



## Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

# Literacy Policy

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Date ratified: March 2023  
Next Review Date: March 2024  
Version Number: 2

To be literate is to possess the functional skills required to actively participate in education, work and in society.

'...teachers in a secondary school need to understand that literacy is a key issue regardless of the subject taught. It is an important element in their effectiveness as a subject teacher. National teaching standards ... require teachers to “**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.**”

(Ofsted, *Improving Literacy in secondary schools: a shared responsibility*, April 2013)

### The RWBA Literacy Planning Objectives

Learning through talk:

- to clarify and embrace ideas;
- active listening to understand;
- talking and thinking together;
- widening vocabulary.

Learning through writing:

- ✎ using writing as a tool for thought;
- ✎ structuring and organising writing;
- ✎ developing clear and appropriate expression.

Learning through texts:

- 📖 developing research and study skills;
- 📖 reading for meaning;
- 📖 reading for pleasure;
- 📖 understanding how texts work.

## Whole School Disciplinary Literacy

### Rationale

RWBA recognises that:

- *Literacy supports learning. Pupils 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 leads to improved self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. It allows pupils to learn independently. It is empowering.*
- *Better literacy raises pupils' attainment in all subjects.*

*(Ofsted, Improving Literacy in secondary schools: a shared responsibility, April 2013)*

In the 2021 student survey on Literacy, the student body responded positively in regard to the teaching of literacy skills in lessons, giving each question a score of 3 or 4 out of 5. Students said they took part in the Literacy calendar, enjoyed reading and were given regular opportunities to develop the various literacy skills.

The Literacy audit 2021 identified that whilst subject departments felt they were addressing many of the requirements for successfully embedding literacy teaching, there was little consistency between individual teachers, some misunderstandings about what literacy referred to, a lack of time to dedicate to developing literacy within each subject, and a lack of awareness of interventions or possible interventions. The focus now thus needs to be on raising staff confidence, knowledge, and accountability.

The 2021 Literacy Deep Dive highlighted the need for more support in SEND and EAL literacy instruction, a focus on vocabulary and reading skills, and a more consistent approach to literacy whole school.

### Vision and Aims

RWBA aims to have literacy at the heart of learning: confident literacy skills provide pupils with the language they need to ensure academic success and success in their lives beyond school. The teaching and development of these skills does not occur naturally, nor is it confined to English: rather it spans the entire curriculum, across all subject disciplines.

We aim to equip all staff with the awareness, knowledge and confidence to deliver these vitally important skills in a way that is beneficial to their own subject discipline and to the whole academic development of each student that they teach. Teachers should understand the different ways in which students may struggle with their literacy, be able to identify what support they need or who to work with to do this and create meaningful and robust interventions that will ensure eventual success in their subject.

Student feedback on literacy should continue to be positive and reflective of an attitude that recognises the importance of literacy in their lives both in and beyond school. Improved literacy skills should be noticeable in their written and spoken work. For those with reading and spelling ages below their age, we want to see that gap lessen as their progress through each year.

### Policy Objectives:

- Recognise the potential of all pupils.
- Establish a cohesive and consistent approach to all areas of literacy.
- Raise literacy attainment at every level of ability.

- Equip all teachers with the necessary resources and knowledge to effectively embed and teach the literacy skills in their subject areas.
- Devise whole school strategies and systems to further develop the instruction of reading, writing, oracy and vocabulary.

### Monitoring and Measurement of Progress

- Marking and Feedback policy, including utilising the standardised literacy marking codes for SPaG.
- GL Assessment Reading Age and Spelling Age scores.
- Q&A walks
- In-department and whole school book scrutiny. Scan a sample selection across a class, subject or the curriculum, taking note of patterns in literacy strengths and weaknesses.
- HoDs to undertake deep dives into Literacy as a whole and the various branches that stem from this within their subject to identify areas of strength and best practice, and areas for further development.
- Monitor the reading diet of pupils and provide opportunities for them to read more, read more broadly, and read more challenging material where appropriate (Library, iLearn, English).
- SEND interventions: phonics instruction when possible, KS3 reading groups, Nurture, TA led targeted intervention according to need in oracy, reading and writing. RWBA is currently on a pathway to achieving accreditation as a Dyslexia Friendly School.
- Year 7 transition Best Pieces of Work to highlight issues with handwriting and spelling.

