

Ormiston Forge Academy

# Literacy Policy

March 2019



Approved by the SLT on behalf of the Governors Curriculum and Standards Committee  
under powers delegated by the Governing Body: **May 15<sup>th</sup> 2019**

Review period: **May 2021**

“Literacy is about people’s ability to function in society as private individuals, active citizens, employees or parents...Literacy is about people’s self-esteem, their interaction with others, their health and employability. Ultimately, literacy is about whether a society is fit for the future.”

“Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools: a shared responsibility” (Ofsted April 2013)

### **Introduction and Aims**

Every teacher at the Academy is a teacher of literacy. As developing the literacy skills of our students is one of our core purposes, literacy provision at the Academy must encompass the following:

- Excellent practice to ensure that all students have high levels of literacy appropriate to their age.
- Support for students to develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect, in reading, writing and spoken communication.
- Opportunities for students to read widely and often across all subjects.
- A positive learning environment to develop a love of literacy.

Our aim is to develop an ethos in which literacy is upheld as key to success both within the academy and which enables our students to leave us equipped for the life they will lead in society.

Well-balanced curriculum provision will be further supported by a range of personalised and targeted intervention strategies as well as enrichment activities for students.

Our policy outlines expectations in the following areas:

### **Speaking and Listening**

- Teachers will provide students with opportunities to express themselves in a range of contexts and situations. This should include a focus on building student self-confidence and knowledge of appropriate forms of speaking for different contexts and audiences.
- Students should learn that listening is a skill that requires focus and a genuine interest in what is being said, leading to decisions on how to best respond.
- Students should be able to assess their performances in spoken language against recognised criteria.

### **Reading**

- Staff will have access to up to date reading ages for all students, to allow them to make informed choices about appropriate texts, and to plan appropriate support for students in order that they may successfully access texts.
- Staff will ensure that fiction and non-fiction reading material provided for students will be accessible and appropriately challenging for students of all abilities.

- Opportunities for reading (both silently and aloud) will be provided and planned for both within and outside of lesson times.
- Opportunities for students and teachers to share their reading experiences and a love of reading will be provided.
- Staff will follow the guidelines for E.R.I.C. \*
- Staff will support students and plan provision to enable to students to use a range of reading strategies including;
  - how to scan for overall meaning, key points, words and phrases,
  - how to sift/select, and take notes from text and read to locate information,
  - how to use reading to research and investigate from both printed and electronic text.
- Lessons and private study tasks will provide opportunities for students to be actively engaged in reading both to widen their subject knowledge, and also reading for pleasure.

\*(Appendix 1 provides guidelines for E.R.I.C. (Everyone reads in Class))  
 (Appendix 2 provides strategies to help with reading)

### **Writing**

- Schemes of work and lessons will provide opportunities for students to write in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students will be encouraged to plan, draft, review and redraft their writing to promote a growth mindset.
- Staff will help students to organise their writing in logical, coherent and legible forms.
- Staff will ensure that lessons and marking provide students with strategies to improve accuracy of spelling; accuracy of punctuation; more developed use of complex sentence structuring; more structured writing and coherence; more focus on layout, audience and purpose.
- Staff will use agreed literacy target codes when marking student work:

- L1 Use appropriate punctuation at the end of sentences.
- L2 Use capital letters to start sentences and/or for proper nouns.
- L3 Use a wider range of conjunctions to link ideas.
- L4 Organise ideas into paragraphs.
- L5 Check spellings of the most commonly used English words.

(Appendix 3 provides strategies to help with key words and spellings)

Ormiston Forge Academy

# Literacy Strategies

June 2019



## **Appendix 1 (E.R.I.C.)**

### **E.R.I.C. (Everyone Reads in Class)**

All students in Key Stage 3 will participate in E.R.I.C.

Students will spend 20 minutes engaged in reading at the start of a lesson during period 1 in week one, period 2 in week two and so on. This is on rotation of two weeks out of three with numeracy. A schedule will be provided at the start of each academic year. The only exceptions where students will not be expected to read for 20 minutes are practical lessons (Technology, Art , Music or P.E).

