Hitchin Girls' School



Literacy for Learning 2021

All teachers, irrespective of subject, are teachers of literacy' • Ofsted Framework 2014

Governing Body approval: November 2021

Next review date: November 2024

VOCABULARY - ORACY - READING - LISTENING

<u>Ethos</u>

YOU CANNOT READ TO LEARN UNTIL YOU HAVE LEARNT TO READ AND WRITE

At Hitchin Girls' School Literacy is the responsibility of ALL staff and ALL subjects.

Literacy is an essential element within the English curriculum but the two are not wholly the same – English extends far wider than the acquisition of literacy skills.

The literacy of all students and staff will be judged by Ofsted. All are expected to use Standard English. They will assess student progress in terms of literacy (and Maths) from evidence across a range of subjects.

It is essential that all learning activities promote, support and teach the appropriate literacy skills.

Literacy encompasses Reading, Writing and Communication (listening and speaking). As such, at HGS our methods of communication i.e. newsletters, Google Classroom, emails and signage actively promote correct and appropriate use of literacy.

Teachers are aware of and regularly use the *Literacy for Learning* resource folder in the Staff shared Google Drive.

<u>Rationale</u>

Research shows that young people entering the workplace often lack the speaking and listening skills to communicate successfully.

70% of employers rate literacy skills as one of their three most important considerations when recruiting school and college leavers. **CBI Education and Skills Annual Report 2019**

The Wolf Report (2011) states that literacy is the 'most vital foundation for employment' and that 'when young people compete for jobs and enter the workplace, they will be expected to communicate precisely and effectively.'

THERE CAN NEVER BE ENOUGH SUPPORT AND CONSOLIDATION FOR LITERACY

<u>Aims</u>

All HGS teachers and support staff, regardless of subject, will actively promote, support and teach literacy skills to students of all ages Year 7-13.

Learning Walks, Lesson observations, Book monitoring, alongside progress checks and summative assessments will be the key methods for tracking literacy progress.

Knowledge, understanding and application (i.e. correct spelling) of subject specific words and terminology will be expected of students of all ages. HGS students are able to effectively express themselves and communicate their ideas in all subjects.

It is the responsibility of all HGS staff (teachers and tutors) to promote, support and teach appropriate literacy skills. (Please see Literacy for Learning Checklist 2021/22) Teachers are responsible for undertaking the following which must be evident in their planning, assessment and feedback:

- Clearly highlight and promote subject specific terminology & key words. This should include breaking them down into syllables and explaining the etymology (meaning/origin of a word). The Learning Support department provides resources to support and aid the teaching and learning of key words.
- Clear explanation of command words in different subjects/contexts so that students can place meaning in different areas of their curriculum.
- Actively use the Literacy Ladder (i.e. Speak, Listen, Read, Write) in planning, learning activities and as an assessment tool.
- Consistently assess, mark and provide meaningful feedback for students' work (written, comprehension, speaking and listening) using the agreed *Literacy Code for Learning* as outlined in Appendix A.

For frequency of homework, marking and assessment please refer to our Homework Policy 2020 (available on our website).

In terms of Literacy, marking and assessment must include:

- Annotation of students' work this should be clear, legible and in a suitable colour that is immediately evident on the page.
- When correcting spellings/grammar in written work, the correction of all literacy mistakes is not helpful. Teacher judgment here is crucial as they best know the student in the context of the subject/class – however it is expected that there is evidence of active marking of all written work (including when relevant, peer/self-assessment).
- Teachers will be aware of, take into consideration and support those students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) or who have SEND needs.
- In line with our Rewards System students should receive praise for what they have achieved and be made aware of what they need to do in order to improve and make further progress.
- Feedback should take into account previous work and targets. For example, if a student
 has been repeatedly reminded about incorrectly spelling a subject specific keyword and
 continues to do so then this must be highlighted and addressed.
- Common errors such as missing or incorrect use of capital letters, commas and apostrophes need to be addressed.
- For any corrections, students <u>must be given time</u> to correct errors, practise spellings and apply them in new contexts in order to embed what they are learning. Teachers must then check corrections so that students are clear what their target is and when they have met it. This is crucial and should be evident in all written work. In the best examples, a dialogue is evident in the written work between student and teacher using departmental systems to make this explicit and accessible.
- Subject vocabulary should be actively used in the classroom with the most relevant key words for the learning in that lesson being displayed, referred to and embedded – ideally

on the board or relevant display/resource. (Glossaries and word banks are good, but not sufficient and will only be effective if they are actively used).

