



## COMMUNICATION, READING, AND WRITING (LITERACY & ENGLISH) POLICY

### Introduction

At Tor View School we identify Communication, Reading and Writing as the most important skills for all our learners. We deliver these skills through our individual targeted teaching (**Key Skills**). The appreciation of books and words is taught through English lessons and a broad and balanced age-appropriate content is provided throughout our learners' school career and throughout our curriculum.

### Subject Aims

- To develop effective Communication, Reading and Writing skills in all learners, developing their individual potential to the full.
- To foster an enjoyment of literature and language through exposure to a range of multi-modal texts.
- To develop initiative and ability to work both independently and in co-operation with others across the curriculum.
- To reflect the key learning stages within our school and offer appropriate subject material and teaching experiences, considering current research.
- To enable learners to write to the best of their ability.
- Promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word and develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

### Delivery Across School

Individual targets are identified in accordance with our Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy. These are taught specifically through Key Skills Lessons following the guidelines in our Key Skills Policy Document. Communication, Reading, and Writing are key areas of focus within our daily Key Skills lessons. An additional twenty-five minutes each day is dedicated to teaching Reading (including phonics and/ or phonics, guided reading).

Each age phase has a recommended allocation of time for Communication, Reading, and Writing. However, it is at the discretion of the teacher to identify the priorities for the pupils in their class. Weekly Speech and Language sessions take place within the Primary curriculum to support learners. Below is a summary of dedicated time to each area of focus, however teachers use their professional judgement to plan suitable teaching opportunities.

#### Foundation Stage and Key Stage One

Communication, Reading, and Writing are taught through Continuous Provision and Key Skills sessions, they also have one lesson of English per week. The setting and resources enable learners

to explore literacy and be guided in developing their skills. Key Skills are taught throughout the day, learners are withdrawn on an individual daily basis. In addition, learners have shared text experiences within English lessons and reading features across the curriculum. Rocket Phonics is taught at opportunities throughout the school day and within learning activities through continuous provision. Each class has a set lesson dedicated to Communication (Speech and Language) and is delivered in class groups.

### Key Stage Two

English is taught for two lessons each week; the lessons follow an age-appropriate text linked to the thematic curriculum across Key Stage Two. Within English lessons, there are opportunities to focus on both fiction and non-fiction texts. Each class has a set lesson dedicated to Communication (Speech and Language) Therapy and is delivered in class groups and learners are identified to join another group if they are working at a similar ability.

There is dedicated reading time which follows the Rocket Phonics reading scheme and utilises age-appropriate resources to support learners.

If learners are capable of sitting accredited tests i.e. SATS, then they are supported to achieve this through following a bespoke timetable.

### Key Stages Three and Four

English is taught at least twice a week based on age-appropriate texts identified from the National Curriculum. Functional Skills are taught by all teachers and are assessed and accredited in the summer term for Year 11 pupils where appropriate. Where appropriate learners are supported to undertake accreditation, i.e. GCSE through our Inclusions programme. There is dedicated reading time which follows the Rocket Phonics reading scheme and utilises age-appropriate resources to support learners. Writing is focused on within Key Skills lessons and reinforced across the curriculum.

### Key Stage Five

Adult Literacy is taught once a week based on functional appropriate texts from the Core Curriculum. Learners work towards accreditation with Open Awards. The curriculum and accreditation determine that the learners cover Functional Communication, Reading, and Writing.

Functional Skills are taught by all teachers. Students leaving (for whom it is deemed appropriate) complete Functional Skills Tests in the summer term of their leaving year. These tests are externally accredited.

An additional twenty-five minutes each day is dedicated to teaching functional reading, using texts which are age appropriate for the learners and follows the Rocket Phonics Reading to support writing and spelling.

All learners continue with Key Skills, in line with whole school policies and writing, reading and spoken language is emphasized throughout the curriculum.

### Intensive Support Centre

Literacy objectives are taken from individuals Education, Health Care Plan and are broken down into specific communication targets to support the development of functional communication skills. Over the course of the academic year these targets are broken down and taught in small manageable steps during daily Key Skills lessons. These targets are also delivered within sessions within the curriculum such as Sherborne Developmental Movement and Therapeutic music to consolidate and encourage functional communication and social communication.

## **Communication**

Tor View encourages multi-modal approaches to communication and offers a total communication environment.

### Objectives

- To teach active listening and understanding of language.
- To teach expression and choice making skills.
- To teach social communication skills.
- To give learners a voice

Throughout school, all teachers are aware that communication is an essential skill which is an integral element of all subjects and activities. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide opportunities to develop and generalise individual learners' communication skills. In addition, staff should model appropriate language and grammar whilst modifying their speech to suit the needs of the learner using a total communication approach. It is our priority to teach functional communication skills to all learners.

Learners are made aware of language to reflect purpose and audience at their appropriate ability. They are encouraged to; perform, present, chat, imitate, babble, discuss, debate, and share information using Alternative and Augmentative Communication aid where appropriate.

### Resources

At Tor View all teachers are trained in specialist speaking and listening strategies. Teachers liaise with our in-house Speech and Language Therapists and NHS Speech and Language Therapist to review targets and plan next steps. Teaching assistants are also trained in many of these strategies and training is offered to parents.

The following resources are used throughout the school –

Makaton

Derbyshire Language

Blank Level Questions

ELKLAN

PEIC-D

Intensive Interaction and Jabadao

Narrative Therapy

Tac Pac

Sherborne

Sensory Stories

Picture Exchange Communication (PECS)

Alternative and Augmentive Communication (AAC) including iPads and VOCAs (Voice Output Communication Aid)

Eye Gaze

Wiget Online

Objects of Reference and Objects of Focus

Small Steps to Success

## Reading

### Objectives

- To develop a love for reading and encourage reading for pleasure.
- To read, share and access a range of books and literature.
- To teach a variety of reading strategies including synthetic phonics, sight vocabulary and functional literature.
- To teach functional reading skills including e-literature.

