



# St. Gregory's Catholic High School

## Literacy Policy

### Monitoring

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Deputy Headteacher, Learning and Teaching

### Evaluation

The policy was reviewed by the Literacy Coordinator and the Senior Leadership Team on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023 prior to submission of the policy to Governors Standards Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Board for approval

### Policy Review Dates:

**Date last approved by Full Governing Board:** 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Date submitted to governor committee:** 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Date submitted to Full Governing Board:** 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Review Frequency:** Annual

**Start date for policy review:** June 2024

## **Intent**

St. Gregory's Catholic High School is committed to raising the standards of pupil ability in reading, writing, speaking and listening. To adequately equip our pupils as they embark on their journeys in an increasingly competitive society, it is vital that school staff recognise the fundamental importance of literacy and its deserved status as a part of our curriculum. The promotion and development of literacy skills sits not with one individual or department, but with each staff member acting as an advocate and teacher of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

## **Responsibilities**

**Governors** will support the implementation of this policy through:

- Ensuring there is a strategic direction for the development of literacy across the curriculum
- Ensuring robust accountability for the quality of provision via the Governing Board

**The Senior Leadership Team** will support the implementation of this policy through:

- Ensuring that there is clear communication to all staff that literacy is a whole school priority area of the curriculum
- Developing and refining the strategic direction for the development of literacy across the curriculum
- Supporting the leadership, and management of the development of literacy via the delivery and coordination of high quality CPD
- Ensuring the co-ordination of key stakeholders including the literacy co-ordinator curriculum and pastoral leaders, teaching staff and teaching assistants
- Defining clear structures and procedures
- Monitoring literacy progress data for all pupils
- Reviewing quality assurance processes and staff implementation of the literacy policy as part of performance management and appraisal procedures
- Visibly supporting and promoting literacy to visitors, staff and pupils at every opportunity

## **The Literacy Lead**

The whole-school literacy lead will support the implementation of this policy through:

- The development and regular review of the school literacy policy using research and evidence to inform its evolution
- Identify and monitor priority groups to receive literacy interventions
- Oversee the delivery of literacy interventions
- Provide written and numerical reports to internal and external bodies regarding pupils' reading progress
- Monitor staff adherence to the literacy policy in their everyday practice
- Champion a positive culture of literacy across all departments
- Promote literary events within school in collaboration with LRC staff
- Deliver staff training to support whole-school understanding and delivery of strategies to support the development of pupil literacy

## **The LRC Staff**

The LRC staff will support the implementation of this policy through:

- Monitoring pupil attendance at the LRC during non-curriculum time (before/after school, break/lunch times)
- Promotion and celebration of key literary events and opportunities
- Supporting the delivery of literacy interventions
- Monitoring and acquisition of relevant and engaging library stock
- Monitoring the use of the eBook platform
- Delivery of regular literacy enrichment activities

## **Classroom Teachers**

All classroom teachers will support the implementation of this policy through:

- Remaining familiar with the literacy policy and any amendments following its review and upholding its principles
- Ensuring that all schemes of learning (across every discipline) incorporate literacy as a fundamental component
- Planning sequences of learning that provide pupils with regular opportunities to develop their literacy, oracy and listening skills
- Attendance at professional development opportunities to strengthen understanding and delivery of literacy strategies across the curriculum

## **Definition of Literacy**

Literacy is 'the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world' (National Literacy Trust 2017). To be literate is to be able to perform these actions at a level enabling us to function in education, work and society more broadly.

## **Aims of the Literacy Policy**

The intention of this policy is to raise the literacy attainment of all pupils at every level of ability. By working together to integrate literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) into our curriculum areas, staff can maximise the potential of each individual pupil. The policy's objectives are as follows:

- To provide pupils and staff with consistency in the assessment of literacy across all subject areas
- To assess the literacy attainment of all pupils more effectively
- To implement whole-school strategies for the development of pupils' literacy skills

## **Key Principles**

- All staff must share responsibility for literacy at St. Gregory's and work together to create an immersive literacy environment in which all pupils are supported and motivated to develop their skills across the domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Consequently, the contents of this policy apply to all subject areas.
- Good standards of literacy are essential for the processes of learning to take place. Pupils require literacy skills to cope with the cognitive demand of all subjects across the curriculum.
- The literacy policy will:

- Acknowledge and build on existing good practice
- Support the needs of all pupils
- Foster consistency of literacy approaches across all departmental areas.

