Spelling screener administered (e.g. GL Assessment Spelling Test)



PHASE 2 · END OF AUTUMN 1

Writing Sample Analysis

- All Y7 complete a structured independent writing task (30–40 min, unsupported)
- Marked against a trust-agreed diagnostic rubric: handwriting, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, vocabulary, structure
- Writing colour band assigned — RED / AMBER / GREEN / PURPLE



RED WRITERS

- ◇ Diagnostic conversation to identify primary area of need
- ◇ Handwriting intervention referral if fluency is a barrier
- ◇ Structured writing intervention commenced
- ◇ SENDCo informed of RED writers; progress reviewed termly

AMBER / GREEN / PURPLE WRITERS

- ◇ Universal writing provision via subject teaching
- ◇ Disciplinary writing explicitly taught in all subjects
- ◇ Challenge through extended writing and argument
- ◇ Annual writing sample in subsequent year groups



ONGOING

Monitoring

- Writing samples reviewed termly for RED pupils
- Annual writing sample for all pupils at the start of each year (Y8–11)

02 PILLAR 2

Intervention for Struggling Writers

RED INTERVENTION Handwriting, spelling or sentence construction is a barrier to learning. Structured intervention. SENDCo informed.	AMBER TARGETED Writing below age-expected level. Targeted support in English and across subjects.
GREEN UNIVERSAL Writing at or close to age-expected level. Disciplinary writing taught in all subjects.	PURPLE CHALLENGE Writing above age-expected level. Extended composition and complex argument.

PRIORITY INTERVENTION AREAS

Handwriting	Fluency addressed before composition can develop; touch-typing considered where appropriate.
Spelling	Systematic programmes linked to phonics, vocabulary and morphology.
Sentences	Explicit teaching of sentence types, subordination and punctuation through slow writing and sentence combining.
Vocabulary	Tier 2 and Tier 3 words taught explicitly, with opportunities to use them in writing.
Composition	Scaffolds for planning, drafting and revising; mentor texts as models; scaffolds removed as confidence grows.

03 PILLAR 3

Seven Shared Commitments

The common approach every school commits to and every department implements in its own discipline. **It is how we teach.**

1

Build Background Knowledge

Pupils cannot write about what they do not know. Rich, sequenced subject knowledge comes first.

2

Teach Vocabulary Explicitly

Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary taught systematically, so pupils can write with precision.

3

Model Writing

Teachers write in front of pupils, thinking aloud, using worked examples and annotated mentor texts.

4

Craft Great Sentences

Sentence types, variation and punctuation taught routinely through slow writing and combining.

5

Plan, Draft and Revise

Teaching the full writing process, not just the product. All good writers revise.

6

Teach Disciplinary Writing

Subject-specific conventions taught by subject specialists.

7

Meaningful, Manageable Feedback

Focused feedback that is more work for the pupil than the teacher.

PART TWO • WRITING

Disciplinary Writing & Moderation

The way a scientist writes a method is not the way a historian writes an argument. Every subject teacher is expected to:

- ◇ Identify the key writing genres in their discipline and sequence their teaching across the year
- ◇ Use **mentor texts** — examples of excellent disciplinary writing, annotated and discussed
- ◇ Model writing in front of pupils, thinking aloud about vocabulary, structure and style
- ◇ Give feedback that focuses on writing craft, not just content accuracy

TALK BEFORE WRITING

Oral language is the foundation of writing. Teachers build structured talk into any significant writing task: discussion before planning, peer response before drafting, and rehearsal of academic language before extended composition.

TRUST-WIDE MODERATION

Writing Leads coordinate moderation of real pupil writing across schools at least once a year, calibrating standards and sharing excellent practice. No teacher makes judgements about writing quality in isolation.



III

PART THREE

Oracy

Talk is the medium of thought — the ability to speak and listen effectively, at the very centre of learning.

- 1 Why Oracy Matters
- 2 Pillar 1 · Identification
- 3 Pillar 2 · The Talk-Rich Classroom



Pupils in discussion
or [browse files](#)

PART THREE • ORACY

Why Oracy Matters

Before pupils can write an argument, they must be able to articulate one.
Before they can read with comprehension, they must be able to discuss what a text means.

