



SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE

CELEBRATING ENGLISH ACROSS OUR TRUST – NATIONAL YEAR OF READING 2026

Welcome back to our second edition of Spotlight. This year marks the National Year of Reading, and our trust is embracing the opportunity to celebrate the power of books and language. Reading is not just a skill - it's a gateway to imagination, empathy, and lifelong learning. As part of this commitment, the Trust gifted each student a book for Christmas, ensuring every learner had the chance to enjoy reading over the festive season.



A Shared Vision for Student Success

Across our schools, English leads and teachers have worked tirelessly to make reading meaningful and enjoyable. Tracey, our Trust Lead for English and English Lead at Church Lawton School, explains:


“Reading is obviously incredibly important for our students but is not always the most popular thing for them to do!” Tracey explains.

To foster enthusiasm, the English curriculum spans a diverse range of texts—from Shakespeare and Willy Russell to Malorie Blackman and Dickens. Students in Years 8–11 read between five and seven full texts, complemented by weekly reading-for-pleasure lessons and form-time reading sessions where everyone, including staff, reads peacefully.

Tracey also organised an English Hub visit for all three schools, creating opportunities for collaboration and best practice sharing.

Vocabulary development is another priority. Tracey has introduced staff across all areas of the curriculum to the Frayer model. All three trust schools explicitly teach new vocabulary and word etymology in English lessons. A strategy that has already shown impact in exam scripts. The next step is rolling this out across all subjects to strengthen subject-specific vocabulary. See an example of the Frayer model from Tracey below.

Let's read together:

<p>Meaning</p> <p>A caricature is a character who is given exaggerated characteristics and features to generalize and represent a group of people.</p>	 <p>Caricature Noun</p> <p>(ca-rick-a-chure)</p>	<p>Synonyms</p> <p>Exaggeration, simplification, parody, mimicry</p>	<p>We will read:</p> <p>From Giving us the port, Edna? That's right up to I'm sorry, Daddy. Actually I was listening.</p>
<p>Used in a sentence</p> <p>Scrooge is a caricature of a typical rich Victorian miser.</p>		<p>Etymology</p> <p>from the Italian words <i>carico</i> and <i>caricare</i>, meaning 'to load' or to 'exaggerate'</p>	

At Thames Valley School, Eirini leads English and with her team has developed a rich reading culture that thrives through themed activities like First News debates and a Greek Culture Reading Afternoon involving parents. Library-based incentives, celebrations of pupil achievement, and events such as World Book Day, author visits, and local library trips highlight wider reading opportunities within the community. Reading enjoyment is further encouraged through accessible book selections, rewards, collaborative tutor-time tasks, and peer reading.

Meanwhile, at Vanguard School, under Steve's leadership of English, staff are preparing creative initiatives to promote reading and writing for pleasure as part of the Year of Reading celebrations. Steve has also developed high-quality resource study booklets to accompany his curriculum, which effectively scaffold pupils' learning and support clear progression; they are well worth asking him to share an example of if you get the chance. Steve has also introduced Vancast, a school podcasting initiative that enables pupils to take part in the full publishing process while developing their oracy, communication, and broader creative media skills.

Lots to Celebrate

All schools have celebrated success in English this year, and at Church Lawton School, an impressive 91% of students achieved a Level 4 or higher in English - a testament to the dedication of staff and students and the impact of our trust-wide commitment to literacy.

“Through the use of the Frayer model, all three trust schools are explicitly teaching new vocabulary... which is having a profound impact on our students’ skills,” Tracey notes.

Together, these efforts are building confident, articulate learners who can thrive academically and beyond.

And the next exciting initiative? The Book Hub, an online app where students and staff can share opinions and recommend books to each other.

“We hope this online book app will bring together staff and students across the trust,” Tracey says. “Watch this space for the big launch information!”



Coming Soon

Stay tuned for the next edition of Spotlight on Excellence, where we continue to celebrate the incredible work happening across our trust. If you have something you wish to feature in a spotlight, please get in touch.

