

Reading for Pleasure and Progress

There are three fundamental elements which we believe make it a benefit we cannot afford to pass up. These are based on solid evidence and some of the research is included in the appendix below for your information.

1. Literacy
2. Academic performance
3. Empathy

At Emanuel we aim to develop our pupils to be literate, successful and empathetic citizens of the world with strong intercultural competence, and reading is a vital element in that development.

Appendix

1. Literacy

[Literacy is a core ingredient for success](#) in all aspects of life. While levels of general literacy among adolescents in the UK are just above the OECD average, we believe our pupils should aim for the highest levels of literacy. This includes spelling, range and depth of vocabulary, comprehension and general cultural literacy. We want our pupils to be able to engage with the wider world in an articulate, literate way and reading for enjoyment is the surest route to that outcome. There is also considerable research that boys lag behind girls in both reading and literacy, and we see a role for us as educators in addressing any such imbalance among our pupils.

2. Academic performance

'Research suggests that reading ability affects attainment in all subjects [...] reading is a crucially important component of achieving success in education and throughout life.' ([Mulcahy et al](#), p5; p1)

There is an established body of persuasive research indicating the clear link between regular reading and improved academic performance across all subjects. Not just for the more able and academic pupils, it is also particularly important for those struggling with academic achievement. A [2020 study by the UCL Institute of Education](#) reinforced the particular value for young people of regularly reading high-quality, longer books rather than shorter comics, newspapers or other brief articles, posts and blogs.

3. Empathy

Arguably the most important benefit of all, reading improves our capacity for empathy towards other people. This encompasses [Theory of Mind](#), or the human capacity to comprehend that other people hold beliefs and desires that may differ from our own – an essential skill in navigating the complex relationships that characterize ever more mobile human societies. Increasingly lacking in a time where extremes of opinion and siloed thinking are on the rise, empathy is a fundamental quality we wish to foster in our pupils and students. Reading books offers a unique way to 'step inside' another person's life, share their perspective and walk a while in their shoes. We are given tools to understand situations radically different to our own, or to understand our own position from a radically contrasting perspective. In this way, reading helps us to understand others and ourselves in a far more profound and lasting way. At Emanuel we aim to develop our pupils to be empathetic citizens of the world with strong intercultural competence and reading is a vital element in that development.