

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY POLICY



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LANGUAGE & LITERACY POLICY

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- 1. To encourage all teachers to become teachers of literacy and to provide the necessary resources, advice and support, in order to raise standards of literacy for all ages and abilities across the school.**

Teaching strategies

- using grids, columns, spider diagrams, flow charts and other graphic aids to thinking and to the structuring of ideas;
- being explicit in setting and modelling written assignments, and providing effective examples of the task, style or genre required;
- interrogating texts systematically; sharing headings, structures and sentence stems for note-taking, but avoiding dictation or copying (except where it is an essential learning tool, e.g. MFL);
- providing opportunities for skimming and scanning texts.
- Provide literacy placemats for all departments according to audit and distribute accordingly
- Provide non-fiction literacy ladder to all departments for assessing literacy
- Provide speaking frames for improving literacy across subjects
- Provide Literacy lessons in form time once a week from Years 7 – 11 with a specially designed programme of study to compliment subject areas and to focus on key features of literacy which are being assessed in line with the National Curriculum changes due from 2015.

- 2. To ensure that the whole school language and literacy policy is reflected in departmental policies and is implemented, monitored and evaluated.**

2.1 Whole school strategies

The staff recognises that whole school strategies are an essential aspect of improving literacy for all. For example:

- marking policy (see appendix)
- promoting correct spellings through the look, say, cover, write, check method
- glossaries of terms
- specific teaching of suffixes, prefixes, word stems, etc. as a means of promoting word recognition and correct spelling
- Use of key words in lesson objectives and throughout lessons
- Literacy pages on the school planner to refer to across the school
- Literacy lesson in form once a week which are recorded in planners
- Revision of misconceptions picked out in lessons by teacher
- Literacy placemats used in all subject areas
- Punctuation pyramid in all classrooms
- Literacy Leaders who observe literacy lessons and co-write form time literacy lessons
- Connectives page and literacy terms in planners

2.2 Schemes of work

- Groups of students are asked to research some aspect of volcanoes and then prepare a short talk on their research, using powerpoint. Subsequently, after discussion, each group has to complete an evaluation sheet explaining what their own talk was about and what they learned from the presentations (speaking and listening objective — geography, Year 7).
- Students write on the question: why was there a revolution in France? They are

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supported by a basic essay framework with essential questions and issues they have to tackle. The marking scheme stresses accuracy, clarity of introduction and conclusion, development of reasons and arguments, sentence and paragraph structure (writing objective — history, Year 8).

- Students are introduced to key scientific terms which facilitate their analysis of scientific results and allow for students to draw their own conclusions based on qualitative and quantitative data. Students construct a scientific report on how hexavalent chromium contaminated water samples led to illness in the human population.

3. To identify and target underachieving students and those with special educational needs, and to make appropriate provision for them.

3.1 Identification

All students have their reading and spelling ability tested upon entry. Various other forms of information are also be taken into account such as:

- Primary school records
- SEN information
- CAT test results
- SATs scores
- Record of Achievement
- National Curriculum attainment levels
- Teacher/Classroom assistant observation

3.2 Targeting

Students who are deemed to be underachieving and as having difficulty acquiring literacy skills are targeted for additional provision, according to the level of need. This additional provision can take the following forms:

- Intensive and explicit teaching as in the small English and Extra English sets – all students have a Classroom Support Plan
- Additional one-to-one teaching – students have an Individual Support Plan
- Additional in-class support for facilitating learning
- Regular access to interactive learning packages such as SuccessMaker which can also be used during lunchtime and after school
- Use of mentors
- Homework and revision clubs
- Provision of handwriting club and literacy page on Fronter
- Literacy software programmes
- Working with an SOS subject mentor.
- Additional English classes for Pupil Premium students.
- Summer intervention literacy pack and workshop for year 6 parents
- Accelerated Reader scheme for all pupils in years 7-9
- 20 minutes reading in form time at least once a week

4. Differentiation to Improve Literacy

4.1 Differentiation

- By outcome
- By rate of progress

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- By enrichment
- By setting different tasks
- Use of Accelerated Reader
- Closing the Gap project

