



HEADLANDS SCHOOL
SINCE 1965

Literacy Policy

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Creation date	Spring 2019
Adopted by Governors	Spring 2019
Next Review Date	Spring 2020

Headlands School Literacy Policy

‘A child who reads will be an adult who thinks’ Sasha Salmina (Russian illustrator)

Policy Aims

- To ensure a whole school approach to addressing literacy needs across the curriculum.
- To enable all students to fulfill their potential in the skills of reading, writing and spoken language. For students to be able to transfer and apply these skills in order to fully access learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- To reinforce that Literacy is the responsibility of all staff and recognise the central place of every class teacher in relation to literacy.
- To ensure that all staff and especially SMT, Subject Leaders, Literacy Coordinator and the SENCO expect and set, the highest possible standards for literacy.
- To ensure that the English department takes a leading role in laying the foundations for appropriate literacy skills in reading, writing and spoken language, which are purposeful and clearly transferable across the curriculum?
- To ensure that students with special educational needs in literacy, underachieving students and gifted students as well as those in groups associated with underachievement in literacy, are given appropriate and rigorous support.

1. Rationale

1.1. What is Literacy?

- Literacy is a tool for communicating and developing thought processes.
- Literacy development is rooted in social interaction.
- Literacy is at the heart of learning - across the whole curriculum.
- Literacy teaching should be contextualized.
- There is more to Literacy than technical accuracy i.e. spelling, grammar and punctuation.

“Literacy can be defined on a number of levels. It is obviously concerned with the ability to read and write but a fuller definition might be the capacity to recognise, reproduce and manipulate the conventions of text shared by a given community.”

“Literacy is or ought to be a shared responsibility - it is too important to leave to English teachers....Literacy is important because it enables students to gain access to the subjects studied in school, to read for information and pleasure, to communicate effectively.”

“Teaching Standards make it plain that all teachers should: demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher’s specialist subject.”
John Hertrich (HMI inspector)

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Leadership of teaching and learning responsibilities

- To ensure a high profile for Literacy across the whole school.
- To actively support and drive the policy of improved literacy for all.
- To ensure that the literacy needs of all students are met through the curriculum.
- To review the overall effectiveness of strategies for improving literacy across the school.
- To ensure that each subject area has a broad range of literacy skills embedded within schemes of work, and that the quality of literacy teaching and learning is of an excellent standard.
- To monitor and evaluate the school Literacy Policy.
- To ensure that training and resource needs are met.
- To model high literacy skills in their own writing

2.3 Subject Leader

- To ensure that staff are aware of the policy on the delivery of Literacy.
- To ensure and sustain Literacy as a priority in departmental policy, improvement planning and delivery.
- To ensure the effective implementation of the Literacy Policy by all departmental members.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of specialist vocabulary and that spelling of specialist terminology is reinforced appropriately across the department.
- Implement regular audits of students' books to ensure that the Literacy Policy is fully implemented.
- To ensure a broad range of literacy objectives / skills are embedded in schemes of work, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the department's contribution to literacy development
- To ensure a broad range of literacy objectives / skills are embedded in schemes of work, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the department's contribution to literacy development.
- Ensure that all staff follow the marking policy regarding literacy
- To ensure that literacy mats are in general use within the department.
- To ensure that reading lists for all key stages are available for their subject.
- To identify and share good literacy practice across the department.

a. Classroom Teacher

- All staff are responsible for addressing literacy and acting as role models, demonstrating high standards of oral and written literacy to all students.
- To fully implement the school Literacy Policy.
- Make effective use of the marking policy and literacy.
- To identify any student who may need testing for dyslexia or dyspraxia (e.g. spelling and poor handwriting).
- To teach subject specific spellings, and to encourage their use in students' verbal and written responses.
- All staff are to promote the value of language in learning and effectively teach the skills of reading, writing and spoken language.
- All staff to be fully committed to raising literacy skills *at all levels* of student attainment.
- Support the Subject Leaders in developing and enhancing the delivery of literacy.
- To use the subject-specific literacy mat in their lessons.
- To be aware that exam boards will now be taking literacy into account in their mark schemes.

- To fully support all school and departmental initiatives and strategies to raise standards of literacy and promote a culture of literacy development and enrichment across the curriculum.
- To ensure that they raise the profile of literacy within their subjects through visual displays either in the classrooms, or in corridor displays.
- All staff are to ensure that teaching resources are accessible for all reading ages.
- All staff are to ensure that students are aware of the literacy specific information in their planners and encourage the use of it in lessons.

3 The Core of the Whole School Literacy Policy

3.1 Reading

Aims

- To encourage students to become confident, independent readers across all subjects in school.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of, and are teaching important reading skills in their subjects.
- To encourage a culture of reading for pleasure.

