

Literacy Policy

Policy number	PS020 / ISI 02a
Applies to	Prep School
Endorsed by	Ian Silk
Responsibility	Ian Silk
Date reviewed	September 2023
Next review	September 2024

Rationale

Literacy underpins the school curriculum by developing pupils' abilities to read, write, speak and listen for a wide range of purposes, and is a key element in enabling them to develop into effective learners across the curriculum. All departments and teachers have a crucial role to play in supporting pupils' literacy development.

Aim

To provide a range of strategies aimed at improving pupils' literacy across the curriculum. This aim can be broken down as follows:

Reading – Improving our pupils' ability to:

- Read for pleasure
- Recognise and engage with subject specific vocabulary.
- Understand and interpret the language of questions and instructions.
- Understand and interpret whole texts

Writing – Improving our pupils' ability to:

- Spell words correctly and use correct sentence structure and punctuation
- Communicate precisely and accurately
- Create, shape and organise texts effectively and according to purpose
- Develop fluent, legible handwriting

Speaking and Listening – Improving our pupils' ability to:

- Speak confidently in a range of setting
- Actively listen and respond in a range of settings
- Interact and discuss effectively with peers

Improving Reading across the Curriculum

Recognising and Engaging with Subject Specific Vocabulary

All HoDs and teachers must ensure pupils are exposed to subject specific vocabulary in a variety of ways:

- HoDs should ensure that key vocabulary is included in all schemes of work.
- HoDs should ensure that key vocabulary is displayed in teaching areas.
- Subject teachers should introduce key vocabulary at the beginning of relevant lessons or tasks as appropriate.

- Subject teachers should employ a variety of different lesson activities which require pupils to engage with key words. Pupils should not be asked to recognise the word, but to understand, interpret and use it in context.

Understanding and Interpreting "The Language of Questions and Instructions" (See Appendix A)

All HoDs and teachers must ensure they are providing pupils with opportunities to understand and access these vital words as relevant to their subject area:

- HoDs should ensure that key question and instruction words are displayed in teaching areas
- Subject teachers should regularly refer to key question and instruction words, and give pupils opportunities to recognise and highlight these words when attempting questions or tasks
- Subject teachers should provide opportunities for pupils to access these words in a variety of contexts, to ensure a familiarity and develop an ability to interpret the meaning of questions and instructions.

Understanding and Interpreting Whole Texts

All HoDs and teachers must ensure they are providing pupils with opportunities to read, understand, and interpret texts (e.g. articles, blogs, letters, explanations, summaries, novels etc.)

- HoDs and subject teachers should ensure texts are chosen based on their suitability for a specific class, providing challenge and rigour without being inaccessible.
- HoDs and subject teachers should look for opportunities to practise key reading skills such as skimming, scanning, summarising, selecting information.
- HoDs and subject teachers should accompany texts with tasks which challenge pupils' abilities to infer, predict, analyse, evaluate or create.
- Subject teachers should employ active reading strategies to help ensure all pupils engage with the text. Pupils should be asked to question, visualise, predict, connect and respond as they read.
- Subject teachers should try to ensure that texts are considered in light of their purpose and audience, and that pupils are encouraged to reflect on the features of a text that suit a particular purpose (e.g. structure and layout, language used, vocabulary etc.).

Reading for Pleasure

All teachers and tutors must ensure that they create an environment where pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure:

- Tutors might establish a private reading routine during some morning registrations.
- Subject teachers and tutors should look to expose pupils to a wide range of non-fiction texts at suitable opportunities, including newspapers, magazines and online texts.
- English teachers should monitor and reward pupils' reading routines outside of lessons by using Accelerated Reader. A record will be kept and shared with the form tutor.
- Improving Writing across the Curriculum

Spelling

All HoDs and teachers must ensure they provide a consistent approach to spelling:

- HoDs should ensure up-to-date subject specific vocabulary is included on English Department spelling SoW.
- Subject teachers should ensure subject specific vocabulary is engaged with in a way which encourages positive spelling habits: breaking the word into syllables; sounding out syllables; identifying the root words and discussing any spelling rules or irregularities.
- Subject teachers should create an environment through their teaching and marking, where poor spelling of common or subject specific words is not accepted but highlighted as an area for development.
- Subject teachers should correct poor spelling in pupils' written work, up to a maximum of five errors on a single piece of work. (See Appendix B)
- Subject teachers should ensure that spelling errors are corrected by the pupil in green pen.
- Subject teachers should be aware of and sensitive to the needs of pupils who have specific difficulties with spelling.

