

LITERACY POLICY

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| Reference this policy is aligned to with LCC | **n/a** |
| Agreed with Support Staff Trade Unions | **n/a** |
| Adopted by the Governing Body | **Dec 19** |
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### Introduction

Our world is dominated by the written word, both online and in print. This means we can only contribute and participate actively if we can read and write sufficiently well. But, each year, hundreds of thousands of children start their secondary school two years behind in reading; some leave even further behind their peers... Literacy is about people’s ability to function in society as private individuals, active citizens, employees or parents... Literacy is about people’s self-esteem, their interaction with others, their health and employability. Ultimately, literacy is about whether a society is fit for the future.

(*Final report of the EU High Level Group of experts on literacy, 2012)*

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.

(*Ludwig Wittgenstein)*

Language is the principal medium of learning in school, and every teacher needs to cultivate it as the tool for learning in their subject. Teachers have a stake in strong language skills because language enables thought, empowering learners. Language goes beyond just ‘writing up’ what is learnt and ‘looking up’ information in a text; it is through the acts of reading and writing that meanings are forged, refined and fixed. Finding the right words, giving shape to an idea, articulating what is meant: this is where language is synonymous with learning.

### Aims

* To raise all subject teachers’ awareness of the need to plan the literacy provision within their faculty.
* To recognise that lessons need to be structured in ways that support and stimulate language development and contribute to the development of pupils’ communication skills.
* To develop pupils’ confidence and self-expression and raise pupils’ own expectations of achievement.
* To outline practice and methods which can support the teaching of spelling, vocabulary acquisition, active reading and writing.
* To suggest proposals to raise the profile of literacy across the curriculum, ensuring ongoing development of good practice and shared goals.

**The requirement included in the National Curriculum (2013)**

**Spoken Language**

The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils’ development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language continues to underpin the development of pupils’ reading and writing during key stage 3 and 4 and teachers should therefore ensure pupils’ confidence and competence in this area continue to develop. Pupils should be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate, as well as continuing to develop their skills in working collaboratively with their peers to discuss reading, writing and speech across the curriculum.

**Writing**

Pupils should be taught to write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through:

* writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences.
* summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail.
* applying their growing knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and text structure to their writing and selecting the appropriate form.
* planning, drafting, editing and proof-reading through amending the vocabulary, grammar and structure of their writing to improve its coherence and overall effectiveness.
* paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**Reading**

Reading at key stage 3 and 4 should be wide, varied and challenging.

Pupils should be taught to:

* develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material through choosing and reading books independently for challenge, interest and enjoyment.
* understand increasingly challenging texts through learning new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understanding it with the help of context and dictionaries
* make inferences and refer to evidence in the text.

**Vocabulary**

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils’ vocabulary will arise naturally from their reading and writing. Teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words and how to understand nuances in meaning.

**Writing**

Attention should be drawn to the purpose and audience (intended readers) of each piece of writing. Whilst the audience for pupils writing is often teacher and peer group, pupils could be encouraged to write for a range of intended readers, e.g. writing to explain a scientific principle to a younger audience, writing to other parties to elicit information or to express a viewpoint.

**Pupils should demonstrate their growing competence as writers by an increasing ability to:**

* present their writing clearly, using accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting.
* write in different forms for different purposes and audiences e.g. to evaluate, explain, analyse and instruct.
* develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader using wide ranging and technical vocabulary and an effective style, organising and structuring sentences and whole texts coherently.
* plan, redraft and check written work .
* apply word processing conventions and understand the principles of multi-media text.

**Staff should support students’ writing by:**

* giving opportunities to write a range of text types for a range of purposes across the Curriculum, explicitly teaching and reinforcing how to write in various styles.
* teaching the conventions of different forms of non-fiction writing by using writing frames (scaffolds that provide the writer with the structure and organisation for writing) and providing clear models for writing.
* using the whole-school literacy marking code, which should be displayed in classrooms or stuck into students’ books.
* supporting SEN and EAL learners with appropriate strategies providing dictionaries, glossaries or lists of appropriate subject vocabulary and encouraging pupils to use them.
* acknowledging and celebrating good written work through the creation of displays and the school’s rewards system.

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**The role of the literacy co-ordinator is to:**

* work collaboratively with departments to advise and reflect upon the effective use of writing frames, looking to create cross-curricular strategies where possible to approach longer written responses.
* collate the different writing styles used across different subject areas to record the types of writing students do in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and inform curriculum planning across the school.

**Vocabulary**

Oxford University Press’s recent report *Why Closing the Word Gap Matters* …reminds us that the size of a child’s vocabulary is the best predictor of success in future tests, and that children with a poor vocabulary at five are four times more likely to struggle with reading in adulthood and three times more likely to have mental health issues. It also shows that 69% of primary school teachers and 60% of secondary school teachers believe the word gap is increasing. (*Geoff Barton*)

**Pupils should demonstrate their growing competence as learners of vocabulary by an increasing ability to:**

* use subject-specific terminology with accuracy and confidence, both in written and spoken contexts.
* keep lists of key terms with appropriate definitions.
* actively learn words, through repetition, mnemonic strategies or using words in appropriate contexts in sentences.
* apply known strategies for spelling complex words, such as sounding out, segmenting, mnemonics or identifying links to other words (root words, prefixes, suffixes).

**Staff should support students’ acquisition of vocabulary by:**

* explicitly teaching subject-specific vocabulary and terminology, giving opportunities for pupils to learn and use these words in a range of contexts.
* modelling the use of a word in a correct context, exploring nuances and correct usage.
* giving students strategies to help them learn and retain spellings of subject-specific terms, drawing links to other vocabulary learnt in this subject area or in other subjects.
* ensuring that key words and connectives are displayed in all teaching areas
* enabling students to keep glossaries or lists of key terms in their subject area.