The effective teaching of reading takes place when:

- Reasons for reading are made explicit.
- A range of reading materials is available.
- Active reading strategies are used to support the reading process.
- Higher order reading skills are taught explicitly [inference, deduction].
- Every effort is made to find reading materials that are interesting and engaging.
- The teaching of reading is built into departmental planning and assessment policies.
- Students are given the opportunity to read from moving image, print and screen texts.

Promoting Reading across the Curriculum

Departments should:

- Know and understand the reading and writing levels of their students, made available through Sims and Y7 and 8 reading assessments
- Plan appropriate support for students in order that they may successfully access texts.
- Use the Reading Tutor Period effectively to ensure students are engaging appropriately with their texts. Tutors should promote class discussion in order to enhance the profile of reading and text comprehension.
- Periodically review textbooks and worksheets for readability.
- Make available a range of reading/research materials, and use the facilities provided by the school (especially VLE) to enhance reading skills.
- Build extended reading tasks into departmental schemes of work e.g. research tasks; reading in depth around a subject; comparisons of viewpoints in texts in order to develop students' independence.
- Make available, in teaching rooms, dictionaries and glossaries

Supporting reading at home

There are numerous studies that suggest that **students who are exposed to books from a young age perform better across the curriculum**. Children who live in a house with well-stocked book shelves have been proven to remain in education for an average of three years longer than those with little access to literature.

- Send a letter home to all parents at the end of the summer term with an attached reading list and sent out to our new Y7s in the autumn term.

3.2 Writing

Aims

- To encourage students to plan and edit work effectively.
- To provide a wider audience for students' work.
- To encourage students to take pride in their writing.
- To make students aware of the language/literacy links across subjects.
- To enable students to write effectively for a variety of audiences in a variety of forms.

The effective teaching of writing takes place when

- Students understand clearly why they are being asked to write.
- Features of different types of texts are made explicit.
- Strategies are used to support developing writers [writing frames].
- There are a range of models for different texts available.
- They are encouraged to plan their writing.
- Drafting is encouraged when appropriate.
- There is teacher modeling for a range of text types.
- Students are offered a range of audiences to write for, including, where possible, real audiences.
- Students' work is celebrated through display.
- There is a proper balance between a concern for secretarial skills (the ability to communicate in a clear and accurate written manner) and the content and style of the piece of writing.
- Regular opportunities for independent, extended writing are promoted.
- Students are encouraged to proofread completed work.
- All teachers are aware of and enforce the principles of written English.

Promoting Writing across the Curriculum

Departments should

- Draw attention to the purpose and intended readers of a piece of writing and, where possible, plan for opportunities to engage a wider audience. For example, writing to explain a scientific principle to a younger audience, writing to agencies to elicit information etc.
- Help students to appreciate the differences between spoken English and written English with reference to subject-specific written tasks.
- 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
- Constructions are required.
- As far as possible, limit the use of copying and dictation.
- Discourage students from all forms of plagiarism in their writing, especially in relation to the internet.

- Provide opportunities for extended pieces of writing within schemes of work.
- Explicitly teach note-taking skills.
- Provide good models of the different text types.
- Plan strategies for teaching research skills and project writing and embed in schemes of work.
- Explicitly teach the features and different forms of non-fiction writing.
- Where appropriate, develop department portfolios of different forms of writing related to subject.
- Have subject-specific vocabulary on literacy mats or on display or in books.
- Ensure that all students are given time in the lesson to correct mistakes after work has been marked.

Problem	Support Strategies
<p>Slow handwriting/tires easily This can be due, in part, to Dyspraxia. Also it may be “learned helplessness” in response to pressure. The logic goes, “If I write slowly I won’t have to do as much and perhaps someone will do it for me.”</p>	<p>Comparing handwriting speed when the learner is keen and has chosen to write - if speed does increase then a lack of speed may be a choice in response to certain tasks. Stating a minimum number of lines or sentences to be completed - be fair and reasonable, but firm. Offering a deal to chunk the task - “You write the first 5 lines and you can dictate the rest to me” or “I’ll get you started and you write me more lines. Accepting work in different forms.</p>
<p>Inefficient grip- may shake hand, massage fingers etc.</p>	<p>Regardless of the age of the learner, trying to change a pen or pencil grip is seeking to change the habits of a lifetime. There are various grips that can be slipped over a pen or pencil and these can work well. A large lump of blue tack or plasticine on the pen can also encourage the hand to open up. However it is important to be aware that these strategies may also make the learner feel stigmatized.</p>
<p>Poorly formed/shaped letters despite adequate practice</p>	<p>Teachers may need to be prepared to lose the battle for well-shaped letters in order to win the war of communication through writing. In some cases, students work can become illegible as soon as they join their letters, or when they DON’T print. Whilst students should aim to use capitals appropriately and join their handwriting, effective written communication must always take priority. Specially prepared paper may help. Try creating lined paper with a middle line to determine the height of lower case letters.</p>
<p>Poor page layout - may write down the middle of the page or over to the right</p>	<p>Dyslexic and dyspraxic learners may share a lack of awareness of the importance of the left hand margin as the place to start writing. Drawing bold margins on both sides of a page seems to help. Persistent reminders to write down the left hand margin and to get close to the right hand margin seem to help, providing the main preoccupation is with learner’s self-esteem. Aim to “accentuate the positive,” using the language of success wherever possible. Often students will feel insecure about their presentation, and will therefore not put the effort in to improve it.</p>

3.3 Spoken Language

Aims

- To encourage students to be confident speakers in a wide range of situations.
- To encourage students to develop good listening skills.
- To make students aware that spoken language is a key aspect in the study of all subjects.
- To develop students' ability to articulate increasingly complex ideas effectively to listeners.

