

LITERACY POLICY

Term of policy: 3 Years

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Online location: Policies

Consulted with JCC? Yes No

Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations.

As part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, we have carefully considered the impact of this policy on equality. The school will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all employees and does not have a negative impact on students or staff with protected characteristics, race, sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Definition of Literacy

Literacy generates the development of effective skills in communication. To be literate is to be able to listen, speak and write at a level necessary to succeed in Education.

‘Young people who leave school without good literacy skills are held back at every stage of life. Their outcomes are poorer on almost every measure, from health and wellbeing to employment and finance’. (Sir Kevin Collins - EEF)

Principles of the Literacy Policy

The aim of the whole school Literacy Policy is to raise literacy attainment at every level of ability. Staff work together to integrate the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing into the curriculum to maximise the potential of each student.

- Literacy supports learning. Students need vocabulary, expression, and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of all subjects.
- Writing helps us to sustain and order thought.
- Better literacy empowers students, allowing students to learn independently and leading to improved self-esteem, motivation and behaviour.
- Better literacy raises students’ attainment in all subjects and leads to improved life outcomes.

This policy is based on the long-standing aims of the school to encourage all students to reach the highest level of achievement that is possible for them, both in public examinations and in the development of any special talents they possess; to equip all students with the knowledge and skills necessary for coping successfully with life; and to foster the development of all students as mature and responsible individuals.

This policy is founded in the school’s commitment to the development and maintenance of good behaviour and a positive and inclusive ethos for all members of the school’s community.

Foreword

Rooks Heath School is a mixed 11 to 18 multicultural comprehensive in the London Borough of Harrow. This policy is formulated by Literacy Coordinator, in consultation with staff, and is monitored by other members of the School’s Leadership and Management Group. The policy is subject to annual review by the school’s Leadership and Management Group and is subject to approval by the Governors of the school.

We believe that sound literacy development is central to learning, that it is intrinsically linked to raising achievement across the curriculum. Consequently, developing and supporting the literacy development of students is a responsibility shared by all teachers and support staff.

This literacy policy has been formulated to sit within the school’s development plan and reflects the Government’s recommended policy.

This policy needs to be read alongside the Assessment Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Inclusion Policy, SEN/EAL policies and Teaching and Learning Policy. All these impact on students’ literacy development.

Whole School Aims

To improve the quality of students speaking, listening, reading, and writing in order to enhance their progress and achievement. Students will be given opportunities to:

- Speak clearly and effectively for a range of purposes and to a variety of audiences.
- Listen thoughtfully to others and to understand their meanings, intentions, and feelings.
- Read confidently to gain ideas, interpret, and infer information and stimulus from a written text – and for enjoyment.
- Write accurately and coherently to task, audience and purpose expressing clear understanding. To present understanding, information, and ideas appropriate to task.

Principles

1. Literacy is integral to the process of learning: students require the skills of language in order to respond successfully to the cognitive demands of all subjects.
2. The term 'literacy' includes all three elements of language: oracy, reading, and writing.
3. All elements of the literacy policy should be reflected across the curriculum.
4. All staff must share responsibility for developing student literacy and must work together to create an environment which promotes the highest levels of literacy, motivating and supporting all students in order to raise their expectations of achievement and thus raising standards within the school.
5. The Literacy policy is seen as a key policy of the school and will:
 - Reflect the needs of every student.
 - Build on the strengths of existing practices and procedures.
 - Support students learning in all subjects.
 - Develop an approach that is consistent across all curricular areas while simultaneously attending to discipline-specific literacy demands.

Practice

1. Class teachers

- Must be aware of the literacy needs of the students they teach. This may be gathered from KS2 English SATs results, CATs results, Star Reader/nGRT results, Flightpaths/Target grades, and EAL/SEND assessments. All relevant data will be made accessible via the school MIS. Observation of students in lessons and the work they complete will add to this awareness.
- Need to be aware of the implications of disciplinary literacy and thus the literacy demands that are particular to their subject: this should include pertinent Tier 2 and Tier 3 Vocabulary (especially where such the use of such vocabulary within the subject differs to general usage); as well as discipline-specific reading, writing and speaking skills.
- Should give due consideration to disciplinary literacy when planning lessons: for instance, by selecting texts tailored to the literacy levels of their students; planning for the explicit teaching of Tier 2 and Tier 3 Vocabulary; including opportunities reading and writing; including in opportunities for structured, accountable talk; planning for the support and scaffolding of reading, writing and speaking.
- Should make effective use of modelling to teach discipline-specific reading skills and writing skills, and follow the whole school approach (model, write, review) when teaching extended writing.

2. Departments

- Must be aware of the literacy demands of their subject and the needs of their students and adapt teaching to meet these.
- Must ensure that their curriculum, schemes of learning and lesson materials cohere with the aims and approaches advocated in the literacy policy.

3. The Literacy Coordinator

The Literacy Coordinator is responsible for:

- Overseeing a rigorous programme of intervention to support struggling readers across the school (see below).
- Chairing the Literacy Working Group of HoDs to collaboratively instil whole school literacy strategies and share best literacy practices.
- Deciding, in consultation with senior leaders, on the literacy focus for each school year.
- Ensuring relevant literacy data is made accessible to staff.
- Keeping up to date with developments in literacy and with new government initiatives.
- Monitoring School policies for their impact on literacy.
- Facilitating training for colleagues in department and whole staff meetings.
- Liaising with the Deputy Head with responsibility for Teaching and Learning in order to keep literacy on the training agenda of the school.
- Liaising with the SENCo regarding literacy.
- Overseeing literacy-related programmes and events.
- Informing the Headteacher and the Leadership and Management team of new developments in Literacy, especially new government initiatives.
- Ensuring that Literacy development is included in the School Improvement Plan.

Whole School Strategies for Supporting Literacy

Tutor Time

Tutor Time Reading

One tutor time per week for Years 7-10 is to be allocated to Tutor Time Reading. In Years 7-9, this comprises reading from the Tutor Time Anthology (compiled and edited by the Literacy Coordinator). In Year 10, students read a short novel.

Tutor Time Reading is led by the tutor or co-tutor, who reads aloud to the class. Reading aloud allows all students to enjoy the cognitive benefits associated with reading while at the same time providing an opportunity to:

- Model fluent and expressive reading.
- Model and promote the use of reading comprehension strategies (i.e. activating prior knowledge, predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarising).
- Promote reading for pleasure.

Tutor Time Literacy

One tutor time per fortnight is to be allocated to Tutor Time Literacy. In these sessions, students complete activities disseminated by the Literacy Coordinator aimed at developing vocabulary, reading, writing, and oracy.

Vocabulary

Tier 2 and 3 words are identified in Schemes of Learning and taught explicitly in lessons through the process of explanation, exploration and consolidation as outlined in literacy training and materials. This process assists students in the correct spelling and use of academic language, which is also ensured through marking for literacy (see below).

Relevant key words are displayed in Knowledge Organisers and in classrooms and students are encouraged to embed these words appropriately in their spoken and written responses.

Reading

In the Classroom

Within lessons, students are explicitly taught the reading approaches and strategies that are particular to each subject (disciplinary reading) as well as general reading comprehension strategies such as prediction, clarification, questioning, summarise, skimming and scanning. The mastery of these strategies is achieved through teacher modelling, 'reading for writing' and the use of mentor/model/exemplar texts, and independent practice. Students learn to apply these reading skills across a range of text types and genres and thus develop as skilled independent learners. Teachers select texts to cater to the reading abilities of their students, ensuring that all students are adequately supported and challenged.

Rooks Heath Literary Canon

The Rooks Heath Literary Canon is compiled by the Literacy Coordinator with input from Heads of Department. This document comprises a selection of recommended 'satellite texts' for each subject and each year group and is made available to the school community on the school website, with the aim of promoting a culture of reading for pleasure, supporting student learning and adding to their cultural capital.

Reading Logs

Students in Years 7 and 8 complete a weekly reading log responding to specific guided reading questions to check students understanding of the text.

Reading Assessment & Intervention – Raising Readers & Lexia

Students in Years 7 and 8 follow the Accelerated Reader Programme; their reading abilities are assessed termly through Star Reader tests coordinated by the LRC Manager. For Year 7, this data is used in conjunction with SATs and internal primary school data to ensure targeted support is in place for students at the earliest opportunity.

Year 7 students identified as having low reading ages and reading difficulties receive intervention with a trained member of staff in the form of one-to-one reading sessions as part of the 'Raising Readers' programme. Progress over the course of these interventions is assessed via Star Reader (for comprehension) and Microsoft Reading Progress (fluency). Where students require phonics intervention, these sessions will be coordinated by the SEND department.

Students in Year 8 who are identified as having low reading ages attend tutor time intervention delivered via the Lexia software, which accelerates literacy skills through a combination of personalised independent practice and teacher-led instruction.

The reading abilities of students in Years 9 and 10 are assessed via nGRT testing at the beginning and end of the school year. Students in Year 9 and 10 who are identified as having low reading ages also attend tutor time Lexia sessions.

