The Polesworth School
ENSURING EXCELLENCE

Literacy Policy

Member of leadership team with lead responsibility for oversight and update of policy	FOR
Approved at SLT	June 2025
Approved at School Standards Committee (SSC)	July 2025
Policy review cycle	Annually
Policy review date	June 2026

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COMMUNITY ACADEMIES TRUST

Introduction

For the purposes of this policy, 'literacy' is defined as reading, writing, speaking and listening.
The latest data from The DFE, Survey of Adult Skills 2023 PIAAC, concluded that 18% of the adult population are functionally illiterate; early research predicts that the pandemic has had a further negative effect on literacy levels across the UK. In their 2024 report, the NLT concluded that adults with low literacy levels earned, on average, 12% less which in turn leads to a life expectancy 17 years lower than average.

Aims

The Polesworth school aims to:

- Incrementally improve the literacy of all.
- Ensure all school leavers are functionally literate.
- Involve the whole school community in literacy development.
- Develop reading programmes to ensure all students are working at or exceeding their chronological age expectations.

In understanding the significant impact of low-level literacy on life outcomes, this policy promotes the view that it is the responsibility of all staff in our school community to use every opportunity to teach, develop and improve explicit literacy skills of students. The curriculum and how that curriculum is accessed is a priority consideration for all staff, therefore literacy is taught explicitly across the curriculum.

Reading strategy (summary)

This strategy aims to develop the ability of all students to decode and comprehend increasingly complex texts to unlock achievement. Please refer to appendix 2 for the reading policy in full.

- Priority 1 – Encouraging academic reading and reading for pleasure.
- Priority 2 – Improving students word depth knowledge.

The above priorities involve work toward four strategic areas.

Strand	Entry criteria
Reading independently for pleasure	Universal offer (includes targeted reciprocal reading in Tutor Time Carousel sessions)
English curriculum	Universal offer (tailored to the needs of students in the class)

Reading across the wider curriculum	Universal offer (identification and impact informed by termly assessments)
Reading to decode.	Universal offer. The Tutor Time Literacy Carousel will focus on all eight strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope (appendix 3) with particular emphasis given to Vocabulary, Language Structure and Verbal Reasoning.
Targeted support for weakest readers	Targeted offer

Methodology

This policy uses the Education Endowment Foundation report, 'Developing Literacy in Secondary Schools' as it's foundation (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4). This report concludes with seven recommendations:

1. Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum.
2. The concept of a subject lens, subject specific vocabulary, textual structures and conventions.

3. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject.
4. Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary should be explicitly defined, spoken aloud, modelled and scaffolded. Etymology and morphology should be included where appropriate alongside simple definitions, examples and non-examples.

5. Develop students' ability to read academically complex texts.

6. Texts should be carefully chosen and appropriately framed. Reading should be modelled, scaffolded and linked to existing knowledge.

7. Break down complex writing tasks.

8. A variety of approaches should be used to scaffold, model and break down complex writing tasks with the aim of increasing fluency.

9. Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject.

10. Reading should be used to develop students' understanding of structure, features, aims and conventions of high quality writing.

11. Provide opportunities for structured talk.

12. High quality talk should be modelled, structured, scaffolded and linked to vocabulary acquisition.

Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students.
Well-chosen screening and assessment processes will generate data enabling students to be carefully matched to well-structured interventions with clearly definable, well-monitored outcomes.

Alongside literacy taught in subject lessons, a highly structured 'reciprocal reading' curriculum will be centrally planned and delivered by tutors weekly to further engage all students. The library will act as a hub for 'reading for pleasure' as well as supporting lessons across the curriculum.

Appendix 1 – Literacy Toolkit

This toolkit is indicative rather than exhaustive

1. Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum	• 'Read / write / speak like a …' • Subject identity / lens • Examples of subject experts • Key features of subject literacy • Model subject specific thinking metacognitively
2. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject	• Focus on tier 2 and 3 words • I say, you say • Simple definitions • Words in variety of contexts • Repeating / modelling use of word • Morphology charts / root words / prefixes / suffixes • Etymology • Examples / non-examples • Links to prior learning / other words • Transform is / debate it / use it • Word gradients • Signpost synonyms / antonyms • Combine with spelling instruction • Use graphic organisers / icons
3. Develop students' ability to read academically complex texts	• Promote reading for pleasure • Link to prior knowledge • Identify key texts in SOL • Pre-teach vocabulary • Scaffold SOL with icons or paragraph breaks / word diagrams • Scaffold annotation of complex texts • Frame texts as challenging • Read complex texts aloud rapidly • Engage students with focussed questions – explain / re-phrase / predict / question / clarify / summarise • Promote wider academic reading • Focus on fluency • Tutor Time Literacy Carousel
4. Break down complex writing tasks	• Pre-writing activities – activate prior knowledge / vocabulary • Planning / monitoring / evaluation • Scaffolding and modelling / sentence strips • Sentence stems / word lists • Collaborative / paired writing • Model metacognitively

