



FOREST HILL SCHOOL

Whole School Literacy Policy

*October 2015
Review: every two years*

“Read like a writer, write like a reader.”

‘To be literate is to gain a voice and to participate meaningfully and assertively in decisions that affect one’s life. To be literate is to gain self-confidence. To be literate is to become self-assertive... Literacy enables people to read their own world and to write their own history... Literacy provides access to written knowledge – and knowledge is power. In a nutshell, literacy empowers.’ (Y. Kassam, 1994)

‘Information literacy empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion in all nations.’ (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation 2005)

Introduction

Literacy skills are essential for our young people to reach their full potential in school. This document (written using the advice of The National Literacy Trust and “Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools,” Ofsted 2013) sets out our aims and approaches to ensuring all our students develop the literacy skills needed for their learning and for future life.

Key Principles

- Literacy includes students’ reading, writing and speaking & listening skills, but it is more than just the mechanics of these. Students need to engage with texts that challenge preconceptions; reading with thought and understanding as well as recalling, selecting and analysing ideas and information. They need to speak and write in coherent, considered and convincing ways, experimenting with language and reflecting on a range of views and perspectives of the world. They need the vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects.
- Responsibility for developing literacy skills lies with every member of staff who interacts with students.
- Reading widely, critically and for pleasure is central to the development of students’ literacy skills.
- Information literacy is a key life skill and allows students to read, make sense of and synthesise information presented in a wide range of different ways, e.g. websites, graphs, charts and schedules. Students need to also be able to create their own information texts. The information literacy demands of each subject area will be different.
- Improving literacy can have an impact on pupils’ self-esteem, on motivation, behaviour and overall achievement. It allows them to learn independently. It is empowering.
- We recognise that the teaching of skills is most effective when it is done at the point of need, as opposed to provision through generic, stand-alone skill sessions. We strive through our literacy teaching to examine skills explicitly with students and to raise their metacognitive awareness.

Key Aims

- To enable our students to develop into powerful communicators.
- To ensure our students have the reading, writing and speaking & listening skills needed to access the school curriculum.
- To improve the technical aspects of students’ writing, e.g. spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- To promote reading for enjoyment and wider reading.
- To develop teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the assessment and teaching of literacy skills.
- To promote the development of information literacy skills.

- To promote a consistent approach to literacy across the school (Professional Teachers' Standards 2011: *demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject*)

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- Follow the whole school guidance about accuracy of written communication and presentation of written work.
- Make use of the advice and feedback they are given with regard to improving their literacy and communication skills.
- Make full use of the opportunities offered in lessons and in the library to develop themselves as speakers, readers and writers.

Parents

- As far as possible, provide access to the resources needed at home to improve literacy skills, e.g. a dictionary and a thesaurus.
- Support and encourage the boys to edit, correct and improve their written work.

All Staff

- Ensure that all internal and external documents model accurate and clear use of written English.
- Promote understanding of the importance of standard English and the contexts for which it should be used.
- Promote literacy through using the marking code.
- To adhere to and promote the agreed format in regards to the presentation of students' work.

Teachers

- Know the literacy demands of their subject and any changes in those demands, e.g. as a result of changes in the assessment of that subject.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' reading, writing, speaking and listening; giving feedback that supports students' development of literacy skills.
- Provide literacy and oracy tasks that appropriately stretch and challenge all students including the most able.
- Model how to speak and listen, read and write for different purposes and search for information and interact with different resources.
- Make use of 'The Literacy Skills List' when planning lessons and schemes of work.
- Make use of the information available in the SEN register when planning for the literacy needs of all students.
- Provide frequent opportunities for students to develop their literacy skills including writing at length where appropriate.
- Make reference to literacy when giving verbal or written feedback to students and when reporting to parents as appropriate.
- Make corrections to spelling using the whole school protocols.
- Ensure students present their work correctly and use exemplar material to model this.
- Liaise with the librarian to identify resources to support the teaching of their subject.
- Make the literature of their subject visible through the use of display and wider reading activities.
- Plan activities that activate prior learning from other subject areas and that examine how skills vary in different contexts.
- Teach students to use information ethically, e.g. what is plagiarism.

Teaching Assistants

- Identify spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in the writing of students they are supporting and help them to correct them.
- Encourage students to use dictionaries, thesauruses and spelling logs in all subjects.
- Promote literacy when speaking with and supporting students.
- Model how to speak, listen, read and write for different purposes.
- Make use of the information available in the SEN register when planning for the literacy needs of all students.

