



The
Swinton High School
A Converter Academy

Literacy Policy

January 2015

The Swinton High School literacy policy

All teachers are teachers of literacy. As such, the staff of The Swinton High school are committed to developing literacy skills in all of our pupils, in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum, because:

- pupils need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects
- reading helps us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience;
- writing helps us to sustain and order thought;
- language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do, and on the things others have said, written or done;
- responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry;
- improving literacy and learning can have an impact on pupils' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour. It allows them to learn independently. It is empowering.

All schemes of work and most, although not all lessons, will include specific literacy objectives. These objectives will inform what is taught, how it is taught, what is learnt and how it is learnt. Literacy should also form part of lesson plenaries when it is appropriate to the focus of the lesson.

Implementation at whole-school level

Language is the prime medium through which pupils learn and express themselves across the curriculum, and all teachers have a stake in effective literacy.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Senior Managers:** lead and give a high profile to literacy;

- **English Department:** provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write and speak and listen effectively;
- **Teachers across the curriculum:** contribute to pupils' development of language, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons;
- **Literacy co-ordinator:** supports departments in the implementation of strategies and encourages departments to learn from each other's practice by sharing ideas.
- **Parents:** encourage their children to use the range of strategies they have learnt to improve their levels of literacy;
- **Pupils:** take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements;
- **Governors:** an identified governor could meet with staff and pupils and report progress and issues to the governing body and to parents in the governors' annual report.

Key points for improving Literacy across the Curriculum

Keep it simple, keep it consistent

- Try to always insist on full sentences.
- Talk, model, write..
- Are you checking your work?

Use the school's WIN marking policy to focus on Pupils' literacy and what they need to do to improve.

It is the responsibility of both staff and students to raise standards in literacy.

This starts with an expectation that students should respond in full sentences and in Standard English; teachers are expected to model this, to challenge poor oracy, and to provide students with the language necessary for a high-level response.

Before setting their students to write, teachers should model the process of writing: the thinking, the planning, the drafting and the editing.

Integral in developing pupils' wider reading and reading for enjoyment is how teachers facilitate reading for meaning through using a range of teaching methods and approaches.

All teachers should promote high standards of literacy...whatever the teacher's specialist subject.

(Department for Education (2012), Teachers' Standards)

"All teachers should have a better understanding of the role literacy plays in their subject..."

and...[this will] enable them to understand how improved reading, writing and speaking and listening skills would help them make more progress in their own subject"

"Direct teaching of reading skills such as skimming, scanning and reading for detail (including on the internet); using the index and glossary; identifying key points and making notes; summarising; or using more than one source

Teachers must foster thinking and talking about texts by creating an environment of rich dialogue and response towards all types of text. The reading of images and film, fiction, poetry and non-fiction is vital in developing talk and response, the starting point for comprehension.

Questioning by both teachers and pupils is foundational in improving comprehension. It should involve the explicit exploration and development of literal, inferential and evaluative questioning

Speaking and Listening

We will teach pupils to use language precisely and coherently. They should be able to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively.

We will develop strategies to teach pupils how to participate orally in groups and in the whole class, including: using talk to develop and clarify ideas; identifying the main points to arise from a discussion; listening for a specific purpose; discussion and evaluation.

Reading

We aim to give pupils a level of literacy that will enable them to cope with the increasing demands of subjects in terms of specific skills, knowledge and understanding. This applies particularly in the area of reading (including from the screen), as texts become more demanding.

We will build on and share existing good practice. We will teach pupils strategies to help them to: read with greater understanding; locate and use information; follow a process or argument; summarise; synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading. This must be planned within the scope of reading for enjoyment and tasks should engage pupils with the world beyond the classroom.

Teachers should clarify pupils' purpose for reading. They should relate the reading to pupils' lives; pre-teach concepts that might inhibit understanding; and activate or build background

Teachers must also develop pupils' toolbox of comprehension strategies such as making connections, asking questions and forecasting predictions. It could also involve previewing the text or questions related to the text so that it focuses reading. Teachers should pre-teach vocabulary through games, along with drama, to explore and bring new language alive.

Teachers should vary the way the text is read. This could involve silent reading, bringing a text alive by reading to pupils, oral reading by pupils, audio recordings or guided reading. Teachers should do everything to avoid reading becoming a dull and slow business – and this isn't achieved by just reading extracts, but on teacher approaches that are imaginative, innovative and lively.

The use of DARTs. There are four main types of DARTs – cloze, text reconstruction, text marking and text sequencing - and they all help pupils make sense of a text, and can be used as pre, during or post-reading activities. For example, text reconstruction uses graphic organisers (also known as visual diagrams) to help readers make sense of a text. The type used will depend on the purpose of the text or what needs to be drawn out. For example, a venn diagram would enable pupils to compare and contrast, a story board or timeline would help pupils sequence events or steps. These response activities develop pupils' reading strategies, their ability to skim, scan and/or read closely, for key words and synonyms, to answer questions, and to comprehend. It also increases pupils' appetite for reading for enjoyment and improves comprehension skills, when underpinned by collaborative talk.

Writing

It is important that we provide for co-ordination across subjects to recognise and reinforce pupils' language skills, through:

- Making connections between pupils' reading and writing, so that pupils have clear models for their writing;
- Using the modelling process to make explicit to pupils *how* to write;
- Being clear about audience and purpose;
- Providing opportunities for a range of writing including sustained writing.

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Each department will:

- *teach pupils how to write in ways that are special to that department's subject needs;*

The text types are:

- *information;*
- *recount;*
- *explanation;*
- *instruction;*
- *persuasion;*
- *discursive writing;*
- *analysis;*
- *evaluation;*
- *formal essay.*

The structures and language features of some important types of non-fiction texts

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| <p>Recount</p> <p>Purpose: to retell events</p> <p>Text structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ orientation – ‘scene setting’ opening, e.g. I went to the shop... ▪ events – recount the events as they occurred, e.g. I saw a vase... ▪ reorientation – a closing statement, e.g. When I got back I told my mum. <p>Language features of recount</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ written in the past tense, e.g. I went ▪ in chronological order, using time connectives, e.g. then, next, after, that ▪ focus on individual or group participants, e.g. we, I | <p>Report</p> <p>Purpose: to describe the way things are</p> <p>Text structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an opening, general classification, e.g. Sparrows are birds. ▪ more technical classification (optional), e.g. Their Latin name is... ▪ a description of the phenomena, including some or all of its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> qualities, e.g. Birds have feathers. Parts and their function, e.g. The beak is... habits/behaviour or uses, e.g. They nest in... <p>Language features of report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ written in the present tense, e.g. they nest ▪ non-chronological ▪ focus on generic participants (birds not a particular bird) |
| <p>Explanation</p> <p>Purpose: to explain the processes involved in natural and social phenomena or to explain how something works</p> <p>Text structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ general statement to introduce the topic, e.g. In the autumn some birds migrate. ▪ a series of logical steps explaining how or why something occurs, e.g. Because the hours of daylight shorten... ▪ These steps continue until the final state is produced or the explanation is complete <p>Language features of explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ written in the simple present tense, e.g. go ▪ uses time connectives, e.g. then, next, ▪ and/or casual connectives, e.g. because, so, this causes | <p>Instructions</p> <p>Purpose: to instruct how something should be done through a series of sequenced steps</p> <p>Text structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ goal – a statement of what is to be achieved, e.g. How to make a sponge cake ▪ materials/equipment needed, e.g. 2 eggs, flour ▪ sequenced steps to achieve the goal, e.g. Cream the sugar and butter. ▪ often there is a diagram or illustration. <p>Language features of instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ written in the imperative, e.g. “First you sift the flour”, or, “Sift the flour”. ▪ in chronological order, e.g. first, next, after that ▪ focus on generalised human agents rather than named individuals. |
| <p>Persuasion</p> <p>Purpose: to argue the case for a point of view</p> <p>Text structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ thesis – an opening statement, e.g. Vegetables are good for you ▪ arguments – often in the form of point + | <p>Discussion</p> <p>Purpose: to present arguments and information from differing viewpoints</p> <p>Text structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ statement of the issue + a preview of the main arguments |

