



HALL GREEN SCHOOL

LITERACY POLICY

Adopted:	17 November 2021
Next Review:	November 2024
Governing Committee:	Pastoral and Curriculum
Responsibility:	Deputy Headteacher/Teaching and Learning

Policy and Practice

Literacy is integral to the success of all learners at Hall Green School. Literacy learning and teaching are put into context and the procedures to be followed by each subject areas are outlined.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the English Curriculum policy, the LINC curriculum policy and the SEND policy.

Context and Rationale

The Ofsted School Survey report into literacy in 2013 quotes an EU report about the importance of literacy to all learners.

‘Literacy is about people’s ability to function in society as private individuals, active citizens, employees or parents. Literacy is about people’s self-esteem, their interaction with others, their health and employability. Ultimately, literacy is about whether a society is fit for the future.’

The Ofsted report provides a definition of literacy skills based on the National Curriculum:

‘Literacy’ [...] is more than the mechanics of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The National Curriculum demands that connections be made between each strand and across subjects, which calls for thought and understanding, for recall, selection and analysis of ideas and information, and for coherent, considered and convincing communication in speech and in writing. All pupils should be encouraged to:

- ‘make extended, independent contributions that develop ideas in depth’;
- ‘make purposeful presentations that allow them to speak with authority on significant subjects’;
- ‘engage with texts that challenge preconceptions and develop understanding beyond the personal and immediate’;
- ‘experiment with language and explore different ways of discovering and shaping their own meanings’;
- ‘use writing as a means of reflecting on and exploring a range of views and perspectives on the world’.

Approximately 30% of pupils at Hall Green School are registered as EAL pupils. While the majority of pupils have sufficient language skills to enable them to function perfectly well on a social level, often pupils have difficulties with the more formal and transactional forms of English that are required for academic success.

Typically, Hall Green pupils demonstrate a narrower vocabulary than pupils in other schools, particularly for the formal types of language. This also impacts on reading for understanding, as pupils become proficient in decoding texts but are unfamiliar with the vocabulary. They also sometimes show non-standard grammatical forms in their own speech and writing, possibly from interference from another language spoken at home, or limited experience of formal standard English.

The aim of this policy is to show how we at Hall Green support pupils to acquire the literacy skills they need to succeed both within school and when they leave.

To achieve this, we recognise that:

- All modes of language contribute to the development of literacy: speaking, listening, reading and writing;
- The teaching of literacy is the responsibility of all staff in the school. The National Teaching Standards make this clear: teachers should ‘demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever their specialist subject.’;
- Some learners will need additional support;
- A common approach to the teaching of literacy helps pupils transfer skills learned in one area of the curriculum to another.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to:

- Set high standards for literacy across the school;
- Ensure that the school follows a clear, effective and co-ordinated cross-curricular strategy for the development of literacy for all pupils;
- Ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach to the teaching of literacy;
- Ensure that staff are supported in their teaching of literacy through appropriate training, guidance and support materials;
- Ensure pupils are aware of and increasingly make use of a common set of literacy skills;
- Encourage pupils to reflect on their use of literacy skills and make efforts to improve;
- Ensure that parents understand the importance of literacy for their child’s progress in school, are aware of the ways that the school is supporting pupils and are aware of ways that they can support their children themselves;
- Ensure that the quality of literacy in the school is monitored regularly;
- Set out a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of this policy.

Strategic Overview

This literacy policy outlines the strategic approach adopted by the school to support the development of literacy in the school.

Broadly, there are four different aspects of the policy:

- SEND department provision: Fresh Start, the literacy continuums at KS3 for Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening, Toe by Toe and the Word Wasp spelling programme and Paired Reading* in form time (*Currently not running, as it requires vertical tutoring, which has been suspended until the covid crisis is over);
- English Department curriculum and provision (including the Lexia programme);
- Use of the Library and the wider reading programme (including Book Buzz);
- Cross-curricular literacy (including the form-time reading programme to develop tier 2 vocabulary).

For the majority of pupils, their literacy needs are met through the English curriculum, the library and cross-curricular literacy provision.

Pupils identified as having additional needs follow one of the routes managed by the SEND department, in addition to the universal provision provided by the English department and cross-curricular literacy. This additional need is part met through the use of the Year 7 Catch Up funding, as is the Lexia programme.

Assessment

On entry to HGS in Year 7, pupils take tests to provide standardised spelling and reading scores. In addition, Lexia is used as a diagnostic tool with every pupil in year 7. These are used in conjunction with KS2 data and information from parents and teachers to identify pupil need and appropriate pathways and support. Normally, this will involve liaison with the junior school, as G Wright visits all junior feeder schools and collects information about pupils. Whole school reading tests are managed by M Griffiths. Year 7 and 8 pupils take their tests in September, while Year 9 pupils take them in July.

