



Literacy Policy

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Signature of Chair of Management Committee:	<i>A. Cunningham</i>
To be reviewed:	Annually

Literacy Policy

All staff 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.’ (Teacher standards September 2012.)

This policy gives guidance to staff on Literacy and should be read alongside the Teaching and Learning Policy, Marking Policy and Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy.

Introduction

At The Link School, we believe that language and literacy is fundamental to the overall development of children and their access to all curriculum areas. We also believe that in the society in which we live, an ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, and to read a wide range of texts is essential if children are to achieve their potential throughout their school days and into their adult life.

Rationale

Literacy is fundamental to students’ development and underpins our curriculum by developing abilities to speak, listen, and read and write for a wide range of audiences and purposes. Helping students to express themselves clearly orally, and in writing, enhances and enriches teaching and learning in all subjects. Teachers and support staff, in all subject areas, have a crucial role to play in supporting students’ literacy development. Literacy must be embraced by the whole school, with each member of staff making a contribution towards a common goal. Literacy holds importance in our curriculum and has a wider reaching impact on the lives of our learners.

Aims

We aim to develop students’ abilities within an integrated programme of spoken language, speaking and listening, reading and writing. Learners will be given opportunities to incorporate the teaching of English across the curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce literacy skills and practice extended writing. We follow the 2014 National Curriculum Framework for Literacy and English and use other current guidance to enable quality teaching and learning to take place.

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping learners with a strong command of the spoken and written word and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with understanding;
- Develop the habit of reading widely both for pleasure and information;
- Acquire a wide range of vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language;
- Appreciate our rich and varied literacy heritage;
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting language and style in, and for, a range of contexts, purposes and audiences;
- Use discussion in order to learn; to elaborate and explain clearly understanding and ideas;

- Develop competency in the art of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debates.

We aim for all learners at The Link School to be able to:

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct;
- Have an interest in books and reading and read for enjoyment;
- Have an interest in words, their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms;
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate responses;
- Understand a range of text types and genres and be able to write in a variety of styles and forms, appropriate to the situation;
- Develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Look to consistently improve reading ages of pupils.

Curriculum

At The Link School we provide a rich, bespoke curriculum to address the complex needs of the children who attend. Our approach to promoting high quality and effective literacy skills is an integral part of our whole school curriculum and is a key focus in all areas of learning. It is based on clear values, high expectations and up to- date effective approaches to the teaching and learning of literacy. We also recognise that it is the responsibility of the school to provide high quality teaching and learning opportunities which will significantly influence the literacy standards of our learners. We accept and recognise that classroom management, teacher behaviour and modelling of appropriate spoken language and literacy strategies can have a positive impact on the development of functional literacy skills. We will seek to encourage and support the literacy achievements of our learners through highly effective teaching, clear planning with literacy opportunities identified and a positive learning climate conducive to learning.

The Link School (Springwell Dene) aims to provide a creative curriculum, based on topics that interest our learners, to try and engage them and show links between subjects. The curriculum is based around National Curriculum expectations. The exciting and relevant personalised curriculum we provide has a strong emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills as well as helping young people understand their emotions, build confidence and resilience and improve their behaviour. Prior to attending the unit learners often have gaps in their literacy skills or have underperformed due to behavioural or health issues. The rich curriculum we provide addresses reading and writing needs by teaching them as discreet subjects but also through integrating the teaching of literacy across all subjects. Staff plan opportunities for learners to write across the curriculum, giving the written word meaningful context.

At **KS2**, learners focus on basic literacy skills during 'Tray Time' where they complete tasks around phonics, reading, comprehension, handwriting and spelling. They then further develop these skills in English lessons and other subject areas. Regular opportunities are given to learners to write about real life experiences often relating to outdoor experiences and educational visits they have with their class or Key Stage. In KS2 writing is topic related and child led so staff ask the learners what topics they are interested in and the learners cover a wide range of genres relating to the topics.

