



Literacy Policy

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Policy Statement

All teachers are teachers of literacy. Therefore, the Peak Academy is committed to developing literacy skills in all of our pupils, in the belief that this will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum because:

- pupils need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects;
- reading helps us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience;
- writing helps us to sustain and order thought;
- language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do and the things others have said, written or done;
- responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry;
- improving literacy and learning can have an impact on pupils' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour. It allows them to learn independently. It is empowering.

All schemes of work and everyday practice will incorporate specific literacy objectives, focussing on the school's termly Literacy Objective. These objectives will inform what is taught, how it is taught, what is learned and how it is learned. Reviewing Literacy learning outcomes should also form part of lesson plenaries when this is appropriate to the focus of the lesson.

1. Objectives

- The Oxford English Dictionary defines literacy simply as ‘the ability to read and write’. The recent White Paper adds further context: ‘When young people compete for jobs and enter the workplace, they will be expected to communicate precisely and effectively.’ (Para. 4.50) There is a clear expectation, when taken with the response to the Wolf Report quoted above, that young people leaving the education system at 16, or more likely 19, will have the requisite literacy and communication skills to be employable and to be effective in that employment. Moreover, the recently published Teaching Standards make it plain that all teachers should: ‘...demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher’s specialist subject’ (Part 1, point 3).
- The inclusion of Standard English here, along with the full sense of ‘communicate’, suggests that the definition of literacy should be taken to include the ability to speak and listen effectively alongside the skills of reading and writing.
- Pupils often arrive at The Peak Academy with low levels of literacy. This may be because they have experienced disruption to their education or because they have found it difficult to engage with learning in the past. Literacy has a high priority at the academy and new pupils’ reading ages are assessed as soon as they arrive so that a literacy programme, tailored to their needs can be implemented.
- Our vision for Literacy is:
 - to make our best better;
 - that students who have a reading age below their chronological age make rapid progress so they can access the whole curriculum effectively.
 - that every teacher is a teacher of Literacy;
 - that all lessons in all subjects, will promote the development of Literacy skills.
- Across the Academy we will:
 - identify the strengths and weaknesses in pupils’ work across the academy;
 - adapt the identified literacy cross-curricular priorities for each year;
 - identify progression in the main forms of reading, writing, speaking and listening undertaken in each department and strengthen teaching plans accordingly;
 - plan to include the teaching of cross-curricular literacy objectives to support learning in own subject area;
 - model the same high standards of literacy practice that we expect from our pupils;
 - monitor the impact of our literacy interventions and review provision accordingly;
 - review this policy annually.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- SLT: lead and give a high profile to the Academy vision for literacy;
- Teachers across the curriculum: take every opportunity to provide pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively;
- Teaching Assistants: provide additional scaffolding for pupils with identified literacy weaknesses;

- Literacy Co-ordinator: supports departments in the implementation of strategies and encourages departments to learn from each other's practice by sharing ideas. He /She regularly monitors pupils' progress in literacy and the impact of literacy interventions and reviews provision accordingly;
- Parents: encourage their children to use the range of strategies they have learned to improve their levels of literacy;
- Pupils: take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements;
- Governors: an identified governor will meet with staff and pupils and report progress and issues to the Governing Body and to parents annually.

3. Monitoring and Review

- The Literacy Co-ordinator will report on the Policy to the Headteacher as appropriate.
- The Headteacher will report to the Governors on any relevant aspects of the working of the Policy as appropriate.
- The Governing Body will review the Policy every two years.

4. Procedures

- Within the Ofsted document, 'Reading, Writing and Communication' (October 2011) it is clear that every teacher is expected to be a teacher of literacy. Therefore, all teaching staff will use these questions to inform their planning to literacy within their lessons:
 - How have I planned to make key terms and vocabulary clear and explore these with pupils to ensure that they recognise and understand them? How do I demonstrate any relation to similar words or the root from which they are derived?
 - How have I planned to identify and explore any particular features of key vocabulary and help pupils with strategies for remembering how to spell them or why they might be capitalised?
 - How have I planned to remind children of important core skills – for example how to skim a text to extract the main elements of its content quickly or to scan a text for information about a key word or topic?
 - How have I planned to make literacy expectations clear before pupils begin a task – for example on the conventions of layout in a formal letter or on the main features of writing persuasively?
 - How have I planned to reinforce the importance of accuracy in spoken or written language – for example, emphasising the need for correct sentence punctuation in one-sentence answers or correcting 'we was...' in pupils' speech?

