

Literacy Policy

Rationale

Literacy underpins the curriculum by developing students' abilities to speak, listen, read and write for a wide range of purposes, using language to learn and communicate, to think, explore and organise. Helping students to express themselves clearly, orally and in writing, enhances and enriches teaching and learning in all subjects and therefore raises achievement. All departments and all teachers have a crucial role to play in supporting students' literacy development.

Aims

The aims of this document are to:

- support students' learning in all subjects by helping teachers to be clear about the ways in which their work with students contributes to the development of students' communication skills
- develop a shared understanding between all staff of the role of language in students' learning and how work in different subjects can contribute to and benefit from the development of students' ability to communicate effectively
- raise students' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards;
- develop students' confidence and self-expression
- promote knowledge and understanding of students' standards of achievement and assessment in speaking and listening, writing and reading, and the identification of any areas of strength and weakness.

The Three Areas of Focus

Although the following is divided into three sections, **Speaking and Listening**, **Reading** and **Writing**, it should be noted that the three language areas are interdependent.

Speaking and Listening

Talk is our main means of communication in everyday life and is fundamental to the development of understanding. We want our students to develop increasing confidence and competence in speaking and listening so that they are able to:

- clarify and express their ideas and explain their thinking

- adapt their speech to a widening range of circumstances , including paired and group discussions and speaking to a larger audience;
- use varied and specialised vocabulary;
- speak for a range of purposes e.g. to narrate, to analyse, to explain, to reflect and evaluate;
- listen with understanding and respond sensitively and appropriately.

Reading

We want our students to enjoy reading, to be able to use their reading to help them learn and to develop increasing confidence and competence in reading so that they are able to:

- read fluently, accurately and with understanding;
- become independent and critical readers and make informed and appropriate choices;
- select information from a wide range of texts and sources including print, media and ICT and to evaluate those sources;
- apply techniques such as skimming, scanning, and text-marking effectively in order to research and appraise texts.

Writing

Many lessons include and depend on written communication. We want our students to develop increasing confidence and competence in writing so that they are able to:

- write in a widening variety of forms for different purposes e.g. to interpret, evaluate, explain, analyse and explore;
- develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader using wide-ranging and technical vocabulary and an effective style, organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently;
- present their writing clearly using accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting;

Implementation

Successful implementation of this policy is dependent upon the extent to which we:

- include literacy objectives in our lesson planning and schemes of work, across the curriculum

- use the appropriate symbols in our marking to help students improve weakness and highlight and celebrate the areas of Literacy where students are making progress
- students provided with Literacy targets (writing, reading and speaking and listening), these are used across the curriculum, and they are supported in meeting them by teaching and classroom support staff
- Students' Literacy targets are reviewed every half term
- take account of the needs of all students, with regard to ethnicity, gender, ability and social and cultural factors
- value students' language achievements, including those in languages other than English
- structure lessons appropriately in ways that support and stimulate language development and show how literacy learning objectives for students are to be achieved
- monitor and evaluate the impact of Literacy Across the Curriculum and of students' developing ability to talk, read and write more effectively

Speaking and Listening

- In our teaching we should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to engage in purposeful talk, both formally and informally.
- In planning for talk we should consider pace and timing so that purposeful talk is maintained
- Whilst teacher exposition is essential we should take account of demands on concentration to ensure that students are required to listen for realistic lengths of time.
- We should give students regular opportunities to speak and listen in the following contexts:
 - in pairs with a partner;
 - in small groups, with opportunities to take on the roles of chair or scribe;
 - with the teacher or another adult
 - in whole class discussions
 - presentations to a wider audience

In these contexts some of the following activities should take place:

- use of the learning structures to ensure collaborative learning takes place
- exploring and describing events, activities and problems, exploring and developing ideas with others
- reporting back to a wider audience in order to consolidate ideas and understanding
- asking questions as well as answering them

