



**BURTON
BOROUGH
SCHOOL**

Literacy & Reading Policy

Policy Reviewer	Maria Griffiths (Assistant Head)	Date of Review	September 2023
Date Presented to Governors	23 rd October 2023	Date of next Review	Autumn 20256

Lead SLT: Maria Griffiths

Lead Governor: Mark Austin

Our Vision:

Literacy is at the heart of BBS. We understand that literacy is the 'language of learning' and is fundamental for our students in their life beyond BBS. Here, we are committed to ensuring that all students are at or above their reading age, have the skills to write effectively, and use oracy to clearly explain their ideas. Knowledge is power and reading empowers our students to be powerful communicators when they move on to higher and further education.

We have a whole-school approach to literacy with a consistent and shared language to ensure coherence across subjects. Staff are regularly trained to enhance their knowledge and application of literacy. Collaboration between subject leaders is also encouraged to embed literacy skills within their subject-specific contexts. All of this is research-informed and led by the senior leader in charge of whole school literacy and reading.

Our Aims:

We aim to develop students' skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. By the time that students leave BBS, our aim is for them to be:

- Fluent readers and writers.
- Have a positive attitude towards books and reading, reading widely for pleasure and information.
- Enjoy writing in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences, adapting their language and style for different purposes.
- Have a wide vocabulary and understanding of grammar and linguistic conventions.
- Competently speak in group discussions and be able to clearly explain their understanding and ideas.
- Listen carefully and sensitively to those around them.

Legislation and Guidance:

This policy reflects the requirements and expectations set out in:

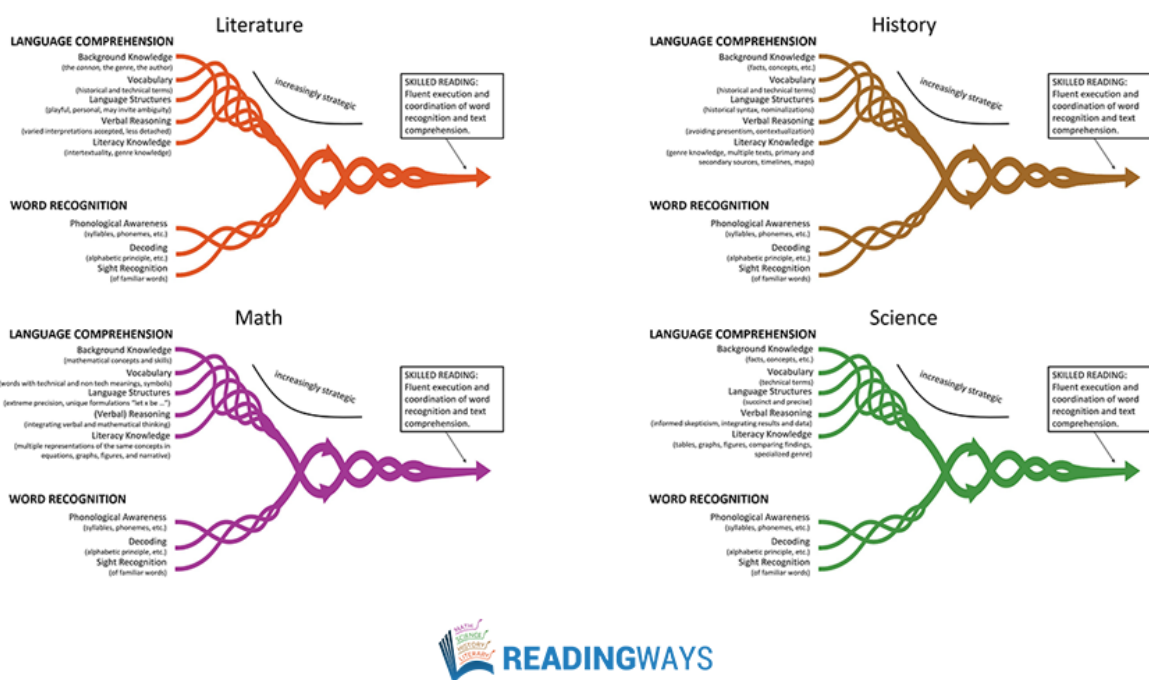
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The [National Curriculum programmes of study for English 2013](#)
- The [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice 2014](#)
- The [Reading Framework 2023](#)

Reading Skills:

At BBS, we champion **reading for empowerment**. Students are encouraged to read and interpret a range of different text types as well as understand how style and format can affect how meaning is conveyed. Students are taught how to decode texts and interpret explicit and implicit meanings. Reading for meaning strategies, such as reciprocal reader are being used in English lessons and form time. 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. All subject teachers use disciplinary literacy to enable students to access texts in their subject. This often includes pre-teaching content and vocabulary to allow students to access materials. We recognise the importance of students being able to read like a geographer, a scientist, and a mathematician, for example. As well as within lessons, students have a weekly focus on reading for empowerment in their 'Hot Topics' session during form time. Students are read non-fiction articles by their tutors who model reading, preload vocabulary and discuss poignant questions on the topic. These are selected and ordered to feed into the curriculum and national celebration days.

