



Literacy Policy

Governor Committee Responsible		Teaching and Learning	
School Staff member Responsible		Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)	
Policy Type	Non-Statutory	Review Period	3 years
Date Reviewed	June 2021	Next Review	June 2024

Aims

The aim of this policy is:

- to develop consistent approaches to teaching and learning in Literacy across departments, and to build increased awareness of the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils could be expected to bring to lessons in relation to Literacy.

Every teacher is a teacher of Literacy

*"Teachers should develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects."*¹

As a school, we also recognise and value the importance of disciplinary literacy in our curriculums.

"Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers in every subject to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects."

*As students progress through an increasingly specialised secondary school curriculum, there is a growing need to ensure that students are trained to access the academic language and conventions of different subjects. Strategies grounded in disciplinary literacy aim to meet this need, building on the premise that each subject has its own unique language, ways of knowing, doing, and communicating"*²

Therefore, the objectives for Literacy across our school are:

- that literacy is seen as a shared and whole school cross curricular responsibility;
- that consistent strategies are put in place to develop literacy skills across the whole school curriculum;
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¹ The National Curriculum in England. Key stages 3 and 4 framework (December 2014) DfE p.10

² Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Guidance Report (The Education Endowment Foundation) p.7

- that departments and individual teachers become confident and critical users of teaching and learning strategies to develop disciplinary literacy.
- that literacy strategies should be reviewed developed and revised as necessary.
- that teachers ensure pupils recognise their own role in and responsibility for developing literacy skills.
- that pupil's progress be measured in terms of both internal tests and external examinations.

We recognise that the term 'literacy' encompasses reading, writing and oracy development.

Reading

Reading strategies need to be carefully applied and adapted in different subjects. It is recognised that the following strategies are employed when asking students to read:

- a. Appropriate background information
 - Students must have the appropriate background understandings and knowledge of concepts if they are to assimilate new information.
 - Students should be encouraged to activate prior knowledge before reading a text.

- b. Awareness of purpose

Students need to:

 - have a clear understanding of what they should gain from their reading and how they are to use this information;
 - present students with questions (or ask them to create their own) before they read the text.

- c. Active involvement

Students must read actively. They must:

 - predict, question, hypothesise and reflect on information, ideas and concepts as they read;
 - be taught that effective reading cannot be passive but should be a receptive activity.

- d. Using new information
 - Students must have strategies to manipulate, transform or use new information and understandings, in a meaningful way, in order for it to become a part of their long term memory.
 - Use extension tasks to explore their new knowledge.

Writing

Students are encouraged to become confident, conscientious, and capable producers of extended writing by:

- a. being encouraged to produce considered writing through discussion and planning;
- b. being shown examples of expected work where appropriate;
- c. the technique of class discussion and small group work. Modelled responses mean students are often able to communicate thoughts, opinions and facts orally where they struggle to get their message understood through the written word;

- d. introducing writing frames in Key Stage 3 and be able to carry the knowledge through to controlled assessment in Key Stage 4.

Speaking and Listening

*"Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning"*³ High quality talk should be modelled by all teachers.

Students should be encouraged to:

- a. listen to instructions before beginning any task as their understanding of the task will be important;
- b. ask questions and use available opportunities to ask for help if they have not understood a teacher's demonstration;
- c. develop a variety of listening skills. For example to listen to recordings, distinguish tone of voice, identify key features etc;
- d. students should be encouraged to use Tier 2 and subject specific Tier 3 vocabulary by using word walls and glossaries.

Students should be encouraged to:

- a. be able to articulate responses and/or ask questions;
- b. take part in whole group or small group discussions;
- c. explore a range of topics and assessment objectives through discussion;
- d. have the opportunity to use discussion as a planning tool.

Spelling

Teachers will ensure that:

- a. spelling is recognised as being the responsibility of all departments;
- b. word walls are used to assist students' spelling of subject specific words;
- c. spellings are taught in the context of the lesson;
- d. homophones⁴ are discussed with students when appropriate;
- e. students are encouraged to recognize their role in, and their responsibility for, developing their spelling;
- f. students are encouraged to use a range of dictionaries, thesauruses, spelling and grammar checkers;
- g. students are taught the 'look, say, cover, write, check'⁵ method of learning spellings;
- h. students are encouraged to use 'fun' spelling systems e.g. mnemonics⁶ and word games to promote a positive attitude to spelling;

³ Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Guidance Report (The Education Endowment Foundation) p. 5

⁴ Homophones e.g. 'wood' and 'would', 'to', 'two' and 'too'

⁵ LOOK at the word carefully; say it slowly; cover it; write it down; check it; if it's wrong repeat the process

⁶ Mnemonics are short phrases or rhymes to help your memory e.g. 'big elephants can't always use small exits'

- i. they correct the main and most consistent spelling errors only in students' work to avoid demoralisation;
- j. they will use the agreed marking symbols⁷ when correcting work and students will be explained clearly to pupils;
- k. students are praised not only for successful finished written work, but for successful drafting and proof-reading of work to make improvements.

Whole School Marking Scheme

sp= Spelling mistake

p= punctuation error

np or // = New paragraph

gr= grammatical error

WW= wrong word

NAS= not a sentence.

ROS = run on sentence. (Series of comments without punctuation)

Literacy Intervention

The Accelerated Reading Programme

What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?

AR is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. A child picks a book at his own level and reads it at his own pace. When finished, the child takes a short quiz on the computer. (Passing the quiz is an indication that the child understood what was read.)

AR gives both children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help set goals and direct ongoing reading practice.

Children using AR choose their own books to read, rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they can choose books that are interesting to them.

Teachers and librarians help the child choose books at an appropriate reading level that are challenging without being frustrating, ensuring that the child can pass the quiz and experience success.

If the child does not do well on the quiz, the teacher may:

- Encourage the student to choose another book that is more appropriate;
- Ask more probing questions as the child reads, and before taking a quiz;
- Investigate any patterns or trends in the child's historical AR data

⁷ E.g. *sp* would highlight a spelling error and *gr* would highlight a grammatical error;

Bedrock Vocabulary Program

What is Bedrock?

Bedrock is a computer program that is focussed on the explicit teaching of Tier 2 vocabulary⁸. All students across Key Stages three and four participate in Bedrock by completing two 'lessons' per week for homework. Each lesson consists of a series of activities to introduce and consolidate understanding of a key tier 2 word. The lessons are monitored and managed by the English department.

At the start of each week, the Tier 2 words learnt in the previous week are made available to all staff so that they may be embedded within each subject area. On page 12 and page 22 (respectively) of staff and students' academic planners, the full bank of Bedrock words can be accessed at any time. Staff and students are encouraged to draw on this page when appropriate to create further opportunities to reinforce the vocabulary in the classroom.

The library is available for any student to complete their Bedrock homework or to receive additional help or support.

⁸ High frequency words that are not subject specific but can be found across all subject disciplines.