



Saint GREGORY'S
Bath

Literacy and Oracy Policy

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In Christ we flourish

Section 1 - The St Gregory's Literacy vision

Developing a solid foundation of Literacy and Oracy is the most essential component of education. Having well developed literacy skills enables students to better access the curriculum of **ALL** subject areas, and the subsequent exams, thus improving their overall qualification outcomes.

“Students who enter secondary school without reaching their Age Related Expectations (ARE) in reading only have a 1 in 5 chance of achieving a level 4 in English GCSE. (GL Assessment ‘Read all about it’ 2020)”

However it is important to realise that literacy and oracy are more than just valuable within the school environment. Literacy is a fundamental life skill and the benefits of being able to accurately and fluently read, write, speak and listen cannot be overestimated. Literacy will benefit people greatly as they move through their adult lives, both professionally and personally. Research shows that higher literacy levels affords young people more choices in their lives and careers. Having improved literacy and oracy enables people to apply for new educational or career opportunities, it enables them to learn and develop their skills at a faster rate, it makes people more flexible and adaptable thus more employable and perhaps even more successful.

“Children with poor vocabulary at the age of 5 are twice as likely to be unemployed by the age of 34. (The National Literacy Trust)”

There is also a growing body of evidence that suggests having well developed literacy skills, in particular reading a variety and range of literature for pleasure, helps improve a person's ability to build strong healthy relationships. Research has shown that through reading we broaden our sense of experiences; of different places, people and environments, as well as improving our decision making abilities. Research by Kidd & Castano at the University of California (2013) has suggested that those who regularly read are more likely to develop stronger emotional intelligence and empathy, thus improving their personal relationships.

Reading is also a useful tool for managing mental health. Reading offers an opportunity for people to unwind and become distracted from daily worries. It has been proven to reduce cortisol and stress levels and reading before bed encourages better quality sleep, helping to mitigate against sleep related problems. Indeed a recent study by the National Literacy Trust states those with poor levels of literacy are three times more likely to suffer mental health problems as adults.

Consequently, at St Gregory's we view literacy and oracy as an essential element that underpins the education of all of our students, in all subject areas, and through implicit and targeted delivery helps to create independent, successful, resilient and responsible future global citizens.

Section 2 - Literacy Goals

Having reviewed the feedback from the most recent Ofsted report in 2022, and with a renewed focus on the importance of literacy as a cornerstone in education, we have identified five main areas to develop over the coming years.

1. To Bridge the gap between KS2 and KS3

- a) To invite all prospective Year 6 students to St Gregory's in the summer term as part of our transition programme and to ensure an experience of an English lesson is an essential part of their first visit with us.
- b) To conduct an assessment of incoming Year 7 students' literacy and oracy skills, particularly their ability to read and spell, to initially identify areas and individuals requiring improvement.
- c) To cross reference this incoming assessment with data from SATS, CATS and primary school feedback to more accurately select individuals in need of intervention.
- d) To provide targeted support to students who do not meet their Age Related Expectation of reading through our Read Write Inc intervention programme. The programme is dynamic and focussed on developing the fundamental skills of literacy such as the knowledge and use of phonics and how to segment and blend in order to improve reading fluency and comprehension. Students receive lessons three times per week for 25 minutes. Students are set in small groups, in pairs or individually dependent on ability, progress is reviewed termly and groups re-organised as necessary. A carefully matched text will be read across the week to enable students to build their reading fluency, comprehension, ability to read aloud and to develop their enjoyment of the text. Where possible, students remain with the RWI programme until they have completed the course at level 26.
- e) To implement a programme of peer support between our targeted Year 7 students and our sixth form students. This involves a weekly, one to one, guided reading session designed to improve reading fluency and build confidence when reading aloud. The reading partner scheme is held during morning registration in a quiet and calm environment outside of the tutor room and runs from terms 1-4. Volunteers from both Year 12 and 13 are given explicit instruction in the aim of the provision and are monitored weekly to ensure quality partnerships and interactions develop. Subject to the number of sixth form volunteers, the reading partner scheme aims to support all Year 7 students whose reading falls below Age Related Expectations.

