

WEST GRANTHAM UPDATE



Friday 28 March, 2025

WEST GRANTHAM

Church of England Secondary Academy

Dodgeball, Desserts and Discoveries

Another fortnight has flown by at WGS, with plenty going on both in and out of the classroom. Some of our students have been in action at dodgeball club, showing off their agility and teamwork in a fast-paced and competitive environment. Meanwhile, a group of students represented the school in a boccia competition and did brilliantly. For those unfamiliar, boccia is a precision sport similar to bowls, designed to be inclusive and requiring skill, strategy, and accuracy. Well done to all who took part!

Over in the kitchens, the school has been filled with the sweet smell of flapjacks as students have been baking up a storm in cooking lessons. A new enrichment has also started this term, with students learning Makaton—a form of sign language that uses signs and symbols to support communication, helping to make language more accessible for all. Science Club has been keeping busy

too, using bug catchers to investigate the creepy crawlies around school while also experimenting with the law of conservation of energy using a large (and rather crudely constructed) pendulum in the science lab.

Thursday marked Lab Technician Appreciation Day, so a big thank you goes out to our lab tech for all the behind-the-scenes work that keeps our science lessons running smoothly—Science Club students especially appreciate all the help and support! Looking ahead, Year 10 students will be sitting their mock exams next term, so now is a great time to start revising over the Easter break. Also, Year 9 Options Evening is coming up, where students will have the chance to choose their GCSE subjects for next year.

That's all for this issue—have a great Easter break, and we'll see you next time for more updates from around the school!

A word from...

Molly, Y8

Hello, my name is Molly, and I'm in Year 8. I believe that West Grantham is the best school for helping students develop a growth mindset. This school offers many fun activities for everyone to take part in, helping them feel welcome.

New students, especially Year 7s, may feel a little lost in our wonderful school (the staircases are really confusing when you first join), which is why we have friendly students from different year groups to help guide them to their lessons and around the building. West Grantham has a strong reputation for welcoming new learners, and just this past week, we had about 30 new students join us. Some of my classmates and I have been buddied up with them to help them settle in. They're really nice and have been a fantastic addition to the West Grantham family!

WEEK A - MARCH 31

Mon

Football Clubs, Fitness Gym, Gardening Club, Library Club

Tue

Library Club
Table Tennis
PSHE Drop Day
Y9 Options Evening

Wed

Fitness Gym
Library Club

Thu

Homework, Fitness Gym, Debate, DT, STEM Clubs
Positive Futures

Fri

Christian Union Club (Lunchtime)
Art Club
Library Club

WEEK B - APRIL 21

Mon

EASTER DAY

Tue

Y10 Mocks Begin
Library Club
Table Tennis

Wed

Fitness Gym
Library Club
St George's Day
Themed Menu

Thu

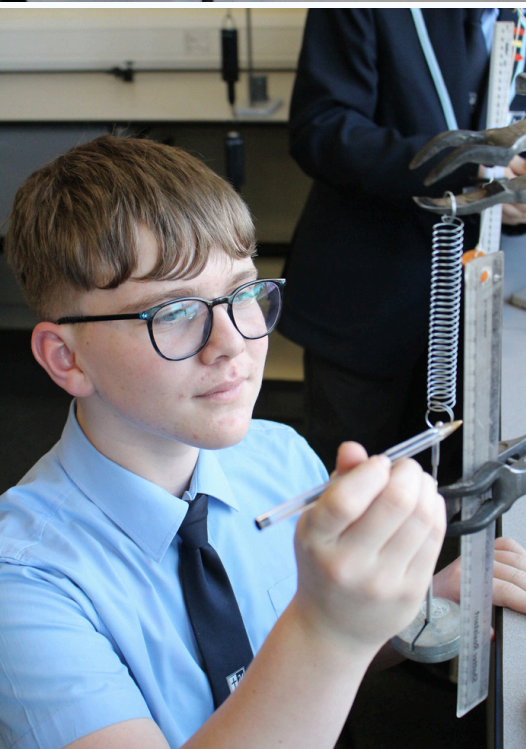
Homework Club, Fitness Gym, Debate Club, Design Tech and Art Club, STEM Club
Positive Futures

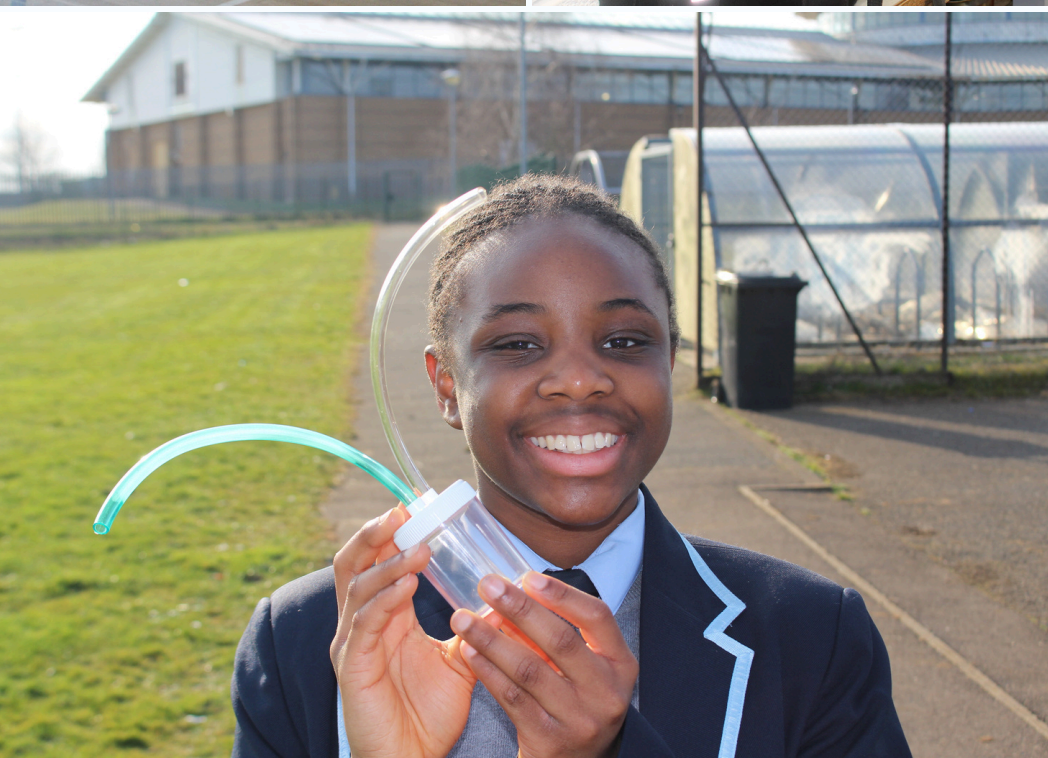
Fri

Christian Union Club (Lunchtime)
Library Club









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 Lowrie 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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