Using Correct Sentence Structure and Punctuation

All HoDs and teachers must ensure that pupils focus on the structure and punctuation of their written work on all written tasks:

- Subject teachers should ensure that pupils are made aware of the appropriate form and purpose of their written response. Note-taking and annotation require less formal application of grammatical rules, whereas most other forms of writing require that punctuation and full sentences are used. It is essential that pupils do not receive mixed messages.
- Subject teachers should not ignore errors in sentence structure and punctuation. Specific correction of these mistakes is not necessary, but pupils should receive either written or verbal feedback that their written work was inaccurate according to the marking policy (See Appendix B).
- Subject teachers should model effective sentence structure and punctuation as often as possible. Pupils should be given the opportunity to access these when attempting written work through the use of sentence starters, key words, and scaffolding.

Creating, Shaping and Organising Texts

All HoDs and teachers must ensure that pupils are encouraged to create, shape and organise texts according to their purpose:

- Subject teachers should make the purpose and audience clear for any piece of written work.
- Subject teachers should discuss the conventions of different writing tasks, ensuring pupils have a clear idea about: Formal or informal language? Layout? Structure of paragraphs? Use of headings and sub-titles? Use of connectives to sequence? Use of bullet points? Tense? First or third person? Specific vocabulary?
- Subject teachers should encourage planning before any piece of extended writing, using techniques such as mind mapping, lists, storyboarding etc.

- Subject teachers should use models and examples as much as possible, drawing out key aspects of the structural and linguistic features mentioned above.
- Subject teachers should provide opportunities for weaker pupils to use writing frames and scaffolds to ensure writing can be structured effectively.

Developing fluent and legible handwriting

All HoDs and teachers must ensure that pupils are encouraged to write legibly and neatly. (See Appendix C)

- Subject teachers should have high expectations for handwriting on all appropriate tasks, focusing on fluency and legibility.
- English Teachers are responsible for identifying and addressing issues of poor handwriting and poor pencil grip through liaison with the HoD of English, SENCO and parents.
- Subject teachers should be aware of and sensitive to the needs of pupils with poor fine motor skills.

Improving Speaking and Listening across the Curriculum

All HoDs and teachers must ensure that pupils are given opportunities to speak, listen, respond, interact and discuss in lessons:

- HoDs should ensure that Speaking and Listening activities are incorporated into SoWs.
- Subject teachers should create opportunities for children to speak and listen in a range of different contexts, both formal and informal: in pair work; in small groups with assigned roles; with the teacher; in whole class discussions and in formal presentations to a wider audience.
- Subject teachers should look to utilise drama and role-play within the classroom when appropriate.
- Subject teachers should use formative questioning techniques to ensure all pupils engage in active listening and producing responses (avoiding closed questions, no hands up, thinking time, sharing answers in pairs).
- Subject teacher exposition is essential, but it is vital that demands on concentration is considered, ensuring that pupils are required to listen for realistic lengths of time (five-minute bursts).

Appendix A

The following words are integral to students understanding of a question or set of instructions. Many of our students underperform in tasks as they fail to grasp exactly what they are being asked to do. A greater familiarity with these words will help overcome this problem.

Question Words: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Instructions: Copy, Find, Discuss, Analyse, Summarise, Evaluate, Revise, Design, Note, Annotate, Draw, Sketch, Label, Persuade, Argue, Inform, Describe, Explain, Report, Advise, Perform, Complete, Add, Subtract, Multiply, Divide

These words should be visible in classrooms as appropriate.

Appendix B - Presentation Expectations and Marking

Quality presentation encourages children to work towards a high standard and take pride in every piece of work they produce. Continuity and progression will be enhanced if our presentational practices and expectations develop logically through the age groups and are consistent throughout the school.

Presentation

1. All books should be valued and treated with respect.
2. All work should be dated.
3. Work on separate sheets of paper should be named.
4. Headings and subheadings should be used as appropriate. For handwritten work these should be underlined. In word processed work headings and subheadings should make use of sensible font styles and sizes. Underlining headings in printed work is poor style.
5. Work should be spaced out to give a pleasing appearance to the format of the page, eliminating too much white space. Paragraphs should be used. In handwritten work these should be indented. In word processed work paragraphs should have a space between them.
6. All lines must be drawn with a ruler.
7. Handwriting should be in line with the school policy.
8. Word processed work should use an appropriate font. This should generally be a clear simple font. The size used should be appropriate for the piece of work. Most work should be done in 10pt or 12pt size, although work for display may require larger fonts.
9. Diagrams should generally be drawn in pencil, with a ruler being used for straight lines. Pencil crayons may be used for colouring if appropriate for the requirements of individual subjects.
10. All work on paper should be filed or stuck in the appropriate book.
11. Mistakes that are recognised by the pupil should be corrected. In handwritten work a single line should be drawn through the error with the aid of a ruler. It is particularly important that pupils do not attempt to correct numbers by writing over since the result is never clear. Tippex and other correcting fluids should not be used. Generally spelling errors in word processed work should not occur as pupils should be encouraged to check their work with the aid of a spell checker.