The following sections of the literacy policy will outline whole school approaches and expectations with regards to the development and monitoring of pupil literacy levels.

### **Baseline Testing and Intervention**

All pupils in year 7 are tested using both the STAR reading test and the Suffolk reading scale. The purpose of this testing is to triangulate the KS2 data reported from primary schools and to establish a firm starting point for all pupils. For pupils identified as needing additional intervention, regular specialist input will take place through combinations of paired reading sessions, literacy booster intervention and access to the Accelerated Reader programme as deemed appropriate. These approaches support pupils to make more rapid and sustained progress as measured from their baseline literacy tests.

All pupils in year 8 then continue to be tested using the Star reading test. The purpose of this is to continue to monitor the development of our pupils' literacy skills and identify pupils who may require support to accelerate their progress. The same intervention opportunities (paired reading, literacy booster sessions and Accelerated Reader) are offered to our year 8 pupils identified as requiring literacy intervention.

We will test the reading levels of all other school pupils twice a year to monitor pupil progress and to offer teaching staff appropriate strategies to support the reading of all pupils in their care. This information will be shared with appropriate staff when testing is completed. Staff should feel confident to ask for further support and guidance from the literacy coordinator if they wish.

### **Implementation: Whole School Strategies for Supporting Literacy**

#### **1. Marking for Literacy**

All subjects must adopt a marking approach which encompasses explicit references to pupil literacy, addressing misconceptions and encouraging the metacognitive development of writing skills.

#### **Purposes of Marking for Literacy**

- To provide pupils with precise feedback that will help them to improve the standard of their literacy across all disciplines
- To motivate pupils to communicate their understanding clearly and effectively
- To monitor pupils' use of tier two and tier three vocabulary
- To identify misconceptions and gaps in literacy knowledge

#### **Key Principle: Proof Reading**

Pupils must be reminded of the importance of checking their work for accuracy. Opportunities for proof reading will be incorporated into written tasks.

#### **Key Principle: Consistency**

To ensure that marking for literacy routines are embedded, it is important that all staff adhere to the below literacy marking code. Consistency of this approach will support pupils' cognitive loads by providing predictability, enabling them to focus on improving the quality of their work rather than

decoding their feedback. Copies of the whole school literacy marking codes are laminated and visible in all classrooms for reference during the completion of pupil feedback and response activities.

### Whole School Literacy Marking Code

MEANING	SYMBOL
New Paragraph	//
Capital letter required	CL
Missing or incorrect punctuation	Circle gap / error and add letter <b>P</b>
Spelling error*	SP
Missing word	MW
Missing letter	^

\*Pupils must correct spelling errors and copy the correct spelling 3 times in red pen in their margin.

\* Pupils will be asked to correct no more than 3 subject-specific spellings and 3 'generic' spellings per piece of work.

#### 2. Word of the Week

Every Monday, the whole school community is informed of the new word of the week. The intention of this is to develop pupil understanding and confidence when using tier two vocabulary. Tier two vocabulary refers to words found frequently in academic domains across a range of subjects. Therefore, knowledge of these terms will support pupils to better express their understanding of content across the whole curriculum.

The word of the week is communicated to all staff on a Monday morning via email. It is also promoted through the school's social media channels and through visual displays around school (e.g. word of the week posters, electronic signage, literacy notice board).

