



**Reading  
Lab**

## **SECONDARY**

### **1:3 Intensive 10-week Catch-Up Programme for KS3**

**Reading Comprehension, Fluency & Vocabulary Development**



## THE CHILDREN'S LITERACY CHARITY

The Children's Literacy Charity exists to close the literacy gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. We were founded on the belief that the earlier the intervention, the greater the benefit and our goal is to give underserved children the literacy skills needed to close the attainment gap with their better off peers and the opportunity to fulfil their true potential.

We are much more than a reading charity. What sets us apart is our holistic, evidence-based approach to literacy. Our expert tutors deliver carefully structured programmes that support all core strands: speaking and listening, reading, and writing. Every session is tailored to the specific needs of each child, ensuring that teaching is personalised and meaningful for every child.

Our 10-week Reading Lab intervention for Key Stage Three aims to narrow the literacy gap through the provision of small group (one-to-three) specialist literacy tutoring in secondary schools in areas of economic and educational disadvantage.

The programme focuses on improving reading fluency, developing vocabulary and progressing comprehension skills. The sessions build reading stamina and confidence and encourage children to enjoy reading for pleasure.



**We do not  
compromise  
on the quality  
of our tutors  
or resources**

**We employ, train and manage our expert tutors who work collaboratively with classroom teachers and specialist support staff as well as building trusted relationships with the children themselves and where possible their families too. Close collaboration with schools is at the heart of our successful programme delivery.**

# A child's journey through Reading Lab



1:3 tutor to child ratio

45 minutes per session, twice a week

10-week tuition block



Literacy focus: Reading  
Comprehension, Reading  
Fluency, Vocabulary and Oracy.

Two tuition days per week, with  
the same tutor teaching five 1:3  
groups, supporting 15 students.  
The timetable is rotated weekly  
so that children do not miss the  
same lesson.

For pupils working below or  
towards age-related expectations,  
prioritising children who fall into a  
'disadvantaged' category or are in  
receipt of Pupil Premium (PP) / Free  
School Meals (FSM).



Intensive catch-up literacy with a  
strong focus on reading  
engagement.

Pupils are assessed on entry  
and exit to the programme.  
On average, children achieve 7  
months of progress over the 10  
weeks of tuition.

At the end of the programme,  
schools report an improvement  
in pupils' engagement with  
learning, behaviour and self-  
confidence.

## Why choose Reading Lab?

- We provide a nurturing, safe environment where students feel supported and valued, helping them build the confidence and self-belief essential for learning.
- We develop close partnerships with our schools, ensuring effective communication with teachers, senior leaders and parents.
- Our Reading Lab programme is informed by the National Curriculum, the DfE Reading Framework and the latest research from the Education Endowment Foundation, ensuring both rigour and relevance.
- Our children make significant progress and most Reading Lab graduates significantly close their reading gaps; on average children make seven months of progress after the 10-week block of tuition.
- Parental engagement is embedded in our programme delivery. We keep parents informed, involved, and empowered to support their children at home.
- We foster a love of reading through carefully selected books including a diverse and inclusive range of poetry, fiction and non-fiction.
- Our monitoring processes allow our tutors to benefit from ongoing professional development and tailored support, helping them deliver high-impact sessions.
- Through the delivery of fun and engaging sessions, we help children develop a genuine desire to read, in the classroom and beyond.



### Our Reading Lab programme is designed for children who:

- Can decode but are not fluent readers
- Are reluctant readers
- Lack confidence in reading
- Have a limited vocabulary
- Struggle to comprehend
- Need to improve their oracy skills
- Are working towards age-related expectations
- EAL pupils who are developing competence in English and need to improve their vocabulary and spoken English skills
- Are in receipt of PP/FSM or those who fall into a 'disadvantaged' category

## The Reading Lab Catch Up Programme – in detail

Our 10-week, small-group (1:3) Reading Lab intervention is designed for secondary schools, enabling Key Stage 3 students who are behind in reading to make rapid progress and help to close the literacy gap.

This programme targets pupils who are working towards age-related expectations. These students are able to decode and read but lack the fluency skills needed to comprehend and enjoy texts. Groupings need to be of a similar ability in order to maximise opportunities for progression.

Reading Lab provides schools with a cost-effective catch-up programme for children who would benefit from tailored literacy support to enable them to engage more effectively in the classroom. Schools using our Reading Lab tutors have also reported significant improvements in confidence, behaviour and engagement right across the curriculum.

### This intervention can, in particular, be used to target:

- **Year 7 students who require support from primary to secondary school. It is ideal for those who can read but require additional help to build reading fluency, broaden their vocabulary, and strengthen comprehension and oracy skills.**
- **Year 8 and 9 students who are struggling to access the wider curriculum due to gaps in reading proficiency, low engagement with reading, and a lack of confidence. The programme helps to build the foundational skills needed for secondary learning and re-establishes core reading habits to support students to become more independent learners.**

The programme was developed in response to evidence showing that older students face greater challenges in reading comprehension, particularly vocabulary knowledge, inference and deduction skills. Research shows that 1:3 small-group interventions deliver comparable gains to 1:1 support for most students, making it a highly efficient model without compromising impact.

