

Literacy Policy 2017

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How do we define literacy?

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We therefore define literacy in its broadest form, encapsulating under one umbrella term the following areas:

- Speaking & Listening (including Thinking and Questioning)
- Writing
- Reading

These are to be delivered & reinforced throughout the curriculum and by all teachers and classroom support staff.

Why is literacy important?

Literacy is a basic need in modern society. 'The recent White Paper [states that]: 'When young people compete for jobs and enter the workplace, they will be expected to communicate precisely and effectively.' (Para. 4.50).' – *Reading, Writing & Communicating*, (Ofsted 2011).

Furthermore,

- 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.

Our commitment

Samuel Ward Academy is committed to achieving the following ambitious targets:

- Age related reading scores for all pupils regardless of ability
- 100% Level 5+ in English at KS3
- 100% 5A*-C with English and Maths at GCSE
- 100% 3 levels of progress in English KS2-4

Our strategy

1. **Leadership:** The Academy will have a named literacy co-ordinator and a SLT link to ensure that literacy has a high profile on an ongoing basis.
2. **A Literacy Steering Group** will be created to provide direction for the Academy. This will consist of the above mentioned people and, in addition, the SENco, Head of English and any other interested party. They will meet at least bi-annually to agree and monitor the annual action plan for literacy.
3. **Primary Liaison:** The Academy will ascertain the literacy level (and needs) of the pupils currently in year 6 prior to their joining Samuel Ward. This will enable any necessary setting/adaptations to the curriculum to take place.
4. **Testing Reading & Writing:** Pupils will be tested on entry to the Academy to establish a baseline for their reading skills. A baseline for writing will be taken from their SATs results in Year 6. Thereafter, reading will be tested twice a year in years 7 & 8. Pupils will then be re-tested prior to transition into year 9 and again into year 12 to ensure that they have adequate literacy levels to access the reading material appropriate to their qualifications. Writing will be tested as part of the normal progress check cycle within English.
5. **Measuring Impact:** The progress made by pupils with regard to literacy will be measured by comparing the results of the reading tests as outlined above and by tracking current grades in English at every progress check. Here the English team will need to provide a reading and writing level twice a term. Progress within reading and writing in English should be measured for individuals and groups of pupils. In the case of the latter, the Average Point Score (APS) in English for any group will provide the easiest and most accurate measurement of progress.

An additional indicator of the Academy's literacy levels will be the percentage of pupils on track to meet the expected standard of three levels of progress KS2-4 and the more ambitious four levels of progress over the same time period.

Reporting on the progress of pupils in their literacy will take place in accordance with the Academy's Self Evaluation Cycle.

6. **Intervention:** The Academy recognises that all pupils will need some form of literacy intervention to move them on. It therefore has a three tiered approach to intervention:

- **Wave 1:** Quality first teaching by the class teacher/learning coach in the context of normal lessons. **Appendix 1** gives some guidance for doing this.
- **Wave 2:** **Small group intervention co-ordinated by the SENco. These will be of fixed duration, have specific targets and will mean that pupils may need to be withdrawn from Meeting Time, Enrichment or lessons. For pupils reaching the end of year 8 and not having yet met the national average for learners at that age, Wave 2 intervention might also involve additional English lessons in year 9.**
- **Wave 3:** One to One intervention for the weakest pupils. These are likely to be on-going and will need to be co-ordinated in such a way as to release pupils from curriculum time elsewhere. These will be co-ordinated by the SENco.

Pupils engaged in Wave 2 & 3 activities will also continue to be supported through Wave 1.

The teaching of phonics etc. will take place in Wave 2 and 3.

7. Careful identification of appropriate texts

- Departmental text books and other reading materials will be checked to ensure that they offer the right balance of access and challenge for all pupils and alternative provision will be made for pupils with particular needs where appropriate.

8. Staff training and development:

The Academy has an ongoing commitment to training its staff in the area of literacy. To this end,

- **The Literacy Co-ordinator will work with the SLT to ensure that aspects of literacy are revisited regularly on PD days with all teaching and classroom support staff.**
- The SENco will identify and facilitate the training needs of those support staff that will specialise in meeting the specific literacy needs of groups of pupils, e.g. those with dyslexia.

9. Monitoring

The effectiveness of the literacy strategy will be monitored in a number of ways

- **Bi-Annually the Literacy Steering Group will meet to review the action plan for that year**
- The Literacy Co-ordinator and members of the SLT will undertake regular literacy learning walks
- **Subject leaders will report on literacy developments, marking and their impact in their areas of responsibility as part of the standards report every progress check cycle (four times a year)**

- The SLT will review pupil progress in reading, writing and English as outlined in *section five* above.
- The Governing Body will be informed of pupil progress against key targets on a regular basis and through the Principal's report

Ratified by the Governing Body on:	21 January 2013
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Appendix 1: Wave One Interventions – Guidance for Staff

Our aim is to take every opportunity to reinforce the four main areas of literacy: Reading, writing, speaking and listening. In order to achieve this, we need an agreed common thrust across the Academy. The following begins to define that thrust.

