

Parent Bulletin



7th March 2025

As we come to the end of Trafalgar Book Week, we're celebrating the fantastic competitions and reading-themed activities that have taken place throughout the week. We hope students have enjoyed the events and have found inspiration to grow their love of reading.

A special highlight of the week was **World Book Day 2025**, where staff dressed as characters from Jurassic Park, The Wizard of Oz, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and more! Students then got to work out the characters and choose their favourites!

Year 9 parents and students—don't forget to save the date for our Year 9 Options Evening on 13th March. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn about the GCSE options process, speak to subject leaders, and prepare for the Tutor RAP meetings in April.

Linked to Book Week, we're also excited to share that we've provided a document with tips on how to use technology to boost reading skills, kindly shared by The National College. It's a great resource for students and parents alike, with helpful tips to help enhance reading through digital tools.

Stay safe and take care,

Team Trafalgar

Year 9 Options Evening

We are excited to invite Year 9 students and their families to our GCSE Options Evening on Thursday 13th March, from 6:00 - 7:30 PM in the Main Hall.

This in-person event is a fantastic opportunity to learn about the options process and make informed decisions for the future. Throughout the evening, you will:

- Gain a clear understanding of how the GCSE options process works
- Speak with teachers and subject leaders for expert guidance
- Receive an Options Booklet packed with key information
- Get prepared for Tutor RAP meetings on 1st April

Choosing the right subjects is an important step in shaping future success, and we are here to support you every step of the way.



Key Dates

Spring 2025

Monday 3rd - Friday 14th March - Year 11 Mock Exams

Thursday 13th March - Year 9 Options Evening

Friday 14th March - Activities Week final payments due

Saturday 15th March - Bronze DofE Practice

Uniform & Equipment

Please ensure your children have the correct uniform & equipment with them each day. If you require any support, contact your child's form tutor. Please ensure students have a bag. You can find full details of what they need [here](#).



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World Book Day 2025 – A Storybook Celebration!



World Book Day 2025 was a blast at Trafalgar School!

Our staff brought stories to life by dressing as beloved literary characters, including iconic figures from Jurassic Park, The Wizard of Oz, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and many more!

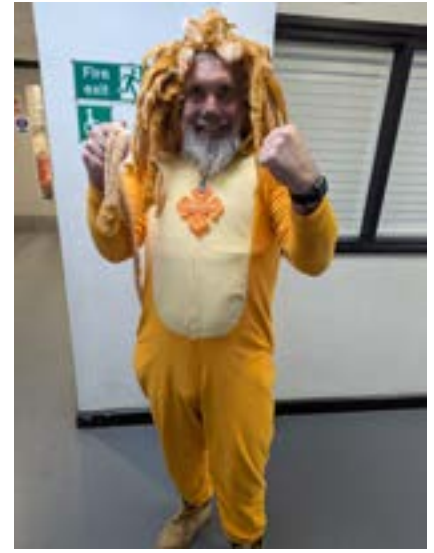
One of the most amusing sights of the day was our Maths Department, transformed into dinosaurs, helping students prepare for their Maths mock exam that morning—certainly a unique way to lessen their nerves!

Take a look at the photos on this page to see some of the brilliant costumes and celebrations from the day!



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Reading Plus Leaderboard

Congratulations to 7G2 for topping the Reading Plus leaderboard again this week!

Well done! You've smashed it and are currently the best across Years 7 to 9!

Leaderboard	
Top Classes - Total Avg. Reading Lessons (SR)	
1. 7G2/En (2024/25)	60.5
2. 7R3/En (2024/25)	47.4
3. 7R1/En (2024/25)	46.3
4. 8G1/EN (2024/25)	39.3
5. 8R3/EN (2024/25)	34.3

But there's more good news...

Each week, the individual student who tops the Reading Plus leaderboard for the most words read will be rewarded with a book from the Library Book Vending Machine.

This week's winner is Dexter, who chose The Final Gambit by Jennifer Lynn Barnes.

Happy reading, Dexter—you've earned it!



Moving Forward

Education, employment, health and community support event for young people and adults with SEND or a learning disability in Portsmouth.

 **Thursday 27 March 2025**

 **9.30am – 3pm**

 **Victory Suite, Fratton Park**



A free event showcasing employment, training, health and community support information for young people and adults with SEND or a learning disability, as well as their parents and carers.

There's no need to book, just drop in and find out about the many opportunities in Portsmouth for adults and young people with SEND or a learning disability.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, Neuroteachers, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



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