- speculating, hypothesising and imagining
- planning, organising and reviewing activities
- investigating and solving problems collaboratively
- evaluating experiences and reflecting on learning
- talking at length and adopting the 'expert' role

Reading

- We should use available data on students' reading levels in order to make informed choices about appropriate texts and to plan appropriate support for pupils, in order that they may successfully access texts.
- We should take opportunities to demonstrate pleasure in reading.
- We should make opportunities for students and teachers to share their reading experiences.
- We should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to:
 - read and follow written instructions
 - read and engage with narratives of events or activities
 - follow up their interests and read texts of varying lengths
 - question and challenge printed information and views
 - read with understanding descriptions of processes, structures and mechanisms
 - read and explore ideas and theories
 - learn how to sift and select, take notes from text and read to locate information
 - learn how to scan for overall meaning and scan for key points, words and phrases
 - use reading to research and investigate from printed words, moving images and ICT texts.

Writing

- We should draw attention to the purpose and intended readers of each piece of writing. Whilst the audience for students' writing is often teacher and peer group, students should be encouraged to write for a range of intended readers. For example, writing to explain a scientific principle to a younger audience, writing guidance for peers on an aspect of the subject, writing to agencies to elicit information or to express a viewpoint.
- We should pay close attention to writing as a learning tool as well as a product of the learning.
- We should help students to recognise the appropriate form for their written responses, so that they know when to respond in note form and when more formal writing types are required.
- We should limit the use of pre-structured writing e.g. copying, sentence completion and sentence

rearrangement.

We should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to:

- make notes from a variety of sources - printed word, moving images and ICT texts;
- use writing to plan organise and record
- plan, draft, discuss and reflect on their writing
- learn the conventions of different forms of writing in different subject areas e.g. by using writing frames and providing clear models for writing
- write at appropriate length, sometimes briefly
- write collaboratively with other students
- present some writing for display or publication

We should:

- expect high standard of presentation in students' finished writing
- provide good models of particular kinds of writing
- provide dictionaries, glossaries and lists of appropriate subject vocabulary and encourage students to use them
- help students to use a range of strategies to learn spellings, including:
 - look – say – cover – write – check
 - making connections between words with the same visual spelling pattern
 - exploring families of words.

Resources

As a school, we should aim to provide:

- displays of vocabulary relevant to the topic or National Curriculum subject
- relevant material, at appropriate levels of interest and difficulty, and from a range of text types
- reading material of high quality which is up to date and relevant

- some texts in the first languages of pupils acquiring English as an additional language
- access to the school library and to ICT sources of information
- access to appropriate audio visual equipment
- classroom environments that support good literacy practice

Assessing Literacy Across the Curriculum

- When assessing students' work across the curriculum we should value their oral contributions and listening skills, alongside their reading and writing
- We should take into account students' performance in Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing when assessing and reporting on students' progress in subject areas
- When setting writing tasks, we should plan for, and make explicit to the students, the key features of language which will be assessed

When responding to pupils' work we should:

- make comments which are positive, supportive and aid the development of literacy skills
- target specific literacy areas for improvement (a selective and focussed identification of errors)
- give guidance on how to achieve the short-term literacy targets set
- create opportunities for students to reflect on the quality of their own work; use a pink highlighter to highlight spelling errors and a yellow highlighter to point out grammatical errors, students must then be given time and the resources to correct. As per the marking policy, incorrect spellings must be written out correctly three times.
- create opportunities for peer assessment

In order to ensure that the introduction of a whole school literacy policy is successful, we should, on a regular basis:

- audit existing literacy teaching in all curriculum areas
- carry out action planning
- provide training for staff based on areas for development
- research successful literacy initiatives

- inform parents/carers of the high priority given to Literacy Across the Curriculum and develop ways for parents/carers to support the initiative
- raise the profile of literacy across the curriculum, starting with integrating key objectives into planning for the new Year 7 curriculum
- provide guidance for subject teachers and supporting staff on how they can best support students' literacy development across the curriculum.
- establish procedures to monitor and evaluate students' progress.

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