



Royal Greenwich Trust School

Literacy Policy

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At Royal Greenwich Trust School, we recognise the important link between high standards of literacy and future success.

Research shows that 'literate individuals contribute to and are successful in a range of areas, and help create literate families, who live within literate communities, which contribute towards a literate nation' (National Literacy Trust, 2008). Furthermore, evidence indicates that 'addressing literacy skills is a key first step in beginning to address and helping to overcome other related factors that lock individuals into a cycle of disadvantage' (National Literacy Trust, 2008).

We are making good progress in developing the literacy of our students. The last Ofsted inspection (January 2019) noted that 'Pupils enjoy reading in lessons and they are keen to read aloud' and the post-16 GCSE English Language results in the 2017-2018 academic year show much to be proud of:

- 64% of students in post-16 GCSE English Language passed with a level 4 or higher (National average for post-16 GCSE English is 27%)

We are determined to keep building on this progress across the school from KS3 into KS4 and the 6th Form. Our commitment is shown by a renewed whole school focus on academic writing:

Students across all ability ranges will produce extended writing which is well-focused, well-developed and displays accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

This will be monitored on a termly basis via reviews of formal learning walks, Departmental work and feedback scrutiny and measured on the learning walk survey document within the 'book look' section.

The below teaching standard will be a mandatory observation focus and key aspect of appraisal for all members of teaching and support staff in the school (2019/20):

To take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of Standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject.

Parents will be kept informed of their child's progress with literacy during Parents' Evenings and the Dynamic Progress Reporting system which is updated after each data drop.

AIMS

COMMUNICATION: Students will demonstrate accurate and well-developed literacy skills across all of their studies.

INVESTIGATION: Students will have an interest in reading outside of timetabled lessons, thereby reading for pleasure.

NETWORKING: Students will establish an atmosphere of mutual courtesy where they are able to listen and respond respectfully to others i.e. adults as well as other students.

PARTICIPATION: Students will be able to make purposeful presentations that allow them to respond with authority on significant subjects.

SCHOLARSHIP: Students will engage with challenging texts that demonstrate an understanding beyond the personal and immediate.

VISION: Students will recognise the link between good literacy and their future success.

LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Royal Greenwich Trust School (RGTS) offers its students a broad and balanced curriculum. Twenty-eight subjects are taught here: Applied Science; Art; Biology; Business and Economics; Chemistry; Computer Science; Construction; Dance; Design and Technology; Drama; Engineering; English; French; Food Technology; Geography; History; Information and Computer Technology; Mathematics and Further Mathematics; Media Studies; Music; Personal, Social and Health Education; Photography; Physical Education; Physics; Psychology; Religious Education; Spanish.

All of these subjects involve literacy in some form or other. Literacy Across the Curriculum (LitAC) is distinct from the subject, English:

English and whole school literacy are clearly linked – but they are not the same thing. English teachers play a vital role in developing and teaching literacy skills such as reading expertise, writing for different purposes, spelling, punctuation and oracy.

However, English is a specific subject which includes key knowledge and skills beyond literacy, for instance: the history of the English language; knowledge of critical terminology; developing responses to a wide variety of texts, including novels, poetry and plays. In English lessons pupils are also taught how to write creatively and analyse texts.

How does 'literacy' differ? It considers the wider aspect of reading, writing and communication, the skills that need to be developed in all curriculum areas, so that pupils can manage the particular literacy demands of each subject and develop communications skills for everyday life.

Caroline Bentley-Davies, *Literacy Across the Curriculum*

Teaching and support staff seek to extend students' literacy by supporting their acquisition of new skills which enable them to access challenging texts or articulate ideas of increasing complexity.

We recognise that some, or all of the below 'pillars of literacy' will be relevant in all lessons:

1. Teachers make clear the success criteria for the particular type of writing to be produced, before the task is begun
2. Teachers help to model the type of writing that needs to be produced from students
3. Teachers provide opportunities for students to plan, draft and review their work
4. Teachers reinforce the importance of accuracy in written language
5. Teachers provide opportunities for students to act on the feedback they have received

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

WHOLE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Supports and gives a high profile to literacy across the school
- Identify and support CPD literacy programmes

DIRECTOR OF LEARNING: TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Develops and leads the implementation of whole school literacy strategies and interventions

Monitors progress and areas for development in literacy across the school ENGLISH DEPARTMENT SPEAKING AND LISTENING

1. Teachers utilise exploratory talk opportunities, asking 'how' and 'why' questions rather than just 'what', 'when' or 'who'
2. Teachers reinforce accuracy in spoken language (speaking in Standard English) – e.g. correcting 'we was...' in students' speech
3. An atmosphere of mutual respect exists where students listen and respond respectfully to others

READING

4. Teachers provide opportunities for students to explore a range of challenging texts
5. Teachers establish and emphasise subject specific keywords
6. Teachers use systematic strategies to enable students to develop subject specific vocabulary
7. Teachers support students with reading skills – e.g. how to skim a text to extract its main contents quickly
8. Dictionaries and thesauruses are available and referred to, and the skills to use them effectively are taught

WRITING

- Provides students with knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS DEPARTMENT

- Communicates with all subject staff about those students who have significant literacy difficulties and gives advice on what staff can do to support these students in their subjects

- Monitor students with literacy difficulties through EHC Plans and review meetings
- Provides literacy support to those with specific learning needs

LIBRARIAN

- Provides appropriate resources to support the curriculum
- Promotes reading for pleasure across the school
- Provide support and extra-curricular literacy based opportunities for students.

HEADS OF FACULTY

- Monitor the work of subject teachers within their faculty with regard to the inclusion of subject specific literacy strategies in marking, feedback and lesson planning

TEACHERS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

- Ensure they are familiar with the specific literacy demands of their subject and ensure sufficient coverage of these skills in their lesson planning (Appendix 1 and 2)
- Identify areas for development in students' literacy skills and support students in addressing these

PARENTS

- Encourage their children to value fluent and accurate literacy

STUDENTS

- Take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements

SPEAKING & LISTENING

Staff will expect the highest levels of spoken language from students. In their verbal communication with adults at the school, students will be required to speak in full sentences and in standard, formal English. Teachers will ensure that inaccuracies in students' speech are picked up on and corrected with the students.

Students should understand the importance of waiting their turn and will be encouraged to listen carefully to others.

Teachers will increasingly use exploratory questioning in their lessons to enable students to develop their speaking ability. The following from Geoff Barton's *Don't Call It Literacy!* provides useful advice for how this can be achieved:

- Emphasise the classroom as a place for exploring ideas, for improving our collective understanding and where making mistakes is a natural part of learning. This means giving less superficial praise for answers and instead exploring the content of what is said.
- Use a no-hands-up approach. This depends on good discipline but can lead to a very different dynamic in the classroom. It needs deliberate flagging in the way you set up a question, like this:

"I want you in pairs to think of three reasons that the Cold War ended. Three. Be ready to explain them. You've got two minutes with your partner to come up with your three reasons. Then I'm going to choose someone to tell the class. We'll all listen and I will then ask one person to say which of those reasons you think is the main one – the most important one. Do you see?"

Although slightly artificial on the page, the extract shows how clarity arises from linguistic redundancy – from a heavy use of repetition.

Notice also how the need for active listening is brought to the fore by the no-hands-up rule. Pupils will need to listen because they know they might be asked to comment. And since our purpose is to understand ideas, when you get to the part where pupils have to say which is most/least important, try to avoid evaluating it. Don't say 'very good'. Instead say 'thank you' and ask another pupil to give her response; then another. Then ask another pupil which of the three responses she most agrees with.

- Always build in thinking time and oral rehearsal. This isn't making questioning 'easier'; it's not a dilution. Rather it's a way of developing more thoughtful responses and making it more likely that a pupil who lacks confidence will respond because she has had the opportunity to rehearse her answer with a partner or in a small group.
- To develop more extended responses, ask 'why' and 'how' questions and tell pupils that their answers must contain more than, say, twenty words.
- To avoid the scattergun approach, use an interrogation technique. Signal in advance that you are going to give pupils time to revise a topic. Then you're going to choose one of them and you – or a pupil – will interrogate what she knows. If she gets stuck, then she just needs to ask others in the group to help her out. This approach – so long as you choose the right pupil! – allows knowledge to be explored in more detail because we're not having to retune into a range of different voices around the room.

Opportunities will also continue to be provided for students to participate in public speaking events such as Debate Mate and the Royal Borough of Greenwich Public Speaking Competition.

READING

There will be reading opportunities in lessons across the curriculum. When providing resources for students to read, teachers should think carefully about the reading strategies they want students to make use of. It would be useful to bear in mind the following:

What effective readers do when they read:	What this means:
Predict	They make informed guesses about the text.
Skim	They read quickly through the sentences getting a gist of the understanding of the text.
Scan	Their eyes move across a text searching for a specific word/phrase/number.
Read closely	They pay close attention to the sentences, taking time to understand the meaning.
Question	They ask questions about a text to clarify ideas.
Read backwards and forwards	They have the confidence to move through the text, including re-reading, to make connections or clarify ideas.
Empathise	They put themselves in someone else's shoes and feel what they feel.
Visualise	They see a picture in their minds to help gain a better impression or understanding of the text.
Infer	They read 'between the lines' to find the writer's intended meaning.

Geoff Barton, *Don't Call It Literacy!*

The literacy walls in all classrooms encourage the following regarding reading:

- Reading aloud, or hearing a reading voice
- Talking about the text
- Skimming the text for the main information
- Scanning the text and highlighting key words
- Underlining new vocabulary
- Making predictions and asking questions about the information in the text.

THE LRC (LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE)

The Library is at the heart of the school’s literacy policy. The Library should be an orderly, safe, stimulating and welcoming environment for all students.

The Librarian has a key role in promoting reading in the school. The Librarian coordinates all fiction and non-fiction resources and promotes reading across the school including the use of the Book Buzz programme. The Librarian will use their knowledge and expertise to help support staff and student book choices- with a particular focus on making sure that there is reading material which is attractive to boys in order to narrow the literacy gender gap.

FORM TIMES (KS3 ONWARDS)

Students will engage in a number of literacy activities during form times including ‘word of the week’, silent reading and ‘academic word list’ activities.

Additionally, teachers have been showing the importance of reading by putting up their ‘I’m reading... how about you?’ signs on their classroom and office doors.

WRITING

Quality in students’ written communication will be key to their academic success. When asking students to write, teachers should make clear, *how* they want students to write. It would be useful to bear in mind the following:

Convention	What this means:
Layout	Are there any conventions about layout – e.g. use of paragraphs, bullet points, headlines, sub-headings, bold, italic, quotations? Do pupils know them?
Structure	Is the text chronological (telling a story from start to finish)? If not, how should it be structured? Do the big ideas come first, or the arguments for and then the arguments against? Is an introduction needed? A conclusion? How should these sound?
Formality	How formal should the text be: should pupils use ‘isn’t’ and ‘don’t’? Should they use abbreviations like ‘etc.’? Should they use technical words? Are polysyllabic words generally better than monosyllabic words (‘suggest’ rather than ‘say’, ‘disappointing’ rather than ‘bad’)?

Impersonality

Should pupils avoid using 'I'?

Should they use passive voice ('Potassium was added to the test-tube' rather than 'I added potassium to the test-tube')?

Should a personal opinion be included at the end?

	Is the pronoun 'we' generally more advisable than using 'I'?
Vocabulary	<p>What kind of words should pupils use?</p> <p>Which are the ones used by the experts in your subject?</p> <p>How do pupils know these? Where do they see them? How do they access them if you are off sick?</p> <p>Can you help pupils to spell key words accurately (visual/auditory/mnemonics)?</p>

Geoff Barton, *Don't Call It Literacy!*

Teachers should also consider building into their lessons these eight steps to writing success, taken from Caroline Bentley-Davies' *Literacy Across the Curriculum*:

1. Engage them in the process
It is important to get pupils thinking about what they already know about the type of writing you require before they start. By assessing their knowledge *before* you start, any misconceptions can be corrected. The lesson also builds on, rather than duplicating, their knowledge, e.g. they might already be proficient at writing newspaper articles from their studies in English.
2. Study an example
Good writers need to know what they are aiming for if they are to achieve success. To become better writers, your pupils need first to be perceptive and thoughtful readers. Before embarking on a writing task, always try to show an example of the type of text you are asking for.
3. Plan structure and format
Good writers plan their work. Get pupils to think about the overall plan and format of their work. What should it look like on the page?
4. Plan content and organisation
Once pupils have decided on the structure of their work, they will need to plan the content in more detail. They could produce a spider diagram listing all their initial ideas, adding further detail and linking ideas together. Some students might now be ready to start writing, but those who regularly forget to paragraph might write down each main topic idea on a sticky note, and arrange them in a logical order, with each post-it representing a new paragraph.
5. Right words – language and register
Next, pupils need to consider language and vocabulary. Good teachers get pupils discussing this *before* they start writing, encouraging them to pay particular attention to the *purpose* of the task, the *audience* and the expected *level of formality*. These three things determine the register of the writing.
6. Talk first!
Get pupils talking *before* they start to write. Discussing ideas leads to better understanding. Talking first also gives individuals a chance to rehearse their arguments, positions and thoughts, which in turn increases their confidence and enthusiasm for written work.
7. Modelling and sharing
It really helps if we model the writing and reviewing process for pupils with our own work. It's helpful to do some shared writing as a process. You start writing and ask pupils for contributions.
8. Read, review, refine!
To become successful writers, pupils need to be able to review and redraft their work. It can be useful, initially, to provide a checklist to help them 'key into' what you are looking for. As pupils progress, promote independence by encouraging them to devise the checklist themselves. This ensures that they are really thinking about what they are trying to achieve.

Don't forget to give them time to amend, improve and correct their work so that redrafting has a real purpose and impact on their writing (Appendix 1). Getting pupils to highlight where they have met the given criteria is also important, and developing peer partners to assess each other's work can be effective.

HANDWRITING AND PRESENTATION

At all levels, whenever they are writing, students should be reminded of handwriting and presentation standards:

- Setting work out appropriately for subject
- Forming letters and words correctly
- Correct spacing of words
- Ensuring writing is appropriately legible
- Basic grammatical expectations of capital letters and punctuation

LITERACY CODES

Literacy codes are used across the school and in all subject areas to create a consistent focus.

Literacy		<u>Student response (in red pen)</u>
//	New paragraph needed	N/A
Sp	Spelling mistake	Write correct spelling in margin
C	Capital letter error (needed/not needed)	Students correct the letter
P	Punctuation error (incorrect/missing)	Students add, remove or correct the mistake
Gr	Grammar error (e.g. 'we was looking')	Students correct the mistake
V	Vocabulary is too simple	Students add in a synonym
?	Meaning/handwriting is unclear	Students re-write the sentence

LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM



Reading

Speaking and Listening

Writing

- Teachers provide opportunities for students to experience a range of balanced texts.
- Teachers establish and emphasise subject specific keywords.
- Teachers use systems, thematic strategies, and enable students to develop subject specific vocabulary.
- Teachers support students with reading skills: e.g. how to skim and select to extract information.
- Teachers use dictionaries and theses are available for reference.

- Teachers utilise exploratory talk opportunities, asking 'how and why' questions rather than 'just what'.
- Teachers raise awareness of language - e.g. correct use of 'we was' in student's speech.
- At least one subject exists where students listen and respond to each other.

- Teachers make deliberate choices: critical form of writing to be produced, before the task is begun.
- Teachers help promote the type of writing that needs to be produced from students.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to plan, draft and revise their writing.
- Teachers reinforce the importance of writing in the curriculum.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to act on their feedback received.

Approval Signature

Signature of (enter position e.g. Chair) Chair

Print name Chris Philpott

Date 25.6.19