



LITERACY POLICY

Author of Policy
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Date adopted by Governors/Academy
December 2014

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Lemin', is written over a horizontal line.

Signed on behalf of Governing Body

Reviewed
December 2014

ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY, PLYMOUTH
Pennycross, PLYMOUTH PL5 3NE

All Saints Church of England Academy, Plymouth aims to be an inspirational community of learning, which will transform the life chances of the students and make a positive contribution to the well-being of the local community and the wider world. The Academy is rooted in Christian values including truth, justice, forgiveness, generosity and respect. The Academy aims to provide outstanding educational opportunities and experiences which will enable all students, regardless of ability and background, to bring out the best in themselves, and to make a difference for good in the world.

The Academy believes that education is about the development of the whole person, and in educating each student will endeavour to:

- sharpen the mind
- enrich the imagination
- strengthen the body
- nourish the spirit
- encourage the will to do good
- open the heart to others

This policy and the associated procedures are based on these principles, aims and beliefs.

Purpose

At All Saints Academy Plymouth, it is our belief that good levels of literacy will support learning and raise standards across the curriculum. We believe this because:

- Improving literacy and learning can have an impact on students' self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. It allows them to learn independently. It is empowering.
- Students 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.
- Language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do.
- Responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry.
- Literate young people are more likely to succeed as adults.

Procedure

1. Responsibilities

Academy Leadership:

All members of the senior leadership team are responsible for promoting literacy and acting as role models across the Academy. One member of SLT has specific responsibility through which literacy interventions are delivered.

Literacy Committee:

This group will be led by Kevin Lemin [SLT] and Sue Mullinder [literacy development leader]. It will be made up of literacy co-ordinators from each curriculum area who will drive literacy through their own curriculum areas.

Staff:

All staff are responsible for improving levels of literacy in the Academy and therefore any communications relating to literacy will be delivered through whole staff meetings. Teaching staff are all teachers of literacy and incorporate it into every curriculum area. Teachers are expected to plan lessons carefully, which includes planning for the specific literacy needs of their students.

Students:

The importance of literacy is promoted to students through competitions and literacy material around the Academy.

Parents:

It is our ambition that as the Academy continues to develop all parents will also take responsibility for literacy. Parents will be involved through communications from the literacy committee. Literacy will also be a fundamental part of meetings that are held with the local primaries and the parents of students new to All Saints Academy Plymouth.

The wider community:

A number of staff are involved with the local primary schools. There will also be joint projects taking place to address literacy. We hope to extend our knowledge and training of the phonics programme to the wider community to ensure more students arrive at secondary school with the appropriate levels of literacy required.

2. Specific Interventions and Initiatives

- All students in Year 7 will be expected to spend some time engaging in private reading in most curriculum areas. In Years 7 and 8 students are motivated to read by means of "Renaissance Learning: Accelerated Reader". This is a differentiated program. Students are guided to choose books at an appropriate level of readability and can then self-assess their understanding by means of interactive tests. The results allow us to reward reading through a points system, and provide the teacher with data relating to pupil progress and engagement.
- Students who join the Academy in Year 7 with level 4C in English are most at risk of failing to achieve expected progress to grade C. These students receive additional catch-up tuition in small groups with tailored resources. This is delivered by a team of teachers drawn from across the curriculum.
- For students joining below level 4, intervention is led by the SENCO, delivered by HLTA and TA, and characterised by small group delivery of a phonics-based approach, and use of the "Fresh Start" scheme. This work continues into Year 8.
- English teachers were trained in the delivery of "Literacy Plus", a KS3 National Strategy scheme, which focuses on the consolidation of pupils' Language skills at level 4B and above. In 2013/14 this will be embedded in the Y7 scheme of work for English.
- Literacy development for all year groups is a key component of the tutorial programme each week. It is delivered through private, shared or guided reading, and through "First News", a literacy-based scheme, focussing on topical events and current affairs.
- Awards and rewards are a key feature of our drive to raise standards. Effort and progress in literacy, particularly as evidenced by Accelerated Reader must be acknowledged in the classroom and in Learning Family assemblies. Major awards are issued on a termly basis.

3. Literacy across the Academy

3.1 Developing a Reading Culture

The Academy aims to produce an environment and ethos where reading is part of the culture.

The following activities aim to promote this:

- Students in Year 7 all receive a book as part of the government 'Booked Up' scheme.
- 'I am reading' display boards have been issued to all teaching and administrative staff. These are displayed on the doors of rooms in order to help stimulate conversations about reading. They are a visual reference for students, staff and visitors that reading does take place within our community.
- Major literary events take place and are supported by staff and highlighted during Family assemblies e.g. World Poetry Day.
- After school clubs and activities take place that promote literacy and reading: Homework club, Reading club.