Promoting Spoken Language

Departments should:

- Develop and use structured talk as part of the delivery of the curriculum.
- Develop strategies to encourage talk through the use of open questioning.
- Use group and individual presentations in conjunction with the non-fiction text types such as: persuade, argue, review, analyse etc.
- Encourage students to understand the importance and benefits of good listening skills.
- Encourage students to take different roles in groups, and to assess their own contribution.
- Assess spoken language in the same way as reading and writing.
- Provide opportunities for self/peer-assessment.
- Use structured talk in the classroom.
- Recognise that spoken language is a skill that can be taught.
- Make sure their use of language is accommodating to the needs of students.
- Recognise that in some cases it will be appropriate to allow waiting time. between the asking and answering of questions. Waiting time may be dependent on situation, but a general rule is to allow time according to age i.e. 11 seconds for year 7 students, 12 seconds for year 8, and so forth.
- Recognise that it may, in some cases, be appropriate to give extremely reluctant students alternatives to speaking in front of large groups e.g. pre- recording a presentation.
- Ensure that every effort is made to incorporate open and probing questions in the classroom.

4 Marking for Literacy

Teachers should follow the whole school Marking and Assessment Policy

4.1 Some Key Principles

- Make marking criteria explicit both in terms of subject knowledge and literacy objectives.
- Be positive, focusing rather on aspects that can be improved than aspects that are wrong.
- Expect active involvement from students.
- Develop a consistent approach, easily interpretable by students, teachers and parents.
- Students must always be given adequate time to respond to the feedback they have been given.

Reading

- Use metacognition to model the mental process of responding to a question or topic.
- Students should be given credit for supporting their point with evidence, and explaining them thoroughly using concepts studied in class.

Writing

- In longer essays dealing with increasingly complex ideas (i.e. A Level essays), it is often best to identify one specific area in which the student's meaning is hindered by communication, as will be a more manageable process of improvement for the student.

Spoken Language

- Teachers should correct imprecise grammar and expression during verbal feedback; students should be aware of the appropriateness of their language in different situations.
- Success criteria should be made clear to students before they prepare their spoken piece. The assessment focuses for English may be useful in setting these criteria.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The school will use the following data and information to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in raising standards of students' literacy:

- Review of whole school and departmental improvement plans.
- Lesson observations with an explicit focus on literacy.
- Sampling departmental schemes of work and student work.
- Student / staff interviews and feedback.

Appendix 1: Teaching Strategies for improving literacy

Strategies to improve reading skills

Use pictures and diagrams as visual clues to aid reading

Avoid cloze exercises that don't test understanding. Rather, have students put a concept in their own words.

Allow opportunities for students to read and follow written instructions

Encourage Students to Question and Challenge printed Information and views

Use a range of Questions to differentiate and to test higher order skills of synthesis and evaluation

Use a range of non-fiction text types in teaching activities

Explain and plan for Activities requiring skimming, scanning, close reading, note taking and inference.

Strategies to improve Writing Skills

Differentiate by giving students a range of images with which to structure the paragraphs in their essay.

Experiment with using writing frames, mind-maps or flow-charts for structuring longer pieces of writing.

Use the literacy mats and teacher mats to plan for a range of written forms and for different contexts.

Subject-Specific Language

Can be enforced through spoken language, by the teacher, students, in videos, and through prepared printed lesson material. Introduction of terms should be managed systematically.

Key terminology should be listed on literacy mats and referred to. Word games like cross-words and word-searches can be built into schemes of work. Drawings and diagrams can be used to illustrate key terms

Use paired and group writing to support students who lack confidence.

Have word banks and glossaries at back of books

Some students may have access to alternative ways of recording their work. This may be on a laptop, through the use of communicate in print, or an amanuensis.

Strategies to improve Spoken Language skills

Plan opportunities for different types of group work. For example, Socratic discussion, in which an outer group assesses the performance of an inner group during a debate.

Use mixed ability strategies including 'snowballing' or 'envoying'; or have G & T students acting as spokespeople for their group.

Instead of giving information to students, read it to them and ask them to take notes. Use videos and radio programs to improve listening skills

Aim to incorporate a relevant context when preparing speaking and listening activities, such as an interview, and ensure that success criteria is outlined before activity