Due to the demands of the GCSE literature syllabus, more time is devoted to language skills in KS3, this is to help address the imbalance in KS4 due to the demands of the GCSE curriculum.

At **KS3**, Link School learners often arrive with scores below national and age related expectations and are lacking in confidence and self-esteem. This can lead to disengagement and 'fear' of failing in English subject areas. Staff develop learners' confidence and effectively break down the barriers to learning by creating a safe and stimulating learning environment based on individual needs. Regular opportunities are given for children to write about their real life experiences, for example writing a recount about Outdoor Education. Children engage in English lessons and discreet Reading lessons and also apply literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Due to the demands of the GCSE literature syllabus, more time is devoted to language skills in KS3, this is to help address the imbalance in KS4.

At **KS4**, The Link School Pallion aims to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of a diverse group of young people. This involves students embarking on a broad and balanced curriculum accredited through examinations. Functional Skills; Entry Level Certificates and GCSEs. Individual programmes offer a bespoke curriculum where literacy is a focus within a nurturing environment. Learners experience reading, writing and speaking & listening opportunities across the curriculum. Students are encouraged to use subject specific terminology and key words are used in each lesson to help develop pupil's vocabulary. There is a focus on improving pupils reading age and closing the gap between our pupils and those of the same age in mainstream. We have recently obtained a computer based programme which focuses on improving pupils reading. We encourage reading for pleasure and pupil are given not only books but also newspapers and magazines during tutor time to promote an interest in reading. Once a week pupils are given a targeted reading task to encourage reading development and many additional reading tasks are written into the curriculum.

Speaking and listening

We want our students to develop confidence and competence in speaking and listening so that they are able to:

- Speak clearly and confidently in different situations;
- Adapt their speech for different audiences and purposes;
- Listen with understanding and empathy and respond sensitively and appropriately;
- Build on others' viewpoints and attitudes as well as having their own personal opinions.
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Pupils are all given the opportunity to take part in their GCSE Spoken English examination and a spoken English task as part of the Functional Skills qualification.

The Link School will:

- Provide **planned opportunities** across the curriculum for students to engage in purposeful talk, both formally and informally;
- Use a wide range of questioning techniques and strategies to elicit improved spoken responses from students;
- Reinforce the differences between Standard English and non-standard forms of the language where appropriate;

- Reinforce the importance of accuracy in spoken or written language – for example, correcting ‘we was...’ in students’ speech.
- Where appropriate, give students regular opportunities to speak and listen in the following contexts:
 - in pairs with a working 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.
- In these contexts some of the following activities should take place:
 - exploring and describing events, activities and problems, exploring and developing ideas with others;
 - 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 want our students to enjoy reading, to be able to use 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;
- Select information from a wide range of texts and sources including print, media and ICT and to evaluate sources;
- Use of phonics and phonemes to support reading.

The Link School will:

- Use available data on students’ reading ability to plan appropriate support for students in order that they may successfully access texts;
- Understand the importance of checking the readability of materials used with students against their reading ages;
- Promote phonic and phoneme awareness;
- Provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to:
 - read and follow written instructions;
 - read and engage with narratives of events or activities;
 - question and challenge information and views;
 - read with understanding descriptions of processes, structures and mechanisms;
 - read and explore ideas and theories;
 - learn how to scan for overall meaning and scan for key points, words and phrases;
 - Use reading to research and investigate a variety of texts.
 - Attempt to increase pupils reading age through the Reading Plus programme.

Writing

Most 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 range of styles for different audiences and purposes;
- Develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader using wide-ranging and technical vocabulary where appropriate;
- Organise and structure sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently;
- Use paragraphs to aid meaning;
- Present their writing clearly using accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting.