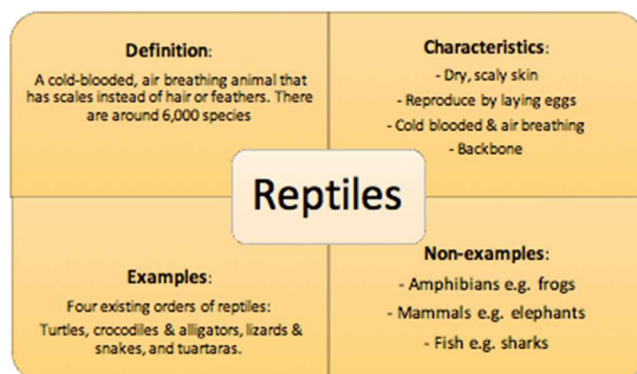
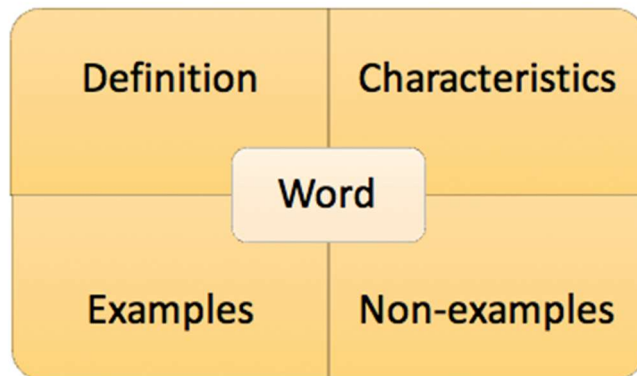
Furthermore, form tutors should lead pupils in exploring the word of the week through a selection of activities based on the principles of the Frayer model. This is intended to continuously offer pupils a range of strategies for decoding tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary, thus enhancing their future resilience as readers when encountering challenging texts. Pupils should then be encouraged to use this word in their lessons to demonstrate their understanding and application of it. Accurate use of the word of the week should be rewarded with achievement points.

#### 3. Academic Language and Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Every discipline across the school curriculum has its own academic vocabulary. It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to ensure pupils studying their subject are able to confidently and accurately express themselves in specific academic domains.

To support this, staff will need to plan the explicit teaching of certain tier two and tier three vocabulary items and ensure that this is clearly incorporated into the corresponding schemes of learning for consistency. Methods of explicit vocabulary teaching are as follows:

- Read the word. Practise saying the word out loud as a class to promote correct pronunciation and confidence.
- Offer a clear definition and sample sentences containing the word.
- Model how to use the word in a variety of different sentences – check understanding by asking pupils to do this too.
- Where applicable, explore the morphology of a word. Morphology allows us to deconstruct words by considering the prefixes, suffixes and root words. This can also provide excellent examples of hinterland for pupils to then decode unfamiliar words. For example, although a word may prove unfamiliar, pupils can often recognise parts of a word. Common prefixes and suffixes offer strategies for pupils to recognise words and connect them to their prior knowledge. Faced with a word like ‘depression’ and ‘devolve’, pupils can connect the ‘de’ prefix, meaning ‘down’ from words like ‘demote’.
- Provide, or ask students to provide, synonyms and antonyms where applicable. Sometimes unfamiliar words are simply the more sophisticated labels for familiar words e.g. ‘avarice’ simply means excessive greed. Exploring these can deepen understanding as well as increasing students’ confidence in their initial usage of the word.
- The Frayer model is a very helpful tool in the teaching of vocabulary and is easily made into a template to be stuck into exercise books or smaller subject vocabulary booklets. An example of the Frayer model is below. All teaching staff and curriculum areas should implement the Frayer model to ensure school-wide consistency in the teaching of new vocabulary.



#### 4. Whole-school Oracy and Listening

Oracy refers to a pupil's ability to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English. The National Curriculum states that pupils should be able to:

- Justify their ideas, and the ideas of others, with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Negotiate with others
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Develop their understanding through hypothesis, speculation and exploration
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication

As such, it is necessary for all staff to support and promote the development of oracy across all subjects. Not only does this improve pupil confidence across a range of domains, it enables pupils to clarify their thinking and organise their ideas. Consequently, oracy also supports pupil performance in written tasks. Examples of oracy tasks include (but are not limited to):

- Debates
- Presentations
- Verbal responses to prompts and questions (e.g. responses to targeted questioning; 'think, pair, share' etc.)
- Mock trials
- Speeches
- Hot seating
- Role play

Further guidance and ideas in relation to oracy tasks can be found at <https://noisyclassroom.com/secondary-oracy-activities/>.

#### **Developing literacy through listening**

The act of listening cannot be separated from the act of speaking. As children, our listening competency develops faster than our reading competency. As such, pupils are often better able to understand spoken information at a faster rate than written information. Practising listening skills alongside developing pupils' spoken language will therefore enable them to communicate more challenging ideas in a lower-stakes environment before committing their thoughts to a written form.