All Year 7 and 8 students should have a book with them every day. This could be a book from home, or one from the academy library. In order to promote borrowing from the library, fines have been suspended.

Following Accelerated Reader testing, students in Years 7 and 8 will be provided with a ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) card. The card indicates which library books are accessible for the student's current reading ability and directs them to books with a degree of challenge.

Members of staff who teach Year 7 and 8 students have been provided with a small selection of books which they can loan to students if any arrive at a lesson having forgotten their book at any time. These will remain the property of the class teacher. They do not need to be returned to the library.

### **Expectations of students**

Students are expected to bring a book every day. Ideally this will be from the library and have the appropriate ZPD coloured sticker, or could be a book from home.

Staff should not allow students to go to the library during ERIC time as the time is specifically for reading.

Students are expected to read silently unless they are reading to an adult.

### **Strategies for staff**

1. **Be a positive role model.** Spend time reading yourself so that the students can see you modelling good reading habits, and can see that you value reading too.
2. **Listen to students read.** Encourage students to read to you. They are used to reading to teachers during English lessons, so should happily spend a few minutes reading aloud to you. This allows you the opportunity to help with pronunciation of words/check on the understanding of what is read.
3. **Prompt discussion.** A quiet word with a student about what they have been reading will help to motivate them to read on and talk about their book again next time.
4. **Recommend books.** Students are often interested to hear about books that others have read. You could have a few minutes at the start of end of some sessions where you, or students in the class, give a thumbnail sketch of a book and recommended it to others.

## **Appendix 2 (Reading Strategies) Activities which encourage close reading**

These activities are most effective when worked on by a pair or small group as the discussion of possibilities leads to a close look at the text.

### **Cloze activities**

Filling the gap involves the reader in actively constructing meaning. Skills include:

- paying close attention to the meaning of the sentence,
- choosing a word that fits grammatically,
- using one's existing knowledge of the topic,
- working out what is likely from the rest of the text,
- working out what will fit with the style of the text,
- attending to the sense of the whole sentence by reading and re-reading.

### **Sequencing**

Sequencing activities involve reconstructing a text which has been cut into chunks.

Skills include:

- reading and re-reading,
- paying close attention to the structure of the genre,
- paying close attention to link words,
- hunting for the logic or organising principle of the text – e.g. chronological order,
- using prior learning and earlier reading.

### **Text marking**

Text marking includes underlining, annotating or numbering the text to show sequence.

Skills may include:

- skimming or scanning to find specific information,
- differentiating between different categories of information,
- deciding what is relevant information,
- finding the main idea(s),
- questioning the information presented in the text.

### **Appendix 3**

It is a key element of the academy's Literacy policy that we promote a set of strategies to help students to learn and retain spellings.

The following pages provide good, practical suggestions for ways in which departments can help support their students in using subject-specific vocabulary.

#### **Ten strategies for use with keywords:**

##### **1. Have subject-specific dictionaries in your subject rooms**

Students can locate words more quickly within these than in a large, general dictionary. Technical definitions are listed first to aid easy retrieval of meaning. Discuss and clarify the meanings and get students to define the word in their own words. Encourage the use of these dictionaries on a regular basis.

##### **2. Create word banks**

After brainstorming/concept mapping, keywords from this activity are identified and written on strips of card by students. These are sorted and displayed alphabetically around the room. Add new vocabulary to these lists during every lesson. Draw attention to the lists whenever students are undertaking written work.

##### **3. Make word and definition cards**

Prepare boxes of cards for specific units of work. One set of cards contains the words, another contains definitions. These can be used for a variety of games and matching activities. If the separate words and definitions are stored on computer, students can cut and paste their own prompt sheets.

##### **4. Create interactive glossaries**

Make a booklet containing an alphabetical list of keywords from a unit of work. Leave a blank line alongside each word. Students can complete glossaries as words are used in lessons.

