

Literacy Policy

Ixworth High School

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1. Overview

The Sapientia Education Trust recognises that Literacy in schools consists of the well-contacted and supported interplay of reading, writing and oracy. Reading at – or beyond – a student’s chronological reading age (CRA) unlocks the curriculum and improves individual and school outcome and progress therefore it is the bedrock of the Trust’s policy.

The Secondary School Literacy Policy is rooted in academic research, Ofsted’s ‘Quality of Education’ judgment criteria, the ITT Inspection handbook (2022), Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools (2019) and Teacher Standards (2011), in which teachers are expected to, *“demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of Standard English, whatever the teacher’s specialist subject.”*

The Trust recognises that whilst reading must be at the core of the Literacy Policy, writing and oracy are also fundamental to Literacy and a clear and strategic approach to the promotion of writing and oracy are inherent in the Literacy Policy.

Furthermore, the role of Oracy is seen as increasingly important in students communication skills which is further reinforced by the Institute of Student Employers who highlight that a quarter of employers feel students levels of Oracy are impacting on their success.

2. Section 1: The Sapientia Literacy Policy framework:

Schools audit annually according to the 'bucket model' (appendix 1) where:

- a. Bucket 1 = reading intervention/s (how, when, who + appropriate assessment trackers)
- b. Bucket 2 = reading culture – including *generic* reading (eg strategic reading initiatives across the school) and *disciplinary* reading (consistency in the way teachers read and are read to)
- c. Bucket 3 = reading extension and challenge, including reading for knowledge. This bucket extends beyond reading and includes oracy and writing

At the end of each academic year, Literacy Leads in each Secondary will be required to complete and submit a 2 page document (appendix 2) RAG rating Literacy development and providing Trustees with additional information concerning interventions as well as tracking links between students' literacy and absence/behaviour.

1. **Schools test (and track) all incoming students to the school for their CRA and share this information so that it can be put on seating plans and used by staff as part of the school's disciplinary and generic reading approach.**

- a. There are clear processes for capturing incoming year 7s, with all students undergoing Bedrock tests in the first half term of school.
- b. CRA is captured twice annually for all year groups, once in the first half term and the second prior to the Easter break.
- c. Incoming students across all year groups have their CRA determined when they join the school.
- d. The Literacy Lead is responsible for the collation of whole-school tracking and should be able to use their in-school systems to report to the Trust on the numbers of (and progress of) T1-3+ readers. It is expected that T3/3+ readers are monitored at least termly.

2. **Schools share a Trust-wide common language regarding reading ability and RAG rate accordingly on a seating plan (there a Trust wide expectation that all staff have access to reading age information and that this is updated post each set of tests), specifically:**

- a. Tier 1 (green) – on or above chronological reading age
- b. Tier 2 (amber) – below chronological reading age by up to 18 months
- c. Tier 3 (red) – below chronological reading age by 18months- 2.5 years (group and/or individual intervention)
- d. Tier 3+ (red +) below chronological reading age by in excess of 2.5 years (group and individual intervention)

3. Schools have a clear Assessment and intervention processes in place for Tier 3 readers and mechanisms to track the impact of those intervention strategies.

Literacy leads and their SLT lead are clear on the level and type of intervention/s being undertaken, how progress is tracked and work with the Trust to QA them.

4. All Trust Secondary Schools have a *generic reading* offer to students

Each school has the autonomy to decide how this is delivered, but twice a week is the minimum. This could be ERIC, DEAR and/or via Strategic reading. It must be regular and consistent - and form part of the whole school QA/ learning walks. School literacy leads are responsible for working with their SLT and the Trust Literacy Lead to QA literacy, promote and embed generic reading - and train staff to deliver it appropriately:

- Modelling reading in Tutor time, lessons and assemblies.
- Awareness of CRA of those who offer to read
- Never putting a child 'on the spot' (i.e. no 'reading round the class')
- Associated reward system for those that record the reading they do, both inside and outside of school – this is located in PEP booklets and monitored by Tutors.
- Expectation that subject vocabulary is discussed (e.g. fluency)
- Regular reading lessons are provided by the English department for KS3 students

5. All Trust Secondary Schools have a *disciplinary reading* offer to all students.

Each school has clear protocols shared with staff via appropriate training that reiterates that all staff are teachers of reading. Moreover, *when reading occurs there is a clear way in which it is done across the school*, meaning that all staff take the opportunity to read in the same way. Where there is reading, the expectation is:

1. The teacher reads, modelling fluency and picking out key/tricky vocabulary (I do)
2. There is the opportunity to re-read what has been read (we do)
3. There is the opportunity to re-read what has been read (you do)

Note that just one of (2) and (3) might be utilized, though both could be.

6. It is the responsibility of the school's Literacy Lead, negotiated with the Head/SLT, to ensure that the school provides appropriate training to any member of staff (or students) who provide reading support to students (Red and Red +) as part of your in-school intervention (including older reading buddies):

- An "I read, you read" approach must be used
- Read to punctuation, fluency, expression – ideally there is a 'pointer card' of key reading vocabulary eg expression, fluency etc etc
- Ideally 'short bursts' of reading, followed by contextual questions to check for understanding.
- Always positive/praise

- No more than 15 minutes in total
- 1-2-1 feedback at the end of each session; WWW, EBI (area to focus on for next session)

7. WRITING

It is expected that each Sapientia Secondary School will:

- Develop and share whole-school expectations for teaching writing which exploits the fact that reading and writing are reciprocal and speaking and writing are generative in nature. Share the whole-school expectations with all staff – all departments should work together on writing initiatives as well as reading initiatives.
- Give pupils the opportunity to write for a range of media platforms: social media, websites and multimodal writing. This gives them the motivational power of the anticipated audience response as well as the skills for writing in a technological age.
- Ensure all staff have seen samples of Year 6 writing at the expected level in a range of text types so that they have high expectations of pupils at the start of Key Stage 3.
- Develop teachers' pedagogical subject knowledge, reminding all that writing is a tool for recording thought and developing content knowledge.
- Encourage subject areas to use curriculum time for extended writing through a process for teaching writing, including modelling, planning, editing and redrafting to produce writing of 'quality'.
- Explicitly teach grammar in context using a consistent approach to correcting errors. The 2014 national curriculum KS3 English grammar glossary and spelling and vocabulary appendices outline what is to be taught.