The Many Strands of Skilled Reading Across Domains



Reading for pleasure is also championed at BBS. There are a range of strategies used to promote reading across the school including class libraries, author visits and reading challenges. In form time, students can read books of their choice. KS3 students have library visits scheduled in form time and during a fortnightly English lesson. Students are encouraged to pick challenging texts and log their reading at school and at home. The librarian uses this time to promote the library and help students select fiction and/or non-fiction texts that are challenging and engaging. The library offers a weekly 'book worm' day dedicated to independent reading. The BBS library is well-stocked with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. The librarian, and Assistant Head leading on literacy, lead the way on the whole school reading culture and promote 'books on doors', reading competitions such as the Masked Reader and Extreme Read Challenges in addition to other initiatives happening whole school. Once a term, the librarian and Assistant Head host reading awards where students, such as the Student Librarians and top readers, are celebrated and awarded with certificates,

books and/or book tokens. We are passionate about reading being rewarded with more reading.

At BBS, we are proud of our student reading focus group who meet with the librarian and Assistant Head leading on literacy. This group help evaluate and improve the library and whole school reading culture. We believe it is important to put our students at the heart of what we do at BBS. All events, competitions and notices around reading are promoted on the @BBS_LRC Instagram page, newsletters, and screens in school.

Reading interventions are important at BBS. We are passionate about closing the reading age gap and helping all students access a wide variety of literature for pleasure and empowerment. The English Department use the Faster Reading Approach to rapidly progress reading ages. Similarly, English teachers are linked to year groups during form-time to intervene with students who are below their expected reading age or are below target in their English assessments. Reading ages are tested in Year 7 and Year 8 using the New Group Reading Test. Other interventions that take place are 'Reading Partners' whereby students read alongside peers. This has proven to be successful in rapidly increasing reading ages. We also have trained TAs who lead on the Literacy Pathway for those students who require phonics teaching and have a reading age of below 8. Reading interventions are prioritised in Year 7 and BBS have developed a model of tiered support which increases with intensity in line with need. The system is coordinated by the leadership team and is led by specialists in English and the Inclusion Team. All information around literacy interventions is communicated home via the Assistant Head leading on literacy.

All reading strategies are research informed using strategies from texts such as: 'Closing the Reading Gap' by Alex Quigley, 'Disciplinary Literacy' by Kathrine Mortimore, 'Reading Reconsidered' by Doug Lemov, 'The Secret Literacy' by David Didau, the DfE Reading Framework (2023), and reading research from the Education Endowment Foundation.

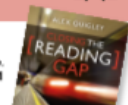
Writing Skills:

Alex Quigley's 6 STEPS to CLOSING THE READING GAP

[1]	Train teachers to be expert in how pupils 'learn to read' and go on to 'read to learn'.	
[2]	Develop and teach a coherent and cumulative 'reading rich' curriculum.	
[3]	Teach with a focus on reading access, practice, and enhancing reading ability.	
[4]	Teach, model and scaffold pupils' reading so that they become strategic and knowledgeable readers.	
[5]	Nurture pupils' motivation to read with purpose and for pleasure.	
[6]	Foster a reading culture within, and beyond, the school gates.	

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These steps are taken from Closing the Reading Gap.
Available at www.routledge.com/9780367276881



Students learn about crafting different styles of writing for different purposes across the curriculum. 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. The skills are reinforced within specific subject areas as part of disciplinary literacy. Students need to be able to demonstrate their ability to interpret, evaluate, explain, analyse and explore through written expression. When completing extended writing tasks, teachers provide students with scaffolds to enable them to progress and organise writing appropriate to the task. Topic sentences, structure mnemonics, models (including live models), and clear success criteria are used.

