



The Acorns School

Literacy Policy 2026

George Sampson: "All teachers are teachers of English because every teacher is a teacher in English".

This Literacy Policy reflects our commitment for our pupils to learn to achieve.

The Acorns School is committed to raising standards of literacy in all its pupils, through a co-ordinated approach.

Every staff member has a stake and duty in this process.

At The Acorns School, we know that developing pupils' literacy skills is essential to improving achievement across the curriculum and that is why every teacher at The Acorns School takes responsibility to implicitly and explicitly teach Literacy.

Our whole-school Literacy strategy involves everybody. It is a central part of our lesson planning, classroom delivery, school meeting and planning cycles - it is at the heart of the school.

The staff of The Acorns School are committed to developing the literacy skills of our pupils in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum. This is because we understand that:

- Pupils need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects;
- Reading helps pupils to learn from sources beyond their immediate experience;
- Writing helps pupils to sustain and order thoughts;
- Language helps pupils to reflect, revise and evaluate the things they do, and on the things that others have said, written or done;
- Responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry;
- Improving literacy and learning can have an impact on pupils' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour, allowing them to learn independently.

Some of our Literacy initiatives include:

- Cross-curricular support and Literacy INSET delivered by Miss S. Evans and Mr S. Koole
- Implementation of NGRT and NGST for all new admissions
- Weekly timetabled reading lesson for KS3 pupils
- World Book Day activities and presentations
- Use of the recently refurbished school library for scheduled form time literacy
- Every child within Key Stage 3 receives a 'free' book of their choice as part of the BookBuzz initiative.
- 6 core literacy targets which are focussed on the areas our pupils continually need to revisit
 - 1: Capital letters and full stops
 - 2: Homophones
 - 3: Commas
 - 4: Paragraphs
 - 5: Apostrophes
 - 6: Improving vocabulary

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Senior Managers:** lead and give a high profile to Literacy. Use lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny to ensure that the Literacy Policy is being utilised correctly within a teaching and learning framework.
- **Leader of Literacy and SENCO:** to oversee the implementation of The Literacy Policy and continue to develop opportunities for the delivery and promotion of cross-curricular Literacy. Provide CPD to staff, as required, to support the carrying out of responsibilities listed within The Literacy Policy. WRIT and WRAT test results, CATs results further inform this process. Identify and agree additional and different support for individuals and groups, to be shared with all staff.
- **English Teachers:** provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write and speak and listen effectively (outlined later in the policy). Work alongside the SENCO to make (regularly reviewed) individualised and group literacy targets for pupils which are shared with all staff.
- **Teachers across the Curriculum:** contribute to pupils' development of literacy, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are integral to all lessons.
- **Teaching Assistants:** support the teaching of literacy skills throughout the school through modelling and effective targeted support.
- **Pupils:** take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements.

Summary of Literacy Provision within English:

Literacy is taught explicitly through KS3 and GCSE English Schemes of Work through the 3 cornerstones of Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening. All pupils will receive two dedicated reading lessons each week.

Reading

We aim to equip pupils, across Key Stages 3 and 4, with a grasp of Literacy which will enable them to cope with the increasing demands of all subjects - in terms of specific skills, knowledge and understanding – and to prepare them for further study or employment at the end of Key Stage 4. Text comprehension and analysis are at the core of our English curriculum and staff promote positive attitudes towards reading by discussing their own personal reading habits with the pupils. Opportunities for group and shared reading, as well as independent reading, are incorporated into our schemes of learning.

We will teach pupils strategies which enable them to:

- skim and/or scan a text to withdraw specific information;
- summarise;
- read with greater understanding of content;
- locate and use information efficiently;
- infer and deduce;
- follow a process or argument;
- synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading.

Schemes of Learning are designed to ensure that pupils engage in both fiction and non-fiction texts from both pre and post 1914.

Writing

At Key Stage 3, specific lessons are factored into the timetable to address 'word level' literacy skills. At both Key Stages, we teach 'word', 'sentence' and 'text' level writing skills which enable pupils to write for a range of audiences and purposes.

We will teach pupils strategies which enable them to:

- plan and organise extended writing, structuring and organising their writing into a coherent and logical form;
- use specifically selected vocabulary to match the audience and purpose;
- be able to use punctuation manipulatively for effect;
- make connections between their reading and writing, so that pupils have clear models for their writing;
- engage in learning through teacher modelling, where it is made explicit to pupils how to write;
- self-assess their extended writing. Pupils are encouraged to plan, draft, amend, write and review their work or the work of their peers.

Speaking and Listening

We will teach pupils to use language precisely and coherently. They should be able to listen to others and respond appropriately. Pupils will develop skills which will allow them to convey their views and ideas in a constructive manner.

We actively engage pupils, giving adequate thinking time, using open ended questions to derive a considered response. We aim to use and model higher level vocabulary so that the pupils will imitate this in their own responses. We provide opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills through a range of approaches – including independent, paired and group work - and offer thorough and detailed feedback on how pupils can improve to reach the next stage in their development.

We will teach pupils strategies which enable them to:

- use talk to develop and clarify ideas;
- identify the main points arising from a discussion;
- listen for a specific purpose;
- discuss and evaluate their own speaking, and the speaking of others.

Inclusion

1. Adaptive Approaches

The Acorns School's pupils are entitled to our highest expectations and support. Some will need additional support and others will need to be challenged and extended. Strategies that we can use include:

- making objectives, outcomes and success criteria clear and accessible;
- teaching to the top of the curriculum;
- targeted questioning;
- adjusting the demands of the task;
- the use of additional support;
- use of group structures;
- adaptive resources to meet need;
- creating an ethos where pupils evaluate work of their own and that of their peers.

2. Timetabled Reading Lessons for KS3 and KS4 targeting literacy-focused intervention

Weekly reading lessons will provide targeted intervention by supporting pupils scope for improvement as quickly and effectively as possible. This will allow maximised pupil access to the curriculum. This might take the form of additional 1:1 support or withdrawal from lessons for literacy interventions.

Teachers across the curriculum will be kept informed about which pupils are participating in intervention programmes via daily debriefs and teacher meetings.

Teachers will be familiar with the content of particular intervention programmes in order that they can 'link the learning' into their subject area and to provide pupils with opportunities to practise their skills.

3. The more able

We will seek to:

- identify able pupils;
- promote ways of structuring and extending learning for the more able;
- develop a teaching repertoire which supports and challenges the more able pupils.

4. English as an Additional Language

Any EAL pupils need to hear good examples of spoken English and also to refer to their first language skills to aid new learning in all subjects of the curriculum. The use of their first language enables them to draw on existing subject knowledge and to develop English language skills in context. This will be reflected in target setting and adopted strategies across the curriculum.

5. SEN

We will teach our pupils with special educational needs appropriately, supporting their learning and providing them with challenges matched to their needs, through using a range of teaching strategies such as:

- individualised targets to be achieved through highly focused, short term reading interventions
- additional support of TA, where available;
- guided group/ paired work;
- use of writing frames and oral activities;
- personalised resources;
- setting challenging but achievable targets
- setting expectations, interventions and support which enable all pupils to access their learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Implementation and Effect

We will make use of formal data (including that from other schools) and half termly assessment and updates to evaluate the standards of pupils' literacy skills. All new pupils will complete an English Baseline Assessment to inform immediate planning for progress and to use as a point of reference for measuring progress. All new pupils will complete the NGRT and NGRST assessments, which will highlight any potential difficulties with literacy, to determine reading and comprehension ages upon admission. Additional literacy levels could be assigned using the Salford Reading Age Test. If indicated by CATs, a WRAT test could also be carried out to assess reading, spelling and comprehension skills. This will identify whether additional and different interventions are required. Clear recommendations for additional and different support in class will be agreed with all teachers and keyworkers.

Monitoring will include:

- For individuals requiring additional and different support, interventions will be identified, monitored and evaluated on a half termly basis.
- Termly use of the NGRT/ST tests to measure progress, as well as close monitoring of pupil progress through teacher assessed classwork.
- For whole school literacy, monitoring will include:
 - sampling pupils' work
 - observation;
 - pupil voice;

- learning walks.

Marking for Literacy Across the Curriculum

Principles of Marking for Literacy

- We recognise that all members of staff have a responsibility for developing and marking pupils' literacy skills, using a consistent approach across all subjects.
- The learning and teaching of different subjects require that teachers understand how work undertaken in their areas can contribute to the development of literacy skills and how literacy skills can contribute to pupil understanding of their subject.
- Ultimately, the whole school and all staff benefit and share the attainment of pupils' literacy skills.

Practice of Marking for Literacy

- We aim to ensure that there are balanced opportunities for writing, reading and speaking and listening in lessons.
- We actively encourage and 'model' the use of Standard English in day-to-day interactions.
- We aim to deliver activities which focus on subject-specific vocabulary, which is displayed within classrooms.
- We encourage and assess the use of paragraphing and full sentences that use punctuation appropriately and effectively.
- We encourage the discussion, planning and drafting of written work.
- We actively encourage pride in the presentation of all work.
- We support the self-esteem of learners by praising and displaying work from pupils of all abilities.
- Written and verbal feedback is provided regularly as a method to help set targets for improvement.

Specific Marking Strategies

- Spelling, punctuation and grammar are regularly marked as learners will pay more attention to these areas if they know it is going to be marked and commented upon. Students are also expected to monitor and self-evaluate their work.
- The use of literacy features in any key assessment is carried out in all subjects and in any feedback provided. Literacy will only develop if progress is regularly tracked.
- Positive, constructive and effective feedback is given to pupils to help improve literacy abilities.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar errors are identified by all staff when assessing pupils' written responses. However, recurring SPAG difficulties should be made aware to pupils and corrected.

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