- Students should evidence these key words in the context of the work they produce during that lesson – how this is done will depend on the context of the subject but students may wish to highlight or underline them to make them clear on the page.
- Exploring the derivation of subject specific words, their roots and how they may be used in other curriculum areas has been identified as outstanding practice by Ofsted.

'Bad habits' that should be avoided include:

- Writing in block capitals. Teachers should model correct capitalisation, including keywords.
- Poor handwriting it must be clear and legible in order to support teaching and learning.
- Using abbreviations unless specific to your subject terminology or relevant to the lesson.

In order to actively promote and support literacy each classroom should have:

✓ Make use of student's own dictionaries and thesaurus. These should be actively promoted as a first point of reference whenever relevant.

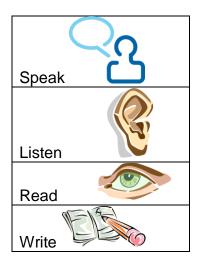
✓ <u>The Literacy Code</u>

HGS Literacy Marking Codes

SP	Spelling	EXP	Expression / grammar error
	Highlights a particular mistake	\bigcirc	Highlights an omission or unneeded punctuation
//	New paragraph required	\land	Missing word
Т	Tense	Ρ	Punctuation
С	Capital letter needed / should be lower case letter	?	Doesn't make sense
	Target	Literacy errors v indicated using codes.	

The Literacy Ladder

This should be clearly visible and actively referred to by teachers and support staff to remind students of a particular literacy focus at different stages in the lesson. One or more elements of the ladder may form part of the lesson objectives. Derivation of words and links to other areas of the curriculum should always be encouraged.



By promoting and supporting each of the elements of the Literacy Ladder HGS staff enable students to:



- Talk to hear.
- Talk with confidence in a range of contexts.
- Be able to adapt the way they speak to meet a given purpose.
- Be grammatically correct (staff and students) and correct incorrect speech.
- Be able to convey their opinions clearly.
- Be able to engage the listener through use of varied expression and tone, taking into account purpose and the views of others.



- Have opportunities to actively listen to whoever is talking and be able to respond appropriately. For example, teachers and support staff should use a range of questions to draw out students' understanding.
- Understand how to listen depending on the context and be able to recall key information.



- Feel confident to read in class to themselves, to someone else or in front of the whole class.
- Students must be encouraged and supported to fully engage with text, to read questions properly in order to aid comprehension and properly prepare for future exams.
- See good reading strategies modelled by those who support their learning in the classroom i.e. teacher, LSA or Ambassador.
- Be encouraged to actively read independently, to promote and use shared reading i.e. through paired work and feedback in order to ensure that students really digest what they read.
- Be supported and encouraged to demonstrate what they have actually understood and be given time and strategies to address any problems or concerns that they may have.
- Feel supported and be able to benefit from interventions appropriate to their reading level i.e.
 - Students should be encouraged to look at overall page layout and engage with titles, headings and captions in text books.
 - Reading fluently and accurately, along with the ability to 'Skim or Scan' texts for information.
 - Students must be able to apply deduction and inference to what they read.

WRITE

In addition to departmental strategies, such as writing frames, missing word sheets etc., staff are encouraged to use the following guidelines as set out by Ofsted when setting and assessing students' written work:

¹ Select an extended piece of writing from near the beginning of the book/folder/sketchbook etc.