Across subjects, **teachers combine writing instruction with reading.** According to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research, this is likely to improve students' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach. Reading helps students to become knowledge-rich which leads to better writing. Examples of good writing across subjects are used as models to support students. Similarly, students are explicitly taught and encouraged to reflect on spelling, punctuation and grammar, particularly when focused on meaning. The whole-school marking policy promotes marking for literacy in a consistent and focused way. **The BBS Feedback policy** has a dedicated section on literacy to ensure students are aware of their areas for improvement and what they need to do to move forward. Students are provided with regular opportunities for extended writing practice and feedback.

Alex Quigley's 7 STEPS to CLOSE THE WRITING GAP

[1]	Train teachers in the art and science of writing	
[2]	Take advantage of talk and the rhetorical roots of writing	
[3]	Explicitly teach and model the stages of the writing process	
[4]	Offer pupils the gift of grammar, so that they can make informed writing choices	
[5]	Concentrate on crafting great sentences	
[6]	Prioritise disciplinary writing	
[7]	Plan for focused feedback and assess writing excellence	

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These steps are taken from *Closing the Writing Gap*.
Available at www.routledge.pub/Closing-the-Writing-Gap



Writing interventions are provided in class and in form time to those identified in KS3 and KS4 who are not on track for their end of year target. They are intervened with by English teachers linked to that year group or their class teacher within lessons. In KS4, students may be invited to targeted revision classes by subject leads following data analysis.

Celebration days encourage students to write for pleasure. Students can enter whole school creative writing competitions and our Big Think challenges. Families are informed about these via email, newsletters and social medias as we understand the importance of involving all stakeholders in the discussions around writing.

All writing strategies are research informed using strategies from texts such as: '*Closing the Writing Gap*' by Alex Quigley, '*Disciplinary Literacy*' by Kathrine Mortimore, '*The*

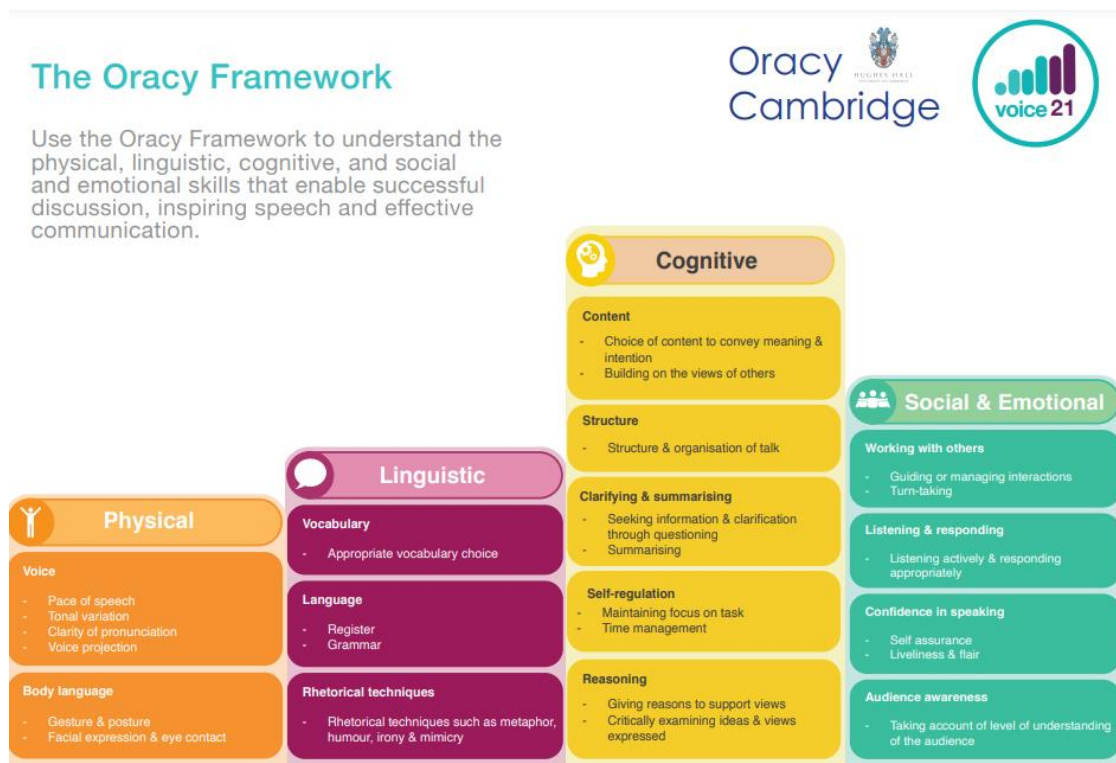
'Secret Literacy' by David Didau, and writing research from the Education Endowment Foundation.

