

The Sir John Colfox Academy Literacy Policy

“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right.... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realise his or her full potential.”

(Kofi Annan 1997)

Literacy rationale

At The Sir John Colfox Academy, we recognise that:

1. Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. By developing literacy skills in learners we are providing practitioners with opportunities to make effective use of this powerful tool for learning, within and across the curriculum areas and subjects.
2. Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar, spelling and the spoken word, are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum.
3. Being literate is central to an individual's development and well-being in our society. It increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life and lays the foundations for lifelong learning, encompassed in the school literacy motto '*Literacy for life*'.
4. Literacy skills are essential in the developing of critical and creative thinking and competence in speaking and listening, reading and writing underpin important personal, inter-personal and team-working skills.
5. The teaching of, and whole-school approach to literacy across the curriculum, is key to the raising of standards in the school.
6. All teachers are teachers of literacy and that in their subject teaching they have a responsibility in the promoting and teaching of language and literacy development.
7. Language is the main medium we use for teaching, learning and developing thinking, so it is at the heart of teaching and learning.
8. Additional guidance in the Inspection Framework set out by Ofsted (2011) is central to our school policy and in addition, The Sir John Colfox Academy is committed to the challenge and ambitions set out by the recent report 'Improving literacy in secondary schools: a shared responsibility' (OfSTED 2013).
9. This policy is an integral part of the whole curriculum and that its content and approach is adopted consistently and systematically across the curriculum.

Whole-school literacy mission statement:

'At The Sir John Colfox Academy we aim to develop the knowledge, understanding and ability of our pupils, to their full potential, by providing them with opportunities to develop the requirements of literacy within a broad and balanced approach to the teaching of oracy, reading and writing across the curriculum.'

We aim to help students to:

- ⇒ read and write with confidence, enjoyment, fluency and understanding – orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor, evaluate and correct;
- ⇒ develop an increasing working knowledge of Standard English;
- ⇒ have an interest in words and their meanings, developing a growing working vocabulary in spoken and written forms;
- ⇒ develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical thinking
- ⇒ be able to communicate effectively;
- ⇒ understand a range of text types and genres and be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the task or situation;
- ⇒ grow in confidence as they develop their literacy skills;
- ⇒ have a suitable technical vocabulary to explain their thinking, articulate responses and communicate effectively;
- ⇒ enable all students to gain access to all aspects of the curriculum diet;
- ⇒ achieve recognised GCSE and A level qualifications in English Language, English Literature and other language based subjects.

1. Literacy and staff training

- At The Sir John Colfox Academy the School Literacy Improvement Plan (LIP) has been formed to support literacy development across the curriculum. Part of the LIP's drive is to ensure staff have the correct knowledge, skills and tools to deliver and develop literacy effectively in lessons, and that pupils are aware of the importance of literacy for learning.
- As such, The Sir John Colfox Academy is committed to providing whole-school Literacy INSET training for staff from varying curriculum areas on a rolling programme.
- Literacy is a key theme for skills' days at KS3, with each year group receiving support in the teaching of literacy skills to raise awareness of the school's approach to the teaching of literacy.

2. The learning environment

- Each classroom in the school has a designated area for literacy resources, which include text types, connective phrases, the whole-school literacy marking codes, reading strategies and writing frames. Teaching staff use this area to encourage learners in the application of literacy within their subjects.

- Specific students in year seven are provided with an enriched literacy programme (four periods per fortnight), where they are encouraged to develop their writing skills and read a variety of texts for enjoyment.
- SEN pupils are supported 1:1 or in small groups, using a range of literacy support packages including: Read&Write Gold, Phonics programmes and spelling programmes, as well as handwriting support, speech and language packages. Electronic exam readers or support staff are used to help students read in GCSE exams.
- A dedicated Literacy, English and Reading intervention group has been timetabled in Year Seven.
- Reading age data is released to all staff for students in year 7. This data is used to implement planning for specific literacy needs

3. **Whole school approach to assessment**

- We have implemented a whole-school literacy marking policy, which all teaching staff use to assess and improve written English. See below.

Marking of literacy errors:

All teachers are responsible for improving pupil literacy. This means the marking of literacy will be evident in all books and folders. In order to keep marking focussed, where errors are numerous, teachers are to use their judgement to decide on the salient features to correct.

1. Teachers identify and correct spellings of key subject vocabulary and/or frequently used words such as homophones; 'there' and 'their', for example, which are misspelled frequently.

2. It is expected that poor sentence structure or repeated punctuation errors are also highlighted or corrected, for example, incorrect use of capital letters or punctuation to end or link sentences. Arrows should be used to indicate where any incorrect word order has been used.

3. In order to promote consistency, a 'common approach' to the marking of errors should be used, using the following symbols during marking;

SP = spelling

P = punctuation

C = misuse of the capital letter

// = new paragraph

?? = not clear

^ = something is missing

O = encircle a full stop if it needs to be replaced with a comma

□ = place a square around a comma if it needs to be replaced by a full stop.