2. To help narrow the gap between reading ages and Age Related Expectations at KS3

- a) Utilising the reading and spelling test data, CATS, SATS and primary school feedback, students are selected to be part of the Core Plus intervention group which occurs in lieu of a modern foreign language and continues throughout KS3.
- b) Students are taught a bespoke literacy and numeracy curriculum by dedicated specialist staff. The curricula of both subjects links to and supports the KS2 and KS3 national curriculum in Maths and English. The thematic approach of the Core plus curriculum also incorporates cross curricula links aimed at developing both literacy skills and content knowledge in a wide spectrum of school subjects such as Geography, History, Science and RE.
- c) Parental engagement is recognised as key to the success of the Core Plus programme and all parents of participants are invited to attend an information evening which runs concurrently with the Year 7 tutor evening.
- d) Assessment opportunities are embedded into the KS3 curriculum to allow for progress to be monitored in both literacy and numeracy and these are reported to parents via the progress reports in line with the schools assessment policy.
- e) A new KS4 Core Plus intervention group will occur in the academic year 2024/25 in lieu of the triple award for Science. Students are selected by reviewing progress data in Science and Maths and will develop their literacy and numeracy skills three times per two week cycle.
- f) In the KS4 Core Plus students will either take part in more traditional English and Maths study sessions led by the English and Maths faculty or a more bespoke 'Core Plus' curriculum with a focus on more fundamental literacy, numeracy and life skills.

3. To help narrow the gap between EAL and non EAL students at KS3

- a) To ensure all central records of EAL students are accurate the initial parental questionnaire asks parents to identify both the first language, spoken in the first five years of their life, and the home language spoken by the incoming child.
- b) Using this information an internal decision is made to decide if the student qualifies as an EAL student, details of which are then added to and stored on SIMS.
- c) The EAL status of each student is then cross referenced with any SEN needs, Pupil Premium status and reading age to identify students that are the most in need of support. Colleague feedback has also been useful in identifying those in need.
- d) Those students identified as most in need are enrolled in an EAL intervention programme led by an external TEFL specialist. The sessions last one hour and are timetabled once per fortnight. Students are initially assessed by the specialist using the 'Common European Framework of References for Languages' (CEFR) system and sorted into two groups based on ability. The programme is dynamic and movement between groups occurs depending on progress. Once students have successfully reached level C1- Advanced, they can understand a wide range of demanding, longer clauses, and recognise implicit meaning. At this point they will no longer need to attend the intervention.
- e) Those students identified as EAL may also be enrolled into the RWI and KS3 Core Plus groups depending on their level of need.

4. To create a culture of reading for pleasure

- a) Links have been made between the school rewards policy and literacy with the creation of a new Literacy Point. This House point can be awarded by any member of teaching or non-teaching staff and is awarded for excellent achievement, effort or progress shown in reading, writing, speaking or listening.
- b) To incentivise students to collect Literacy Points, a Literacy raffle is included in the Name and Praise assemblies held every two terms. One random student from each year group is awarded an Amazon voucher ranging in value depending on whether they have achieved 10-20, 21-30, or 30+ Literacy Points.
- c) A whole school 'Reading Challenge' has also been introduced. Students are encouraged to read any genre of age appropriate fiction or non-fiction and record each book read on a reading tracker. The challenge is divided into three tiers, Bronze – one book read, Silver – five books read and Gold – 10 books read. Upon completion of each tier students are awarded a reward token of their choice such as the ability to skip one homework or collect 10 additional Literacy points. They are also entered into an end of year Reading Challenge raffle where one student will receive a literacy focussed reward such as theatre tickets. Students who successfully complete the silver and gold levels will also receive a silver or gold 'Top Reader' St Gregory's bespoke badge.
- d) To aid with the reading challenge and to promote reading for fun each faculty will provide a suggested reading list for KS3 and KS4 based around their area. Each suggested text is chosen to inspire students to want to read and comes with a brief synopsis of the book. The suggested reading lists are available on the school website and reviewed annually.
- e) Each faculty has also been encouraged to develop a dedicated 'Literacy Corner'. These literacy spaces are stocked with subject related literature, some of which are linked to the exam specifications but many of which are fiction and designed to inspire young readers to explore and develop their love and mastery of the subject. Each literacy space displays the suggested reading list and is open for students to use during breaks and lunch.
- f) Student success stories will be celebrated publically using the 'Headteacher's wall of fame'. Students who have made great progress, achievement or effort with regards to their literacy and oracy will be recognised, as will students who gain the silver or gold award in the reading challenge and students who win the Literacy raffles.

5. *To encourage collaborative staff development on embedding literacy*

- a) All staff share a responsibility for teaching and developing literacy, whatever their subject, and must collectively encourage students to be literate both globally and in their own subject areas.
- b) To encourage a more successful outcome in this regard it is important that all staff are aware of the Literacy Policy and the initiatives the school employs to raise literacy. As a result, literacy updates are regularly embedded in school inset sessions. Similarly literacy and oracy are standing items on both the Curriculum Leaders Group and Senior Leadership Team agendas.
- c) To better understand the quality of literacy and oracy across the school, each faculty conducts a bi-polar analysis of their provision using a bespoke assessment based on the key criteria identified by the 2019 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools guidance report' published by Education Endowment Forum. The results of this assessment allow the school to better understand the current health of literacy and oracy across the school, to better direct and plan future CPD needs and to serve as baseline against which to measure progress.
- d) The school recognises that there is a considerable wealth of expertise in the delivery and teaching of literacy and oracy across the school. To improve the holistic development of literacy and oracy a mind-set of collaborative staff development is emerging. Teachers are encouraged to share best practise by taking part in informal lesson observations and applying new techniques and learning to their own professional behaviours.
- e) In the academic year 2024/25, a new literacy and oracy working group is to be developed. Each faculty will nominate a champion to attend and each term members will identify an area upon which to focus. This pragmatic approach encourages staff to share and implement best practise further and to trial novel ideas in their own classrooms. The group will regularly reconvene to assess the impact of these new practises and then begin to share them with the rest of their faculty.