Compare with a piece of writing from the middle and one nearer the end:

- Is there a discernible difference in length, presentation & sophistication?
 - Are the same issues highlighted in the later pieces as in the earlier ones?
 - Has the student or teacher identified any developing strengths or commented on improvement?
- Students must be clear on the purpose and audience for their writing i.e. is it: To inform? Persuade? Describe? Argue?
- Subject specific vocabulary and glossaries must be made explicitly clear to students at all times and be explained within the relevant context.
- HGS staff must ensure that all written work/instructions/resources are clear (including appropriate format and text size), well written and model the highest standards of correct spelling, grammar, punctuation and use at all times Standard English.
- Teachers are encouraged to actively use exemplar student work that reinforces effective literacy skills (these may not need to be up at all times but are a very powerful tool when relevant).
- Students learn how to effectively check work before submission in order that they correct any 'SPAG' (spelling/grammar/punctuation) issues before their teacher sees their work. This is essential in preparation for GCSE and A Level exams.
- For those students with Chromebooks and/or electronic spell checkers, they should be encouraged by staff to actively use them (including when identified in controlled assessments and/or exams).

Additional support for vulnerable students and those at risk of underachieving

At Hitchin Girls' School we make adaptations to our curriculum as part of supporting both literacy and numeracy development. Bespoke timetables may be put in place for specific students based on the holistic view of their needs and progress; these are done in partnership between school, home and any other relevant agencies. At Key Stage 4 student progress data indicates which students would benefit from a reduced options route. This allows the students more curriculum time devoted to English and Maths Skills and as such helps to support them in achieving their best outcome in both their core and other subjects.

Once identified (via subject teacher, Learning Support Department, tutor, Head of Year or progress check data) those who require further literacy support receive appropriate interventions.

Depending on individual need, such intervention may include:

- Targeted 1:1 or small group work provided by either HGS subject specific, the Learning Support Department or external agencies i.e. Sound Training, Lexia.
- Targeted, individual literacy support for those who receive Pupil Premium funding i.e. support to buy equipment/reading books, access to IT, access to additional courses/opportunities i.e. relevant trips. Students being provided with Chromebooks to aid and support their learning.
- Additional small group work for those who have been identified with specific need by teachers, the Learning Support Department and SLG i.e. those on a personalised learning route at KS3, GCSE or A Level.
- When required, additional support will be offered for students with EAL, for example students of Indian sub-continent heritage may not readily use the definite 'the' and indefinite 'a' or 'an' as their home language does not have these parts of speech.
- Receiving support from an HGS Ambassador.

<u>Library</u>

'An attractive and well-stocked library is often an indicator' (of outstanding, embedded literacy across the whole school) – Ofsted 2014

Our library is an essential hub in our school community, frequented by students and staff on a daily basis. Full time librarian provision is provided from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. every day and creates a welcoming and extremely positive space which is full at both break and lunchtimes. It is also the base for our very popular Homework Club which runs daily from 3.30-4.30 p.m. The advice, support, guidance and enthusiasm provided by our school librarian and library assistant ensures that students and staff are able to fully utilise the library as a learning space which actively and effectively promotes the highest levels of literacy.

Integral to the promotion, support and provision of literacy in HGS, are the following activities and opportunities provided by our library:

- <u>Book boxes</u> Every Year 7 and 8 form group receives a new, tailored 'Book Box' every half term so that students can read during the allocated tutor time slots each week. A range of appropriate books for each year group is selected and feedback asked for at the end of each term in order to respond to the individual reading needs of each group.
- Library lessons Every student is introduced to the library during their Year 7 Induction Week, where they learn how to effectively use the library and our online library management system Accessit. After this initial introduction they have specific library lessons in Year 7 (1 every half term) so that they develop their understanding and use of the library and everything that it offers. In Year 7 this is followed up with 1 Library Reading Skills lesson every fortnight led by an English teacher. All students work towards our school based Reading Awards. This continues in Year 8 when students have 1 Library Reading Skills lesson every fortnight. These 'Active Reading' lessons allow and encourage students and staff to share book recommendations thus broadening the reading experience and exposure for all. These sessions are used also for group reading, book based research and learning the key skimming and scanning skills required to be effective.
- <u>Reading lists</u> A variety of reading lists are regularly created by the librarian and available to view on our Accessit dashboard and on google classroom. These include yearly updated years 7, 8 and 9 reading lists and subject related lists as requested by staff.
- World Book Day is an integral part of our school calendar, taking place every March as part of the international campaign. Every student in the school attends a Book Fair during the day, run by a local business partner, David's Bookshop from Letchworth, and held in the library. The event is promoted by the library staff and a large percentage of students choose to purchase books on the day. In the lead up to 'World Book Day' the library organises competitions featuring members of staff to share with students a love of and importance of reading such as Guess the Reader and The Masked Reader. During World Book Day a section of a short story is read aloud by teachers in every lesson. World Book Day is a real highlight of the school year enjoyed by all.
- <u>Encouraging reading for all</u> In conjunction with the BookTrust charity and Pupil Premium funding, every student in Year 7 is given the opportunity to choose a free book from a wide selection. This helps to engage them with reading and marks an important start of their reading journey at HGS.This is through a nationwide initiative called Bookbuzz run by the BookTrust charity.
- <u>Readings & visiting authors</u> The librarian arranges regular visits from authors and poets who speak to a range of our students both through English lessons and extracurricular workshops.
- <u>Homework Club</u> Introduced in 2014 to address the increasing need and demand we had from students who wished to do their homework at school, with access to staff and facilities to aid them. Our Homework Club has quickly become a huge success with a large number of students engaging with the opportunity on a daily or weekly basis.
- <u>Reading Group</u> The librarian organises and runs a weekly student Reading Group which is regularly attended by 20+ Year 7–12 students. A wide variety of fun book related activities take place including The North Herts Schools Book Award event. Some

students also attend the Evening Book Club which takes place once every half term and is open to our staff, parents and wider community. Numbers are consistent and high.

- <u>Additional support provided by the library</u> The librarians work very closely with all departments to provide support and resources for the curriculum. They work in close partnership with the English department.
- <u>Student led activities</u> Student librarians from year 9 up help to run the library during lunchtimes and our library Twitter feed @eliot_elephant which promotes books and reading to the school community and beyond.

In all of these opportunities, our expert librarian team proactively supports and promotes the reading and literacy skills of all students in keeping with Ofsted's desire that *'library sessions are not just about reading but punctuated with questions.'*

Further whole-school promotion and support of literacy:

- Our published tutor time schedule actively promotes and encourages literacy such as Wordy Wednesdays for Year 7.
- Communication: our students' speaking and listening skills are encouraged and developed through their active involvement in planning, preparing and leading whole school, Year and House assemblies. This happens from Years 7–13 and often involves cross-year group teams working together.
- Every department is expected to have its own subject specific literacy policy relevant to the needs and requirements of their curriculum and actively promotes subject specific key words, phrases and terminology. This is clearly communicated with and made available to the relevant support staff who may work in that department.
- When Covid permits, departments actively promote literacy through taking students to see plays and performances that are available in our local area and nearby cities as well as having visitors.

By implementing our Literacy for Learning policy we aim to ensure that:

• Students are confident, enthusiastic and effective in their use of all literacy skills knowing that this will support their overall love of learning, progress and achievement.

'There can never be enough support and consolidation'

Key document: Reading, writing and communication (literacy) Ofsted October 2011

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/reading-writing-and-communication-literacy

<u>Appendix A</u>

HGS Literacy Marking Codes

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<u>Appendix B</u>

Additional guidance for promoting, supporting and enabling Literacy for Learning based on Ofsted guidance – What they will look for:

- Including the ability to speak and listen effectively alongside the skills of reading and writing.
- Students apply their reading and writing skills successfully and speak articulately in a range of contexts and for different purposes.
- In effective secondary schools a policy for teachers to consolidate basic literacy skills in other subjects.
- Secondary schools have developed cross-departmental strategies to improve literacy.
- Evidence about literacy from more than just English lessons and assessment data.
- Literacy teaching and the application of literacy skills being a focus across the school and in a range of different subjects.
- Comprehensive policies on the teaching and application of literacy skills within subjects.
- Subject specific words being taught including the spellings with meaning and how they are used in lessons.
- Key words relevant to the topic of the day being up in classrooms and referred to.
- How students communicate with each other in pairs, groups and debates etc.
- Evidence that the students' vocabulary is being extended by using proper subject specific words.
- Three or more levels of progress in English are key and will form part of the judgement before they come in.
- How literacy is used in plans for lessons, assessment and marking.
- How tasks are explained i.e. clarity of instructions.
- Students can spell and know the meanings of subject specific words.
- Students write in proper sentences in all subjects.
- Time provided in lessons to reinforce spellings.
- Students being taught to skim and scan.
- Students reading and then being asked questions either by staff or peers.
- Students being given the purpose for their reading and directed as to what was expected afterwards.
- How effectively is the school teaching reading?
- The use of mentors in reading ensuring that they do not only read with students but also ask questions.
- Teachers making expectations clear before students start a writing task and guidance being given. Conventions and structures need to be given. The main features need to be given. Students aware of Form/Language/Audience and Purpose.
- Using skills learnt at KS2 and in English.
- Students knowing what they need to do to improve their literacy.
- Students being aware that all teachers refer to specific literacy skills or targets.
- Students knowing the relevance of English outside the classroom.
- Consistent expectations for student responses to corrections e.g. use of dictionaries, writing out corrections, re-writing with punctuation.
- Teachers' use of correct capitalisation with all examples on the board writing in upper and lower case.

- Literacy links in all subjects derivation of words (prefixes and suffixes) and links to similar words found in other areas of study.
- Connective posters in all rooms to support students with explaining and expanding their answers.

Promoting and developing reading

- As readers develop, they are expected to select, analyse and synthesise information from what they have read and to comment on the thematic, structural and linguistic elements of texts.
- Reading fluently and accurately, along with the ability to skim or scan texts for information becomes increasingly a vital part of students' learning across a full range of subjects.
- Provision to encourage independent reading.
- Promoting reading is a high priority... a curriculum which gives high priority to reading for pleasure as one of the key components in producing excellence.
- Fluent and sophisticated readers.
- Deduction and inference.
- Teachers using a range of questions to draw out students' understanding of the text in depth.
- Students talk with confidence in a range of contexts. They adapt their talk to purpose and convey opinions clearly. They engage the listener and vary expression taking the views of others into account.

Spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting

- Mark schemes could take greater account of the importance of SPAG spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Little formal teaching of spelling.... teacher's marking of spelling was inconsistent and it was usually not clear how students should respond to any spelling errors that teachers identified.
- It is not clear how students will improve their spelling skills and understanding of grammar and punctuation without explicit teaching.
- Little rigour in the identification of spelling errors, especially of common words... not only were misspelt words not identified but there were few occasions where teachers required students to correct errors, practise spellings or apply them in new contexts.
- High standards of literacy and the correct use of Standard English.
- Improvement overall in the accuracy of s, p & g over a period of time.
- A progressive scheme for improving writing.

Literacy across the curriculum

- All teachers to act as teachers of literacy.
- Embed literacy activities in themes or other subjects so that students might develop and apply skills and knowledge which they had learnt in English in a range of different, but relevant, contexts.
- A whole-school marking-policy which emphasises the importance of literacy and is applied consistently.
- Teachers' attitude to reading is central.

- An enthusiastic librarian often raises the profile of reading and provides good opportunities for students to share their views of books.
- Set aside time in tutor time for individual reading... and opportunities for them to discuss what they have read.
- For many using fluent, clear and legible handwriting is also a problem. Hand writing is not marked so long as it can be read.

Context for effective provision:

- There is Literacy Co-ordinator with a clear role and status.
- Using staff working groups and expertise to inform provision and application.
- Developing whole-school policies and a specific literacy action plan.
- Encouraging teachers across different subjects to lead on literacy in their areas.
- Monitoring outcomes in literacy and evaluating the effectiveness of actions and provision.
- Skills to be reinforced and applied with accuracy across subjects.

What the inspectors will look for:

- Effectiveness of students' reading in lessons.
- Engagement of certain groups of students in literacy activities.
- The standard of marking for literacy.
- Quality of students' spoken work.
- How teachers in other subjects refer to specific literacy skills or targets, and attitudes to reading.
- Some groups are more likely to be the focus of inspection i.e. those who might appear to be performing less well than their peers.