Writing

Writing Activities

Students are given the opportunity to develop their ability to write in a variety of forms for different purposes and for a range of audiences. They are explicitly taught the discipline-specific demands of writing within each subject area (disciplinary writing) and are given opportunities to shape their writing to meet these demands. Students plan, draft, and discuss writing, use writing to organise thoughts and to aid learning, produce written material of a quality appropriate to their individual level of attainment, and write for pleasure.

Whole School Writing Approach

Where students complete extended writing, they do so according to the whole school writing approach of 'Model, Write, Review'. Teachers follow the I do, We Do You do/Gradual Release approach in the instruction of extended writing, by first modelling and explicitly drawing students' attention to the features of successful writing (including all stages of the writing process, such as planning and editing), before gradually releasing students to complete independent practice. After any extended piece of writing students are given adequate opportunity to review, reflect on, and revise their work (e.g. through self- or peer-marking activities).

Where required, teachers might further scaffold writing activities to adapt to the needs of their students, for example through the use of writing frames, sentence starters, sentence expansion, 'talk for writing' activities and word/phrasbanks. Teachers adapt and withdraw these as students gain confidence.

Marking for Literacy

All subjects have integrated the teaching of literacy into their planning and should now adopted the whole school approach to the marking and assessment of literacy, including the Marking for Literacy policy.

In marked pieces of work that include extended writing, teachers will close mark at one paragraph for literacy, encouraging students to correct errors as part of their overall response to feedback.

Oracy

Accountable Talk

Each subject offers opportunities for structured, 'accountable', talk within the classroom, through which students acquire knowledge and understanding, broaden their vocabulary and range of expression, and gain deeper insight into the ideas, perceptions and emotions of others. 'Accountable' talk comprises these three principles:

- Accountability to community (students listen, respect and respond to their peers' contributions)
- Accountability to reasoning (students explain and justify their answers with reference to their thought process)
- Accountability to knowledge (students refer to their knowledge or learning to explain/justify their answers)

Mark	Means
Sp	Correct spelling error. Write out 3x
P	Correct punctuation error .,'?!";:-
Gr	Correct grammatical error
T	Secure Tenses
C	Correct missing or misplaced capital letters
//	Mark where paragraphs should be
v	Exceptional point/use of language
?	Not clear. Rewrite this short section
^	Replace missing word
UV	Uplevel Vocabulary
D/T	Date/title needs to be added
U/L	Underline

have
use of
least

Guided by the principles of accountable talk, students have the opportunity to use talk for a range of purposes and audiences; plan, discuss and evaluate their listening and speaking; explore ideas through drama and role-play; ask and answer questions in group discussion; solve problems collaboratively.

The Learning Resource Centre (Library), Literacy Events Calendar & Extracurricular Literacy

The Learning Resource Centre

The Learning Resource centre plays a leading role in supporting Literacy. There is a Library Induction Programme for Year 7 students and students in Year 7 and 8 have fortnightly timetabled Library lessons as part of the English curriculum. EAL students also have timetabled lessons working alongside the Accelerated Reader Programme to improve reading and fluency skills.

The Learning Resource Centre Manager also regularly organises theme/genre-based displays to promote wider reading and introduce students to new texts and promote topical events including Black History Month.

Literacy Events Calendar

Each year, led by the Learning Resource Centre, the school celebrates World Book Day and National/World Poetry Day through tutor time, assemblies, whole school activities and competitions.

The Literacy coordinator works with the KS3/KS4 English Coordinators and Head of English to ensure a full and varied calendar of competitions and events to promote the highest standards of reading, writing and oracy, including the Jack Petchey Challenge, the School Poetry Slam, the Rooks Heath Poets Laureate competition, the Million Word Challenge, and various annual competitions.

Creative Writing Club

Creative Writing Club is held weekly and encourages students' creative poetry and prose in a positive and constructive environment. Selected pieces of work by club members are entered for regional and national competitions.

Debate Club

Debate club is led by the Literacy Coordinator and colleagues from the English department. It is held weekly and open to all students. Regular attendees will be invited to represent Rooks Heath in inter-school competitions.

Book Club

Book Club is led by the KS3/Year 9 English Coordinator and held weekly. Staff and students are invited to discuss books of their choice.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Literacy Policy:

The Literacy Coordinator is responsible for initial monitoring and evaluation of the Literacy Policy.

Overall evaluation and review will be undertaken by the Leadership and Management Group and reported to the Governors. This will be both part of the whole School review process and directly relate to the School Improvement Plan.