Literacy Policy

Reviewed by Committee: 10th May 2018
Ratified by Full Governing Body: N/A
Next due for review: Summer 2019

Literacy Policy

Literacy across the curriculum

Language is the prime medium through which students learn and literacy underpins the school curriculum by developing students' abilities to speak, listen, read and write for a wide range of purposes, using language to learn and communicate, to think, explore and organise. Helping students to express themselves clearly orally and in writing enhances and enriches teaching and learning in all subjects. All departments and all teachers have a crucial role to play in supporting students' literacy development.

In the context of this document the term 'literacy' is used to embrace all aspects of language development – reading, writing and speaking and listening. All teachers are teachers of literacy. As such, the staff at Blacon High School are committed to developing literacy skills in all of our students because it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum. The key principles are to develop consistent approaches to teaching and learning in literacy across departments and to build increased awareness of the skills, knowledge and understanding that students could be expected to bring to lessons. The core principles of this are as follows:-

- Students need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects.
- Reading helps students to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience.
- Writing helps us to sustain and order thought.
- Language helps students 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 students' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour. It also allows them to learn independently and all this is empowering for the student.

Aims

The aims of this policy document are to:

- Support students' learning in all subjects by helping teachers to be clear about the ways in which their work with students contributes to the development of students' communication skills.
- Develop a shared understanding between all staff of the role of language in students' learning and how work in different subjects can contribute to and benefit from the development of students' ability to communicate effectively.
- Recognise that language is central to students' sense of identity, belonging and growth.
- Raise students' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards.
- Develop students' confidence and self-expression.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the students' standards of achievement and assessment in speaking and listening, writing and reading, and the identification of any areas of strength and weakness.

We will:

1. Identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' work from across the school.
2. Identify progression in the main forms of reading, writing, speaking and listening undertaken in each department and strengthen teaching plans accordingly.
3. Plan to include the teaching of objectives to support literacy in own subject area.
4. Review this literacy policy annually.

All faculties now have in their RAP plans subject specific statements regarding reading and writing strategies for both KS3 and KS4. Faculties have also submitted the developments in their areas with regards to talk and these developments have formed part of the new 'Talk for Learning' policy (April 2016).

SPaG also remains a key priority for all areas. SPaG concerns are now reported on through SIMS at each data catch and interventions put in place in response to any such concerns.

Whilst reading and writing are now firmly embedded across the curriculum and this has been recognised by our recent Ofsted (February 2016), subject areas are continuing to refine these aspects of literacy. The aims of reading and writing remain the same.

Writing, particularly non-fiction writing

Many lessons include and depend on written communication. We want our students to develop increasing confidence and competence in writing so that they are able to:

- Write in a widening variety of forms for different purposes e.g. to interpret, evaluate, explain, analyse and explore.
- Develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader using wide-ranging and technical vocabulary and an effective style, organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently.
- Present their writing clearly using accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting.
- Apply word processing conventions and understand the principles of authoring multi-media text.

To improve standards of written work across the curriculum, it is important that we provide for co-ordination across subjects to recognise and reinforce students' language skills. We will do this across the school by:

- Making clear the connections between students' writing across the curriculum by teaching subject specific text types.
- Using the modelling process to make explicit to students *how* to write.
- Being clear about audience and purpose.
- Providing opportunities for a range of writing including sustained writing.
- Drawing attention to purpose and audience and writing for different audiences.
- Identifying the differences between Standard English and non-standard forms of the language.
- Recognising the appropriate form for written responses.

<u>Writing non-fiction</u>

<u>Each subject area:</u>

- Teaches students how to write in ways that are specific to that department's subject needs and to demonstrate explicitly the sequence for writing and modelling writing for a key **<u>text type</u>** within the subject.
- Liaises with the English department to help decide when the generic **<u>text types</u>** are best introduced in Year 7.
- Adapts and develops writing frames for different classroom contexts and purposes.
- Builds expertise in the use of the sequence for writing though every teacher.
- Subject areas have identified the common **<u>text types</u>** used on their RAP plans and also on the front cover of student exercise books.

<u>Reading</u>

Students need 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 and focus on teaching students 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.

Each subject area:

- Uses available data on students' reading levels in order to make informed choices about appropriate texts and to plan appropriate support for students in order that they may successfully access texts.
- Has identified reading strategies used in their area.
- Takes opportunities to demonstrate pleasure in reading.
- Makes opportunities both in lessons and in tutorial times for students and teachers to share their reading experiences.
- Provides planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to:
    - Read and follow written instructions.
    - Read and engage with narratives of events or activities.
    - Follow up their interests and read texts of varying lengths.
    - Question and challenge printed information and views.
    - Read with understanding descriptions of processes, structures and mechanisms.
    - Read and explore ideas and theories.
    - Learn how to sift and select, and take notes from text and read to locate and relocate information.
    - Learn how to scan for overall meaning and scan for key points, words and phrases.
    - Use reading to research and investigate from printed words and moving images ICT texts.
- Subject areas have identified the common **reading strategies** used on their RAP plans and also on the front cover of student exercise books.