- How have I planned to identify when it is important to use Standard English and when other registers or dialects may be used – for example, when recreating dialogue as part of narrative writing?
- How have I planned to help pupils with key elements of literacy as they support them in lessons? Do they point out spelling, grammar or punctuation issues as they look at work around the class?
- How have I planned to use my marking to support key literacy points? For example, are key subject terms always checked for correct spelling? Is sentence punctuation always corrected?
- How have I planned for challenging literacy in my success criteria for each extended speaking and listening or written task?

4.1 Strategies and Implementation

- Exams and assessment outcomes will be monitored to ensure that no group is disadvantaged in their literacy with respect to ability, gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
- Literacy is a standing agenda item in weekly education meetings in order to discuss work completed, work to be completed, share good practice and training needs.
- Regular reviews will take place in order to map the progression of Literacy skills across the curriculum and to provide appropriate staff INSET.
- The curriculum will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning, the Senior Leadership team and the TWHF to ensure it matches the interests, aptitudes and special needs of all its pupils.

4.2 Monitoring pupils' progress in Literacy

- We will make regular use of available data to assess the standards of pupils' literacy. SLT, the Head of English and the literacy coordinator, will meet termly to share a report/update on pupil engagement and progress within literacy groups, they will collectively decide how to monitor pupils' literacy progress in the academy on a regular basis, at least once every half term as well as supporting key pupils through different intervention activities.

Monitoring activities include:

- sampling work – both pupil's work and schemes of learning;
- testing all students' reading ages at least 3 times a year.
- observation – pupil pursuit and literacy teaching by literacy coordinator;
- discussion with pupils
- scrutiny of pupil work;
- encouraging departments to share good practice by exhibiting or exemplifying pupils' work;
- literacy RAG rating for engagement
- literacy learning walks

4.3 Reading

- Our commitment to promoting reading to learn means across the academy pupils are encouraged to:
 - Become successful readers and read with confidence, fluency and understanding.
 - Use a range of strategies to help understand the meaning of texts.
 - Understand and use a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.
 - Be interested in books, read with enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences.
 - Develop their skills of researching and using information gained from relevant texts.
 - Every pupil will participate in literacy sessions a minimum of 3 times weekly, RWI intervention 4 times weekly. Rewards will be in place to recognise the pupils' efforts and successes in reading.
 - 1:1 RWI intervention to take place for specific pupils .

- To ensure consistency in reading practice every teacher will:
 - Utilise every opportunity within lessons to support pupils in enhancing their core reading skills (i.e. specifying precise reading skills to be practiced including skimming and scanning, inference and deduction, prediction, visualisation, evaluation, reading for meaning);
 - Promote the Read, Write, Inc Programme and Comprehension Express Intervention as outlined in the table below:

Activity Outline	For whom?	Measure of impact
4 times weekly RWI Fresh Start sessions	All pupils assessed with the RWI phonic and reading check	Increase in reading age as measured by Literacy assessment online test Increase in the number of sounds known in RWI and pace of reading
PIRA – Progress in reading and language assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - administered on entry to The Peak Academy - Administered 3 times yearly. - Data available to staff following reading test analysis - Staff/pupils record reading ages in their subject files. - Pupils 'at risk' to be identified for appropriate intervention 	All pupils	Data analysis and report to be presented to SLT following testing of pupils.

Activity Outline	For whom?	Measure of impact
Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the access and availability of appropriate texts - Current and of interest reading displays - Accelerated reader program for pupils 	All pupils	Pupil opportunities to borrow books for home
Celebration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Termly reward trip - praise assemblies - updating parents on reading ages 	All pupils	High participation / success rate on literacy assessment online dashboard
Accelerated reader program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - books at the correct level for pupils to read - engaging titles for reluctant readers - challenge for more able readers - word challenges - certificates for participation and achievement 	All pupils	Pupils reading independently Engagement in books of low ability high interest Book quizzes – give scores following reading

- The Academy ensures that reading ages are regularly tested (as appropriate to age and key stage) and that intervention provision for reading is regularly and accurately monitored and reviewed:
- The academy is committed to supporting pupils who leave primary school with reading ages below their chronological reading age through the provision of additional reading support or interventions. The impact of this support will be monitored and reviewed. In addition to the interventions listed, we will ensure that weaker readers have the opportunity to read aloud and discuss their reading in terms of progress and preferences on a weekly basis.