	• Word / sentence / text level scaffolding and instruction • Build writing stamina • Command / key word teaching • Planning strategies including graphic organisers / word diagrams • Monitor and review including peer assessment • Model and provide plenty of opportunities to practise the writing process e.g. planning, writing, revising, editing and proof-reading • Provide opportunities to practise different styles of writing e.g. summarising, making judgements, arguing etc. • Modelling metacognitively • Celebrate success
5. Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject	• Frame reading and writing as intrinsically linked • Use of exemplars • Recognise conventions /features / aims • Teach SPaG focussed on meaning • Write before reading – predictions / prior knowledge / expectations • Read before writing - • Annotate • Create summaries of texts • Create checklists • Anticipate common misconceptions – show how writers have avoided them • Actively teach spelling in word groups • Instruct on grammar in context
6. Provide opportunities for structured talk	• Tutor Time Literacy Carousel • Sentence stems / scaffolding • Word lists • Plan specific, sequenced activities in a variety of groupings • Model metacognitively / show subject experts • Structure listening tasks – triads / reporter / feedback / listening grids • Concept cartoons • Diagram / sequence / rank / • Premise / question • Word games • 'Accountable talk' – knowledge / reasoning / community • Podcast / radio announcement • Harkness • Explaining narratives / processes

	• Model metacognitive / self talk • Open questions • 'Say it again better' • Give precise feedback
7. Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students	• High quality screening: reading age, fluency, phonics (as appropriate) • Use of standard scores and percentile ranks • Contextualise and triangulate results with other data • Tiered support with clear objectives • Train intervention staff • Impact of interventions monitored closely

In addition to the EEF recommendations, in line with research outcomes, we seek to promote 'Reading for Pleasure':

- Provide a broad range of age-appropriate reading material to borrow in the library including newspapers and magazines.
- Every student should carry a book / appropriate reading material. Take opportunities to discuss reading material with students.
- Encourage staff to read children / teen literature.
- Provide enriching experiences through author visits and Warwickshire Library Service Book Awards.

Appendix 2 – Reading Strategy

Strategy aim

This strategy aims to develop the ability of all students to decode and comprehend increasingly complex texts to unlock achievement.
Priority 1 – Encouraging academic reading and reading for pleasure.
Priority 2 – Improving students word depth knowledge.
Communication and engagement

Stakeholder	Communication
Students	The importance of reading will be regularly revisited throughout the wider school curriculum.
Parents/carers	Launch of reading strategy through a general letter followed by reading scores being included on reports and specific letters informing them about the targeted intervention that their child is scheduled to receive.
Staff	Literacy and reading will feature heavily in Tutor Period Carousel of activities. Staff will be offered coaching and modelling of effective reciprocal reading.

Summary of strategy

Strand	Entry criteria	Actions	Assessment of impact	Lead
Reading independently and for pleasure	Universal offer	• Reading competitions and challenges • Well-resourced library which reflects student voice • Reciprocal reading during tutor sessions	Standardised reading assessment – GL Assessment NGRT Student voice Numbers engaging with extra opportunities and competitions/	HOB and Librarian

		• Extra opportunities such as book clubs, reading mentors, author visits and book fairs.	challenges	
English curriculum	Universal offer (tailored to the needs of the students in the class)	• Carefully chosen texts to represent different views, times and cultures to widen students background knowledge • Key skills for reading revisited throughout the year • Vocabulary is deliberately taught	Standardised reading assessment – GL Assessment NGRT completed Proportion of students achieving at or beyond the expected standard on internal assessment and GL Assessment Progress Test (English)	HDK
Reading across the wider curriculum	Universal offer	• Reading and wider literacy consistently embedded within curriculum plans and schemes of learning • Tier 2 and tier 3	Standardised reading assessment – GL Assessment NGRT completed Proportion of students achieving at	HOB/ORE /FOR

		vocabulary is identified and explicitly taught • Texts used in lessons to be read by expert readers • Tutor time literacy carousel to explicitly teach reading / decoding / etymology and subject specific vocabulary.	or beyond their expected standard on internal assessments, external assessments (where applicable)	
Additional support for weaker readers	Targeted offer	Some reading concerns – SAS – 89-100 • Reading data for these pupils will be highlighted in SIMS marksheets in amber to make teachers aware. • Highlighted on seating plans • Reading accuracy intervention	Standardised reading assessment – GL Assessment NGRT completed	ROS/HOB / QUI

		Multiple reading concerns – SAS 74-88 • Administer further assessment to diagnose reading difficulties including accuracy, comprehension and rate • Reading data for these pupils will be highlighted in SIMS marksheets in amber to make teachers aware. • Lexonic Advance intervention in Year 7. • Highlighted on seating plans Significant reading concerns – SAS 74 or below • Reading data for these pupils will be highlighted in SIMS marksheets in red to make teachers aware.		

		• Precision teaching at single word level • Speech language and communication intervention • Lexonic Leap intervention in Year 7. • Paired reading If there is a significant difference between sentence completion and passage comprehension in NRGT we will screen for dyslexic tendencies. Where tendencies are identified a 1:1 DST (Dylsexia Screening Test) will be conducted.		