SPaG

Each curriculum area:

- Concentrates on the marking of high-frequency and key subject words taking into account the differing abilities of students and has their own specific subject approach.
- Tests or revises high frequency words regularly.
- Commits to the appropriate marking of punctuation errors.
- SPAG concerns have now been highlighted for all year groups and subject areas are identifying intervention taking place

Speaking and listening

In order to improve student speaking and listening skills we need to focus on the following:-
Every teacher:

- Provides planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to engage in purposeful talk, both formally and informally.
- Plans for talk considering pace and timing so that purposeful talk is maintained.
- Plans appropriate listening activities
- Plans regular opportunities to speak and listen in the following contexts:
    - In pairs with a working partner
    - In small groups with opportunities to take on the roles of chair or scribe.
    - With the teacher or another adult
    - In whole class discussions
    - Presentations to a wider audience.
- Lead for Literacy is running a 'Talk for Learning' focus group with staff volunteers to develop techniques to improve 'Talk' in the classroom and to run these strategies whole school.
- In the context of speaking and listening, some of the following activities should take place:
    - Exploring and describing events, activities and problems, exploring and developing ideas with others.
    - Reporting back to a wider audience in order to consolidate ideas and understanding.
    - Asking questions as well as answering them.
    - Speculating, hypothesising and imagining.
    - Planning, organising and reviewing activities.
    - Investigating and solving problems collaboratively.
    - Evaluating experiences and reflecting on learning.
    - Talking at length and adopting the 'expert' role.

o   Working with key words and definitions.

Method:

A combination of the following approaches will be used, as appropriate, across the curriculum at KS3 and KS4 to address the 3 school targets for improved literacy as laid out in this school literacy policy.

- Expect high standard of presentation in students' finished writing.
- Provide good models of particular kinds of writing.
- Provide dictionaries, glossaries and lists of appropriate subject vocabulary and encourage students to use them.
- Display key words in classrooms and use these in lessons.
- Use structure or writing frames when extended writing is set, as appropriate.
- Use sort cards or 'scaffold' the work when extended writing is set, as appropriate.
- Share best practice with colleagues in department meetings.
- Ensure Key Stage 3 students have a dedicated key word page in each book for recording subject specific vocabulary.
- When marking work, teachers should draw students' attention to common spelling mistakes and subject specific mistakes, and ensure students take action to learn the correct spellings.
- Have a marking policy in each Faculty that supports Literacy as well as following the whole school approach to literacy marking.

Outcomes:-

Long term

- Improved writing skills embedded at KS3 to enable successful outcomes at KS4 across the subject areas.
- Confident readers of a range of texts.

Short Term

- Books of students will be audited by the Heads of Faculty and also SLT as part of the half termly marking audit. This will have a literacy focus.
- Align, wherever possible, the teaching of subject-specific text types to follow the broad introduction by the English department, so that students see how types of writing are applied and adapted in different subjects.
- Use the sequence for writing across all subject areas.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will make use of available data to assess the standards of students' literacy.

Monitoring:

- Sampling work – both students' work and departmental schemes.
- Observation – student pursuit and literacy teaching in lesson observations.
- Line management meetings.
- Student interviews.
- Review of development plans.
- Sharing of good practice.
- When assessing students' work across the curriculum, oral contributions and listening skills are assessed alongside their reading and writing.
- When setting writing tasks the key features of language are made explicit to students.
- Give guidance on how to achieve the short-term targets set. For example, whilst "improve your spelling" is unhelpful and vague, the identification of a particular spelling error e.g. doubling of letters before adding -ing is specific and presents the student with a target which can be addressed.
- Create opportunities for students to reflect on the quality of their own work and for peer assessment.

Bibliography

Use of Language in the National Curriculum (Nate, 1995)

The National Literacy Strategy, Framework for Teaching, (DfEE, March 1998)

Version Control

Number	Update	Date	By whom
	SPaG concerns reporting, page 3.	25/04/2017	Rachel Thomas
1.0	Policy approved by relevant committee	11/05/2017	Curriculum and Standards
	Policy approved by full Governing Body	22/06/2017	Governing Body
1.1	Aims, page 2.	03/05/2018	Rachel Thomas
2.0	Policy approved by relevant committee. FGB approval not required.	10/05/2018	Curriculum, Safeguarding and Equality