Oracy Skills:

Speaking encourages students to organise and structure ideas, while active **listening** is key to picking out information. These skills are further enhanced by tasks which integrate oracy skills with reading and writing tasks. The promotion of oral participation in class discussion 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 onto writing in a formal manner.

Classroom teachers create a supportive environment to promote student participation in meaningful discussions, presentations, and debates. Students are encouraged to use Standard English confidently and accurately. Students are encouraged to 'talk like a critic' and 'talk like an expert'. Likewise, strategies such as **Harkness Debates** and **consensus circles** (active, discussion based approaches) are used and shared by the English Department.

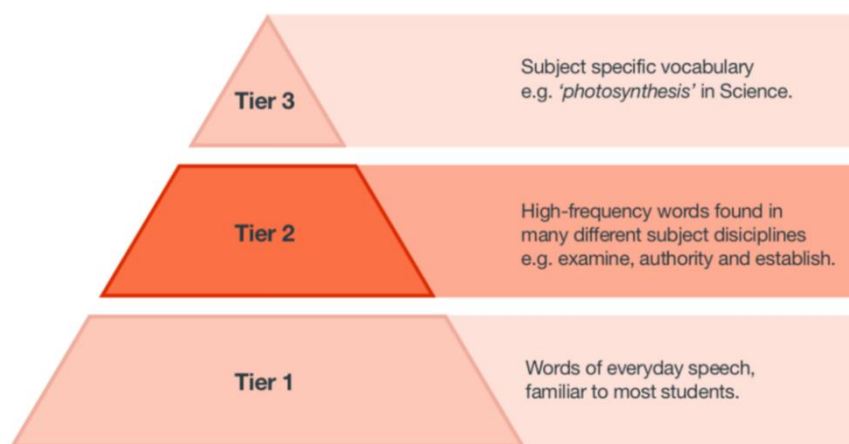
Whole school, there are **extracurricular opportunities** to develop oracy skills including Youth Speaks, the International Debate with Hart, and Mock Trials. These are led by the High Prior Attaining Lead and the Assistant Head leading on literacy. At GCSE level, subjects such as Enterprise, MFL and English also promote oracy skills as these are assessed at GCSE level.



All oracy strategies are research informed using strategies from texts such as: 'Disciplinary Literacy' by Kathrine Mortimore, 'The Secret Literacy' by David Didau, and oracy research from the Education Endowment Foundation and Voice21.

Vocabulary:

Targeted vocabulary instruction is provided across all subjects to help students access and use academic language. At BBS we use approaches related to etymology (the origin of words) and morphology (the structure of words) to help students remember new words and make connections between words using the Frayer Model (a graphic organiser used to breakdown words). In English, a more advanced version is used via word webs.



Teachers prioritise teaching **Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary**, which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech. When curriculum planning, subject leads consider these words and embed them into their schemes. Likewise, displays and

vocabulary banks are used to highlight the subject specific words. With students encouraged to learn core material before lesson time (flipped learning approach), students are encouraged to learn new words before starting a new topic or text. This model is also adopted in the Faster Reading Approach and Hot Topics session during form time.

The BBS 100 (the top 100 words used across the BBS curriculum) has been created by the Assistant Head leading on literacy in collaboration with all subject leads. Each subject provided their top tier three words, and these are displayed on rotation via screens around the school to further promote high-frequency subject specific vocabulary.

All vocabulary strategies are research informed using strategies from texts such as: 'Closing the Vocabulary Gap' by Alex Quigley, 'Disciplinary Literacy' by Kathrine Mortimore, 'The Secret

**Alex Quigley's
7 STEPS to
CLOSE THE VOCABULARY GAP**

[1]	Train teachers to become more knowledgeable and confident in explicit vocabulary teaching	
[2]	Teach academic vocabulary explicitly and clearly, with coherent planning throughout the curriculum	
[3]	Foster structured reading opportunities in a model that supports students with vocabulary deficits	
[4]	Promote and scaffold high quality academic talk in the classroom	
[5]	Promote and scaffold high quality academic writing in the classroom.	
[6]	Foster 'word consciousness' in our students (e.g. sharing the etymology and morphology of words)	
[7]	Teach students independent word learning strategies	

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Taken from Closing the Vocabulary Gap.
Order your copy now at www.routledge.com/9781138080683



Literacy' by David Didau, and vocabulary research from the Education Endowment Foundation.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Governors: There is a governor linked to whole-school literacy who works alongside the leadership team to gain insights to help the Governing Body hold staff to account and drive improvement. The linked governor reports to the Governing Body on the delivery of literacy, the impact of interventions, use of resources, attainment, and progress.