**The role of the literacy co-ordinator is to:**

* Lead whole-school training and INSET on vocabulary acquisition and teaching terminology.
* Disseminate strategies for learning vocabulary – such as Quizlet, dual-coding and mnemonics – and working alongside teachers in different departments to implement these methods.
* Introduce initiatives to raise awareness across the school of spelling strategies (an inter-house spelling bee) and word meanings (word of the week, focusing on idiomatic expressions and etymology) to encourage a whole school approach to literacy.
* Create a vocabulary quiz for the inter-house competition which includes terms from all subjects.
* Oversee department glossaries or key terms lists for Key Stage 3 and 4.

**Reading**

‘It would be fair to say that reading is the skill which both parents and teachers are most eager to see children develop. If children can read, and, more than that, if they can read effectively and with enthusiasm then they are advantaged both in and out of school. It is the key to the whole of the National Curriculum and a key skill for life.’ ***(NATE)***

**Pupils should demonstrate their growing competence as readers by an increasing ability to:**

* have a reading book at all times which is read for pleasure and enjoyment in form time and independently at home.
* use a range of different reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, close reading and annotating.
* actively seek out meanings for unknown words, using dictionaries and online resources to learn new vocabulary independently.
* use the school library to find books which they enjoy, asking staff for appropriate recommendations.
* recognising the features and conventions of a specific text-type.

**Staff should support students’ reading by:**

* enabling students to access a range of challenging texts and text-types, including multi-media and online texts.
* explicitly teaching the skills of skim-reading, scanning, close-reading and annotating.
* asking open-ended and close-ended questions to assess and extend pupils’ understanding of a text.
* explicitly explaining the features of different texts and the conventions which underpin them.
* using strategies and tasks (e.g. directed activities related to texts or DARTS) such as sequencing, numbering, cloze passages, true/false questions, diagrams, labelling, charts, underlining, predictions, transformations or generating questions.
* Providing SEN and EAL students with differentiated reading strategies and appropriate text choices.
* encouraging reading for pleasure by discussing book choices, praising independent reading and making recommendations.

**The role of the literacy co-ordinator is to:**

* Lead or co-ordinate whole-school initiatives to support targeted groups (e.g. the Reading Buddies programme, 8 for 8 reading group).
* Disseminate and share reading strategies, wither in whole-school INSET training sessions, or working with individual teachers or departments.
* Oversee the completion of annual NGRT tests to ensure accurate data is kept on the reading progress and scores of all students.
* To co-ordinate with relevant staff and SEND department to ensure identified pupils are supported with reading materials and appropriate strategies.
* To introduce form group reading books in Key Stage 3.

**Speaking and Listening**

Talk is our main means of communication in everyday life and is fundamental to the development of understanding. It is vital that students develop confidence and articulacy and recognise the importance of the spoken word in a range of situations.

**Pupils should demonstrate their growing competence in speaking and listening by an increasing ability to:**

* contribute to class discussions, articulating answers carefully and in Standard English.
* actively listen to the contributions of others, responding sensitively and appropriately.
* work in pairs and small groups to discuss, share ideas, negotiate and reach a compromise.
* adapt their speech to a range of situations and circumstances, recognising the appropriate register of speech in formal and informal contexts.

**Staff should support students’ speaking and listening by:**

* creating a supportive environment where pupils feel confident to contribute and make mistakes.
* creating the opportunity for students to participate in speaking and listening activities: in pairs, structured groups and whole-class contexts.
* enabling pupils to speak in a variety of different contexts and for different purposes (e.g. a debate, instructions, role-play, a persuasive task).
* recognising that speaking and listening tasks can be used for assessment purposes and is valued as an outcome as well as preparation for a written task.
* modelling effective contributions and register / tone in different contexts, correcting errors constructively.
* encouraging pupils to use new vocabulary and terminology in their contributions; making this language explicit beforehand to enable pupils to experiment with new language.

**The role of the literacy co-ordinator is to:**

* Liaise with other departments about the use of speaking and listening tasks in their subjects, including the school debating society, to transfer best practice across to other subjects, including English.
* Integrate speaking and listening assessments into English in Key Stage 3, using scaffolding, vocabulary lists and a clear assessment criteria.

**Monitoring and Assessing Literacy**

When responding to pupils’ work, teachers should:

* make comments which are positive and supportive but teachers should not avoid pointing out where errors have been made and how, specifically, a pupil can improve.
* give priority to content, ideas and organisation.
* target specific areas for improvement, select and focus on an area (e.g. use of capital letter).
* give guidance as to how to achieve short term targets (e.g. a specific spelling of a word ‘environment’, use of past tense for recounting events.
* create opportunities for pupils to reflect on the quality of their own work and for peer assessment.

**Future Plans**

* to raise the profile of whole-school literacy by leading INSET on vocabulary acquisition and learning terminology
* to work together with departments to compile glossaries and key word lists at Key Stage 3 and 4 to support the explicit teaching of vocabulary and spelling
* to identify and log main types of writing taught and compile a whole-school audit of the provision for writing in Key Stage 3 and 4
* to collate resources to support DARTS (Directed Activities Related to Text) to support reading of materials within the English Department as a departmental objective
* to introduce activities to recognise and celebrate World Book Day (Thursday, 5 March 2020), World Poetry Day (Friday 20 March) and World Literacy Day (Tuesday 8 September)
* to work with Key Stage 3 form tutors to trial and introduce whole class reading books which stimulate discussion and an enjoyment of reading
* to create literacy specific wall displays on etymology, spelling strategies and terminology throughout the school, and to work with staff across the school in the creation of literacy wall displays