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| <p>elaboration, e.g. They contain vitamins. Vitamin C is vital for...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reiteration – summary and restatement of the opening position, e.g. We have seen that...so... <p>Language features of persuasion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the simple present tense ▪ focus mainly on generic participants (vegetables, not a particular vegetable) ▪ mainly logical rather than time connectives, e.g. this shows, however, because | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ arguments for + supporting evidence ▪ arguments against + supporting evidence (alternatively, argument/counter argument, a point at a time) ▪ recommendation - summary and conclusion <p>Language features of discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the simple present tense ▪ generic human (or non-human) participant ▪ logical connectives, e.g. therefore, however |
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Spelling strategies

Each department will:

- *identify and display key vocabulary;*
- *revise key vocabulary;*
- *teach agreed learning strategies which will help pupils to learn subject spelling lists;*
- *concentrate on the marking of high-frequency and key subject words taking into account the differing abilities of pupils.*
- *test or revise high frequency words regularly.*
- *(see staff spelling strategies booklet and the parent/teacher guidance document.)*

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will make use of available data to assess the standards of pupils' literacy. Senior managers, the Head of English and the literacy co-ordinator, will decide how to monitor progress in the school.

Possible approaches are:

- sampling work – both pupils' work and departmental schemes;
- observation – pupil pursuit and literacy teaching;
- meetings;
- pupil interviews;
- scrutiny of development plans;
- encouraging departments to share good practice by exhibiting or exemplifying pupils' work.

Including All Pupils

1. Differentiation

The Swinton High school pupils are entitled to our highest expectations and support. Some will need additional support and others will need to be challenged and extended. Strategies that we can use include:

- questioning;
- adjusting the demands of the task;
- the use of additional support;
- use of group structures;
- resources;
- making objectives clear;
- creating an atmosphere where pupils evaluate their own others' work.

The more able

We will seek to:

- identify able pupils;
- promote ways of structuring learning for able pupils
- develop a teaching repertoire which supports and challenges able pupils.

4. English as an Additional Language

Our pupils learning EAL need to hear good examples of spoken English and also to refer to their first language skills to aid new learning in all subjects of the curriculum. The use of their first language enables them to draw on existing subject knowledge and to develop English language skills in context. Our EAL pupils will be fully integrated across subjects with staff working alongside the EAL team to ensure that the pupil can access the curriculum. The EAL vertical form group will use morning registration time to develop literacy skills and to share issues and concerns that may be hindering their literacy development.

5. SEN

We will teach our pupils with special educational needs appropriately, supporting their learning and providing them with challenges matched to their needs, through using a range of teaching strategies such as guided group work, writing frames and oral activities. Those pupils in years 7

and 8 with specific literacy difficulties will have the opportunity to join the STEPS learning programme for personalised basic literacy development within the SEN faculty.

All pupils in year 7 with low literacy levels from primary follow the Freshstart synthetic phonics programme. This intensive programme delivered in English lessons allows pupils to catch up on basic skills with the aim being to get the pupils to Level 4 by the start of year 8.

6. Pastoral programme

All pupils in every year group follow a literacy programme in morning registration time. Years 7-10 have book boxes with differentiated and age appropriate reading material to promote private reading and enjoyment of reading. Pupils read to their form tutor at least once a term. Year 10 and 11 pupils work on literacy booklets to improve and revise key spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in preparation for their exams.

Year 7 pupils with a reading age below 10.5 work in differentiated groups to boost their reading skills two mornings a week during form time. By practising guided and shared reading activities and using Successmaker in the LSU they follow an intensive programme of intervention.

7. The Academy Pledge

A pledge set by the academy for pupils and parents is that 95% of year 7 pupils will have achieved a reading age of 10.5 or above by the end of year 7.

Assessment

Available data from KS2 should be used to inform planning and to assist us in responding to early pieces of work. We can also use this data to set numerical and curricular targets for each cohort.

The best assessment informs lesson-planning and target-setting and helps us to maintain the pace of learning for our pupils.

For detailed guidance on marking and literacy marking symbols see our marking policy.

Literacy Non-Negotiables

1. Verbal responses should be extended.
2. Key words and definitions should be used in every lesson.
3. Use integrated quotes with detailed explanations whenever appropriate.
4. Spelling of key subject vocabulary should be practised.
5. Pupils should respond to the teacher's marking, including marking for literacy.
6. Pupils and teachers should focus on the presentation of work.
7. Spelling, punctuation and grammar should be a main focus for all members of staff and all pupils.
8. Teachers will promote the use of standard English in lessons and around school.