

Poole Grammar School	Policy	PGS/P/79
Literacy		Issue 2
		June 2023

1. Overall aim

To facilitate improvements in students' literacy in terms of speaking, listening, reading and writing embedding the secure language skills that they need to access, and excel in, all subjects.

Literacy is "...asking students to think, speak, read and write as a historian, scientist or mathematician" (Quigley 2022)¹. Solid literacy skills will allow students to successfully cope with the cognitive demands of all subjects and to access the wider world as confident and successful citizens.

All members of teaching staff have a collaborative responsibility for the promotion of literacy skills through a broad curriculum that works to promote activities that:

- engage pupils to develop speaking, reading and writing;
- create an understanding of language as a tool for shaping meaning;
- develop confident and competent communicators, able to engage with challenging texts and master 'disciplinary literacy' across all their subjects.

All students must be able to:

Read effectively

- read and comprehend a range of age-appropriate texts and identify target audience and purpose;
- develop the ability to deep read, scan and skim effectively;
- become critical and selective readers of material particularly when researching on the internet;
- confidently access the library and be able to use its resources.

Write effectively

- be able to handwrite clearly;
- plan, draft and edit work applying self-criticism and reflection;
- ensure the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) irrespective of subject;
- utilise a range of subject appropriate vocabulary with growing levels of sophistication and confidence.

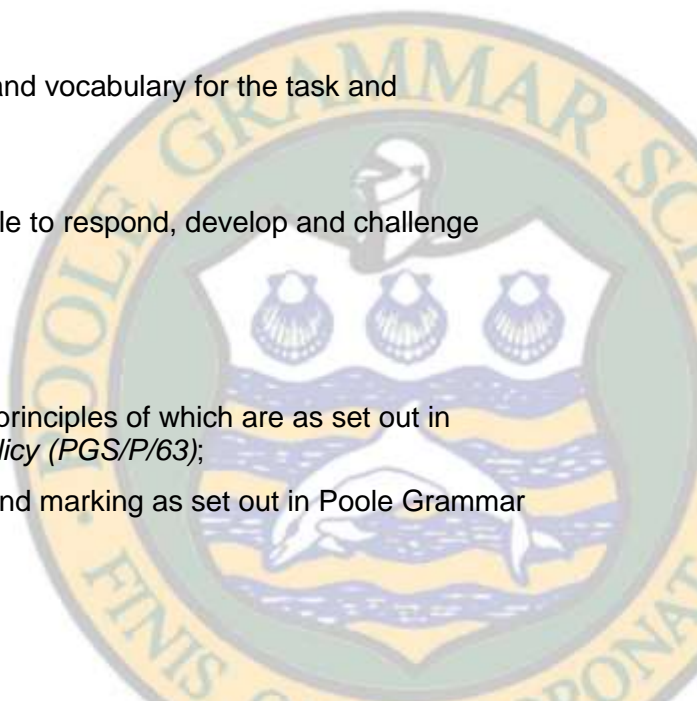
Speak and listen effectively

- present ideas with clarity using an appropriate tone and vocabulary for the task and audience;
- identify and adopt appropriate levels of formality;
- listen carefully to the thoughts of others and to be able to respond, develop and challenge these.

2. Connections to other key policies

Improving students' levels of literacy depends upon:

- excellent teaching and learning within lessons – the principles of which are as set out in *Poole Grammar School's Teaching and Learning Policy (PGS/P/63)*;
- literacy being promoted through effective feedback and marking as set out in *Poole Grammar School's Feedback and marking policy (PGS/P/71)*;



- the promotion of ‘disciplinary literacy’ throughout the school’s curriculum as set out in Poole Grammar School’s *Curriculum Policy 9PGS/P/10A*;
- students with additional needs, for example SEND needs or mental health needs, having those needs met through literacy interventions where appropriate – the principles of which are as set out in Poole Grammar School’s *SEND Policy (PGS/P/27)*.

3. Principles

Poole Grammar School’s approach to literacy will follow the recommendations of the Education Endowment Foundation guidance report on improving literacy in secondary schools (EEF 2021)²:

Prioritise ‘disciplinary literacy’ across the curriculum

- Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.
- All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.
- School leaders can help teachers by ensuring training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity over general approaches.

Provide targeted ‘vocabulary instruction’ in every subject

- Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.
- Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words.
- Teachers should prioritise teaching tier 2 vocabulary (specialist words used across subjects) and tier 3 vocabulary (specialist words used within one subject), which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech.
- Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning.

Develop students’ ability to read complex academic texts

- To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.
- Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge (making links to what they already know), prediction (working it out what be the outcome before you read the rest of a text) and questioning (generating your own comprehension questions on a text), can improve students’ comprehension.
- Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.

Break down complex writing tasks

- Teachers can break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and support students by modelling each step.
- Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality.
- Teachers should use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and paired writing, to motivate students to write.

Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject

- Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students’ skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.
- Reading helps students gain knowledge which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen students’ understanding of ideas.

- Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.
- Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve students' writing, particularly when focused on meaning.

Provide opportunities for structured talk

- High quality talk is typically well structured and guided by teachers.
- Accountable talk (focusing on knowledge – seeking to be accurate and true, reasoning – providing justifications for claims and community – listening and showing respect to others) is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality, and emphasises how talk can be subject specific.
- Teachers can support students by modelling high quality talk, for example including key vocabulary and metacognitive reflection (talk focusing on the processes of learning and on dealing with the barriers to learning).

Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students

- Proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7.
- Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach.
- Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.

4. Literacy and reading strategy

The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) is responsible for drawing up a literacy and reading strategy for the school.

The Poole Grammar School literacy and reading strategy will:

- identify areas for improvement in literacy and reading;
- provide clear actions to facilitate improvement;
- set realistic timescales for improvement;
- indicate staff members responsible for implementing the actions.

Each new version of the school's literacy and reading strategy will be presented to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and to the Governors' Education Committee (GEC) for ratification.

Author	Carolyn Urquhart-Barham & Steve Jenkins	June 2023
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Approved by	Full Governors	July 2024
Next Review		July 2027

1 - Quigley, A (2022), *Closing the Vocabulary Gap*, Routledge;

2 – Education Endowment Foundation (2021), *Guidance Report on Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*, EEF