The Reading Lab intervention is closely aligned to the English curriculum, targeting each reading skill explicitly through structured lessons that hone-in on each skill and give children ample opportunity to practice through 'book talk'. We also place greater emphasis on vocabulary at the start of each lesson so that pupils can broaden their vocabulary and for them to better understand the texts they are reading. The sessions teach reading comprehension strategies through modelling and supported practice.



**We are the only  
literacy charity  
delivering this  
model of  
support**



The Reading Lab sessions are designed in alignment with the key recommendations set out by the Education Endowment Foundation in their *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools* guidance.

Students will be immersed in a range of quality, diverse texts including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Texts are carefully chosen in order to support disciplinary literacy, enabling students to access the wider curriculum.

Oracy is a chief component of the Reading Lab programme. The book talk generated from engagement with texts is well modelled, structured and aims to extend not only the student's vocabulary but will also develop language structures, enabling students to build the confidence and skill to express their opinions and ideas effectively and persuasively.

Our expert Reading Lab tutors teach three pupils at a time. Research shows that when pupils are taught in small groups of three, there are similar outcomes to those taught on a one-to-one basis and in some instances, the outcomes are even better as a result of peer group dynamics.

The pupils attending Reading Lab are assessed at the beginning and the end of the 10-week block of twice-weekly tuition. Progress reports for each child will be provided for the school which will include all assessment data.

### Reading Lab Requirements:

- A named Key School Contact (KSC) who will liaise with our School Programme Manager/Programme Delivery Manager
- A suitable teaching space for three children and an adult
- Access to laptop / computer / printer and IT support in order to access the CLC Sharepoint
- Smartboard and/or display board if possible
- Small storage unit for resources



## Parental Engagement

Engaging parents and carers is a vital part of all our interventions. In Reading Lab, we build strong partnerships with parents throughout the programme. Parents and carers are invited to an information session at the start of the programme to understand how their child will be supported.

To keep parents involved and informed throughout the programme, postcards will be sent home to celebrate the student's effort and progress and on completion of the programme each child will receive a book and certificate. The Children's Literacy Charity will also communicate with parents regularly through email updates, newsletters and via our website.

### Our expert tutors will:

- Use the lessons plans and resources to teach five, 1:3 groups of students (15 in total)
- Adapt content once teaching begins as our tutor become more familiar with the students and their needs
- Teach and practice the children's reading skills using 'VIPERS' during the lessons – Vocabulary, Inference, Punctuation, Explanation, Retrieval, Summary and Sequencing
- Monitor pupils during teaching and modify the lesson to the needs of each group
- Liaise with school staff if groups need to be adjusted
- Create a timetable where groups can be rotated
- Keep a register of students' attendance for each session, every week
- Complete the students' pre-programme assessment data and post-programme assessment
- Adhere to school and CLC policies on pupil behaviour and safeguarding and child protection
- Prioritise safeguarding and ensure that the learning environment is safe
- Work closely with the classroom teachers and specialist staff as well as the charity's School/Programme Delivery Manager who will liaise with the school's key school contact and will ensure the smooth running of the programme

**10** → **7**  
**weeks**      **months**  
**of tuition**      **of progress**



Schools report:

- Significant impact on children's love for reading, confidence and self-esteem
- Strong evidence of children's improved classroom engagement
- Satisfaction with high quality of CLC tutors

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“It's been a delight to work with the Children's Literacy Charity establishing a Reading Lab at Leigh Academy Halley.

Students across Years 7-9 have made significant progress in closing the gap between their chronological and actual reading ages. More importantly, on a whole range of different metrics, these students have shown increased engagement in their learning across the curriculum due to the literacy barriers that have now been removed.

The staff at the Reading Lab have fully integrated themselves into Academy life as trusted, hardworking and valued members of staff. We cannot wait to continue this project into next year.”

Ben Russell, Principal, Leigh Academy Halley, London



“At The Children’s Literacy Charity, our programmes are evidence-based, aligned with national priorities, and informed by the latest research. Our approach is carefully designed around the DfE’s reading and writing frameworks, underpinned by the National Curriculum, and in line with Education Endowment Foundation research.

We deliver literacy support that inspires children, builds language, and deepens comprehension. By combining proven methodologies with our specialist expertise, our Reading Labs deliver the strongest outcomes.

In just weeks, Reading Lab helps children to move on from frustration to fluency, not only gaining confidence and engaging with their education but also developing a genuine love of reading.”

Julie Taylor, Education Lead at The Children's Literacy Charity

“It is through reading that pupils access the curriculum and develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.”

Education Endowment Fund, *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*



Find out more and get in touch at  
[www.thechildrensliteracycharity.org.uk](http://www.thechildrensliteracycharity.org.uk)

We run specialist interventions, including Literacy Lab for KS1, Reading Lab for KS2 & KS3, and our Reader Leader mentorship programme.

As a specialist literacy charity we fundraise extensively to help subsidise our programmes and we are able to cover some 75-80% of the tuition cost while schools contribute 20-25%.

Because we employ skilled tutors and children make significant progress, our school partners value our high quality, high impact intervention as a dedicated external resource in supporting those children needing the most help to close their literacy gap.