

Summerhill Literacy policy

Focus areas:

Staff roles in Literacy

Whole School Strategies to Improve Literacy

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Teaching vocabulary

Support for Students with Specific Literacy Needs

- Testing
- Phonics and Fresh Start
- Y7 Catch-Up
- Reading Mentors

Marking for Literacy

Disciplinary Literacy

Definition of Literacy

Literacy generates the development of effective skills in communication. To be literate is to be able to listen, speak, read and write at a level necessary to function in education, at work and in society.

Why Literacy Matters

To be literate in its most basic form is to have the ability to read, write, communicate and react to ideas in text and language. Literacy skills provide strong foundations which students build on across subject disciplines. National statistics show a concerning downward spiral with regards to the literacy of the nation. National Literacy Trust statistics suggest that:

- 1 in 5 disadvantaged children in the UK say that they don't have a book of their own.
- The longer children maintain an enjoyment of reading, the greater the benefits are in the classroom.
- Children born into communities with the most serious literacy challenges have some of the lowest life expectancies in England.
- Only half of children in the UK enjoy writing.
- Children who enjoy reading and writing are happier in their lives.
- 1 in 6 adults in the England (16.4%/7.1 million people) have very poor literacy skills.

GL Assessment states: There is a clear correlation between reading age and KS4 outcomes in every subject area. "There is a significant correlation between reading ability and GCSE results across all subjects. This was not just the case in English, but in maths and science too. Indeed, the correlation between good literacy and good outcomes at GCSE was higher in maths (0.63) than in some arts subjects like history and English literature (0.60)."

At Summerhill, we recognise that good literacy is key to academic success across the curriculum. Indeed, a recent EEF evidence review found that the strongest factor affecting pupils' science attainment is how well they understand written texts. In our Whole School Intent, one of the three pillars focuses on ensuring our students are good communicators; we see this as a key part of our vision.

Limited vocabulary and therefore ability to read and understand what is being read is inextricably linked to a child's postcode, along with the pay packet and level of academic qualification of their parents.

A 1990s study showed from birth to 48 months, parents in professional families spoke 32million words more words to their children than parents in welfare families.

Our 'Reading to Learn' strategy will equip students with the ability to meet the demands of a challenging, rigorous curriculum. By interacting meaningfully with subject-specific vocabulary and academic texts, students will become better readers, widen their horizons and develop a lifelong love of reading (both for pleasure and to learn).

Aim of the Literacy Policy

The aim of the Whole-School Literacy Policy is to raise literacy attainment at every level of ability.

Staff work together to integrate the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing into the curriculum to maximise the potential of each pupil.

Objectives

- To recognise the potential of all pupils
- To assess the literacy attainment of all pupils more effectively
- To involve all staff in the development and assessment of literacy in their subject areas
- To devise whole-school strategies and systems for literacy improvement

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Staff Title Role	Literacy responsibility
Senior Leadership Team	The Senior Leadership Team will take an active role in supporting and improving literacy across the school
Subject Leaders	Subject Leaders have the crucial role of leading and supporting literacy activities and initiatives within their teams. Each dept has produced subject glossaries- on the website and shared with parents

Heads of House	Heads of House are expected to take a key role in promoting literacy activities supporting form-tutors with reading during DEAR time and any other form literacy activities
Form Tutors	Form Tutors will promote and model reading in DEAR time; to encourage pupils to take part in a range of reading activities They will also model successful reading, check understanding and encourage competent verbal communication during other weekly sessions
English Department	The English Department will take the bulk of the responsibility in teaching the basic literacy skills within the curriculum and to offer advice and support as appropriate
Learning Support Department	The Learning Support Department is expected to identify pupils with literacy difficulties, to co-ordinate and provide support to improve literacy skills through in-class support.
Teaching Staff	All staff have a responsibility to plan and teach lessons which make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills, mark for literacy (where appropriate) and promote disciplinary literacy

Whole School Strategies for Supporting Literacy:

1. DEAR Time during form time – All students from Y7 to Y11 will read for the duration of one form time. Some students with lower reading ages read with a teaching assistant. Staff have a small bank of books to provide to students who may require suitable reading material.
2. Reading Mentors – confident readers from Y10 have been trained as Reading Mentors. They work with a student in Y7 or Y8 with a reading score above 85 and below 100. They focus on the seven Ps of reading.
3. We have a well-stocked and well-used library which is open to students to use in English lessons; during lunch and break time and before and after school. The school library is

organised by genre (rather than alphabetically) to allow students to easily find texts within genres that they enjoy.