### Key Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Whole School Literacy (V Neeves) and the Reading Team (S Gunstone, A Wilson, D Barbour, A Harris)	These roles will oversee the development of Literacy across the school, working as consultants for staff and creating opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills within and beyond the curriculum.
Senior Leadership Team	All members of SLT will take an active role in supporting the overall initiative.
Heads of Department	HoDs will both lead and support literacy development within their subject discipline.
Associate Lead for Diversity, Equality and Personal Development (D Storey), Heads of Year, Tutor teams	These teams will deliver a varied and robust programme that is founded in the consistent development of literacy. They will participate in Word of the Week and other literacy focused projects and encourage reading for pleasure.
Heads of House	HoHs will support literacy initiatives in inter-house competitions and in assemblies.
English Department	The English Department will take on the majority of the responsibility for teaching basic literacy skills. English teachers will also serve as literacy consultants to advise and support where needed.
Learning Support	The Learning Support department will identify pupils with literacy difficulties, establish strategies to aid teachers in

	supporting said pupils, and provide targeted intervention or tuition alongside the wider curriculum. The department will also provide resources and in-class support for teachers.
Teaching Staff	All staff have a responsibility to plan and teach literacy skills in a way that is relevant, meaningful, and supportive.
Student Parliament	The SP will serve as a voice on how well this policy is being implemented and to assist in the further development of literacy across the school.
Head of Transition (M Cullen)	Responsible for forging links between feeder primary schools and RWBA. This includes, collating 'best' pieces of work and working with Head of Literacy and the schools to map out a sequenced transition between literacy as a primary subject and the fragmented secondary curriculum.

## Whole School Strategies for Supporting Literacy

### Vocabulary Development

- Over half the teachers surveyed by the Oxford Language Report (2019) said that 'at least 40% of their pupils lacked the vocabulary to access their learning.'
- 'Children with a poor vocabulary at age five are four times more likely to struggle with reading in adulthood and three times more likely to have mental health issues.' (Language as a Child Wellbeing Indicator, 2017)
- '62% [of teachers] surveyed believe that children who are moving to secondary school in September will struggle more with their speaking and understanding, in comparison to those who started secondary school before the Covid-19 pandemic.' (Speaking Up for the Covid Generation, July 2021)
- 'Pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum.' (DfE, 2014)
- The majority of the Literacy Working Group identified that an effective grasp of a more academic vocabulary was something that prevented students from achieving their potential.

The benefits of developing our students' vocabulary are clearly defined in current research but are also recognised in the initial findings of the RWBA Literacy Working Group 2021 and the Literacy Deep Dive undertaken in Autumn 2021.

The aims of this policy are to move RWBA towards being a word-rich school, where pupils are empowered by wide vocabularies that give them the foundations for success across all subject disciplines. No student should be held back by a restricted vocabulary and the consequences that ensue from being unable to join in the conversation, whether academic, social or professional.

### The RWBA Vocabulary Road Map

The roadmap for improving vocabulary has been designed using the SEEC model by Alex Quigley. Departments select the key Tier 2 and 3 words for learning in each unit, then teachers guide students in understanding, exploring and finally using each word in context. This will allow students to broaden and deepen their vocabulary, enabling a smoother pathway to success in their academic career and beyond.

## Word of the Week

A five-year cycle of grouped words that aim to develop pupil understanding of the etymology, construction and meaning of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary. The programme is delivered by tutors during iLearn time and has links where possible to the wider iLearn programme and RWBA values. WotW follows the SEEC model of teaching vocabulary and the Frayer model for exploring new vocabulary.

## Reading

- All pupils should be encouraged to: 'engage with texts that challenge preconceptions and develop understanding beyond the personal and immediate.' ('English: curriculum opportunities', Secondary National Curriculum until 2014)

## Reciprocal Reading and Explicit Use of the Reading Strategies

This strategy is regularly used in Primary schools and aims to develop pupils' ability to read independently and effectively by focusing on the four main reading strategies (questioning, clarifying, summarising and predicting). With Reciprocal Reading, the teacher models and guides pupils' reading, before gradually withdrawing their support. By returning to this strategy, teachers across all subject disciplines can model and guide their pupils in reading like a Historian/Scientist/Geographer/Mathematician etc.

