

Saint John Fisher Performing Arts College

Literacy Policy

Philosophy

The definition of literacy should be taken to include the key skills of reading, writing and oral communication that enable students to access different areas of the curriculum. There is an expectation that all students should communicate effectively. This includes their ability to apply their reading and writing skills successfully and to speak articulately in a range of contexts and for different purposes.

At Saint John Fisher we recognise the need for all students to have the requisite literacy and communication skills to be employable and to be effective in that employment. 'When young people compete for jobs and enter the workplace, they will be expected to communicate precisely and effectively' (*White Paper para.4.50*). Literacy development is inextricably connected to the development of the whole person, and is linked to their perception of themselves and their place in society. We also recognise that Literacy is a shared responsibility and that all teachers should:

demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject. (part 1, point 3 – Teachers' Standards DfE 2011)

The success of this policy will be measured by the impact of the teaching of literacy and the outcomes across the range of the school's provision. The evidence gathered through departmental and whole-school monitoring will inform the overall evaluation of students' achievement, the quality of teaching and the impact of leadership and management on raising standards. Departments are required to intervene to provide support for improving students' literacy, especially those students who are at risk of underachieving.

Aims of the Policy

1. To raise the standard of literacy;
2. To enable pupils to express and communicate meaning in spoken language, listening to and interpreting what others say and matching style and response to audience, context and purpose;
3. To ensure students with lower than expected reading ages are taught to read effectively;
4. To provide pupils with a range of relevant and purposeful opportunities to develop their ability to read, understand and engage with, various types of text for enjoyment and learning;
5. To enable children to communicate effectively when using written language: making and shaping text appropriately according to context, purpose, reader or audience.

Effective Practice

- Staff must refer to the Marking Policy and use the literacy codes when marking to show a consistent approach.
- There must be clear evidence in students' books of progression over time in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Literacy teaching and the application of literacy skills will be a focus across the school and in all subjects.

- Teachers must use a range of questions to draw out students' understanding of texts in depth, where appropriate. Teachers need to develop students' skills in applying questions to texts and probing to gain a full understanding.
- Time in lessons must be allocated so that punctuation and grammar can be practised and errors corrected by students.
- Teachers must plan opportunities for students to practise speaking and teach the skills of speaking effectively in an explicit way.
- Staff must explicitly refer to the fortnightly literacy focus in lessons.
- Staff must help children develop reading skills: students are expected to select, analyse and synthesise information from what they have read and to comment on the thematic, structural and linguistic elements of texts, where appropriate.
- Opportunities must be provided for individual reading, for example in Tutor Time and in LRB lessons and time given to discuss what they have read. Reading material should be targeted at the right level. The school will provide information on students' reading ages.
- Where students are working below the levels expected for their age and are finding it difficult to master basic elements of spelling, punctuation and grammar extra support should be sought by the class teacher, either at department level or by specialist teachers.

Questions to use when observing 'Literacy' in any subject

- Are key terms and vocabulary clear and explored with students to ensure that they recognise and understand them? Are they related to similar words or the root from which they are derived?
- Do teachers identify any particular features of key terms and help students with strategies for remembering how to spell them or why they might be capitalised (e.g. 'Parliament' in history)?
- Do teachers remind students of important core skills – for example how to skim a text to extract the main elements of its content quickly or to scan a text for information about a key word or topic?
- Do teachers make expectations clear before students begin a task – for example on the conventions of layout in a formal letter or on the main features of writing persuasively?
- Do teachers reinforce the importance of accuracy in spoken or written language – for example, emphasising the need for correct sentence punctuation in one-sentence answers or correcting 'we was...' in students' speech?
- Do teachers identify when it is important to use Standard English and when other registers or dialects may be used – for example, in a formal examination answer and when recreating dialogue as part of narrative writing?
- Do teachers help students with key elements of literacy as they support them in lessons? Do they point out spelling, grammar or punctuation issues as they look at work around the class?
- Does teachers' marking support key literacy points? For example, are key subject terms always checked for correct spelling?
- Do teachers refer to the literacy focus of that fortnight?
- Does the marking comply with the whole school marking policy for literacy?

This may seem an exhaustive set of expectations for teachers whose main role is to teach subjects other than English. However, to students who have weaknesses in their basic Literacy, there can never be enough support and consolidation to ensure that they avoid basic errors.

MARKING FOR LITERACY GUIDELINES

CORRECTING SPELLING ERRORS

- Spelling errors should be indicated in the margin with a 'sp' code. It is recognised that at times it may be more appropriate for teachers to correct spellings.
- Generally, the teacher will allow time, either in a lesson or as homework, for students to correct spelling errors themselves using their back of book spelling sheets (BOBs).
- It is recognised that it may not always be appropriate for every spelling error in a piece of writing to be corrected. Corrections may be limited to subject specific key words and words it is felt students 'ought' to know.
- Teaching staff should remain sensitively aware when correcting the work of students with a Specific Learning Disability, in line with the guidelines in their IEP.
- Departments should devise their own spelling correction strategies e.g. students may be encouraged to write out correct spellings and learn them using 'Look-Cover-Say-Write-Check' method.

CORRECTING GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

- Punctuation and grammatical errors should be indicated in the margin with the correct code (when appropriate) and the phrase underlined.
- It is recognised that it may not always be appropriate for every punctuation or grammar error in a piece of writing to be corrected.
- Teaching staff should remain sensitively aware when correcting the work of students with a Specific Learning Disability, in line with the guidelines in their IEPs.
- Departments should devise their own follow-up strategies for improving punctuation and grammar. An example might be including a literacy comment and/or objective when marking pieces of work.

Marking for Literacy:

Your teacher will mark your work using the following code to highlight any spelling, punctuation or grammar mistakes in your work:

Symbol	Meaning
C	Incorrect or missing capital letter
P	Missing punctuation
//	New paragraph
SP	Spelling error
WW	Wrong word used

T	Wrong tense used
NFS	Not a full sentence

- If you see **SP** for spelling mistake it is your responsibility to fill in your back of book spelling sheet (BOBS) for homework and to practise the spelling.
- You should also be checking and proof reading your own work at the end of a piece of work. Your teacher may also ask you to correct your errors using a green pen.