12. There will be special requirements for particular subjects, and pupils should make sure that they follow such instructions carefully.
13. A poorly presented piece of work will need to be completed again to an improved standard.
14. Comments will also be used which will contain advice as to how pupils can improve the quality of their presentation.

Feedback

It is essential to have a consistent approach to responding to pupils' work. Teachers will use the following codes when marking work written in full sentences.

Sp: Spelling error. Underline the word or part of the word and write Sp in the margin, up to a maximum of 5 spelling mistakes in a piece of work. In many cases the correct spelling will be written in.

P: Punctuation error. Underline the error and write P in the margin.

G: Grammar/expression error. Underline the error and write G in the margin.

VF: Verbal Feedback given to a pupil

/: New sentence required

//: New paragraph requires

^: Word omitted

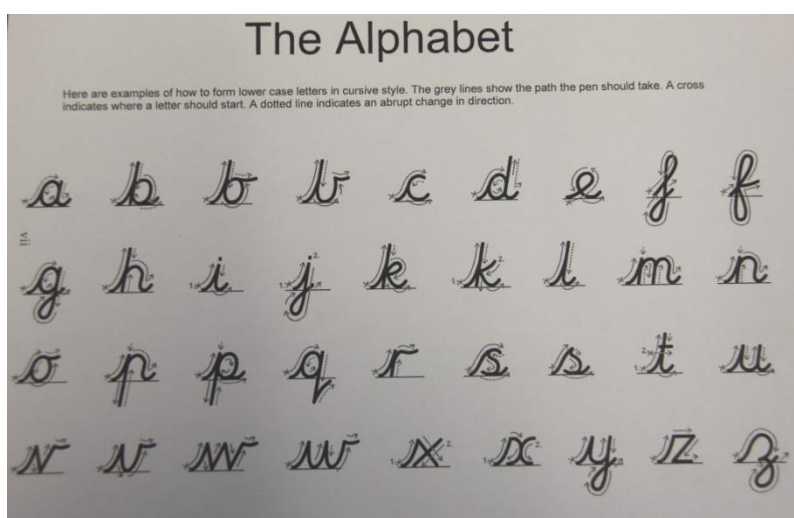
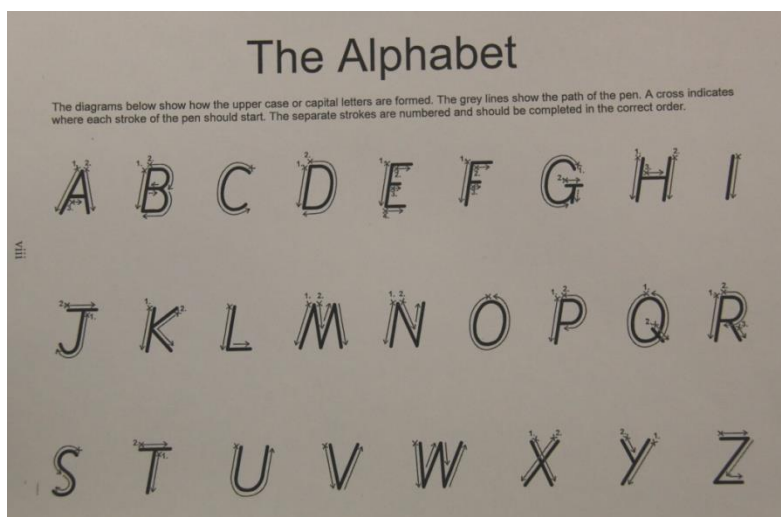
All subject teachers will use the WWW, EBI and Pupil Response format in their marking. Teachers will mark in red pen and pupils will respond using green pen. All detailed marking (two pieces per half-term for most subjects) must be responded to by the pupil to measure their understanding and engagement with the marking process.

Appendix C: Handwriting

It is our aim is to develop a neat, fluent, legible, individual style. Boys entering the school have been taught many different styles and they will not be asked to change their style of handwriting, but we do provide a guide of fully cursive style.

Boys in Y3 will initially have one lesson per week, which follows the 'Handwriting File', using a similar cursive style to the example.

Attention is paid to pencil grip, letter formation, sizing and direction before perfecting joining.



Boys from Y3-8 who need additional practice may be given an individual copy of the file to work on at home or more specific resources if necessary.

Writing in pen occurs as and when the class teacher decides, not by year group. By merit boys are awarded a pen licence, which is an excellent incentive for the boys to try hard. When the boys do gain a licence, this pen should be roller ball, not a fountain pen.