

# LADY HAWKINS' SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM

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Founded  
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Our Ref: PD/PJ

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Dear Parent/Carer,

The new GCSEs are more demanding than those they are replacing and pupils need to have a reading age of 16 to access the texts in all subjects. As a school we are determined to help pupils achieve this.

In January, all Year 7, 8 and some year 9 pupils at Lady Hawkins were enrolled in an extended Accelerated Reader programme. This is a reading programme to boost the literacy skills of pupils and provide staff with data to inform us of progress or difficulties and enable us to support pupils.

All pupils completed a STAR test at the start of the term to give their reading age score and were told the colour code for their reading age group. This code is used to locate books appropriate for your child. All pupils choose books to read from the school library and should have a book with them at all times. They are encouraged to choose books according to the colour relating to their score. When a book is finished, pupils do a ten question online quiz to assess their understanding of what they have read. Their target is to achieve a minimum of 85% correct. There are also vocabulary quizzes for some books and pupils are expected to do these as well. Pupils are also encouraged to read their own books and check on the AR website to see whether there is a quiz for their book.

All pupils will be retested each half-term to evaluate whether they are making progress. Pupils are told their reading ages and are encouraged to talk to you about their targets and progress. If you wish to discuss your child's progress with their teacher, please contact them directly.

As part of the scheme, your child will be expected to read for twenty minutes every day in an allocated lesson. The timetable rotates weekly. They are also expected to read their library book for at least twenty minutes at home every day.

## FAQs:

### **My child prefers non-fiction to fiction. Does this matter?**

No, there are many non-fiction books in the library which are part of the scheme and were chosen to complement what your child is studying in other curricular areas. Encourage your child to take out books linked to a current topic being studied in another subject. They can then take a quiz on this book during their English lesson.

### **My child is a reluctant reader. What can I do?**

Take an interest in what your child is reading. Make sure you have lots of books and magazines around the house and show your child how to access eBooks. Think about swapping the games console for a Kindle or e-reader! Try to incorporate whole family 'reading time' into the daily routine.

### **When should I stop reading to my child?**

Never! Listening to others reading aloud encourages children to read with fluency and expression themselves.

### **How do I know what level my child is?**

Ask your child for his or her STAR reading report. This gives lots of vital information. If he or she has lost it, please contact the school for a replacement. These are taken 6 times a year.

**How do we find a book of the correct level for my child?**

Let your child check out the AR Bookfinder website. All they'll need to know is their book level.

<http://www.arbookfind.co.uk/usertype.aspx>

**My son/daughter says she can't find a book he/she likes. What do you suggest?**

First, ask the librarian which the most popular books are for his/her age and reading ability. Secondly, encourage your child to discuss books with other pupils. They will often recommend a good book they have read. With thousands of books to choose from, it is very unlikely that there will be nothing of interest to them: it just means he/she hasn't found it yet!

**Do they have to read books from the school library in order to take the quizzes on the computer?**

No, there are over 140,000 books in the programme and this is increasing every day as the latest books become 'quizzable'.

**Does it matter if we choose a book of the wrong level?** This very much depends if your child is enjoying what he or she is reading! If they are, let them carry on. If you see your child struggling, not getting past the first few pages, it might well be too hard for them. Be guided rather than restricted by their book level.

**How long should my child be reading each day at home?**

Ideally a minimum of 20 minutes per day. Pupils receiving basic skills and reading intervention in school will benefit from more than 20 minutes. Reading to you and discussing what they have read is also useful.

**How else can parents help?**

Mainly, by ensuring that their children are bringing a reading book into school every day. Also, remember that reading is an on-going and integral part of their English and Accelerated Reader homework, whether or not it has been written down in the planner! If in doubt, please contact your child's English teacher.

We at Lady Hawkins School hope that your child finds a great deal of pleasure in participating in the Accelerated Reader programme.

Yours faithfully,



Mr P Jennings  
Head teacher