The English department will begin using the Reciprocal Reading approach regularly during the academic year 2022-23, with other subject areas trialing the approach and building into their planning where relevant.

## iLearn Guided Reading Programme

The iLearn Guided Reading programme was implemented in September 2022. Each tutor group are provided with a challenging, age appropriate reading book and students enjoy the process of reading as they listen to their tutors read aloud. Tutors have been trained in modelling this process and engaging students through questioning.

The aims of the programme are to:

- To develop the reading diet of all our students.
- To develop the reading for pleasure culture across the school.
- To position ourselves as positive reading role models.
- To encourage discussion about books our students are reading, have read, or want to read.
- To model the active engagement in reading texts.
- To facilitate the development of the key reading strategies to improve comprehension.
- Develop the reading fluency of all our students.
- Promote independence in reading.
- Exposure to a variety of viewpoints, perspectives, and cultures.
- Further develop our culture of classroom talk.
- Develop our students active listening skills.
- Broaden our students' vocabulary.
- Encourage all students to participate and form opinions.
- Promote the Bassett Values through reading and oracy.

The Tutor's role includes:

1. To model and 'think aloud' the reading process:

- Explicitly use reading strategies

- **activate prior knowledge/recall/predict**
- **question and clarify**

- make inferences (reading between the lines)
  - re-read/ skim and scan
  - visualise
  - synthesise
  - **summarise**
- Demonstrate reading fluency:
- Expression and volume
  - Phrasing: Explain known 'sayings' (e.g. He let the cat out the bag) or reread a confusing sentence (e.g. The old man the boat.)
  - Smoothness and pace
  - Bring in relevant background knowledge
2. To monitor comprehension
3. To promote the enjoyment of reading for pleasure as a reading role model:
- Talk about the book with the group: what do they like/not like?
  - Make links to other things you have read.
  - Invite students into a conversation about their own reading.
  - Present themselves as a professional who is word-rich, widely read, empathetic, and interested in the world around them.

### Learning Support Interventions for SEND, low reading/spelling age

A number of literacy SEND interventions and groups are run to support those students with specific needs. RWBA uses Accelerated Reader Star Reading tests, the NGRT (reading age), and NGST (spelling age) to determine where support is needed. From there students may: work on their reading skills with IDL Reading (and spelling) Recovery programme, be placed in a TA run reading for pleasure group, registered in a timetabled Nurture group, receive targeted intervention during their Library lessons, or be signed up to the RNIB *Bookshare* programme (diagnosed blind, dyslexic, ASD or ADHD only).

Each academic year interventions are reviewed by the SEND and Literacy teams and adapted as necessary. New approaches and programme are trialled regularly to ensure interventions are effective and personalised. RWBA is currently exploring further options for more specialised Phonics interventions for those students reading at Reception and Year 1 level.

### Dyslexia Friendly School

RWBA is on a pathway to becoming a Dyslexia Friendly School meaning that we are working to demonstrate high quality education for dyslexic individuals. By Autumn 2022, all staff will have received training and support to ensure that they understand the needs of their dyslexic students and lessons are properly resourced to ensure all students can access their teaching.

### The Library

We want the library to be a central part of every student's experience at RWBA. In addition to the suite of desktop computers and study tables, there is a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, and reference texts available to browse and borrow. Students are encouraged to enjoy the library and recognise its worth as a place of study.

Our Librarian, Debbie Barbour, is integral to the reading journey of all students. Beyond running the Library, DBa's role includes: supporting the Accelerated Reader programme, liaising with teachers to provide additional research or curriculum support for lessons, subject specific wider reading lists, working with students to assess their reading diet and

find new books to read.

### Library Lessons

KS3 pupils will have one English lesson a fortnight timetabled, which is dedicated to curriculum linked literacy work. This may include vocabulary and oracy work, reading tasks, writing activities. Library lessons are a priority for learning support to allow for targeted intervention in basic literacy skills run by both the class teacher and a TA.