4. We have a whole-school drive for World Book Day where staff promote reading and students partake in reading activities and competitions.
5. Every week on all computer screens, students are introduced to a new root word, prefix or suffix. This allows them to develop their understanding of etymology and transfer this onto new words they will encounter.
6. Silver Stories – students in Y7 read to older members of the community via a telephone call once a week. These students are those with literacy levels below KS2 expectation in order to encourage additional reading time and confidence in reading aloud.
7. Read First – all new topics in all subjects at KS3 begin with a high-quality piece of academic reading to expose students to more challenging texts, to develop their vocabulary and to act as a ‘hook’ for new schemes
8. We undertake NGRT testing x2 per year for Key Stage 3 students to ensure that we are tracking progress in literacy.
9. Read Like A – All departments considered what excellent reading would look like within their subject. Students who demonstrate these skills are rewarded with a certificate and a golden coin to use in our Book Vending Machine.
10. The English Department dedicate curriculum time to reading for pleasure and to develop reading stamina. Teachers model good reading, listen to students’ read and question their understanding of what they are reading. They also monitor the quality of the reading that students are doing in order to ensure that it is appropriate to their reading age.
11. Y6 students, as part of their induction, receive a free copy of a text to read over the summer. The author of the text visits the school in the Autumn term and does short workshops with students.
12. Y7 use Century – an online bespoke programme which focuses on developing their English skills. It uses baseline tests to assess the students’ level and then they complete a series of lessons and quizzes. The same process is used for to improve students’ understanding of grammatical rules, sentence parts and punctuation.
13. All departments explicitly assess students’ understanding of, and ability to use subject specific vocabulary.

Whole School and Departmental Strategies for Supporting Reading:

Pupils will have opportunities to:

1. Use reading to research the subject area
2. Use the library and ICT to support subject learning
3. Read for pleasure
4. Read a range of text types
5. Locate and retrieve information
6. To select and make notes from a text
7. To use a range of reading skills such as skimming, scanning, reading for meaning

Approaches

Teachers will aim to:

1. Facilitate reading development through their subject
2. Present reading tasks at a suitable level
3. Draw pupils' attention to structure, layout, format, print and other signposts
4. Help pupils to skim, scan or read intensively according to the task
5. Teach pupils to select or note only what is relevant
6. Help pupils to question, challenge and recognise bias in a range of texts
7. Support pupils who are at the early stages of reading
8. Teach pupils to read identified subject vocabulary

Whole School and Departmental Strategies for Supporting Writing:

Pupils will have opportunities across the curriculum to:

1. Write in a variety of forms for different purposes
2. Plan, draft and discuss writing
3. Use writing to organise thoughts and to aid learning
4. Produce written material of a quality appropriate to their individual level of attainment
5. Record information and observations

Approaches

Each subject area will aim to:

1. Offer pupils models for writing in a range of forms
2. Provide resources to support independence for all pupils (e.g. key words, writing frames etc.)
3. Provide appropriate activities for pupils of all levels of ability
4. Help pupils with handwriting, spelling and presentational aspects of writing

5. Teach pupils to spell key subject vocabulary

Whole School and Departmental Strategies for Supporting Speaking and Listening:

Lessons will enable pupils to:

1. Value and respect talk of others
2. Acquire knowledge, new concepts and understanding
3. Acquire the skills needed to evaluate information
4. Practise using new vocabulary
5. Appreciate talk as a valuable area of learning
6. Adapt talk to match the audience and purpose of the task

Approaches

Lessons will provide:

1. Some activities which feature talk as an essential element
2. Homework activities which require discussion techniques with parents or other adults
3. Activities which focus on accurately using identified subject vocabulary
4. Explicit rules about classroom talk so that the opinions and ideas of everyone are respected
5. Opportunities for all pupils to be able to speak openly and confidently without fear of ridicule

How We Teach Vocabulary at Summerhill:

1. Key words are displayed in lessons
2. Subject-specific vocabulary is taught explicitly
3. Complex texts are read out-loud by the teacher
4. Students are encouraged to summarise texts
5. 'Read like a...' posters are displayed in every learning space
6. Understanding of vocabulary and texts is checked
7. Use of effective vocabulary is recognised and celebrated in both verbal and written responses

Pupils with Particular Literacy Needs

Whilst all pupils benefit from a consistent, coherent and comprehensive approach to literacy, some groups of pupils will require specific attention and targeted support. These might include most able pupils, those with specific learning difficulties and EAL pupils.

Pupils' needs can be assessed by analysing their performance in the following:

KS2 results

CATS tests

Spelling tests

Phonics

Pupils requiring specific support with reading will be re-assessed using the Miskin reading test and they will embark upon the 'Fresh Start' reading programme in order to redress the issues.

Direct teaching underpins Fresh Start. Several times a week, pupils learn new letter-sounds and review previous sounds and words. They apply what they've been taught by reading words containing the sounds they know in lively, age-appropriate stories and non-fiction texts that are closely matched to their increasing phonic knowledge. By the end of the programme, they will be able to read these accurately and fluently. This ensures that they are able to fully access the KS3 and KS4 Curriculum.

This strategy is currently used with our Nurture group who are individuals in Y7 who have been identified as requiring additional support to transition to KS3.

Y7 Literacy Catch-Up

The first approach of the Y7 Literacy catch-up is to make use of Reading Mentors and Teachers to support students in becoming better, more confident readers who are able to demonstrate understanding of what they have read.

Our weakest students may be allocated to the Nurture group to receive additional support and small-group intervention from an ex-primary school teacher and LSAs.

For some Y7 students who are identified to have fallen below the expected end of KS2 standard in literacy, intervention is used to accelerate their progress. Summerhill uses an online programme, Lexia, which offers a bespoke pathway to improving across reading, grammar and comprehension. Students mostly complete this at home, but there are weekly drop-in sessions for students who require additional help.

Marking for Literacy

The focus on literacy in written outcomes should be present, regardless of subject area. The exception might be formally assessed exam pieces where SPaG is not part of the mark scheme

Marking codes:

Code:	This means:	Action required:
Sp	There is a spelling error	Correct the spelling
C	You needed to use a capital letter and didn't or you didn't need to and did	Correct the capital letter error
P	Punctuation has been missed or used incorrectly	Add the missing punctuation or correct
WW	You have used the wrong word	Correct with a more accurate or more effective word
//	You should have started a new paragraph	Use the symbol to show where you should have started the new paragraph
?	Your expression is unclear	Redraft or correct for clarity

Disciplinary Literacy

We recognise that literacy taught as an 'add on' or afterthought is not effective and so we promote the teaching of disciplinary literacy i.e. departments teaching the literacy that relates to their subject and will help students perform better in their curriculum area.

This focus on disciplinary literacy makes clear that every teacher communicates their subject through its own unique language, and that reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing, doing, and communicating Science, Art, History, and every other subject in secondary school.

Strategies that are employed as part of disciplinary literacy:

- Key words which relate to specific subjects or how a particular word might have a different meaning in different subjects
- Vocabulary Key Competency added in all KS3 subjects which means that students are assessed in their ability to use or understand key words in all subjects across the curriculum
- Spelling tests and mnemonics to learn important spellings
- Teachers modelling how to read effectively to students
- Teachers asking students to engage in summary and comprehension exercises across different subjects
- Read Like A... posters and awards to recognise the different needs to different curriculum areas
- Teachers offering models of good answers to allow students to understand the importance of how we communicate ideas
- Live modelling of longer answers to verbally talk through the thought-process when writing longer answers
- Scaffolding to help students phrase and structure their response effectively
- Literacy marking in exercise books across the curriculum