4.4 Writing

- Our commitment to promoting writing skills means across the Academy pupils are encouraged to:
 - write with confidence, fluency and understanding;
 - have fluent, accurate and legible handwriting, which is set out in the appropriate way;
 - plan, draft and edit own writing;
 - recognise the difference between the use of Standard English and colloquial dialect in writing;
 - develop their powers of imagination.
- To ensure consistency in writing practice every teacher will:
 - Use a range of learning strategies to help pupils learn subject-specific terminology. These include:
 - identifying and displaying key vocabulary;
 - offer RWI speed sound charts to pupils involved in the RWI programme
 - revising high frequency key subject words, taking into account subject specific terminology and set personal spelling targets within literacy groups.

- Provide pupils with every opportunity to develop their writing skills including the use of:
 - Literacy placemats (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openings, Punctuation);
 - literacy mats; subject specific
- provide text-type specific writing scaffolds, to ensure a consistent approach to the planning of non-fiction writing across the curriculum.
- Mark pupils' work for aspects of literacy in line with the Academy literacy marking policy.

4.5 Communication

- Our commitment to improving pupils' communication skills means across the academy pupils are encouraged to:
 - talk confidently in different situations;
 - be involved in discussions, talking clearly and using appropriate vocabulary;
 - show confident use of Standard English in formal situations;
 - have an interest in words and their meanings;
 - extend their vocabulary;
 - understand and use subject specific vocabulary;
 - take an active part in discussions, commenting on others' ideas and asking relevant questions.
- To promote our children' communication skills, every teacher will provide children with a range of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through structured activities
- Communication objectives:
Pupils demonstrate good communication skills when they are able to:
 - look at the person who is talking
 - take turns to talk and listen
 - use praise and encouragement to support and guide their peers
 - use talk for a range of purposes and audiences
 - use talk to explore and evaluate
 - listen to the views of others and make constructive comments about what they say
 - respect the views of others
 - use talk to ask and answer questions
 - use active listening strategies
 - welcome visitors and new students in a polite and helpful manner
 - describe what they and others are doing in a lesson
 - discuss how to edit and improve their work
 - work collaboratively to solve problems
 - present work individually, in pairs and in small groups
 - plan, discuss and evaluate their speaking and listening and that of their peers
 - use standard English when required

Appendix A: Reading Interventions in the Academy

Intervention	For whom?	Measure of impact
Ruth Miskin RWI Fresh Start programme – 4 times weekly	Pupils who have been assessed in phonic knowledge and reading using RWI assessment material	Teacher assessment on entry, during the scheme and termly
Comprehension Express	Targeted pupils with a reading age lower than 12 Pupils in y7 that do not need RWI intervention	Literacy engagement RAG rating PIRA reading assessment Book quiz Star assessment
One to one Literacy intervention withdrawal sessions	See separate timetable	Literacy assessment online reading test Teacher assessment at the beginning of the intervention, during the middle and at the end.

Appendix B: Writing Strategies in the Academy

Strategies	For whom?	Measure of impact
Literacy mats	All pupils	Increased independence during writing tasks.
Literacy intervention withdrawal sessions	Specific pupils identified by literacy/English lead	Teacher assessment at the beginning of the intervention, during the middle and at the end.
Handwriting support Irish National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) materials	All students who have difficulty forming letters and writing legibly	Teacher assessment on entry
RWI Strategies	To be used as part of structured writing tasks.	Increased independence and improvement in writing levels.

Appendix C: Communication Strategies in the Academy

Strategies	For whom?	Measure of impact
The academy's 16 communication objectives. displayed in classrooms and referred to in lessons.	All pupils	Pupils meeting increased number of objectives.
Whole school group work rules displayed in all classrooms	All pupils	Rules being followed. Evidenced during learning walks and lesson observations. Students working collaboratively in groups.
Emphasis on using standard English in all classrooms	All pupils	All adults emphasising the use of standard English in lessons and around the school, including the correction of grammatical errors in spoken language. Improvement in speaking and listening levels.