Half an hour is dedicated to independent reading time during library lessons. Teachers and the Librarian undertake 'listen-ins', tracking students' fluency and reading progress. This information helps inform where further intervention is needed from choosing a more suitable book, to phonics support.

### The Literacy Calendar

A calendar of events that encourage pupils to enjoy and value their literacy skills. This includes (but is not limited to): Drop Everything and Read, Speaking and Listening Active Development days, World Book Day, Carnegie Shadow scheme, a wide range of writing and reading competitions, and in school House competitions.

### Transition

There is ever developing liaison between RWBA and some of our feeder primary school within the MAT. There is a growing need for a focus on how students are supported at all Key Stages to ensure their literacy development is enabling them access to all areas of the curriculum.

As students enter into year 7, they ideally need to be confident with reading to learn and ready to adapt their literacy skills to the different subject disciplines. As they progress through from KS3 to KS5, RWBA aims to support these skills to enable students to become critical learners that can switch to academic code in both writing and speaking to express themselves effectively, and read through a variety of lenses according to the subject discipline, text type, and purpose.

At the start of Year 7, students undertake an iLearn task that represents their 'Best Piece of Work'. This is attached to each student's Echo portrait and used to identify issues with spelling, handwriting, grammar, and other such basic literacy skills. Interventions are then out in place dependent on need and TA or teacher availability. This may be structured in lesson support, part of their library lesson, or Nurture. Once students have made expected progress, interventions will cease.

### Literacy CPD for Staff

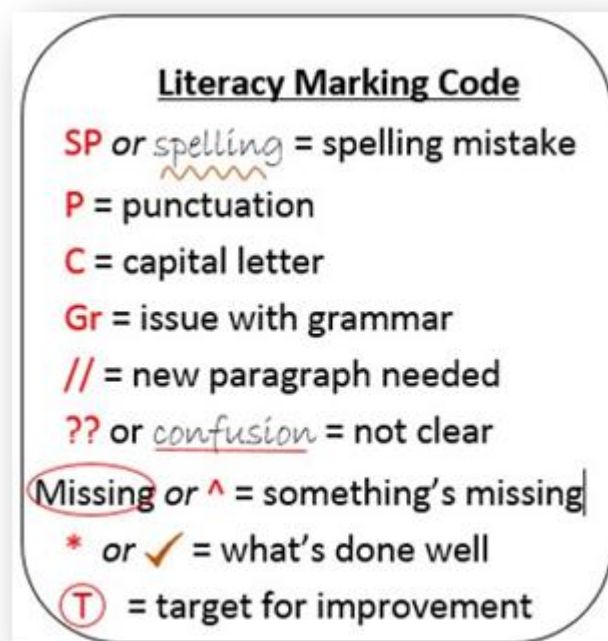
Bitesize training will be provided for all staff. In addition to this, staff or departments may request personalised training in any areas of literacy. This could be anything from revision of grammar for teachers, to how to structure talk tasks, to facilitating effective writing, and supporting reading.

### Literacy Feedback and iACT

All subjects will mark work for literacy. This can be carried out in several ways:

- Highlighting SPaG errors alongside subject content marking (identify up to five mistakes only using the marking codes) for students to correct.
- In lesson verbal feedback: prompts and praise as students work.

- Detailed SPaG feedback as one stage of marking assessed work (such as coursework and where appropriate).
- Detailed written feedback on their wider literacy. This includes but is not restricted: SPaG, style, sentence structure, connectives, vocabulary choice, cohesion and clarity of written or spoken work.
- Dialogue with the teacher or TA, addressing literacy errors and providing targeted guidance to improve. For example, instruction on how to nominalise verbs in academic writing.
- Whole class instruction on collective literacy errors or misunderstandings.
- Providing directed whole class or personalised iACT tasks (and time) that focus on correcting and/or developing literacy.
- Self and peer marking of literacy. This includes the expectation that pupils will proofread work before handing it in to be assessed.



### Purpose of Marking Literacy

- To provide immediate and constructive feedback to support their literacy skills in all subjects.
- To enable students to improve their written and spoken communication.
- To identify areas for further support and instruction in literacy.
- To encourage students to recognise the importance of good literacy.
- To encourage students to be active in their personal development of literacy.