Section 3 – Literacy and the Catholic life, ethos and values of the school

Opportunities to link these two fundamental aspects of St Gregory's have been taken advantage of. The school provides a weekly opportunity to all students to share in a collective worship experience which is led by the students themselves. Each week has a different focus, provided by the school Chaplain, and these are linked to the liturgical calendar of events.

To improve and further the quality of these sessions a collective worship template has been created, in conjunction with the school Chaplain, which has been made available to all tutors and students via our online learning platform. Students use this template to help plan and deliver their weekly collective worship and its use helps to standardise the quality of provision made across the school.

Tutors are encouraged to review the standard of collective worship in their groups by undertaking observations of their tutees three times per year. The results of these observations are collated and analysed to measure the quality of provision, to better direct and plan future improvements needed and to serve as baseline against which to measure progress.

Section 4 - Key roles and responsibilities

- 1. The role of the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team
 - 1.1. The Governing Body has overall responsibility for reviewing the quality and the implementation of the Literacy Policy across the school.

- 1.2. The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Literacy Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 1.3. SLT and The Governing Body have overall responsibility for reviewing the Literacy Policy annually.
- 1.4. The Headteacher, in conjunction with other members of SLT, has responsibility for directing the vision of literacy and oracy for the school. They will also ensure that it links with the school's SDP and monitor that it is implemented in a successful manner and in accordance with the Literacy Policy.
- 1.5. The Assistant Headteacher in charge of developing literacy and oracy will be responsible for liaising with teachers across all departments to facilitate and monitor the delivery of cross-curricular literacy skills.
- 1.6. The Assistant Headteacher will improve communication with parents/carers by posting key information such as the departmental reading lists, weekly recommended books and upcoming internal and external events on the school's newsletter and website.

2. The role of the teacher

All teachers should ensure they plan opportunities to support or develop literacy and reading in their lessons. In lessons, teachers should:

- 2.1. Act as role models for language use and maintain high expectations for student language in the classroom.
- 2.2. Provide structured opportunities to develop student skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- 2.3. Include opportunities for implicit and at times explicit literacy foci in lessons.
- 2.4. Provide accurate and formative feedback on both written and spoken assessments with a view to improving student's ability to write and speak like a subject specialist.
- 2.5. Explicitly identify, explain and highlight key words, meanings and disciplinary terminology for each new unit of work and encourage their use in both verbal and written answers.
- 2.6. Ensure planned opportunities are included in schemes of work to incorporate key words/terminology in students' work.
- 2.7. Encourage wider reading of the subject area by utilising the KS3 and KS4 reading lists and literacy corners.
- 2.8. Develop student's ability to read and comprehend with written text. This might include: predicting what comes next, inference, questioning, analysing and summarising the texts provided.
- 2.9. Assist students in the organisation of their writing, providing good models and writing frames where appropriate to support students with their writing.
- 2.10. Reinforce basic skills in writing, reminding students of the importance of basic punctuation and paragraphing in the context of their work.
- 2.11. Encourage the development of oracy, both speaking and listening, through planned and impromptu activities in lessons.
- 2.12. Be aware of the different reading abilities of students in their care and any additional literacy needs such as SPLD, SLC.
- 2.13. To utilise this awareness to employ adaptive teaching techniques and strategies for supporting those with the lowest levels of literacy and stretch and challenge those with the highest levels.