1. In Meeting Time & Tutorial Sessions

All learning Coaches are required to adhere to the guidelines for Meeting Time. This is because the 'board room style' daily discussion encourages pupils to interact with one another, to shape their thoughts and ideas and, when responding to the 'Thought of the Week' or other stimulus material, to engage in debate and ask and answer questions. Just as importantly, Meeting Time has a structured set of behaviours for conducting the meeting that will overtly teach pupils how to interact in this setting. This will support *speaking and listening*.

Where Sixth Formers have been allocated to a tutor group, they should regularly be deployed to support those pupils with weak reading skills, perhaps through one to one reading. This will support *reading*.

Strategies include: *Language of Meetings* and *The Fox Tool*

2. Midday Tutorial (KS3 only)

Where whole class reading is carried out as part of the tutorial session in KS3, it is expected that staff will discuss the reading with pupils in order to ask questions about the text, answer queries or explore ideas and feelings related to it. This will support *reading*.

Strategies include: *The Book Circle*

3. In lessons

All areas

- Lessons should have a literacy skill focus as one of their objectives.

- Lessons should demand that pupils have to think hard, that they are given time to problem solve together and discuss their ideas and that encouraged to ask questions. This will develop *speaking and thinking*
- All staff will develop the subject specific vocabulary of their pupils. All classrooms must have key subject vocabulary displayed on their walls and these should be referred to in lessons. Pupils must be required to use these words in their written and spoken responses and effective teachers will use questioning to ensure that when this is not the case that the situation is rectified. This will support *all areas of literacy*
- Pupils should have in the back of their books and/or their work folders a space for creating a glossary of key words and definitions. It is the responsibility of the teacher/HLTA/TA to ensure that this is kept up to date. This will support *reading & writing*
- The pupil planner will have a section that contains commonly misspelt words. Pupils should be directed to use this with increasing independence. This will help support *reading & writing*.

Writing

- Pupils should be able to **access a writing frame** when required, though these should not be offered to all and even for the least able might be offered rather than given in the expectation of use. The basic principle is that pupils should be able to explore and develop their own written styles, but that should they need it, there is an effective scaffold for their work. This will support *writing*
- Pupils should also be encouraged to draft their work in rough and, prior to a completed piece being handed in, should not be required to always present their work perfectly. Messiness is often inevitable in the redrafting process and should a 'neat' version be required, time should be allocated for its creation when appropriate. This will improve *writing*.
- It is also expected that staff will model how to write and organise ideas in front of their class prior to and during the creative process. Visualisers and other technological aides might also help show pupils' work to one another and engage them in discussion about the work. This will inevitably improve assessment for learning but will also improve *writing*.
- All staff must also adhere to the **Academy's marking policy** that clearly outlines the way in which marking should be used to effectively support literacy. This will support *writing*
- Staff are required to teach pupils how to learn the correct spellings for key words that they have previously misspelt. The Literacy Co-ordinator and SENco will provide guidance as to how best to do this. Success will be judged through the monitoring of books; observers should see that these spellings are correctly written after the interventions. This will improve *writing*.

Reading

- Staff are required to have reading age information on their seating plans and in their mark books, This is to enable them to differentiate for pupils more effectively and to plan activities that may help to strengthen their reading skills. This will clearly help *reading*.

- Staff should ensure that they use SMOG or similar diagnostic tools to make certain that they have differentiated their texts accordingly to ensure that pupils of all abilities can access the curriculum. This will support *reading*.
- Teachers are also expected during the course of their lessons to structure their work so that pupils have to locate information in text and answer questions in relation to what they have just read. This will develop comprehension skills and is a basic requirement for *reading*.
- If there are opportunities for pupils to read aloud and it is appropriate for them to do so, staff are encouraged to promote this, especially in KS3 where pupils are keen to undertake this kind of activity.

Beyond the classroom

- Marking should be carried out in accordance with the Academy's marking and checking policy. This policy actively supports the development of literacy through the use of targeted marking and an Academy wide approach to correcting spelling, structuring and grammatical errors.
- The Academy also has a commitment to using technology to support the development of literacy. One such tool is 'Sam-E', our VLE. This should be used by subject teams to develop online forums in which pupils can work collaboratively to shape their ideas, thoughts and understanding in response to a problem

4. Cross curricular reinforcement

- Where possible, the same strategies should be used across the school to support and develop literacy. This may incorporate suit of strategies to teach pupils how to read, or perhaps how to learn spellings and/or structure their work. One such example might be the *PEE chain*. Such an approach might also include guidance as to how particular genres of writing have to be laid out – e.g. newspapers. It is the responsibility of the Literacy Co-ordinator, SLT and Subject Leaders to ensure that such whole school approaches are adopted and acted upon within all classrooms. This will help with *reading* and *writing*.
- The Literacy Co-ordinator along with other staff will create a series of agreed definitions for command verbs that are used in examination questions. These definitions will be used across the school and will help to ensure that all pupils know, for example, the difference between describe and explain. This in turn will enable them to more successfully access the curriculum. This will help with *reading, writing and thinking*.

5. Extra curricular

Literacy will be supported through the Academy's enrichment programme. This will by necessity need to be more flexible in its approach, but will seek to engender in pupils a love of all things connected to literacy. Debating clubs would reinforce *speaking and thinking*, essay writing competitions like those run by Peterhouse College, Cambridge, will raise aspirations. Where there is

a reading club or a film club, groups will discuss the novels/films and draw out motifs etc. thus reinforcing the analytical skills needed to achieve the targets set above.