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Lorna Pountney
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11th June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Step Up to GCSE Year 9 Reading Intervention

Following our recent reading assessments, we have identified that your child's current reading age is slightly below the level typically expected for their age group. As students prepare to begin their GCSE courses, strong literacy skills become increasingly important across all subjects. We have therefore invited your child to participate in a 'Step Up to GCSE' reading intervention to provide additional support and help ensure a smooth and successful transition into Key Stage 4.

Each small group will have two one-hour intervention sessions per fortnight for the remainder of the term, beginning in the week commencing 15th June. Please see the schedule for the sessions listed below:

- Obama Intervention Group: Wk A Tuesday Period 3; Wk B Wednesday Period 4a
- Morse and Winton Intervention Group: Wk 2 Tuesday Period 5; Wk 2 Friday Period 1
- Dorsey and Armstrong Intervention Group: Wk 2 Monday Period 1; Wk 2 Wednesday Period 3
- Shakespeare Intervention Group: Wk 1 Friday Period 3; Wk 2 Friday Period 5

These will be held in the Library, with our Librarian, Ms Smyth. Students will focus on developing reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary through guided study of a novel by Benjamin Zephaniah, with structured support to build confidence, understanding and independent reading skills. To minimise disruption to your child's learning, sessions have been scheduled during a lesson that is not part of their chosen GCSE option subjects. This ensures that students can access the additional support while maintaining continuity in the subjects they have selected to study further.

While the intervention will provide valuable support in school, regular reading at home remains one of the most effective ways to improve reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and academic success. Research consistently shows that students who read regularly outside of school make greater progress across all subjects.

How you can support at home

We ask that students read regularly throughout the week, aiming for at least 20 minutes of reading on four or more evenings each week.

Please find attached below a list of our reading recommendations.

To encourage consistency and accountability, students will be issued with a Reading Record. They should bring this along to the reading intervention session each week, so that their commitment to reading can be celebrated and rewarded. Rather than recording every reading session in detail, students should simply log:

- The date
- The title of the text being read
- Pages read
- Time spent reading

You can support by:

- Encouraging a regular reading routine.
- Asking questions about what your child is reading.
- Discussing interesting ideas, characters or events from the text.
- Signing the reading record weekly to confirm that reading has taken place.

Thank you for your support in helping your child develop the literacy skills that will support their success across the curriculum. We are confident that, through this intervention and regular reading at home, your child will continue to grow in confidence as a reader and be well prepared for the demands of Key Stage 4.

If you have any questions regarding the intervention, please do not hesitate to contact us.

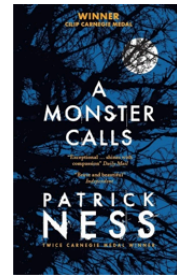
Yours faithfully

Jenny Ideson

Assistant Principal

Recommended/ Further reading

The books listed below will give the students a similar feeling to the book we have been reading as a group, further reading gives them a chance to explore other genres and themes while expanding their cultural capital and critical thinking skills.



Shrapnel Boys – Jenny Pearson

Windrush Child – Benjamin Zephaniah

A Monster calls – Patrick Ness

The first year – Matt Goodfellow

Noughts and Crosses – Malorie Blackman

The Explorer – Katherine Rundell

BBC Bitesize has some fantastic resources that can be used to solidify and further our knowledge. The links below are helpful to reiterate some of the things we have been working on as a group, you will find some recaps, activities and quizzes to really stretch and challenge your current understanding.



BBC Bitesize, English general:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/z3kw2hv>




BBC Bitesize, KS3 Reading skills:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zcv8dp3>

BBC Bitesize, KS3 Critical reading:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zfdh8xs>

Podcasts can be a great way to access information about a range of subjects and topics; there are some fantastic podcasts for fiction and non-fiction lovers that are great examples of oracy and can help expand your vocabulary. See some examples below.

	<p>The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel - A Peabody Award-winning, serialized sci-fi podcast that follows an 11-year-old boy and his friends as they investigate the mysterious vanishing of their classmates at the H.G. Wells Middle School. Great for listening to as a family, a mystery that all can enjoy.</p>
	<p>Bedtime History - This is your home for educational and relaxing stories for kids and families. Wind down your day learning about amazing people like Jackie Robinson and Neil Armstrong, incredible feats of engineering like The Leaning Tower of Pisa, or captivating narratives like The Titanic.</p>
	<p>Ted Talks Daily - Hear thought-provoking ideas on every subject imaginable – from Artificial Intelligence to Zoology, and everything in between. Given by the world's leading thinkers and doers.</p>

Borrow Box.



Borrow Box is an incredible resource for finding a wide variety of digital media and audiobooks. It is completely free to access with your Rugby library card. Access to this online library gives you a range of genres, texts and forms of reading allowing the flexibility to consume literature how you enjoy it most.

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