4.2 Literacy Considerations

- Concepts, vocabulary and language
- Readability and accessibility of books and materials
- Display of work
- Students communication of learning
- Individual research and associated access issues
- Developing higher level thinking - analysis, synthesis and evaluation

INCLUSION

- 5. To be aware of the evidence of and research into varied levels of achievement in literacy of different sub-groups, including but not limited to boys, girls, SEN, Pupil Premium and different ethnic groups. To provide varied opportunities and role models within the curriculum and beyond, to ensure that the needs and learning styles of all students are met.**

5.1 Aims:

To be aware of factors that can influence a student's approach to literacy. These can include:

- Gender differences
- Differences in ethnicity
- Cultural differences
- Home language

To provide staff with examples of teaching strategies which can address these different approaches to literacy.

5.2 Teaching Strategies

- **Boy/girl seating**
- **Managing Group Work:**
jig-sawing (dividing responsibility for parts of an overall task among groups of students, and making each group responsible for the outcome to the class as a whole); vary groups for different tasks;
- **Graphic aids:**
using grids, columns, spider diagrams, flow charts;
- **Showing Examples of Outcomes:**
being explicit in setting and modelling written assignments, and providing effective examples of the task, style or genre required; and examples of how to improve.
- **Reading and Writing:**
using systematic approaches to the handling and interrogation of texts and to guided

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written work.

- **Writing Frames:**
Provide these for non-fiction work.
- **Clear instructions**
Using BLP to make students more self-aware as learners and to enable them to develop personalised strategies for learning.

At the beginning and end of each stage of the lesson.

Small steps and short-term achievable goals

Relevance and variety of texts

Support with homework

Increased access to ICT and media work

Incorporating drama and oral work

Making learning memorable

Increasing the challenge in lessons

Sharing clear learning objectives and success criteria with students, to enable them to take greater ownership of their learning

Ensuring a range of active learning activities, which require students to think.

Developing students' self-confidence, perseverance and willingness to take risk through a range of strategies, including:-

- Use of language of BLP
- Peer teaching and mentoring
- Think-pair-share
- Group work

5.3 Strategies outside the lesson:

- **Literacy software programmes** for older students, used outside normal school hours;
- a lunch hour spelling club;
- a homework clinic;
- Revision classes
- Additional sessions for controlled assessments.
- Work with an SOS subject mentor.
- Additional support from the Year Learning Mentor.
- Disapplication to enable additional curriculum time for English.
- Additional form groups for English and Maths in year 11.
- Identification and close monitoring of at risk groups based on KS4 outcomes and KS2 prior attainment.
- Literacy lessons in form time once a week

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- Accelerated Reader for years 7-9
- Year 7 Book Day
- Literacy Leaders

ICT AND THE LIBRARY**6. To develop an ethos where literacy is valued by ensuring that both ICT and the Library are central to the school.****6.1 Literacy and ICT**

ICT has the potential to make a significant contribution to students' learning by:

- enhancing and developing students' reading and writing by providing access to a wide range of up-to-date learning resources e.g. internet research projects
- supporting and enhancing the study of texts, for example by bringing texts together on a split screen for purposes of comparison e.g. having a mark scheme and an essay together.
- In reading, ICT can develop students' higher order reading skills in analysis, synthesis and evaluation;
- allowing students to refine their work e.g. students can make use of spell-checkers, grammar checkers, integral or on-line dictionaries and thesauruses in the editing process.
- students whose motor skills prohibit clear and legible handwriting are able to present work neatly, especially those with dyslexia.
- emphasising the link between writer and audience by adapting the presentation and organisation of their writing to meet the needs of different audiences, e.g. through constructing a Web page;
- promoting the integration of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The use of ICT can focus students' talk through collaborative work involving reading, writing and redrafting. ICT also provides students with an effective resource to support oral presentations;

6.2 Literacy and the Library

Aim is to get students to use the library more often and effectively by

- Teaching students library, research and information skills
- Increasing resources and services that help *all* students with schoolwork
- Ensuring more differentiation of stock, especially for weaker readers
- Development of Accelerated Reader

STATEMENT – SPEAKING AND LISTENING

7. To increase staff awareness of the central roles of speaking and listening in promoting literacy, and to help us develop these areas within our own subjects.

