

TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Welcome to our monthly Learning Newsletter where we seek to share some of the initiatives and strategies we use in school so you might best support your child in their education, in order to benefit your child and further enhance their educational experiences in the long term.

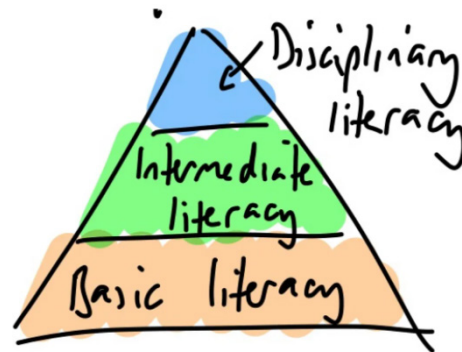
Disciplinary Literacy

Two of the current 'buzzwords' in education, but what do they mean?

We know that general levels of literacy are fundamental for success in school and beyond. Young people who leave school without good literacy skills are held back at every stage of their lives.

Disciplinary literacy goes deeper. It emphasises ways of knowing and communicating knowledge within a specific subject discipline.

It helps students understand how language works in different subject areas and supports their understanding of how vocabulary is used, how question phrasing will shape the answer expected, and how to interpret the written and graphic materials used for learning.



This focus on disciplinary literacy makes clear that every teacher communicates their subject through its own unique language, and that reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing, doing, and communicating Science, Art, History, and every other subject in secondary school.

We're currently working on teaching pupils to read 'like a Scientist', 'like a Geographer', 'like a Mathematician' for example by teaching them the specific skills needed in each subject to interpret what they're reading. For example, in Maths, pupils need to:

- Make meaning from every word, symbol, and their relations
- Intensively read and reread to analyse details
- Get more than just the 'gist'; read closely and carefully
- Identify all parts of words and their meaning
- Divide attention across multiple representations of content (e.g. words and equations)
- Switch strategies when reading charts, graphs, equations etc.
- Use mathematically-specific text features to make meaning
- Focus on what is actually in the text; authorship is less of a concern

So how can parents help?

You can help a great deal by reading a variety of texts together e.g. recipes, biographies, newspaper articles, instruction manuals, etc. Share challenging texts and explain how you approach them, what you're thinking as you do that. Consider for yourself how you unpick information you're reading so that it makes sense, you can pick out the cogent arguments, the author's intentions, you can decode symbols. Talk to your children not only about what you're reading, but also about the strategies you're using to understand and use what you're reading.