8. ORACY

It is expected that each Sapientia Secondary School will:

- Ensure that all teaching staff are aware that Talk for learning (oracy) is an essential part of developing and embedding literacy, recognising that high-quality classroom talk is essential to pupils' thinking and learning. It is also linked to improvements in reading and writing, and overall attainment.
- Support teachers to develop and embed a repertoire of teacher-to-pupil and pupil-to-pupil talk and questioning, and structure tasks to develop depth of thought in learning.
- Acknowledge and implement Key policy and research on oracy, including The national curriculum in England: Key stages 3 and 4 framework document (December 2014), DfE: "Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English. They should learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication. They should be taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. This will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing" (p. 10).
- Actively raise the status and priority of oracy in education and set out shared expectations for oracy across the schools.

9. Quality assurance of Literacy

The QA assurance of Literacy (reading, writing, oracy) forms part of the usual QA of lessons undertaken at the school by SLT and Trust Central Staff. Literacy is one of the focus points for teaching and learning.

Literacy Leads should also undertake a half termly learning walk with a clear focus: e.g. of generic reading.

10. CPD

Literacy updates and training are provided via the Literacy Lead as part of the school INSET. The Literacy lead is responsible, along with the Head, for ensuring that their own training needs are met.

3. Section 2: Roles and responsibilities of personnel in each Sapientia Secondary:

1. Role and remit of the school's leader of Literacy

- Literacy leads should have an appropriate knowledge of literacy pedagogy to best work with other school leads, Trust Central Education Team and their SLT to explicitly develop students' talk, reading and writing.
- Literacy leads should work independently and collectively to ensure their knowledge of the statutory and advisory frameworks containing Literacy guidance are acted on appropriately and that the implementation of policy in their school adheres as far as possible to best practice and is used to review practice and set priorities for improving literacy throughout the school.
- Actively promote disciplinary reading to SLT and Heads of Department: Disciplinary literacy should be promoted, with all members of staff understanding its importance. This can be achieved by giving responsibility to subject leaders for developing "literacy for learning" in their own curriculum areas.
- Help QA Literacy across the school, especially generic literacy
- Advise Heads/SLT on the implementation of literacy across the school and liaise effectively with other stakeholder leaders such as the SENDCo and Co-ordinator of extended curriculum.
- Advise and guide on the school's assessment frameworks that establish students' baselines and set targets using regional and national data rather than just cohort data.
- Work with senior leaders to promote Literacy skills development, which should be embedded in teaching, learning and curriculum plans. In developing classroom practice, leaders should make effective use of specialists such as the literacy coordinator and lead practitioners to support subject teams. Teachers can all learn from effective practice in other areas of the curriculum.

- Literacy leaders should manage and resource a literacy intervention programme for target pupils working below age-related expectations. This will require regular monitoring to ensure effective use of additional funding.

2. Role and remit of Heads, the SLT, Heads of Department and the SENDCo

- Schools should have a whole-school focus on tier 2 (generic, academic) as well as tier 3 (subject-specialist) words. These terms should be displayed in classrooms to ensure support for students with the use of subject and academic terminology.
- Secondary schools must identify and support pupils who are struggling to read and write by diagnosing specific needs and implementing appropriate interventions. These are likely to tackle difficulties with decoding and reading fluency and may include consolidating understanding of synthetic phonics. Diagnosing writing difficulties, including handwriting and spelling, is also recommended. Specific support for pupils with English as an additional language at different proficiency levels may also be required

3. Role and remit of teaching staff

- Teachers should develop students' metacognitive awareness of reading skills, thus enabling them to tackle longer and more challenging material within the curriculum.
- Staff should introduce texts in different ways – for example, reading aloud, oral reading by students, audio recordings or reciprocal reading.
- Reading, writing and speaking should be seen as mutually enhancing processes. Talking about texts before, during and after reading helps to consolidate ideas and thinking whilst serving as a rehearsal for writing.
- Teachers should receive high-quality professional development to support their explicit teaching of reading skills such as skimming, scanning and reading for detail (including on screens) in subject lessons; research strategies such as using the index and glossary, identifying key points and making notes should also be commonly seen.
- Direct vocabulary instruction should be part of normal pedagogical practice, and include paying attention to morphology, pronunciation, spelling and usage of unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Teachers should be familiar with multiple methods for teaching vocabulary, including online commercial resources such as Bedrock, Lexonik, Quizlet, Babbel and Duolingo.
- Students should read texts across the curriculum that have an appropriate level of vocabulary so that they are not overwhelmed by unknown words, but they should also be challenged to learn (or refine) the meanings of words in the text.
- Students should be encouraged to work out the meaning of unknown words in a text by using the context to develop and test hypotheses about a word's meaning.
- Students should be confident users of online and text-based dictionaries, glossaries and word lists to support their vocabulary development.