

St Richard's Catholic College

Literacy Policy



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: September 2020

Chair of Governors: _____

The Governing Body will review the policy in September 2022

LITERACY POLICY

Literacy is a whole school issue. We all share in the responsibility for teaching literacy, which includes speaking, listening, reading and writing. Because literacy is a means of supporting key skills in the curriculum, incorporating a literacy focus in all subjects will give pupils the necessary tools to articulate, explain and justify their ideas and understanding.

Baseline testing will enable us to target, monitor and mentor pupils.

Literacy teaching across the curriculum

For literacy to become a whole-school issue, teachers in individual departments need to accept that they are all teachers of language. Each department needs to consider what the literacy requirements are for their area; the vocabulary specific to their subject; the range of texts used and the writing styles pupils will need to adopt to be successful.

There is a particular challenge to develop expertise in non-fiction writing, including knowledge of grammatical structure. We need to examine whether this is systematically taught, and reinforced by each department with the support of the *Literacy Box* and *Writing Toolkit* accessible to all teachers through their desktop. The college's *Word of the Week* will also help pupils to develop a wider vocabulary as well as understanding meanings and derivations of new words. All subject teachers use the literacy mark scheme – with symbols in margins indicating errors. This then forms part of DIRT/purple pen work.

The Form Tutor is the link between school and home and can play a key role in promoting positive attitudes to reading among pupils. Encouraging private reading is a way of encouraging the reading habit that can then lead on to a wider range of reading material. *Drop Everything And Read* (DEAR) is adopted during at least one registration period each week. Form tutors should also allow time for focused talk related to the pupils' reading materials. Sound Training materials have been adapted for use in form times with Literacy Mondays used to help monitor and secure certain writing skills.

Creating a positive reading and writing ethos in the school

The school ethos should encourage pupils to read and write beyond the curriculum requirements. We can demonstrate how we value literacy, for example, through sharing good books, celebrating pupils' written achievements at school assemblies and encouraging greater use of the school library. Pupils often enjoy taking part in writing competitions and events, including Extreme Reading and rewards for avid readers; successes need to be acknowledged and promoted. Role models, particularly for boys, can communicate the message that reading is important for life. We use displays and posters to encourage pupils to read. Inviting, for example, poets, authors and illustrators to deliver workshops and share their expertise and love of their profession stimulates and supports pupil writing. Pupils are encouraged to develop their reading in each subject area, for example, recommendations of fiction with a historical theme. Celebrating National Poetry Day and World Book Day each year raises the profile of Literacy across the whole school and encourages a positive attitude towards reading and literature.

Literacy Interventions at KS3 and KS4

The college's Literacy Intervention supports many pupils to develop specific literacy skills that need more dedicated time than lessons solely allow. Pupils are selected for intervention based on their progress towards their target level and baseline data, such as reading and spelling ages and CATS Levels. In addition, the Literacy Lead will liaise with the MFL and English departments to identify pupils who should be withdrawn from MFL in order to attend Literacy Support. Pupils

attend literacy support classes delivered by the Literacy Lead, which focus specifically on the weakest aspects of a pupil's reading and/or writing.

In Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils have timetabled Literacy Support lessons. The schemes of learning for Literacy Support classes have recently been updated with embedded assessment points to track and monitor pupil progress. A range of challenging texts have been incorporated into the schemes of work as well as focussing on comprehension and writing skills which will enable pupils to access the GCSE curriculum with more confidence. Bedrock Vocabulary has also been introduced as an additional intervention for Literacy Support pupils to help support them with their reading and vocabulary.

Bedrock Vocabulary is a KS3 online programme which teaches pupils the academic words they need to succeed in school and beyond. Pupils use Bedrock as part of their school learning or independently at home. Studies have proven that a wide vocabulary is essential for strong academic performance across the curriculum and success beyond formal education. Pupils are immersed in aspirational, academic 'Tier 2' vocabulary in a way that's accessible, pupil friendly, and ensures reliable, statistically significant progress. Bedrock Vocabulary also ensures learners read interesting fiction and non-fiction texts. A short test at the start of each learner's journey with us ensures their learning is tailored to their needs. Bedrock Vocabulary are also developing GCSE modules which the college may trial with Key Stage 4 pupils in the future.

In Key Stage 3, pupils' reading ages are tested regularly. Year 7 pupils are tested at the beginning of September and again in June. Any pupil significantly below their chronological age will receive paired reading intervention once a week or be paired up with a Year 9 reading buddy.

Spelling ages are also tested annually and handwriting intervention is also provided on a termly basis and delivered by the Special Educational Needs department.

In October 2020, the English department is taking part in a trial programme called *No More Marking* which involves comparative judgement of scripts to ensure all Year 7 pupils will receive a writing age. The writing age will be shared across the whole school so that all departments will have a writing and reading age for pupils in year 7 by the end of Term 2 of 2020.

Every pupil is therefore entitled to:

- equal rights of access to the curriculum, regardless of their reading and writing ability.
- a right to be taught the literacy skills and conventions particular to each subject.
- be able to learn to read and write in a continuous process for pupils at every age and level.

What every teacher should do

At an appropriate moment, every teacher should:

- teach the literacy skills and conventions particular to their subject.
- teach the spellings and meanings of key words in their subject.
- provide examples of well-written work in the subject to act as a model.
- demonstrate how to compose a good written piece in the subject.
- incorporate literacy objectives in planning, teaching, monitoring and marking.
- build specific literacy teaching into schemes of work, and develop progression over the years.
- introduce pupils to the structure, lay-out and organisation of core textbooks and texts.
- allow reading time for slow readers or reading texts aloud.
- promote active reading through use of the *Reading Toolkit* strategies displayed in classrooms, e.g. highlighting, skimming, scanning.
- Use the literacy mark scheme to indicate mistakes/errors.

Every department area should have:

- a display of key words preferably supported by visuals.
- a portfolio of well-written exemplars.
- a copy of the *Reading Toolkit* in every classroom.
- reference materials e.g. thesaurus, dictionaries, spellchecker.
- enlarged and annotated examples of writing required in the current unit of work.
- access to the literacy mark scheme symbols for assessment.
- reading overlays

➤ **Developing Speaking and Listening**

By enabling pupils to:

- Value and respect others.
- Appreciate talk as a valuable area of learning.
- Speak to match audience/purpose.
- Use a varied vocabulary and Standard English when talking.

Developing Reading

- Provide texts with appropriate readability levels.
- Respect a balance of culture/gender.
- Provide resources which enable pupils to be independent.
- Provide opportunities for use of the *Reading Toolkit* strategies.
- Promote reading for pleasure.
- Promote Bedrock Vocabulary.

➤ **Developing Writing**

- Offer models for writing in a range of forms from the *Writing Toolkit* or other sources.
- Draw attention to purpose and audience.
- Help with handwriting, speaking and presentational aspects.
- Provide opportunities for extended writing
- Spell key vocabulary.
- Promote *No More Marking* initiative sharing pupil writing age across the whole school (Year 7 only).

Across the college, teachers will set literacy targets for improvement using the literacy mark scheme. The areas for improvement are embedded into the teacher's feedback and the use of the purple pen in dedicated DIRT time can help to boost pupils' levels or grades by their own self assessment of literacy elements.

Research shows the most important component of any attempt to raise literacy competency is to enhance the classroom context. 'It goes beyond the teaching of basic skills - the mechanics - to a consideration of how all teachers create opportunities for the use of literacy within a flexible and supportive teaching environment'.

Managing the Literacy Curriculum

'Literacy is a tool for wider enquiry and understanding'.