



Ysgol Uwchradd Y Frenhines Elisabeth
Queen Elizabeth High School

LITERACY POLICY

Introduction

Our strategy is to implement a practical policy that is wholly informed by the current literacy framework. The framework marries into literacy strategies implemented by the school prior to its publication and these extend across all key stages.

Our core literacy aim is to enhance all pupils' skills in oracy, reading and writing through the active and explicit teaching of literacy across all subjects.

The strategies suggested in this policy document are geared towards success with both girls and boys and are targeted to meet pupils at their point of need, whether at basic skills level or in their development of higher order skills.

Strategies

Identifying pupils

On entry, all Year 7 pupils are given literacy tests to assess competence in reading, comprehension and spelling and some non-verbal tests to measure general ability levels.

It is also very helpful to teaching staff if pupils with specific needs can be highlighted. Lists, therefore, will be made available to all staff on the 'Management Information System' after the tests have been completed, and again towards the end of the year to indicate the extent of improvement in pupils. Staff could then highlight pupils' names in their mark books to identify different needs. This will enable all staff to be fully aware of any pupil's particular problems and to take account of them in assessing work. It is counter-productive, for example, to be over-critical of a dyslexic child's spelling but this is very likely to happen if members of staff are not made aware that the child *is* dyslexic. Where there is a clear mismatch, with the non-verbal scores being significantly higher, we will know that this is under-achievement rather than just low achievement deriving from low ability. Such pupils can then be specifically targeted for remedial help.

Intervention Programmes at KS3

Read Write Inc
Successmaker
Phonics teaching

Specific literacy managers deliver, monitor and regularly assess pupils allocated to various intervention programmes. These managers closely collaborate with each other and the numeracy manager in order to ensure smooth continuity and progress. Teaching assistants and sixth form students assist where appropriate.

Specific guidelines given for literacy tasks

Literacy skills are common to all subjects and therefore demand a consistent whole-school approach.

All teaching staff are trained to deliver on non-fiction texts purposes, the reading strategies adopted by the school and the effective use of oracy within lessons. Throughout their time in school, consistent and informed teaching will ensure that pupils apply the school's chosen strategies to their work in order to develop and enhance their skills.

All staff should be familiar with using the literacy framework to set tasks, with elements clearly ear-marked in all schemes of work. Tasks given should be explicitly linked to appropriate elements within the framework. Pupils will be given specific guidelines suggesting the right ways to approach these tasks, the style and layout to be adopted and the specialist terminology to be used.

Success criteria, whether agreed by pupils or set by the teacher, should have literacy objectives at its core. Teacher, self and peer-assessment should have a clear literacy element.

In the classroom environment, these strategies are displayed on pupil friendly posters and are incorporated into pupil planners.

Subject-Specific Vocabulary

Each subject area should produce a collection of key words and terms which are subject or topic-specific. Interactive approaches are encouraged to familiarise pupils with key vocabulary. Departments spend time focusing on these words prior to the delivery of a topic so that vocabulary is encoded and familiar prior to decoding in context. These words should be clearly displayed and when introduced, attention should be paid to correct spelling and usage, incorporating phonics methodology where appropriate. Departments are free to encourage the application of a range of spelling strategies based on what works best for the pupil.

Providing examples

Pupils benefit enormously from work being modelled prior to undertaking tasks.

Well-written exemplar on the same or similar tasks, with important features of style, content and presentation highlighted is good practice. Each department/teacher should aim to build up a portfolio of good exemplar materials to which pupils can refer and which staff can use as teaching aids. Exemplar material should also be moderated so that pupils and staff using them have a firm idea of the grade/level of achievement each piece represents.

Speaking frames and oral rehearsal prior to writing are ideal so that mastery of the written answer is gained.

Teacher modelling of the task – through processing and thinking aloud is another effective approach.

Providing examples may seem problematic in subjects where the work often requires short or even single sentence responses, yet pupils still need guidance on how to frame such answers and what constitutes a good answer.

Parental Support

The active and positive participation of parents and, if necessary, of other appropriate professionals and agencies. Parents are to be contacted if assessment or referral indicates that a pupil is experiencing substantial difficulties and they will be consulted, where necessary as to current and future needs. Information will be passed on through, for example, personal contact, reports, parents' evenings or, in the case of pupils with additional learning needs, through annual reviews.

Parents will be consulted as to any action or support which they may be able to give to aid their child's development of literacy skills, which will include specific guidelines on how they may best support us in improving their child's literacy skills

Use of the library

The reference and fiction books, along with ICT facilities, make a valuable and flexible resource. The room is available to all staff on a booking basis and should be used regularly as a way of developing pupil's skills in researching, fact-finding, note-making, sifting, or summarising. The ICT facilities are useful in allowing pupils to make use of literacy software, enabling them to undertake individual study at any time, including during the homework club. The facilities also offer access to the Internet. The librarian is available to help with the effectiveness of the library as a resource.

Reading for pleasure

Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 are further encouraged to read for pleasure during registration periods twice a week. Volunteer assistants from Years 12 and 13 are recruited at the start of each year to work as reading buddies. Each form room has a book box which is regularly up-dated.

Literacy Toolkit

The literacy toolkit is an extremely useful resource file which has been given to every member of staff. During inset days and sessions with the literacy co-ordinator, more resources are provided and added to the toolkit so that it is naturally up-dated and retains its relevance.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPG)

All teachers should consider themselves to be teachers of language. It is the responsibility of all staff to correct inaccuracies in pupils' SPG. If this is not done the impression may easily be created in the pupils' minds that it is only in English that such accuracy matters. It is particularly vital that the spelling and usage of terms specific to a particular subject, and which pupils are unlikely to encounter elsewhere, are reinforced regularly.

In order to ensure consistency, a practical, easy to apply marking policy is now in place which provides guidance on the marking of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Homework

Homework is an important factor in developing literacy skills, giving pupils the opportunity to work independently and undisturbed. It is also often a vital diagnostic tool to help teachers assess a pupil's strengths and weaknesses. However, it must be recognised that by no means all pupils have access to the sort of quiet, ordered and supportive home atmosphere which is so essential to the doing of homework.

Date reviewed: 23rd January 2014

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