##### **5. Keyword crosswords/word-searches**

Students complete crosswords based on keywords and their definitions. These can be stored on computer and become a permanent resource for the department. The crosswords can be of the conventional type with the keyword definitions given as clues and the keywords being filled in on the crossword grid. Alternatively, students can be given a completed crossword grid and are asked to create the clues for each word. Each activity helps reinforce meaning as well as spelling.

##### **6. Create word cluster posters**

Draw students' attention to the patterns to be found in words (e.g. equal, equalise, equate, equilateral, equality, equation, equidistant, equilibrium, and so on) pointing out their common root (equa/equi, from the Latin word meaning to make even) and how that helps with both spelling and meaning. Students create word cluster posters and display them in subject rooms.

## **7. Create mnemonics**

Mnemonics are sentences created to help us remember how to spell words or a sequence of facts. The first letter of each word in the sentence is significant. The well known examples are ones such as Richard of York gave battle in vain (r, o, y, g, b, i, v – the colours of the rainbow) or Big elephants can't always use small exits (for the word because). For homework, students can create a mnemonic to remind them how to spell a keyword. The results are shared and one selected by the class to become their mnemonic of choice. This is written up, displayed and its use encouraged.

## **8. Create calligram posters**

Calligrams are visual representations of a word that reflect its meaning. For example the words test tube might be written with an exaggerated letter u, which takes on the shape of a test tube, or glacier might be written in jagged 'ice letters'. Students create such visual representations of keywords and display them for all to share.

## **9. Use icons alongside words**

Icons and symbols alongside keywords act as memory prompts and are particularly useful for students struggling with literacy. For example, a drawing of a pencil could accompany the instruction 'write'; or the outline tool shapes often used as an aid to effective storage in design and technology departments can have the word written alongside them also.

## **10. Play word games**

The final few minutes of a lesson can profitably be given over to word games that use key vocabulary. There are many such games. For example:

- Write keywords onto a program such as "WordWall" and play a game to identify the correct one to answer a question. For example, in Maths, words such as quadrilateral, rectangle, square, and so on. When the teacher reads out a definition, two opposing team members compete to be the first to identify and touch the correct word.
- Half a word is written on the board and members of opposing teams volunteer to complete the word.
- Play the traditional game of 'hangman' with keywords.
- Write everyday terms such as times and share and volunteer team members add the technical versions – multiply, divide and so on.
- You provide the definitions and students write the words.

Games such as these require little in the way of preparation but can end a session on an upbeat note, as well as help revisit and revise keywords in an active and engaging way.



More vocabulary games:

- 1 Write key words on the board as they are used
- 2 Personal wordbooks in which students record words as they are introduced to them
- 3 Highlighted key words in worksheets, notes and text
- 4 Read through the list so that students hear the words and repeat them
- 5 'Lucky Dip' – student picks a word and explains what they know about it
- 6 'Jigsaw Cards' – students match words with definitions
- 7 Displays in rooms of key words/word banks
- 8 Group words/concepts – the whole group arrange words and their definitions into themes and concepts
- 9 Making sentences – students make sentences using the words in the box to show their meanings
- 10 'Guess my Word' – a student picks a word and talks about it without saying the word. The rest of the group have to guess the word as quickly as possible
- 11 'Just a minute' – students select a word from the box and talk for a minute about it
- 12 'Draw my Word' – a version of the game 'Pictionary'. Individuals pick a word out of the box and draw it for the rest of the group in 30 seconds
- 13 Wordsearch – with definitions
- 14 'Word Bingo' where the teacher reads out the definition and the students strike out the word on their cards
- 15 Students create mnemonics for subject- specific vocabulary
- 16 Anagrams
- 17 Word banks of subject-specific words located on writing frames
- 18 Interactive glossaries – lists of subjects-specific vocabulary to which students add definitions at the end of lessons in which those words have been introduced
- 19 'Blockbusters' – a version of the TV game in which students or teams of students compete against each other to cross a frame made up of initial letters, for which definitions of subject-specific vocabulary are given subject-specific words omitted
- 20 Word cluster posters