- 2.14. Promote extra curricula opportunities for developing literacy and oracy such as National Poetry Day, World Book Day and through organising internal or external events such as competitions (creative writing and public speaking) and visits (Bath Literature Festival).
 - 2.15. Attending any relevant in school CPD training to ensure they are aware of all current literacy schemes and policies.
 - 2.16. Reward students for their attainment, progress and effort with the use of Literacy Points.
 - 2.17. Promote reading for pleasure and raising the profile of reading in accordance with the Reading challenge programme.
3. The role of the Parent/carer
- 3.1 Improving literacy at school is much more effective if supported at home by parents and carers. Parents should be made aware of the approaches used to develop literacy and oracy at St Gregory's and encouraged to discuss and promote these with their children.
 - 3.2 Parents can also help by identifying a dedicated time to sit with their child and ask them to read aloud. This would be especially useful before bed to help set up a healthy routine and limit 'blue light' sources before sleep.
 - 3.3 Parents should approach reading as something that is for pleasure and not a chore.
 - 3.4 Depending on the age of the child, parents can limit reading time to as little as 10 minutes a day to help develop emerging literacy habits.
 - 3.5 Parents should involve themselves in the reading experience of their children. Asking questions about what they are reading; What they think will happen next? Who is their favourite character?
 - 3.6 Parents can help develop literacy skills and vocabulary by choosing 3-5 unfamiliar words each time they read and testing their understanding of the meaning.
 - 3.7 Parents can utilise other forms of media and experiences to develop literacy. Parents could talk about items in the news with their child and encourage them to read other text, newspapers and magazines.
 - 3.8 Parents should engage their child in conversation as much as possible, encouraging them to explore and expand on their answers to help develop their oracy. Parents can further develop this by using a wider range of vocabulary at home in their discussions.

Section 5 - Monitoring and evaluation

1) To Bridge the gap between KS2 and KS3

- a) Year 7 initial reading and spelling age assessment to calculate mean reading age of the cohort and % of students reaching their Age Related Expectations (ARE).
- b) Repetition of the spelling test on whole cohort and of the reading test for those not meeting ARE to measure improvements. Results expressed as a % of cohort reaching ARE.
- c) Specific RWI assessment every other term to measure progress. Students reallocated to new unit of study as necessary. Results recorded on bespoke RWI tracker.
- d) Success of the reading partner scheme measure uptake of sixth form volunteers and numbers of Y7s meeting ARE increasing.
- e) Parental viewpoints and contributions gathered at the 'coffee and cake' sessions.

2) To help narrow the gap between reading ages and Age Related Expectations at KS3

- a) KS3 spelling test on whole cohort and reading test for those not already meeting ARE to measure improvements. Results expressed as a % of cohort reaching ARE.
- b) Assessment opportunities embedded into the KS3 Core plus curriculum to allow for progress to be monitored in both literacy and numeracy. Progress of students monitored by specialist teachers and Assistant Headteacher. Results reported to parents via the progress reports in line with the school's assessment policy.

c) Parental viewpoints and contributions gathered at the 'coffee and cake' sessions.

3) *To help narrow the gap between EAL and non EAL students at KS3*

- a) Initial assessment made by Assistant Headteacher based on first/home language, SEN need, PP status and reading and spelling age to determine students for intervention.
- b) Selected students assessed by the external specialist using the 'Common European Framework of References for Languages' (CEFR) system.
- c) Progress assessment by external specialist on a termly basis, again using the CERF framework.
- d) Attainment, ATL and progress of EAL students also measured and recorded by holistic analysis of progress reports completed by Director of Studies every other term and after KS4 exam sessions.
- e) Parental viewpoints and contributions gathered at the 'coffee and cake' sessions.

4) *To create a culture of reading for pleasure*

- a) Regular monitoring and termly analysis of number of literacy points awarded using Classcharts.
- b) Regular monitoring and termly analysis of raffle entries to reading challenge using Classcharts.
- c) Student success stories shared publicly on Headteacher's wall of fame.
- d) Learning walks to review the literacy corners around the school in different departments.
- e) Student voice questionnaire focusing to gather qualitative data on the impact of changes made to literacy and oracy across the school.
- f) Parental viewpoints and contributions gathered at the 'coffee and cake' sessions.

5) *To encourage collaborative staff development on embedding literacy*

- a) Initial bi-polar analysis of faculty literacy provision using bespoke assessment based on the key criteria identified by the 2019 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools guidance report'.
- b) Learning walks with a focus on how literacy is being supported in lessons.
- c) Peer observation of colleagues to share good practice.
- d) Work sampling at faculty level to ensure literacy policies are being utilised and implemented.
- e) A focus on literacy in the faculty deep dive process with a particular focus on how literacy and oracy are being implicitly and explicitly utilised in classrooms and planned for in Schemes of Work.
- f) A repetition of the faculty bi-polar analysis to measure improvements made due to CPD training, literacy and oracy working group, and collaborative training.
- g) Staff voice survey to assess the value and impact of the changes made to the literacy and oracy policy.

Section 6 – Other linked policies to be read in addition.

The Literacy and Oracy policy 2024 should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies due to the synoptic nature of the initiative. Policies and documents linking to the Literacy and Oracy policy include:

- The School Development Plan (SDP)
- The Teaching and Learning policy
- The Behaviour for Excellence policy
- The Curriculum and Assessment policy
- The British Values policy
- The Equality statement 2023
- The SEND policy
- The Gifted, Talented and Able pupils policy
- The Pupil Premium policy

- The Spiritual and Moral development policy
- The Collective Worship Policy
- The Catholic life of the school policy
- The Worshipping together –Prayer and Liturgy policy