4. Provide time in class or during homework, for students to correct the grammar, spelling or punctuation errors you have highlighted.

4. **The literacy of boys**

At The Sir John Colfox Academy we recognise the National issue in this area of education and are committed to the development of boys' literacy through a range of strategies including:

1. AFL teaching approaches across all aspects of the curriculum;

2. Use of the whole-school literacy marking policy to support targeted boys understanding and application of literacy skills in both oral and written work;
3. The teaching of text types and connectives in **All** subject areas to support the extended writing of boys.
4. The reading programme has a number of male role model 'teachers' who promote reading for pleasure on a regular basis and support this aspect of the school's literacy focus.

5. Targets for oracy, reading and writing

To ensure the raising of standards in literacy, The Sir John Colfox Academy is committed to the attainment of the following literacy targets:

Oracy

All students:

- (a) Should value speaking and listening as essential means of communication and learning.
- (b) Should understand the rules and expectations governing speaking and listening across a range of contexts.
- (c) Should learn to listen and carry out instructions.
- (d) Should be encouraged to ask questions as well as answer them.
- (e) Should be encouraged to explore and develop ideas with others, through paired and group discussion.
- (f) Should be encouraged to express ideas, feelings and opinions confidently, and to treat other students' ideas. Feelings and opinions with respect.
- (g) Should choose appropriate forms and registers to suit particular purposes and audiences.
- (h) Should take part in structured paired, group and individual activities in which speaking and listening are essential components.

Reading

All students:

- (a) Should be encouraged and supported to become fluent and confident readers.
- (b) Should be supported and taught secure reading strategies for coping with reading a range of texts, including non-fiction media and ICT.
- (c) Should be able to read with understanding, exploring ideas through inference and deduction.
- (d) Should be aware of the language of reading – decoding, comprehension, location, deduction, inference, skimming, scanning, predicting, visualising, empathising, questioning and reading backwards and forwards - to support the reading process.
- (e) Should be encouraged by staff to read for pleasure.
- (f) Should have access to a range of books and reading materials that are up-to-date, relevant and balanced in content.
- (g) Should learn to be critical readers, questioning what they read in books and in the media.
- (h) Should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate texts through termly book reviews in both their English curriculum lessons and as part of the school's reading programme in year seven.

Writing

All students:

- (a) Should use writing to plan, draft, re-draft. Proof-read and organise their written work.
- (b) Should use legible and clear handwriting to support the presentation of work.
- (c) Should structure their writing appropriately, using sentences, paragraphs and headings effectively.
- (d) Should be supported in writing through universal frames for writing.
- (e) Should have ready access to dictionaries, thesauri and departmental vocabulary lists and be encouraged to use them.
- (f) Should learn to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- (g) Should be encouraged to control writing through use and application of effective punctuation including: capital letters, full stops, commas, exclamation, speech and question marks.
- (h) Should be encouraged to use spelling rules to support effective writing.
- (i) Should be provided with helpful models of particular kinds of writing.
- (j) Should be encouraged to discuss and reflect on their writing (DIRT).
- (k) Should learn to compose text on the computer screen, where appropriate.

6. **Targets for assessment**

As a school, The Sir John Colfox Academy is committed to the raising of literacy standards through assessment. As such, we will:

- (a) Make use of diagnostic cognitive, reading and spelling tests at each Key Stage 3 to identify students' progress and needs.
- (b) Use regular assessments of literacy skills, in all subject areas, to inform decisions about students' progress and needs.
- (c) Set literacy targets for students, based on regular formative assessment of their progress.
- (d) Develop marking strategies across departments, which will inform, develop and encourage students' literacy.
- (e) Include assessments of literacy skills in reports to parents.
- (f) Use the key principles of the Literacy Improvement Plan and Work Scrutiny Review to ensure consistency in assessment and the literacy approach.

Monitoring of the Whole-School Literacy policy:

- The importance of monitoring the policy is recognised by all teachers in the school and **ALL** members of staff are expected to be teachers of literacy.
- Senior managers and HODs are responsible for ensuring that departments are working to meet the expectations of this policy and monitoring will be achieved through formal and informal meetings, learning walks, lesson observations, departmental reviews and work scrutiny.
- Heads of Department will be responsible for leading the implementation of the Policy when planning and teaching lessons, and in the devising of Schemes of Work.
- Lucy Wright supports the implementation of this policy through Literacy Reviews and meetings with SLT/HOF/HOD and staff responsible for Literacy.

References

1. Improving literacy in secondary schools: a shared responsibility (OfSTED 2013)
2. Press release: Ofsted Chief Inspector calls for rapid improvement in literacy (Sept 2012)
3. Reading, writing and communication (literacy) - Distance Learning Guidance for Inspectors (OfSTED 2011)
4. Sir John Colfox Assessment Policy (2016)
5. Kofi Annan (UN) International Literacy Day Speech 1997