- Private and/or tutor reading takes place during tutorial sessions at least once per week.
- Authors are invited in to school e.g. Darren Shan

3.2 Tackling Written Literacy

There are a series of cross-curricular measures in place to tackle written literacy. Following the writing scrutiny in July 2011, the following outcomes have been suggested and incorporated in to the new Academy marking policy. The basic expectations for students in all subject areas are:

1. Students should write in full sentences whenever possible. This means when answering a question, they must write in full sentences, re-wording the question. Teachers should provide students with connectives to link their ideas in answering these questions.
2. Students' books should be marked as per the Academy marking policy. Marking for literacy is a key part of this policy. Students should be expected to make their own corrections. All students should have marking codes as stickers in their subject exercise books.
3. Students should not be copying explanations of processes out of books or off the board. They must explain what they have learnt in their own words.

Other initiatives include:

Key Words:

All staff must highlight the use of key words when writing lesson plans. Key words for each subject area can be found on the students' VLE area.

Weekly Literacy Focus:

There will be specific weeks during the year when there will be a specific literacy focus across the Academy, for example full stops or there, their homophones. Teachers will make reference to this on the board and during the lesson, drawing on it during writing tasks or in plenaries.

VCOP pyramids:

Most curriculum areas have now opted to use these. They support the students' vocabulary, connective, and punctuation use. These are particularly useful for grading/levelling up students' work after their initial drafts have been written.

Dictionaries:

There are two dictionaries in every classroom around the Academy. Students are taught dictionary skills in English.

Literacy Starters:

All teachers will deliver literacy based starters to all year groups. Teachers across the curriculum have been supplied with a bank of literacy starters.

4. Continuing Professional Development

Developing staff in their ability to deliver improvements in literacy is a key component of CPD at All Saints, and takes place through whole staff training days and twilight training sessions.

5. Monitoring Impact

All teachers are formally observed twice annually for appraisal and quality assurance. Evaluating the quality of teaching of reading, writing, and communication is integral to this. As part of the process, observers also check for consistency across the Academy on a range of basic expectations some of which relate to literacy i.e., “Are key words shared and understood?” “Is the marking policy in full use?” “Is work marked up to date?”

In 2013/14 regular walkthroughs by senior and middle leaders are scheduled. Monitoring the teaching of literacy will be a key focus. Observers are provided with SSAT literacy observation prompts for guidance (see Resources).

Work scrutiny in departments is scheduled three times a year. Evaluating teachers’ marking for literacy is included in this.

In Years 7 and 8 pupils’ annual progress in reading is formally monitored through NFER reading tests, administered at the beginning and end of each academic year.

Resources

Literacy Symbols

SYMBOLS	MEANING
Sp	Spelling error
P	Punctuation mistake [missing full stop, comma etc.]
G	Grammar mistake, e.g. Incorrect verb-tense agreement [I does football after school]
F	Not a full sentence
C	Misuse of capital letters or missing capital letters
NP//	New paragraph needed

- Marking for literacy is part of the Academy marking policy
- Teachers may choose to have the symbols sheet glued into students’ books alternatively the A3 Literacy Marking Symbols poster should be displayed in classrooms.
- Staff should mark work using the symbols at least once every two weeks.
- Spelling errors should be written correctly for student reference. If spelling is an issue with a particular student it is sensible to only correct the five most common errors.

Observing Literacy

Literacy Observation Prompts

The following observation prompts provide useful questions to consider when observing literacy across the curriculum.

Speaking and Listening

- What kind of expectations does the teacher have in relation to speaking and listening activities?
- How does the speaking and listening that takes place during the lesson enhance students' learning?
- Are speaking and listening activities given clear outcomes/audience/purpose?
- Are all students actively engaged in speaking and listening tasks?
- How effectively does the teacher use questioning?

Reading

- How are students being supported to make sense of the text that is being used?
- How does the reading further the students' learning? How does it relate to the learning objectives of the lesson?
- How are students coping with the text?
- Are all students actively engaged in reading the text? Can they all make sense of it?
- If the students cannot make sense of essential concepts in the text, what is the teacher doing to support the students to develop understanding?

Writing

- What kind of expectations does the teacher have of the students' writing? Is the work well presented? Is any attention given to spelling and punctuation?
- Do the students fully understand the purpose of the writing? Does the teacher provide an example of what is expected or model the text type for the students?
- For extended writing, do the students know what the assessment criteria are?
- How are the least able being supported? What kind of intervention does the teacher make?
- Is there evidence of supportive marking/feedback to move the students on?

Spelling and Vocabulary

- Are key words and subject-specific vocabulary clearly displayed in classrooms?
- Does the teacher make reference to key words and vocabulary during the lesson starter?
- Does the teacher check students' understanding of key terminology as it arises during the lesson?