

St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School

Literacy Policy

Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking. It includes the cultural expectations which enable a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. Literacy allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think; create and question, which helps them to become more aware of the world and empowers them to participate more effectively in society.

UNESCO 1990

Rationale

The development of literacy skills is an entitlement for all students and the responsibility of the whole school community. The Literacy Policy should be embedded in good learning and teaching practices. Literacy is an essential life skill. To make sense of the world around them, young people need an understanding of written and spoken language, the ability to interpret what has been written or said, and to draw inferences from the evidence that surrounds them. It is also about being able to communicate – accurately, fluently and persuasively. There are also new forms of literacy (on-screen literacy and moving image media) to consider alongside the more traditional print literacy. Competent literacy skills enable pupils to read, understand and access examination materials, so that pupils are able to achieve their educational potential across the curriculum.

Aims

St. Bernard's Catholic Grammar School is committed to raising standards of literacy for all of its students, so that they develop the ability to use literacy skills effectively in all areas of the curriculum and as a platform for the demands of further education, employment and adult life. We aim to provide a supportive, stimulating and secure environment where all teachers are teachers of literacy who encourage their students to express themselves and value their contributions. We will provide for the language development of pupils and will develop their ability to use language to think, to explore and to recognise and communicate their ideas.

Objectives

- To raise the standard of literacy;
- To enable students 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;
- To provide students 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;
- To enable students to communicate using written language effectively, making and shaping text appropriately, according to context, purpose, reader or audience.
- To personalise learning in order to create a coherent learning system tailored to the individual student;
- To approach literacy across the curriculum in relation to students' abilities to think and learn.

Role of the Teacher

In the teaching of literacy, the teacher fulfils a number of roles.

1. Model: as a skilled user of language, the teacher's role is the central element in fostering positive attitudes towards literacy;
2. Facilitator: providing a supportive and stimulating environment, organising purposeful activities and enabling children to develop literacy skills;
3. Initiator: providing a variety of resources and opportunities for a wide range of balanced activities to encourage the development of skills in talking, listening, reading and writing;
4. Monitor: observing and recording the development of skills in literacy;
5. Assessor: evaluating and assessing the development of skills in literacy through tracking pupil progress at all key stages and abilities.

Identification of Literacy Support

St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School will offer additional literacy support for those students who have been identified as in need. This literacy support criteria has been drawn up as a document in conjunction with the school's SENCO and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) (see separate SEN Policy). It bases the identification of literacy support students on the following criteria:

- Students who have been recommended by their primary school as having a specific learning difficulty or in need of literacy support when they arrive in Year 7
- Students who enter the school at a low level for reading or writing
- Teacher referral to the SENCO of any student demonstrating low level literacy skills in English or lack of progress of more than one grade below their end of year target grade in English.

Strategies

Reading

1. Across the whole curriculum teachers will provide activities for students to:
 - read and follow written instructions
 - read independently as well as reading together
 - read to explore meaning and to develop understanding
 - learn how to use a range of reading strategies including skimming, scanning sifting and selecting
 - read to take notes from a text
 - learn how to use a range of contextual clues to establish meaning including indexes, glossaries, illustrations, headings, etc.
 - learn how to select from written material, reformulate, question and challenge what they read in books, encyclopaedias, and newspapers or from ICT sources
 - where appropriate, attention will be paid to developing higher order reading skills, e.g. awareness of bias, inconsistency and the articulation of alternative interpretations of what has been read.
2. Teachers will provide reading material of high quality, which is up to date, relevant and balanced in its presentation of ethnicity, culture and gender and appropriate for age and ability of the students.

3. Opportunities should be created for teachers to refer to students' use of reading in assessments and reports for all curriculum areas.

4. Students in Year 7 will keep a Reading Log signed by their English teacher and parent/carer to encourage reading at school and home.

Writing

1. Across the curriculum teachers will provide activities for pupils to:

- plan, draft, discuss and reflect on their writing, using ICT, where appropriate
- write for a range of purposes and audiences
- make notes in a variety of formats, e.g. thought shower, bullet points

2. Teachers will set writing tasks that have clear purposes are objective driven, which are appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils concerned and which challenge pupils.

3. Teachers will model for pupils how to structure their writing using a variety of sentence structures, paragraphs and a wide range of punctuation, including higher order punctuation e.g. semi- colons, colons and brackets.

4. Where pupils are asked to write in a particular genre, e.g. a newspaper report, teachers will ensure that pupils are familiar with the appropriate style and conventions.

5. Teachers will correct errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling in line with the school's marking policy and demand neat and well-organised work at all times.

6. We will:

- provide good models of particular kinds of writing
- provide frameworks and differentiation where appropriate as a means of working towards the goal of independence
- provide dictionaries and thesauruses and teach pupils how to use them
- display key words and their meanings in the classroom
- teach subject specific vocabulary and spelling
- encourage high standards of presentation

Speaking and Listening

Across the whole curriculum teachers will provide activities for pupils to:

- listen and carry out instructions
- listen to others and respond appropriately
- listen for a specific purpose
- explore and develop ideas with others, through their talk
- use oral work as a precursor to written work
- participate orally in pairs, groups and the whole class
- ask questions as well as answer them
- use role play as a way of exploring a wide range of registers and contexts for spoken language
- use language precisely and coherently and use Standard English in appropriate contexts
- identify the main points to arise from a discussion
- evaluate the effectiveness of spoken contributions in class and in other contexts

Assessment for Learning

Pupils should be given feedback on their reading, writing, listening and speaking which helps them understand the progress they are making and helps them know where and how they need to improve.

- (a) Make use of diagnostic cognitive, reading and spelling tests at each Key Stage to identify students' progress and needs.
- (b) Use regular assessments of literacy skills, in all subject areas, to inform decisions about students' progress and needs.
- (c) Set literacy targets for each student, based on regular formative assessment of their progress.
- (d) Develop marking strategies across departments, which will inform, develop and encourage students' literacy.
- (e) Include assessments of literacy skills in reports to parents.

Whole School Implementation

The wider school curriculum will be expected to promote literacy through:

- Promotion of relevant school/national competitions e.g. annual poetry festival, Debating Club, public speaking, Mock-Trial Competition, peer mentor literacy support scheme, conferences, Magazine Club, encouraging pupils to participate in Book Club etc.
- Promotion of suggested reading lists for individual year groups on VLE and in classrooms (subject-specific reading)
- Provision and funding of visiting speakers and writers at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.
- A whole school attack on a specific area over a brief period of time eg. punctuation
- Colleagues in all departments need to identify errors and abide by the correction rules outlined in the Staff Handbook and pupil planner.
- Word walls
- Word of the Day
- High Frequency words should appear in appropriate classrooms
- Member of staff/Dept recommends a book of choice per week/fortnight – link to World Book Day in March
- DEAR – Drop Everything and Read initiative– allocation of specific time per day/week for all students to read.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

All staff have a responsibility to reflect on their own practice in promoting, teaching and through their marking of literacy. Those in management positions have a further responsibility to ensure the policy is properly implemented in their specific areas. The effectiveness and implementation of this policy will be reviewed by the Literacy Coordinator by half-termly meetings with subject leaders and in conjunction with the SMT at Curriculum Group meetings and throughout the academic year.

Agreed by the Ethos Committee: 25th January 2017

Next Review Date: January 2019