Senior Leaders: The leadership team have a clear vision for literacy across the school, supported by the Principal. Literacy is included in the school development plan, ensuring it is promoted consistently throughout the curriculum. The Assistant Head leading on literacy coordinates literacy initiatives and ensures literacy is embedded across all subjects. They also ensure early intervention takes place so that students can access the full curriculum. All initiatives and interventions led by the Assistant Head are research informed.

Middle Leaders: Subject leads are experts in disciplinary literacy. They ensure reading, writing and oracy are embedded in schemes of work. For instance, in history, workbooks are used to scaffold sources. In Science, a subject-specific library has been created to extend knowledge and empower students. In English, the Faster Reading Approach is used to improve reading ages of students. And, in PE, new vocabulary is explicitly taught through the flipped learning approach.

Classroom Teachers: All classroom teachers have a responsibility to promote literacy across their subjects. A whole-school approach to literacy is regularly reviewed through training and sharing best practice. Vocabulary is explicitly taught in lessons. They explicitly teach vocabulary and use the flipped learning approach to pre-teach specific vocabulary and knowledge before approaching a new text. Reading and writing is chunked and scaffolded in a way that is appropriate to the subject.

English Department: The English Department lead on literacy interventions during form time. There are dedicated intervention leads for KS3 and KS4. The English Department prioritise literacy skills and lead the way on the Faster Reading Approach, wider reading, extended writing, vocabulary acquisition and oracy skills. They regularly share good practice with other subjects and families. In KS3, the English Department have one library lesson per fortnight. They also facilitate a book club led by Y11 students in and after school.

SENCO, Assistant SENCO & Teaching Assistants: The Inclusion Team are responsible for intervening with students with SEND. They run the Literacy Pathway (phonics) intervention for students whose reading age is below 8 years of age. They also support with the testing of SEND students and the Faster Reading Approach in Engage. Key workers of students with SEND may also use form time to read alongside students in their designated reading time.

Heads of Year & Assistant Heads of Year: The pastoral team are involved in developing the reading culture at BBS. They promote the literacy competitions with their year groups and are aware of the reading ages of their students. They encourage the

reading time in form groups and the library sessions in KS3. They also help to facilitate the non-fiction guided reading time in form groups.

Tutors: Tutors encourage regular reading in form time and the guided reading of non-fiction too. KS3 tutors are involved in a library lesson twice a term during form time. They are also aware of their students' reading ages and encourage and support students with their reading. Tutors help with the facilitation of literacy interventions too during form.

Librarian: Our librarian is responsible for supporting the reading culture at BBS. They regularly update displays, Instagram (@bbs_lrc), and notices to help foster a love for reading. They are aware of reading ages of students and support them in selecting books that are of interest and accessible to them. Whilst we recognise the importance of reading challenging texts, if students cannot comprehend the text then they will associate reading with failure. Reading for pleasure is at the heart of our BBS library. The librarian works closely with the subject leaders to offer wider reading on topics. They also facilitate the Reading Partners intervention on Wednesdays and Thursdays for Year 7 and 8 students. The librarian runs a 'book worm' day on a Thursday and a book club whereby students share their favourite reads and reviews.

Students: Students are responsible for reading regularly in and out of school. Students in Year 7 are encouraged to keep a reading record as part of their English homework. Students are responsible for borrowing and returning books from the library. They are also encouraged to read widely on topics related to their classroom studies; this is supported by subject leads and the librarian.

Families: Families will be informed about literacy initiatives and strategies will be shared to support their children's literacy development at home. Families are encouraged to promote the value of reading at home and to read alongside and discuss books with their children as much as possible to foster a love for reading. This is vital from Year 7 to Year 11 so that our students are aware of the importance of reading for empowerment and opportunities created through reading widely and regularly.

Evaluation and Review:

The effectiveness of this literacy policy will be evaluated annually through lesson observations, student outcomes, and feedback from staff, students, and families. The policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure it remains aligned with the latest National Curriculum requirements, the guidance from the DfE's Reading Framework, and the expectations of Ofsted.

By implementing this comprehensive literacy policy, Burton Borough School will provide its students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success across all subjects and ultimately prepare them for future education, employment, and life beyond school.

Links with other policies:

- Teaching and learning policy
- SEND policy, SEND offer and information report.
- Assessment and feedback policy
- Home-school agreement policy.
- English as an additional language policy.
- Equality information and objectives.
- Behaviour policy.