If we were given a difficult task to perform and freedom of choice about how to tackle it, most people would choose to discuss the options. Often, however, in the classroom we do not create sufficient opportunities for students to have these learning discussions.

Speaking and listening give students the opportunity to change their minds or to re-formulate their understanding. We need to develop our students as active listeners.

Strategies

- **Contexts**

Varied so that students are challenged by different kinds of oral tasks.

- **Groups**

Grouping should be varied, ensuring that students don't always work with the same set of friends, of the same gender, in the same sized groups.

- **Roles within groups**

Assign active management roles to alleviate stereotypical behaviour in group work, making sure to swap the roles around from one task to the next:

- *secretarial roles*: listening and recording

- *leadership roles*: guiding the discussion;
keeping channels of communication open;
maintaining healthy group atmosphere;
clarifying ideas;
summarising information;
seeking agreement

- *supporting roles*: starting things moving;
contributing;
encouraging;
making connections

- **Purposes**

Consider the audience and purpose when we set up oral work. Real audiences and meaningful purposes produce better work.

- **The role of the teacher**

The teacher should make clear which role(s) apply: expert, facilitator, participant or assessor.

- **Stereotypes**

Girls are good at probing and supporting behaviour in conversation. Encourage all students to think about how to respond to, affirm and reflect on other people's contributions.

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Boys are good at capturing the initiative in conversation – encourage all students to use eye contact, body language and verbal intervention.

- **Active Listening**

Focusing on the BLP Learning habit of listening to help students understand what active listening entails and the benefits it can bring to their learning

- **Learning Dialogues and Questioning**

Staff should look for opportunities for students to discuss their learning, in order to improve their oral literacy. This will be via discussions about BLP, and through assessment for learning. By moving to more active and higher order questioning, teachers can encourage students to give more extended answers, and to develop their higher order thinking skills.

READING

8. To ensure that, in our classroom, all students can read to learn and learn to read.

We often assume that the reading skills of our students are secure, yet all students find some texts challenging.

Allow students to engage with texts in an active way so their reading becomes more meaningful and more memorable.

Use Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs).

8.1 DARTs

- ***Text meaning***

Cloze

Give the students a copy of the text from which single words have been deleted - words which are critical in some way to the meaning. Ask pairs to agree replacements for the missing words that are syntactically and semantically correct. The idea is for the students to have a relevant discussion and justify their decisions rather than guess the right word. Compare with the original passage.

Sequencing

This involves serious doctoring of the text. Make copies of the text and cut into pieces. Do not have too many pieces otherwise it becomes difficult to organise. Give all the pieces to pairs and ask them to order them in a way that makes sense. Try to avoid a 'jigsaw' that can be put together from physical clues. Good exercises of this type can be put on card to be used again.

Question setting

Turn the usual procedure around by asking the students themselves to make up a small number of questions to which they would like the answer. It is more difficult than it sounds and students will tend to go for the more banal kind of question to which they are accustomed questions related to lower-order thinking skills. Make distinctions between questions which are on the lines, between the lines and beyond the lines.

Responding to statements

This is a superior version of multiple choice, and a fairly painless way of focusing discussion on critical issues in, say, a short story. Make up a short list of statements

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(some controversial and/or contradictory, perhaps one or two to do with the writer's intentions) that can stand as overall comments about the piece. Ask your pairs to work through them and decide which two or three they consider to be the most important/appropriate. A simple 'prioritising' system can then show the consensus of opinion in the class as a whole. A class can start with those who choose unpopular statements giving reasons for their decisions.

Wide angle questions

This is a safe start for students in pairs. Give them a few questions to discuss on the text. They must be questions to which there is no obvious single right answer and of a kind to encourage ranging over the text as a whole. Try and make the questions a bit eccentric.

Is this the right title for the passage?

What kind of book/text do you think this extract comes from?

