



WHOLE SCHOOL LITERACY POLICY

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Aim

At Droitwich Spa High School, we believe in the importance of literacy as the basis of a broad and balanced curriculum. A student's confident command of language not only underpins effective learning, but also ensures access to wider academic and employment opportunities. Literacy improves self-expression, self-esteem, and motivation. It is the key to active citizenship and a meaningful understanding of British society and its values. We are committed therefore to ensuring that our students see the importance of speaking confidently and fluently in demanding situations and reading and writing with a precision and vitality modelled by teachers.

Definition

We use the term "literacy" to describe all aspects of the formal use of language in speech and writing. To progress in literacy is to secure fundamental competences that allow the individual to become ready for both further academic study and, crucially, the world of work.

The Whole School Literacy Co-ordinator with responsibility for implementing this policy will:

- provide advice and support to colleagues about how to promote literacy.
- embed and consolidate approaches to tiered vocabulary across the school.
- institute and maintain a rolling programme of professional learning and development sessions aligned with all staff training needs.
- work alongside subject leaders.
- seek good practice within the school and share this across the whole school.
- audit whole school literacy provision and identify and address any staff training needs.
- communicate with parents about issues concerning literacy.
- ensure that the curriculum is text rich.
- ensure that literacy and vocabulary support is disseminated to the school on a weekly basis.
- attend a range of other subject meetings around the school to define and help to meet literacy needs.
- review and update the literacy policy.

Subject Leaders will:

- act as an advocate for literacy within their department.
- ensure that schemes of work and lesson plans include opportunities and strategies to promote high standards of literacy.
- monitor, evaluate and review departmental literacy action plans.
- facilitate the sharing of good practice within the department.



Prioritising reading

Developing strong reading skills and a love for reading is essential for student learning. Our school prioritises instilling these qualities in all students. Fluent, confident, and engaged readers are well-equipped to become effective lifelong learners.. We recognise that these students are at higher risk of struggling with reading proficiency and engagement. Robust reading abilities form the foundation for students to evolve into capable writers. While some may find writing more challenging, being a proficient reader enables students to benefit from the various models and scaffolds that teachers employ to support different forms of academic writing.

Being a good reader

A proficient reader employs specific skills and knowledge, which must be explicitly identified to effectively teach reading. These include:

Decoding: This involves converting written text into spoken language by swiftly associating letters or letter combinations (graphemes) with their corresponding sounds (phonemes) and recognising patterns forming syllables and words. Decoding also depends on linking individual sounds to letters. Comprehending the relationship between letters (or letter groups) and their typical sounds is crucial for sounding out words. Some students may require explicit phonics instruction to develop this skill.

Fluency: This skill involves immediately identifying words without needing to decode them. Fluent readers are characterised by their ability to read swiftly and accurately, demonstrating prosody by grouping words meaningfully and using appropriate intonation when reading aloud.

Vocabulary: A robust vocabulary is essential for reading comprehension. To effectively grasp the meaning of a text, readers must be familiar with most words they encounter. A well-developed vocabulary enables readers to navigate texts more easily, make connections between ideas, and extract meaning from complex passages.

Sentence structure and cohesion: Grasping how sentences are constructed aids students in linking ideas within and across sentences and enhances a reader's ability to derive meaning from text. This skill enables readers to perceive the logical flow of ideas and comprehend the author's intended message more effectively.

Reasoning and background knowledge: Reasoning involves processing new information, comparing it to existing knowledge, and drawing conclusions. While background knowledge is related to vocabulary, it extends beyond word familiarity. It encompasses a reader's prior experience with or understanding of the topic, concepts, situations, and issues presented in the text. This foundational knowledge enables students to construct meaning and expand their understanding. It also facilitates the ability to make inferences - to comprehend implied information not explicitly stated in the text. This process of inference-making is crucial for deeper comprehension and engagement with the text.



1) Predict  Using the title, the layout, connections to prior learning, the images etc. – get the pupils to make a prediction about the text's content <i>prior to reading the text</i>	2) Modelled Reading  Read the text to the pupils . Here you can model expert reading, including pronunciation of new terms, emphasis as and where appropriate etc.	3) Active Reading  Pupils should read the text independently, identifying any vocabulary they need clarifying . Simply put - underline any words/phrases they don't understand.
4) Clarifying  Clarify any words/phrases the pupils do not understand. Model dictionary use, deciphering meaning from context, use of etymology etc.	5) Reading Out Loud  Either as a whole group chorus, in pairs, or in small groups (depending on text/group) – give the pupils chance to read the text out loud .	6) Discuss  Allow pupils the time to discuss the text they've read. Pupils will likely need scaffolding and structure here - don't assume they know how to discuss.
7) Question  Pupils should generate their own questions for either the teacher or the class to answer . Teachers should also have pre-planned questions about the text.	8) Summarise  Before moving on, ensure pupils can summarise what they've read. If they can't, you need to revisit to address whatever the misconceptions are.	9) Respond  Now pupils have constructed meaning from a text, they need to do something with it! Answer questions, manipulate, reproduce, etc.

Developing confident readers

In lessons, teachers will:

1. Utilise diverse academic texts to demonstrate decoding and fluency skills during read-alouds, highlighting challenging vocabulary and discussing pronunciation techniques.
2. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction following established guidelines and training.
3. When appropriate, analyse sentence structure, including the use of discourse markers, punctuation, and connectives that enhance cohesion within and between sentences.
4. Explicitly model thought processes or use targeted questioning to help students connect ideas within texts, fostering coherence.
5. Incorporate structured peer discussions to develop language competence and reasoning abilities. These discussions will be guided by clear instructions, time limits and scaffolding. Explicit instruction focuses on; context-setting phrases, connectives for contrasting views, personal pronouns, explanatory connectives, sequential discourse markers and summarising connectives.
6. Teach text annotation techniques for comprehending both explicit and implicit meanings.
7. Explicitly instruct key comprehension skills such as scanning, retrieval, summarising, and comparing.
8. Demonstrate enthusiasm for reading.
9. Encourage and support students reading aloud by offering specific praise for reading or self-regulation skills, while considering individual confidence levels and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
10. Use available data on students' reading levels to make informed choices about appropriate texts for use in lessons and to plan support for students so that they can access texts successfully.



Disciplinary literacy

During curriculum planning and implementation, essential vocabulary is identified and categorised as: command words (e.g., "evaluate"), subject-specific terms (e.g., "photosynthesis") and general academic vocabulary (e.g., "increasing").

Teachers' deep subject knowledge and understanding of curriculum goals are vital for effectively connecting vocabulary instruction to relevant contexts. It's important to note that some words may fit multiple categories, requiring explanation of each applicable context.

Effective vocabulary instruction goes beyond simply providing or having students copy definitions. To ensure students fully comprehend, can use, and retain new vocabulary in their long-term memory, teachers must employ specific strategies. These methods involve explaining, clarifying, and verifying students' understanding of each term. The following section outlines the required approaches for achieving these objectives.

Pronunciation: Model the correct pronunciation, breaking the word into syllables, having students repeat the word aloud together.

Meaning and misconceptions: Clarify the word's meaning and address any misconceptions. Ask students to verbally summarise the meaning and its relationship to other words.

Chunking: Break down complex words into their component parts, using tools like the Frayer model to build understanding.

Scaffolding: Provide supporting words or phrases to help students explain the target word.

Comprehension check: Have students write their own definition and ask students to use the word in a sentence.

Revision: Use interleaving and spacing techniques to reinforce long-term memory retention, such as incorporating the words into prior learning components.

Cognitive load management and adaptation: Pace vocabulary introduction to suit all learners' progress. Offer alternative words for advanced students. Provide opportunities for deeper learning, such as exploring word relationships or cross-topic connections. Teachers should use their professional judgment to balance cognitive challenge with avoiding overload, ensuring all students progress in their vocabulary development.



Supporting below chronological age readers

Reading proficiency is not an innate skill, and many students enter secondary education without having fully developed this crucial ability. Our school adopts a purposeful and strategic approach to reading development. For students whose reading age falls significantly below their chronological age, we provide tailored reading interventions. These are delivered by a dedicated team of learning support assistants. Our comprehensive intervention program addresses multiple aspects of reading, including:

1. Fluency enhancement
2. Comprehension improvement
3. Decoding techniques
4. Inference and deduction skills
5. Phonics instruction
6. Reciprocal reading strategies

By offering this targeted support, we aim to bridge the reading gap and equip all students with the necessary skills for academic success and lifelong learning.

For those whose reading ages are only slightly below their chronological age, teachers will employ inclusive quality first teaching strategies in normal lessons and tutors will support reading development through the use of oracy-focussed reading sessions. All students in school have access to Sparx Reader and are encouraged to complete weekly reading to boost reading skills. Additionally, our reading buddies will provide supplementary support to these students.

Raising the profile of reading and reading for pleasure

We aim to create a positive reading culture, counteracting negative peer influences and expanding students' cultural horizons through literature. Our observations suggest that for struggling readers without specific learning or language difficulties, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, major obstacles to reading include social pressure and limited cultural exposure. To address these challenges, we've implemented a system of reading leaders and reading buddies. These individuals will elevate the status of reading and showcase its enjoyment by:

1. Demonstrating good reading practices.
2. Offering support to fellow students with their reading
3. Organising and conducting reading-focused events

The importance of regular reading is encouraged through tutor time, and reading opportunities in all lessons. We encourage pupils to have confidence to read aloud, to help develop their speaking and comprehension skills. All students in Year 8 will be auto enrolled in our local library with access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books covering a diverse range of topics, interesting characters, and exploring current and contextual issues relevant to them. Additionally, all students will have access to Sparx Reader, which will provide them with texts to read that are suitable for their reading stage and will ensure their comprehension before they continue to read.

Identifying reading abilities and reading assessments

Early identification of reading difficulties, particularly in Year 8, is crucial. Key stage 2 data from middle school in collaboration with reading age data (gained from Sparx or NGRT tests) will be used to identify reading ages and assist in designing provision and interventions. The weakest readers have additional testing to ensure interventions are impactful and well-matched to reading barriers. Access to students' reading ages, coupled with in-class observations, will allow teachers to adapt lessons and materials to support students struggling with assigned texts. Therefore, all teachers are responsible for reporting any concerns about a student's reading abilities to the Whole school literacy co-ordinator.

This proactive approach enables timely, detailed assessments to be conducted, helping to determine the most appropriate interventions for each student's specific needs. By fostering this collaborative effort between classroom teachers and the Whole school literacy co-ordinator, we can ensure that students receive targeted support as early as possible in their secondary education journey.

Who		Reason
Autumn term 1 All year 8, 9 and 10 pupils.	Standardised reading assessment	Initial screen for specific reading needs and baseline.
Autumn term 2 Students with missing reading ages.	Standardised reading assessment	Catch up for any students absent or in year transfers.
Summer term 1 All year 8, 9 and 10 pupils.	Standardised reading assessment	Measure impact of targeted interventions, identify emerging issues.

Staff Professional Learning & Development

Building on existing professional development, teachers across all subjects will participate in ongoing training sessions focused on their role in cultivating proficient readers. Additionally, the specialised instruction in implementing targeted reading interventions and promoting effective reading practices will be delivered. This comprehensive staff training ensures a school-wide commitment to enhancing literacy skills and fostering a culture of reading.

Subject teachers will (writing):

- insist on high standards of technical accuracy in the areas of spelling, punctuation, grammar, and presentation.
- use models, writing frames and scaffolds to support students' writing.
- provide dictionaries, wordlists, and thesauruses as appropriate to the curriculum.
- plan lessons that allow students to write for a range of intended readers.
- plan lessons that allow the production of writing of sustained and notable formality
- demonstrate an awareness of opportunities to make literacy a stated feature of lessons.

Subject teachers will (speaking and listening):



Plan and teach lessons in which students are regularly required to speak and listen in the following ways:

- in pairs with a working partner
- in small groups with opportunities to assume the different roles of leader, recorder, facilitator, and critical friend.
- in whole class discussion
- with a teacher or another adult
- making formal presentations to sizeable audiences
- using increasingly ambitious, adventurous, and sophisticated language
- offering extended utterances in discourse
- using Standard spoken English
- demonstrate an awareness of opportunities to make literacy a stated feature of lessons.

Evaluation.

The promotion of literacy will be regularly reviewed by Subject Leaders and the Senior Team through lesson observation and data evaluation.

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The School's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form Centre, Briar Mill, Droitwich, WR9 0AA or by email at privacy@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk



TARGETED INTERVENTION	WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH		
Reading support for our weakest readers	Reading for pleasure	English curriculum	Cross curriculum
Some reading concerns. Pupil is below chronological age by 6 months. - QFT – Teachers to utilise data to identify these students on their seating plan and pen portraits. - Close monitoring during lessons. - Implementation of reading and vocabulary teaching strategies covered in whole school PL&D sessions. - Possible use of Lexonic to support reading progress. Multiple reading concerns. Pupil is below chronological by 1+ year. - Fluency intervention - Guided reading using reciprocal reading strategies - Possible use of Lexonic to support reading progress. Significant reading concerns. Pupil is below chronological by 2+ years. - Precision teaching; single word reading intervention	Encouraging reading - All Yr. 8 students to receive an age appropriate reading book for use during tutor times. - Reading rewards - Auto enrolment to Droitwich Library Reading recommendations - Reading challenges - Tutor time reading for Yr. 8 - Recommendations from teaching staff Quality resources - Access to Droitwich Library - Fiction resources in M13 - Age appropriate reading lists - Book sales at parent information evenings Extra opportunities - Book club and reading events - Reading buddies and mentors - Literacy calendar and author events - House competitions - Reading newsletters	Carefully chosen texts. - Novels, poetry, and non-fiction texts giving students opportunities to explore different perspectives and ideas. Reading curriculum - Reading lessons are integrated into the Yr. 8 and Yr. 9 scheme of work. - Reading strategies will be taught and revisited. - Vocabulary is explicitly taught and assessed. - Knowledge organisers support vocabulary instruction and reading strategies. Independent learning - Reading and comprehension activities form a significant role in English homework.	Rich texts - High quality texts used in all subjects. - Implementation of pre, during and post reading strategies covered in PL&D. - Teacher models how to read like an expert. Disciplinary literacy - Exam literacy is taught using command words and exam question structure. - Explicit teaching of Tier 2 and 3 vocabularies and use of glossaries. - Low stakes testing. - Morphology and etymology. Writing techniques - Knowledge organisers - Scaffolded writing frames Oracy techniques - All opportunities for reading aloud are used. Staff CPD - PL&D sessions focus on disciplinary reading.



- Speech, language, and communication - Phonics - Lexonic - Paired reading Parental workshops will be offered to parents of the weakest readers.			
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