Listening carefully also enables us to provide appropriate verbal responses while supporting a full understanding of information. Moreover, listening skills foster an understanding of communication beyond the word level, including prosodic features such as stress and intonation. For this reason, structured listening opportunities are important features of a pupils' literacy diet across the whole-school curriculum. Some examples of structured listening activities include:

- Collaborative discussions (listen, support or challenge the views of peers)
- Fluency modelling (teacher-led reading of text to model pace and fluency)
- Listen and transform (teacher-led reading of text, pupils transform what they hear into a different media, e.g. image)
- Recall but don't repeat (whole class recall activity, e.g. key words/quotations/events, once said they cannot be repeated)

## 5. Reading across the Curriculum

Reading is the gateway to learning. Pupils who read less do not accumulate the necessary background knowledge and vocabulary from reading. To ensure that pupils are equipped to fulfil the demands of the secondary curriculum, they need to be able to read age-appropriate texts fluently. There are two strands to reading across our curriculum: reading for pleasure and academic reading, outlined below.

### Reading for Pleasure

There is a wealth of research that suggests a positive relationship between reading for pleasure and pupil attainment (e.g. Clark 2011; Clark and Douglas 2011). Pupils who read for pleasure are often found to be stronger writers, have more general knowledge and greater insights into human nature and decision making. Therefore, it is crucial that all staff promote reading for pleasure, supported by the following initiatives:

- **Leading by Example**
  - All staff must lead by example and share their love of reading; all staff should consider themselves 'reading role models'. Pupils are inspired by seeing their teachers reading and knowing that they read. Examples include taking part in whole-school reading events such as staff reading challenges, 'caught reading' advent calendars, World Book Day etc. Moreover, staff should feel comfortable and confident in leading conversations with pupils about reading for pleasure in order to encourage our pupils to do so. The greater the breadth of staff involvement, the more successful St. Gregory's will be in showing that everybody at St. Gregory's is a reader.
- **Form Time Reading**
  - Form groups must adhere to their designated reading day in the weekly form time schedule. Pupils may choose their own books from home or school to enjoy independently during this time as all pupils should have a reading book as part of their school equipment.
  - Alternatively, forms can read together, using the visualiser or the eBook platform to share the text with all pupils simultaneously. Pupils can visit the LRC and suggest books that they want to read together during form time. If several suggestions are made, the form may discuss the blurbs of the books and vote/prioritise its book choices.
  - Forms must be questioned regularly about what they are reading. Open questions will be used to promote oracy and encourage pupils to speak at some length about their choice of book.
- **Promotion of the LRC**
  - The LRC is a hugely valuable resource. As well as the many exciting events and celebrations that it hosts, it is also a space for pupils to visit to select books and read in an environment which supports this. Pupils are actively encouraged to visit the LRC.
  - Pupils must also be encouraged to become part of the LRC's community of readers. Clubs and initiatives run by the LRC staff include book quiz competitions, book reviewers, library helpers and more. Staff can contact the LRC manager for further details.

### **Academic Reading**

It is crucial that staff incorporate academic reading into schemes of learning to further promote an ambitious learning culture and access to higher tier vocabulary and ideas. Access to academic reading



across all subjects will also enhance pupils' ability to decode texts and interpret more complex and critical concepts. To support this, it is St. Gregory's aim for all subjects to provide regular, scaffolded opportunities for pupils to access academic reading in the form of reading homework.

All subjects will provide academic reading homework at least once per half term (6 pieces per academic year). Texts must be linked to the curriculum content to deepen pupil understanding of key concepts. Examples of scaffolded academic reading can be found in the school's literacy folder on the shared drive. Reading homework will be assessed through a range of approaches, such as 100 word responses, guided questions, quizzes, whiteboard activities etc.

### **The Learning Resource Centre**

St. Gregory's is fortunate to have a well-resourced LRC. The LRC stocks numerous resources for all subjects and its staff are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. All departments must familiarise themselves with the LRC and the ways in which it can support the curriculum.

All pupils will be encouraged to visit the LRC as it is an exciting place for them to immerse themselves in a positive reading and learning environment. The LRC is a welcoming and inclusive space. Its events, clubs and services should be emphatically promoted to all pupils.