What idea of the writer do you get from this piece?

Give a time limit. No need for written answers but a quick feedback.

Marking the text

This is a simple idea. It just involves asking the students to underline or indicate in the margin in some way bits of the text that deal with one thing rather than another. They can also identify patterns and connections. The physical marking is a prop for close attention and the talk involved is a preparation for the broader discussion to come.

Finding boundaries

This is sequencing in reverse. Ask students to divide the text into what they think are its sections, describing what makes one section different from the next (or putting a title to it). It's made easier if you tell the class at the beginning the number of sections you think there are.

Selective substitutions

Give the students a text, telling them that some of the words/phrases/sections have been replaced by less good alternatives. The reader's job is to look through and recast any parts in any way they feel would help. The range of possible strategies for substitution -semantic, aesthetic, syntactic, logical, surrealist - are considerable. People will need to be given some guidance on this.

Trash and treasure

Introduce the idea of 'trash' (words you don't need) and 'treasure' (vital words). The treasure words should be identified by the students. This is an excellent example of synthesis, and requires students to justify their opinions.

Paraphrasing and summary

Here all or part of the written material is re-presented by the students in their own writing, possibly after work using some other techniques. The piece could be a news bulletin, diary entry or short statement by a key figure/character.

Drawings and diagrams

This just means asking the students to present some of the information in the text in some visual form (e.g. a drawing, a flow chart, a table or a network, etc). This technique could be used for example to focus attention on the relationship between characters in a story or their points of similarity and difference. It may also be useful for reassembling ideas in an information text, as a way of preparing for note-taking of various kinds.

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Role playing and other extensions

Here the written material or some of it is re-presented in verbal form through roleplay or an interview or improvised 'skeleton'. For example, characters in a short story can be 'interviewed' about their motives and feelings or two characters who do not in fact meet or talk in the story can be projected into a scene where they do.

Playing the 'notes' game

This is way of refining students' note-taking skills. Towards the end of the lesson, write a sentence on the board from the current unit of work. Then ask "Who can give me this information in the fewest number of words?" Suggestions are written on the board, until the minimum number of words needed to convey the information remain.

Grids

Physically restricting the amount of space available for the information reminds students to use key words instead of sentences. Provide grids with the category heading already written in. Then move on to another task where the students have to provide the category headings themselves.

8.2 Make reading easier***Resources***

Staff may need to analyse the effectiveness of their written resources (both books and worksheets) in terms of design and readability, and replace where necessary. Staff will be aware that the following design features make reading easier:

- white space
- spacing between the lines
- type choice and size
- use of upper and lower case
- illustrations
- page layout and page breaks
- paper colour

Readability

When preparing worksheets and in buying books we need to take into consideration the following recommendations for improving readability:

- Prefer the shorter word to the longer one. Use simple, everyday words rather than fancy ones. Prefer verbs over nouns and adjectives. Prefer the specific word to the general one.
- Write short sentences with an average of no more than 20, words. Use the active voice rather than the passive. Be a miser with compound and complex sentences and a spendthrift with simple sentences.
- Write short paragraphs with an average of 75 words. Avoid paragraphs that exceed five typed lines for business letters and ten lines for longer compositions

Key words

Wall charts, key words and glossaries of terms.

See also appendix, for long term consequences of poor literacy, by Graham Frater.

WRITING

9. To provide students with the tools necessary to succeed when writing in the genres appropriate to our subjects

Writing frames

Writing frames are available on General Drive and shared area.

Use Connectives

Following the frames are lists connectives or conjunctions, to aid students in showing the relationship of one piece of text to another.

Explanation

I want to explain why

There are several reasons for this. The chief reason is

Another Important reason is

It is also quite possible that

So now I can see why

I want to explain how

To begin with / It starts by

And makes / means / changes

After that

and as a result

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Next

Then

The final result is that

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Persuasion

Structured note-making (reasons and supporting evidence) followed by writing frame

Topic: hanging

Those who feel that hanging should be brought back – argue that

Those who oppose hanging and its return tend to argue that

I want to suggest four reasons for which hanging should / should not For each reason I shall offer supporting evidence

My first reason for opposing / supporting is that This view is supported by clear evidence from (state source) that

Evidence from also shows clearly that

There is also strong evidence to suggest that

In addition to the kind of evidence I have used so far, I believe that there is a strong moral argument because

I believe that I have shown that

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<p>Revision prompts The following prompts, printed on separate cards, were used by Scardemalia and Bereiter.</p>
Choppy – ideas are not connected to each other very well.
Hard to tell what the main point is.
Too much space given to an unimportant point.
The writer ignores the obvious point someone would bring up against what they are saying.
Doesn't give the reader reason to take the idea seriously.
Part of the essay doesn't belong with the rest.
Incomplete idea.
Says something that's not believable.
Expresses the idea in a clumsy way.
The reader will already have thought of this.
Weak reason
Too few ideas
Example doesn't help to explain the idea.

These prompts can be used by the teacher before the student redrafts an essay. Alternatively, students could use them in a peer editing exercise.

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CONNECTIVES**Conjunctions**

Conjunctions are used to provide different kinds of relationships within and between sentences. These relationships can be:

Relationships in time

- first (second, third, etc.)
- when
- now
- at this point
- meanwhile
- after a while
- in the end
- before that
- lastly
- at this moment
- next time
- at once
- afterwards
- on another occasion
- then
- here
- hitherto
- until then
- soon
- straightaway
- previously

Causes and conditions

- so consequently
- an effect of
- otherwise
- yet
- despite this
- all the same
- accordingly
- moreover
- then
- hence
- caused by
- in that case
- still
- however
- nevertheless
- so as
- an outcome of
- therefore
- because
- stemmed from
- as a consequence of
- though
- even though
- as a result of
- an upshot of
- under the circumstances

Comparisons

- however
- in spite of this
- whereas
- on the other hand
- on other respects
- nevertheless
- differs from
- on the contrary
- rather
- elsewhere
- instead
- also
- in that respect
- alternatively

Additions

- also
- furthermore
- moreover
- but
- besides
- in addition
- as well
- and
- not only
- while
- without
- besides
- additionally
- nor
- whereas
- neither

Examples and results

- for example
- including
- such as
- consequently
- for instance
- these include
- accordingly
- therefore
- for one thing
- as exemplified by
- as a result
- though

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10. Parent and Community Links

Parents

- Use of the organiser for spelling (key words);
-
- Promoting help from parents;
- Inviting parents to relevant events promoting aspects of literacy and providing them with advice on hearing students read at home; - Not in LS but check for English department.
- Support for parents with literacy difficulties, Parents able to contact SENCO.

Community

- Public speaking events.

Appendix 1

TALK ON LITERACY AND POLICY

SOME TRENDS: RESEARCH AND INSPECTION EVIDENCE?

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF POOR LITERACY

Cohort studies of adults

A picture emerges of the person lacking basic literacy skills as being marginalised first in education and then in the peripheral unskilled regions of the labour market, typically with long spells of unemployment. (Ekinsmyth and Bynner, 1994).

The Disadvantages are *profound, enduring and increasing*:

Whatever has gone wrong in education that led to these difficulties in the first place, *maintains its impact throughout adult life*. (Bynner and Parsons, 1997, p.79, my italics.).

We have to conclude that *the difficulties associated with these problems have intensified over the years*. (Bynner and Parsons, 1997, p.83, my italics.).

The difficulties often include:

- unskilled occupations and low pay;
- a lack of advancement and training at work;
- poor health and depression;
- rented housing (as distinct from home ownership);
- for men, a divorce rate that is markedly higher than for those whose basic skills are secure (40% cf 16%. p.61 .);
- if they are women, an early exit from work to look after children is also more likely;
- if they left school at 16, adults with insecure basic skills tend to have more children than their peers and to have them earlier;
- they form a group that is less likely to take part in public activities such as voting in elections(Bynner and Parsons, 1997, my summary);
- poor literacy is found in more than one in two prison inmates, but one in six in the general population (The Basic Skills Agency, 1994, p.16.).

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Document History

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