Library Assistants

Support teaching and learning in whole class, small group and one-to-one sessions by

- Monitoring student progress towards targets, ensuring student understanding, provide appropriate feedback to both student and teacher
- Guiding students towards relevant resources, and more effective use of the internet and bookfinder database
- Making use of the information available in the SEN register when planning for the literacy needs of all students.
- Negotiating appropriate reading targets and supporting students in this achievement.
- Providing teachers with book box loans and lists of relevant internet resources for project work.

Librarian

- Contribute to raising attainment and improving literacy in both reader development and information literacy across the school.
- Lead and manage assessment for the Year 7 and 8 reading lessons, contributing to the whole school reporting system.
- Work with teaching colleagues to develop new curriculum and teaching approaches.
- Develop a library service for the whole school community.
- Advise students and staff on selection of resources.
- Provide an offer to parents in support of their child's reader development.

Head of Learning Support

- Monitor and develop the provision for those students who have historically struggled to develop literacy skills in line with their peers, in particular those with identified communication, literacy or specific learning difficulties. Share strategies with colleagues that promote inclusion of these students.
- Monitor the progress of students with special educational needs with regard to literacy, plan and implement interventions as appropriate.

Associate Assistant Headteacher

- Draft and update the literacy policy
- Evaluate the consistency of literacy across the school
- Contribute to whole school training as appropriate
- Provide posters and other resources for whole school use
- Disseminate developments of literacy with all staff
- Monitor the focus on literacy through book sampling and learning walks

Middle Leaders - Curriculum

- Nominate one member of the curriculum area to be the literacy ambassador.
- Liaise with the librarian to identify resources to support the teaching of their subject.

- Provide opportunities to promote literacy through speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- Make the literature of their subject visible through the use of display and wider reading activities.
- Monitor the implementation of strategies to promote literacy, e.g. through curriculum area meetings; lesson observations; schemes of work and book sampling.
- To provide exemplar material and model writing styles to encourage good practice and to provide support to structure extended writing (eg writing frames, mind maps, planning techniques).
- Use curriculum area meeting time to share good practice of teaching literacy within their subject (at least once a term).

Middle Leaders - Pastoral

- Encourage and monitor the use of tutor time activities to promote literacy, e.g. team games; reading fiction; watching and discussing the news.

Senior Leaders

- Give active, consistent and sustained support to the development of good practice with regard to literacy.
- Ensure adequate resources are directed to the development of literacy in the school.
- Provide training to all staff in the teaching of literacy.
- Provide opportunities for key staff to receive training and updates on the national picture with regard to literacy and to share expertise between departments.
- Monitor the implementation of strategies to promote literacy, e.g. through line-management meetings; lesson observations and book sampling.

Governors

- Nominate one member to have responsibility for literacy.
- Ensure adequate resourcing for the effective implementation of the policy, e.g. of the library and departments.

Appendices:

1. The Literacy Skills List
2. Correcting Spelling
3. Writing Guidelines Poster
4. Common Spelling Errors Poster
5. Using Punctuation Poster
6. Useful Resources

Literacy Skills List

Students need opportunities to develop the following skills in a range of subject areas:

Speaking and Listening

- Listening for specific purposes.
- Listening to others and responding in ways that show they have understood what was said.
- Identifying the main points that arise from a discussion.
- Using talk for a range of purposes: developing and clarifying ideas; questioning; narrating and imagining; speculating exploring and hypothesizing, explaining and discussing; evaluating and reasoning; arguing and justifying.
- Contributing to paired, group and whole class discussions.
- Using subject specific vocabulary.

Reading

- Reading for interest and enjoyment.
- Reading with understanding: locating and using information as well as following a process or argument.
- Reading challenging and good quality texts.
- Summarising and synthesizing information and ideas.
- Make inferences and deductions about what they have read.
- Make useful notes about what they have read.
- Understand exam 'command' words.

Writing

- Writing for a range of different purposes and audiences.
- Writing at length.
- Drafting, editing and redrafting their writing.
- Using subject specific vocabulary in their writing.
- Writing using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Correcting and improving their own writing.
- Deploying the conventions of different types of writing appropriately.

Information Literacy

- Searching different sources to select appropriate information, evaluating source, discourse and the task brief.
- Using both digital and hardcopy resources.
- Synthesing information from more than one source.
- Creating content in both digital and hardcopy formats.
- Examining differences in how skills are deployed in different contexts.
- Citation of sources and ability to create a bibliography.

References

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