The Link School will:

- Ensure that when teaching extended writing, the **purpose and audience** of each piece of writing is explained. For example, writing to explain a scientific principle to a younger audience, writing guidance for peers on an aspect of the subject, conventions of layout in a formal letter, encouragement to use persuasive techniques;
- Share **models / exemplar material** of writing where appropriate;
- Use thinking maps and planning templates with students when planning for extended pieces of writing to promote sequencing and structuring of ideas;
- Identify subject specific terminology and key vocabulary and ensure that these are in planning and used in lessons. These words should be referred to regularly and updated and revised for each main topic;
- Reinforce the differences between Standard English and non-standard forms of the language where appropriate;
- Ensure students have planned opportunities to complete extended writing where appropriate. This will be across the curriculum, for example, writing a recount of an SMSCU experience or Outdoor Education activity;
- Promote high expectations of students' presentation. Work should always be dated, titles underlined and students to be encouraged to be neat with their handwriting.

Assessment

Staff at KS2 and KS3 effectively use a wide range of formative and summative assessment tools to regularly check on the literacy progress of learners and to provide a full profile of the learners needs. Staff use a range of strategies to support learners and ensure outstanding progress is made:

- Use of writing and reading progression grids;
- Regular APP tasks are planned into English lessons;
- Literacy Online Spelling age and Reading age tests for all learners and Phonics test as and when appropriate - based on the need of the learner (on entry, exit and at the end of a term);
- Use of Guided reading and reading journals;
- Clear, focused planning;
- PLPs with Literacy targets;
- Marking of children's work;
- Assessment for Learning used to support accelerated progress.

Staff at KS4 use both summative and formative assessment to check progress of learners. Within GCSE controlled assessments, learners are encouraged to use the literacy skills that they have acquired. Literacy spans the curriculum which is evidenced in planning and marking within learners books/files.

On entry to KS4 every pupil is assessed on their reading, spelling and comprehension skills so teachers are able to tailor their lessons to a pupil's ability.

The Reading Plus Programme is also able to assess pupils ability and monitor any improvement or weaknesses, this helps to inform teaching and intervention strategies.

Literacy interventions

At KS2, staff plan interventions as and when needed, for example phonics interventions. Interventions are bespoke to the needs of the learner and are planned at the end of a half term. All KS2 pupil's have Support Plans which focus on barriers to learning and suggest strategies that staff use to help pupil's achieve.

At KS3 and KS4, all pupils have a personal Support Plan which focuses on pupils additional needs and gives clear strategies to help remove barriers to learning.

Pupils reading ability is assessed termly by staff and is subject to ongoing assessment through the Reading Plus programme which allows us to quickly identify those pupils who may need further targeted intervention.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibility for promoting the highest quality of literacy lies with the whole school community.

Key roles and responsibilities include:

- The Management Committee in defining and agreeing the principles underlying the school policy and in monitoring and reviewing its application;
- The Headteacher in framing the school policy and, with other members of the
- Senior Management Team, organising support for the implementation of the policy and the monitoring of literacy;
- All staff in ensuring consistent application of the policy;
- Parents and carers, who will be encouraged to take an interest in their child's learning, working in partnership with the school to maintain high levels of progress;
- Learners need to be aware of what is expected of them in order that their learning, and that of those around them, is as effective as possible. It is important that they understand the value of the learning process.

Professional development:

- Staff will receive regular training on the policy and how to use it effectively to ensure high standards and progress are maintained.
- Identified staff receive regular CPD on literacy through attending courses with Sunderland consultants.
- Subject leaders attend termly network meetings with subject leaders across the city.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Senior Leadership Team will review samples of planning and work (as per SEF calendar) from each area to monitor the implementation of this policy and the effectiveness of the delivery of literacy throughout the school. An analysis will be made and feedback will be given to staff. A review of samples of work in work scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks should inform the following:

The Reading Plus programme will allow clear monitoring of pupil progress in reading and will help staff develop targeted strategies to improve reading throughout the school.

- Improvement in learners' achievement and attainment in key literacy areas;
- Consistency in the delivery of literacy across subjects and key stages;
- Participation of learners in the process.
- Improvement in reading and spelling ages on termly.