Inspectors' focus:

- Track a particular group (or individuals) in several different lessons to assess the quality of their literacy skills and whether they receive any specific support or teaching.
- Observe particular intervention or support sessions to evaluate their impact on literacy skills.
- Review the work of particular students or groups of students to evaluate literacy skills and look for evidence of effective marking, specific teaching, and guidance on improvement.
- Visit particular activities which the school identifies as developing literacy skills.
- Interview selected students.
- Interview selected students after observing them in English, intervention or other lessons to identify how far they understand their performance in literacy and how they are helped to improve.
- Meet a group of students to find out how much they read, and their confidence in and understanding of reading as an aid to learning

Questions to ask when observing 'literacy' in any subject:

- Are key terms clear and explored with students to ensure that they recognise and understand them? Are they related to similar words or the root from which they are derived?
- Do teachers identify any particular features of key terms and help students with strategies for remembering how to spell them or why they might be capitalised?
- Do teachers remind students of important core skills, for example how to skim text to extract the main elements of its content quickly or to scan text for information about a key work or topic?
- Do teachers make expectations clear before students begin a task, for example on the conventions of layout in a formal letter or on the main features of writing persuasively?
- Do teachers reinforce the importance of accuracy in spoken or written language i.e. correct spelling and punctuation in one sentence answers or correcting 'we was' in students' speech?
- Do teachers identify when it is important to use Standard English and when other registers or dialects may be used?
- Do teachers help students with key elements of literacy as they support them in lessons? Do they point out SPAG issues as they look at work around the class?
- Does teachers' marking support key literacy points e.g. key subject terms always checked for correct spelling? Is sentence punctuation always corrected?

When looking at books from other subjects:

- If students are writing in a form that would be taught in English, it is reasonable to expect that they would draw on what they have learnt already.
- > Do teachers identify important errors?
- > Key subject terms should be spelt correctly.
- > Basic sentence punctuation should be accurate.

IF AN ERROR IS NOT IDENTIFIED, HOW WILL STUDENTS IMPROVE?

Effective marking and feedback:

- When looking at teachers' marking, a good test is whether you can see what needs to improve and understand how to make the improvement.
- Challenges students to go back to the work and rewrite a section to improve it in a specific way or to correct errors.
- The student is given time to do this and the teacher can check that they have done so successfully.
- > Provided context for improvement and refers back to previous marking and feedback.

<u>Appendix C</u>

Excerpt from The Ofsted School Inspection Handbook – September 2014

School Inspection Handbook

Handbook for inspecting schools in England under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended by the Education Act 2011)

Age group: 0-19

Published: September 2014

Reference no: 120101





Inspecting the impact of the teaching of literacy including reading¹

1. Literacy includes the key skills of reading, writing and oral communication that enable students to access different areas of the curriculum.

2. Inspectors will consider the impact of the teaching of literacy and the outcomes across the range of the school's provision. They will use the evidence they gather to inform the overall evaluation of students' achievement, the quality of teaching and the impact of leadership and management on raising standards. Inspectors will consider the extent to which the school intervenes to provide support for improving students' literacy, especially those students at risk of underachieving.

3. During the inspections of infant, junior, primary and middle schools, inspectors must listen to children reading; among others, they should listen to lower-attaining students reading and should discuss their reading with them. Inspectors will hear the weakest readers in Key Stage 1 and later years. There may be occasions when inspectors need to hear lower-attaining students read in Years 7 and 8 in secondary schools. This is to find out how effectively the school is teaching reading to its weakest readers and to assess whether the students are equipped with the phonic strategies needed to tackle unfamiliar words.

4. Inspectors should decide which students they will listen to, taking into account the school's progress data on reading and other information such as lesson observations. Inspectors should hear children read from books that are appropriate to their age, including from previously unseen books.

5. Wherever possible, inspectors should listen to children reading within a classroom or in an open area with which students are familiar.

¹ Please refer to: