



# Rossendale School

## Literacy Policy

### Introduction

At Rossendale School, we believe that literacy affords students with the tools that they need to communicate effectively through speaking and listening, reading and writing. It therefore underpins student progression and attainment across all subjects. Consequently, all teachers at Rossendale are also teachers of literacy and, as such, they should seek to embed all three of the above literacy skills within their pedagogical practice and classroom environment.

### Our principles

As a starting point, we believe:

- All students are capable of learning and deserve our best efforts to help them to develop to their maximum potential as stated in the school's mission statement
- Students have different learning styles and abilities which require a varied approach to teaching
- Literacy has an important part to play in all departments as young people use it to think, explore, to recognise and communicate their ideas in all subject areas
- Every member of staff has responsibility for developing literacy through his or her subject area
- For students to progress in any subject they need to be provided with the language of that subject
- good literacy skills are a prerequisite for access to employment opportunities
- Literacy is an entitlement for all and close links between tutors, SENCO, all teaching and support staff and subject leaders ensures that all pupils can access their entitlement.

### Overview

It is essential that teachers begin to use a 'common language' to encourage literacy by developing their understanding of the different ways that literacy is being established across the curriculum. Staff referencing the same techniques to promote literacy will enable students to transfer their skills between subjects more easily.

Teacher awareness of the different techniques used to promote literacy will be raised through whole staff training and through support provided by Lead Practitioners.

When planning for literacy, teachers should follow the guidelines below:

- The success criteria for literacy within written and discussion-based pieces of work are shared and discussed in terms of tone, style, conventions, audience and structure
- Where appropriate, topic sentences and mnemonics should be used to help structure extended written work more effectively
- Teachers should provide clear examples for students; this could be in the format of a WAGOLL (what a good one looks like)
- Where appropriate, teachers should draw on differentiation techniques and prior feedback to ensure students are supported at each level
- Subject specific vocabulary is communicated and used effectively within lessons and consolidated through the use of display
- Feedback should be provided on general literacy skills both within lessons and when marking of both classwork and assessments (this includes spelling, punctuation and grammar). The school's Assessment Policy identifies this.

Reading for Pleasure To cultivate a community of readers, we will be establishing a robust programme to create a strong 'reading for pleasure' ethos both in lessons and around the school. This will be established within the school through the use of Accelerated Reader which is led by the English department, and the use of targeted intervention by English teachers and SSA's. The development of literacy skills within the school will be monitored and evaluated through the various quality assurance processes that are already in place. Pupils should have a reading book at all times available to them to read in lessons across the curriculum and in form time.

## **Defining and Developing Literacy**

Literacy involves the ability to read and write; however, it also involves recognising, reproducing and manipulating the conventions of a range of texts as well as developing speaking skills. With the rapid development of technology, new forms of literacy which relate to the digital world and the use of multimedia also require consideration within the policy.

In line with the Department for Education's suggestions regarding the incorporation of key literacy skills, all subjects need to consider how to develop the following:

- Speaking and listening skills

Speaking encourages students to organise and structure ideas, while active listening is key to picking out important information. These skills could be further enhanced by tasks which integrate speaking and listening skills with reading and writing tasks as this can help to reinforce both skill sets. The promotion of oral participation in class discussions supports the need to use talk to develop and clarify issues resulting in improved active listening skills. Students need to use debate to support key evaluation skills and be taught how to use language precisely and coherently to construct ideas and form clear foundations for moving on to writing in a formal manner.

- Reading skills

This should include being able to interpret a range of different text types as well as understanding how style and format can affect how different meanings are communicated. To develop confidence and competence, students need to be taught how to decode texts and interpret both explicit and implicit meanings. Reading for meaning strategies, such as the use of reciprocal reading being used within the English Department, need to be incorporated into all lessons to ensure students learn how to independently access

challenging texts. All students, regardless of their starting point, need to be able to read with greater understanding, locate and use information, follow a process or argument, summarise, synthesise and adapt what they learn from reading.

- **Writing skills**

In conjunction with grammar, punctuation and spelling, students should also learn about the craft and different styles of writing for different purposes. The idea of 'text type' is central to this, whereby a 'text' is a piece of writing and the 'type' of text relates to its purpose or the reason why it is being written. These skills should be reinforced both within specific subject areas as well as across the curriculum. Students need to be able demonstrate their ability to interpret, evaluate, explain, analyse and explore through written expression. When completing extended writing tasks, all subject teachers must provide students with a relevant, differentiated structure to enable them to progress and organise writing. Topic sentences, structure mnemonics and clear success criteria should be used within all subjects.

To achieve consistency in teaching literacy we will ensure that:

- Literacy skills are taught consistently and systematically across the curriculum
- Expectation of standards of accuracy and presentation are similar in all classrooms
- Teachers are equipped to deal with literacy issues in their subject both generically and specifically
- The same strategies are used across the school - the teaching sequence for writing; active reading strategies; planning speaking and listening for learning
- The literacy learning that pupils are doing in English, and specific intervention programmes, are consolidated in other lessons
- Teachers use the same terminology to describe language
- The success criteria for literacy within written and discussion-based pieces of work are shared and discussed in terms of tone, style, conventions, audience and structure. Where appropriate, topic sentences and mnemonics (such as TEAL and PEE) should be used to help structure extended written work more effectively
- Feedback should be provided on general literacy skills both within lessons and when marking of both classwork and assessments (this includes spelling, punctuation and grammar).

**Speaking and Listening Lessons:**

- Organised by the English department, students in Years 8 and 9 will have a timetabled literacy lesson every week.
- The lessons aim to improve key skills alongside the promotion of confidence building and developing social and emotional awareness.

**Within English lessons:** Students will participate in the reading of a class reader with their class teacher at least once a year, without formal tasks being completed. This should be read for the love of reading a book and discussing it.

**Subject areas** should also provide students with a 'wider' reading list to both encourage them to further engage with the subject and to also expose students to a range of different text types. Reading lists should aim to draw on a wide variety of sources including textbooks, biographies, websites, blogs, newspapers, novels, magazines etc.

Students will be expected to have access to a reading book, either from home or the library.

## Marking for Literacy

All staff will follow the school marking policy when assessing students' work by:

- Displaying the marking key/poster in their classroom.
- Underline/highlight mistakes and place appropriate symbols in the margin. If no margin available, symbols can be placed next to the error.

(NB. It is not policy to indicate every single mistake in students' work especially when marking work of students who have low levels of literacy in all areas of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Specific areas may be targeted in different assessments. Ensure that the student knows which particular literacy focus will be assessed beforehand e.g. The particular focus for this piece of writing will be the correct spelling of all key words and the correct use of paragraphs. In addition, each pupil will have a literacy target, on which marking can be focussed.)

- Take opportunities to praise, either verbally or through marking, the effective and accurate use of literacy skills
- Ensure marking for literacy is embedded into wider marking policy. Challenge is built in if pupils have to edit and rewrite their work accurately.
- Utilise the self/peer marking of literacy with students marking their own or a partner's work with a purple pen.

During marking for acknowledgement, each teacher will make literacy a focus using the following codes:

- Sp Spelling error
- G Grammatical mistake
- ^ Word or letter is missing
- C Capital letter is inaccurate
- P Punctuation error
- ? Something doesn't make sense
- // New paragraph

Where a spelling mistake is identified, teachers should place the correct spelling in green. Students must then write out the correct spelling 3 times. Staff should be mindful of students with weak literacy and focus on common misspelt words or topic specific vocabulary rather than correct every spelling mistake.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**The Literacy Co-ordinator will:**

- Support the development of whole-school policy and practice in the promotion of and teaching of literacy
- Implement a co-ordinated whole-school approach to supporting and developing students' literacy skills, supporting departments to develop literacy across the curriculum
- Lead staff training on literacy, including contributing to the academy's induction programme for new staff and leading staff professional development sessions
- Raise the awareness of, and participation by students, in national and local literacy events, working in conjunction with the English department
- Develop a culture of reading across the school and ensuring that the development of literacy skills is encouraged

- Provide guidance for parents in supporting their child's literacy skills.

**Heads of Subject will:**

- Ensure that 'subject specific literacy' is clearly identified in schemes of work, and that there is obvious progression through the key stages
- Ensure the school's marking for literacy policy is embedded in the department
- Ensure that the termly focus for Literacy is being applied by staff
- Ensure that all texts used within the department are accessible to all students
- Ensure that the department's instruction of reading, writing, speaking and listening is in line with whole school's recommended pedagogy
- Ensure that all department members are aware of the literacy demands of their subject and that progress is reviewed termly.

**All teaching staff will:**

- Ensure that they are familiar with the specific literacy demands of their subject and plan to cover these skills in their lessons
- Use the school/department agreed strategies to teach writing, speaking, listening and reading skills
- Be aware of appropriate expectations of students and difficulties that might be experienced with literacy skills
- Ensure they are familiar with the Whole School Literacy Policy
- Use the Whole School Marking Policy to support students' literacy
- Use SEN and reading age information to ensure that resources and teaching and learning activities are differentiated accordingly.

**Students can support this policy by:**

- Writing answers to questions using full and complete sentences
- Spelling words correctly and using support materials (e.g. dictionaries, word walls) to help spell words they may find difficult
- Structuring work with paragraphs to signal a change of topic, change of speaker, change of time and change of place
- Using punctuation, including full stops, commas, semi-colons, question marks, apostrophes, quotation marks and speech marks, correctly
- Beginning a sentence with a capital letter, along with all proper nouns
- Use discursive markers or connectives, such as 'finally' and 'however', to signal the development of an argument or their opinion, or their consideration of another's opinion
- Planning, organising, drafting, editing and reflecting on their writing
- Using formal Standard English in their writing and speech as appropriate.
- Not using "text speak", inappropriate informalities and abbreviations such as "gotten" and "gonna"
- Through their reading and writing, being increasingly familiar with the key vocabulary of each subject
- Taking pride in the presentation of their work.

### **Parents can support the implementation of this policy by:**

- reading with their children and encouraging them to read more widely
- buying books as presents
- visiting libraries or literacy events
- Reading through the comments written by teachers regularly
- Supporting the school in checking that students are correcting spellings
- Supporting the school in providing a bag that can accommodate books comfortably
- Making every effort to attend parents' evenings, literacy evening, when requested.

### **Governors**

It is the role of the governing body to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and its practice. They will be informed of its impact through:

- Receiving feedback on this in the regular teaching and learning feedback provided by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We aim to identify Literacy support at the earliest stage and act proactively. To do this we will use the following as indicators of potential support needs:

- Previous school referrals
- Referral from teachers in the previous year or stage
- Baseline information from Key Stage 2 and Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) with pupils entering the high school.
- Testing of Reading in all years
- Parental concerns/requests
- Referral from TA
- Target setting at Key Stage 2, 3 & 4
- Reports from outside agencies.

### **Tracking**

Literacy progress across all students will be monitored and evaluated via various means, including:

- Classwork
- Homework
- Assessments
- Test scores
- Lesson observations
- 1:1 support

### **Quality Assurance**

The school will monitor the impact of literacy through its existing self-evaluation processes.

These include book look sessions, evaluation days, lesson observations, line management meetings and student voice. The results of these evaluations will impact upon any CPD to be offered to support and challenge students' literacy.