(For EAL learners who are recently arrived in the country (RAPs), refer to the EAL section of the LINC curriculum policy for appropriate provision. For pupils who are predominantly SEND learners, refer to the SEND policy for their provision.)

Provision

Provision for pupils with different literacy needs varies according to their need. Typically, the range of provision is as follows:

- Pupils who have a weakness in literacy on arrival in Years 7 and 8 (typically scoring below 70 in standardised reading scores) are usually placed in the N class and follow the Fresh Start programme run by the SEND department;
- Targeted pupils, as identified by The Senior Leader: SEND and inclusion (based on reading score and observation) are placed on the Toe by Toe programme;
- Pupils in 7E and above whose Standardised Scores are less than 90 but greater than 85 are assigned to the paired reading* programme in form time. Where appropriate, these pupils are also subject to an additional round of testing by the SENCO to ensure that no further barriers to learning are preventing them from improving their literacy;
- Lexia is used to screen all pupils on arrival in Year 7. The teaching groups who score poorly are targeted for weekly Lexia in-school sessions in their English lessons and encouraged (with parental liaison) to complete two additional sessions in their own time. Other pupils who score poorly but are in strongly-performing teaching groups, are given a Lexia licence and work with the English mentor.
- A target group of 'Red Readers' is identified by the data manager and shared with all staff from all subjects, using Class Charts. Red readers are defined as those whose standardised reading score is below 90 and is also more than 10 below their standardised spelling score.

Further more individualised tests are carried out with pupils who are identified as possibly having further needs, such as additional literacy or numeracy needs, EAL or SEND needs.

This information is input into SIMS and is available to all staff through SIMS or through the Class Charts seating plan software. In addition, new Year 7 pupils are asked to complete a 'best' piece of work on induction day, which is scanned and made available to staff through SIMS. (Note that it has not been possible to do this during the covid years).

Pupils who join the school during the year spend some time in the support base undergoing similar range of tests to identify their needs.

In addition, all teachers are encouraged to report concerns about potential undiagnosed weaknesses in reading and writing that may impact on wider pupil progress to the Senior Leader: SEND and inclusion as soon as possible. This is vital in making sure the Senior Leader: SEND and inclusion can gather evidence to demonstrate need should a child require additional support taking exams in KS4.

Wider reading action plan

All pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have a reading log, which is regularly checked by their English teacher, who will encourage them to read more challenging texts, including taking them to the library to choose appropriate reading matter. All pupils read silently for the first 10 minutes of each English lesson. For those who struggle to engage, smaller excerpts and structured reading tasks are provided.

All pupils in Year 7 receive a free book through the Book Buzz programme, along with structured tasks relating to it. The school also works, when opportunity arises, with external groups, such as Turner and Townsend and the National Literacy Trust, who provide extra reading material and activities.

Form time reading programme

It is recognised that the acquisition of tier two vocabulary is essential for pupils at Hall Green. The reading programme therefore follows a two-week cycle. In the first week, pupils are taught key tier two vocabulary from the article, using the SEEC (Select, Explain, Explore, Consolidate) model. In the second week, pupils read and discuss together the article, revisiting the vocabulary that was taught the previous week. Pupils have a vocabulary book where this tier two vocabulary is noted and pupils are encouraged to revisit frequently the vocabulary they have learned.

The Management of Literacy – Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leader with responsibility for literacy

A member of the Senior Leadership Team has overall responsibility for co-ordinating whole school literacy and ensures that Literacy is included in the SDP as part of the school cycle of development and review.

The whole school approach to literacy is co-ordinated by the Senior Lead working in conjunction with the Head of English, the Senior leader: SEND and Inclusion, and the Librarian.

The senior leader oversees communication with parents about the literacy policy and how parents can support their child in literacy.

Heads of Department

All teachers at the school are teachers of literacy. This means that Heads of Department have a responsibility for the teaching of literacy within their own subject areas, requiring them to be familiar with the whole school approach to literacy and how it impacts on their subject. The curriculum policy for each subject details how literacy issues specific to that subject are addressed.

All subject teachers have a responsibility to monitor the performance of pupils in their subject and report any concerns they may have about a pupil as a result of literacy barriers to the Senior Leader: SEND and inclusion via their Head of Department.

More detail on Heads of Departments' responsibilities is found in the cross-curricular provision section of this document.

English Department

The English Department plays a crucial role in developing pupils' literacy skills. The Head of Department for English ensures that relevant skills for literacy are taught to pupils at appropriate points in the curriculum, to support the speaking and listening, reading and writing literacy skills tasks that all departments make use of. See the core cross-curricular literacy skills below.

The Head of Department, supported by the teacher with responsibility for KS3 in the department and the Librarian (to be appointed), helps co-ordinate whole school approaches to the teaching of literacy to ensure consistency of approach.

Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring all pupils are taught the literacy skills for reading, writing and speaking and listening that will enable them to access the full curriculum;
- Ensuring teachers in the department monitor the performance of pupils in reading, writing and intervene when they fall behind expected progress;
- Ensuring that any concerns about the progress of pupils in reading, writing and speaking and listening are shared with the Senior leader: SEND and Inclusion on a regular basis;
- Ensuring the KS3 curriculum follows on from the KS2 curriculum in junior schools;
- Managing and directing the work of the library to support the whole school literacy policy.

The English Department supports the provision of literacy by maintaining the library as a welcoming and well-resourced site to allow pupils of all ranges of reading ability, including the weakest readers, to access fiction and a limited range of non-fiction.

The English department induct new Year 7 pupils into the use of the library and managing library bookings to enable KS3 pupils to borrow books.

Other duties carried out by the English Department include:

- Running the library ambassador programme and the form time rota for attending the library;
- Reading and writing competitions, such as Readathon;
- Running the English Department reading for pleasure programme aimed at promoting reading fluency for all abilities;
- Leading the form time reading programme
- Guiding pupils in the choice of more challenging texts.

- Developing pupils' oracy skills. This includes GCSE presentations and at least one assessment per year at KS3 which is oral or drama-based.

Senior leader: SEND and Inclusion

The Senior leader: SEND and Inclusion takes responsibility for promoting the reading and writing of pupils identified through the assessment process described above.

Responsibilities include:

- Managing the reading assessment process for pupils for KS3 pupils;
- Ensuring that all pupils go through the testing and screening process, particularly those absent when the tests were carried out or new to the school;
- Carrying out further diagnostic testing (DRA, WRAT, BPVS and DASH) when appropriate, for example, where professionals believe pupils may be using coping strategies to mask weaknesses in literacy;
- Communicating with the rest of the staff about pupils' literacy abilities;
- Delivery of the Fresh Start curriculum for literacy at KS3;
- Management of the Toe by Toe programme;
- Management of the Word Wasp programme;
- Management of the paired reading* in form time arrangements
- Responsibility for the literacy curriculum for Foundation learners at KS4.

Head of House (G Wright)

Liaises with junior schools and parents to ensure the school is provided with sufficient information about pupils' achievements in literacy.

Form Tutor

The Form tutor plays a key role in the development of literacy of his/her tutees. The Form Tutor should be alert to any difficulties the tutees have with literacy and report their concerns to the Senior Leader: SEND and inclusion as soon as possible.

He/she should play a key role in encouraging and promoting wider reading. This is done in various ways:

- Run the form time reading programme;
- Run silent reading time in form time once a week (in addition to the form time reading programme);
- Oversee paired reading* in form, as directed by The Senior Leader: SEND and Inclusion;
- Model reading for pleasure.

Subject Teacher

The teaching of literacy is the responsibility of all staff. As a consequence, the subject teacher should:

- be alert to any difficulties his/her pupils have with literacy, and report their concerns to the Senior Leader: SEND and inclusion as soon as possible;
- know the levels of literacy and standardised reading scores of pupils in the class;

- make use of standardised reading scores and seating plans to make sure weaker readers benefit from sitting next to stronger readers;
- use whole school literacy teaching strategies advocated by the teaching and learning group;
- adapt teaching and learning activities to promote literacy in their subject (as documented in the subject curriculum policy);
- develop tier 3 vocabulary appropriate to their subject and highlight key tier 2 vocabulary as it comes up.

Office Staff

Entering pupil data into SIMS and scanning and allocating a ‘best’ copy of pupils’ work to their SIMS file.

Support Base Manager

Carries out the initial reading age assessments of pupils who join the school midway through the year, and liaises with the Senior Leader: SEND and inclusion to ensure appropriate testing takes place.

Core Expectations

The aim of the core expectations is to provide a consistent approach to teaching key skills of literacy to pupils. This encourages the reinforcement of key literacy skills for pupils and encourages pupils to transfer literacy skills from one area of the curriculum to another.

Presentation of Work

Common policy on the presentation of work

- Underline title and date;
- Write neatly;
- Use blue or black ink.

Speaking and Listening

Precise Formal Polite – full sentences and Standard English.
Use the concept of the academic register continuum.

Marking

The following literacy marking symbols are used:

Marking symbol	Meaning
Sp.	Spelling error
p.	punctuation error
//	New paragraph
©	Capital letter

To be developed . . .

- Toolkit of Literacy Strategies;
- Appointment of a librarian (using Covid catch-up funding);
- Further activities to promote oracy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Departments need to show that they are applying the literacy policy. Evidence could be:

- How the department addresses literacy needs within their subject within the department curriculum policy;
- How the department intends to develop literacy in their subject within department development plan;
- Literacy teaching specified in schemes of work;
- Reference to literacy teaching in departmental minutes;
- Reference to literacy teaching in lesson observation;
- Evidence of literacy teaching from departmental book trawls.

Whole school: The impact of the policy will be evaluated by the senior team based on assessment data, book trawls and lesson observations, as well as year on year changes in standardised reading scores.