Oracy is not a ‘soft skill’ at the margins of the curriculum. **It is at the very centre of learning.** EEF research places oral language interventions among the highest-impact, lowest-cost approaches available, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Drawing on the Voice 21 and EEF frameworks, oracy has four dimensions:

Physical

Voice projection, pace, clarity, gesture and eye contact.

Linguistic

Vocabulary, grammar and register suited to purpose, audience and context.

Cognitive

Content knowledge, reasoning, use of evidence and structuring an argument.

Social & Emotional

Listening, building on others’ ideas, disagreeing respectfully and turn-taking.

01 PILLAR 1

Identification

Every school has a systematic approach to identifying pupils with significant spoken language difficulties, including speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and those learning English as an additional language (EAL). In Year 7 this is teacher-assessed, drawing on:

- ◇ SEN transition data, including any Speech and Language Therapy involvement
- ◇ EAL status and English language proficiency on entry
- ◇ Structured observation in English lessons during the first four weeks
- ◇ Form tutor observation of pupil talk
- ◇ Referral to the SENDCo by end of Autumn 1 where needed

A CAREFUL DISTINCTION

Many pupils reluctant to speak do not have a language difficulty — they have an anxiety or confidence need that requires a different response. Assessment must distinguish between the two.

02 PILLAR 2

The Talk-Rich Classroom

Oracy is developed primarily in every classroom, every lesson. The following are expected as a minimum:

Ground Rules	Explicit expectations for how pupils speak and listen, modelled and referred to routinely.
Cold Calling	Every pupil is expected to contribute, with thinking time, so all pupils are active language users.
Turn and Talk	Structured paired discussion with a clear question and time limit before whole-class sharing.
Talk Stems	Subject-specific sentence frames — ‘I agree with X because...’, ‘The evidence suggests...’ — taught and displayed.
Subject Talk	Teachers plan for the talk genres of their discipline: debate in History, hypothesis in Science.

GOING FURTHER

Schools may add structured academic controversy, debate and public speaking, Socratic seminars, drama and spoken assessment, choosing approaches that fit their context.



IV

PART FOUR

Developing Teachers

Every teacher is a teacher of literacy — the most powerful lever available to us.

1 The Literacy CPD Framework

2 Core CPD Content

3 The Literacy Lead Network

4 Companion Documents



Staff professional development
or [browse files](#)

PART FOUR • DEVELOPMENT

Every Teacher is a Teacher of Literacy

No intervention programme will have the sustained impact of consistently excellent literacy teaching in *every classroom, every day*.

The trust's literacy CPD works at three connected levels:

Whole-School	Shared language and practice for all staff at the start of each year: reading in lessons, writing feedback, oracy ground rules, cold calling and vocabulary instruction.
Subject	Disciplinary reading, writing and talk developed through department meetings and subject networks. At least one department meeting per half term has a literacy focus.
Individual	Instructional coaching with a literacy focus, based on observation and agreed action steps.

Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be better.

DYLAN WILIAM

PART FOUR • DEVELOPMENT

Core CPD & the Lead Network

READING

How comprehension works; using RED/AMBER/GREEN/PURPLE data in planning; modelling fluent reading; supporting struggling readers.

WRITING

Composition and transcription; the genres of your subject; modelling with mentor texts; meaningful, manageable feedback.

ORACY

The four dimensions; the non-negotiable practices; designing demanding talk tasks; supporting EAL and SLCN pupils.

THE LITERACY LEAD NETWORK

Reading, Writing and Oracy Leads meet termly across the trust, coordinated by the Secondary School Improvement Team, to review literacy data, share practice, engage with research and plan trust-wide CPD and events.

COMPANION DOCUMENTS

- ◇ Pope Francis CMAT Foundational Numeracy Framework
- ◇ Pope Francis CMAT Teaching and Learning: The Pope Francis Way
- ◇ Each school's own Reading, Writing and Literacy Policy
- ◇ Each school's own Assessment Policy and Pupil Progress schedule