Synthetic phonics or the pre-requisite skills are taught to all pupils through their Key Skills sessions and within Reading time. A multi-sensory approach is used in teaching phonics to allow for access difficulties (Downs Syndrome research – Snowling, Nash & Henderson 2008 <http://www.down-syndrome.org/reviews/2066/>). Rising Stars Rocket Phonics is used to teach reading.

Throughout the school all teachers are aware that reading is an essential skill which is an integral element of all subjects and activities. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide opportunities to develop and generalise individual learners' reading skills. The school is committed to providing a literacy rich environment to allow learners every opportunity to generalise their reading skills for example in FE learners read signs in the environment.

Each department follows a reading scheme which allows progression throughout the school. The scheme is based on the Rocket Phonics Reading scheme. This uses a blend on physical resources/texts and online resources provided via [boost-learning.com](http://boost-learning.com).

As per the Rocket Phonics Reading scheme, learners decoding sounds from Pink B onwards will have individual reading books which they can fully decode to practice segmenting and blending sounds independently. A Rocket Phonics Reading book, relative to their ability is used to introduce new sounds. Online texts can be shared as homework via Rocket Phonics Website and categorised reading for pleasure books are also sent home to support reading, these books are fully decodable by the reader. All pupils are assessed in phonics using the phonics assessment spreadsheet and are set accordingly.

A reading test is carried out each May to determine the reading age of each learner and this includes accuracy and comprehension– we use the Salford Reading Test. Learners have a daily reading opportunity at school supported by a member of teaching staff.

Alongside phonics, learners also learn to read the high and medium frequency words from the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils use flashcards and multi-sensory methods to learn these words. Once pupils have learnt all 300 words then they are encouraged to extend their vocabulary by reading varied age-appropriate texts. This is supported with the use of the statutory word lists from the National Curriculum 2016.

The school library is centrally located within the school and all learners have access to the library. The texts available link to the curriculum and support learners to develop their love of reading. Primary classes have reading areas within their classrooms relative to their ability and have access to the school library as appropriate. Each Secondary class has subject related literature available. There are regular trips to local libraries to support learners to engage with reading.

## Resources

Reading schemes – Rocket Phonics

Adapted resources for pupils with vision impairments, dyspraxia, dyslexia etc.

Big books, library books, multisensory books, reading for pleasure resources

Literacy/National Strategy word lists and resources

Technology e.g., photo story, iPad, i-postcards

Small Steps to Success

## **Writing**

### Objectives

- To teach systematic fine motor skills; grasp, letter formation, handwriting.
- To teach a range of spelling strategies.
- To teach grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- To develop compositional skills and encourage the enjoyment of writing.
- To teach functional writing skills including email and text messaging.

Throughout school all teachers are aware that writing is an essential skill which is an integral element of all subjects and activities. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide opportunities to develop and generalise individual learners' writing skills.

Letter formation is taught alongside reading and follows the Rocket Phonics reading programme and daily practice. Writing in Tor View is taught sequentially, via the small steps to success framework and staff are aware of the range of needs of the learners.

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently relative to their ability. For learners with physical disabilities then we follow OT programs to support their writing. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

### Writing Steps

Pre-teaching: Learning to learn skills – Can a learner sit at a table and focus on a task for up to 5 minutes.

Step 1: Develop fine motor ability using adaptive resources to support finger strength with reference to OT advice(s) where appropriate. (Doh disco, clay, Play-Doh, fine motor activities)

Step 2: Introduce a writing tool. (sand drawing, paint, chalk, crayons pen, pencils etc.)

Step 3: Encourage an appropriate pencil grip

3a: Palmer-supinate grasp

3b: Palmer or digital-pronate grasp

3c: Four finger and thumb grip

3d: Static quadruped or tripod grip

3e: Mature/ Dynamic tripod grip

Step 4: Using a functional grip relative to their ability, develop writing stamina. If a learner is unable to grip a pencil, then alternative recording methods to be utilised to encourage writing.

Step 5:

5a: Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place

5b: Form capital letters

5c: Form digits 0-9

5d: Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e., letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practice these.

Step 6: Access to a pen/ appropriate writing resource (keyboard/ touch screen).

Learners demonstrating the potential to become a cursive hand writer whilst in the primary department will be taught the 'towards cursive' style within the letter family groups (please see examples in appendices). Once learners have reached secondary if they are producing legible text then composition will take priority.

Alongside handwriting learners will be encouraged to compose texts using word processing packages, mobile phones, emails, social networking sites etc. All computer-generated teaching materials should use the font Sassoon Primary or Comic Sans.

Learners also learn to spell the high frequency word list and if appropriate, the statutory word lists from the National Curriculum 2016 for Years 1 - 6. Pupils use flashcards and multi-sensory methods to learn these words. Spelling tests and homework are set on a weekly basis linked to these words. An annual spelling test is carried out each May to determine the spelling age of each learner – we use Daniel and Diack's spelling test.

### Resources

High and medium frequency wordlists for spelling tests

Towards cursive – letter formation sheets

Tactile resources e.g., plastic letters, sand tray

Writing implements e.g., gripper pencils, non-slip mats, angled writing boards

Handwriting books

Adapted keyboard and mouse

Spelling Made Easy

Sassoon CR Primary/ Comic Sans

Small Steps to Success

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