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Gaudium et Spes

“Live, Love and Learn in the Light of Christ”

Literacy across the Curriculum

All teachers are teachers of literacy and it is at the heart of everything we do. Fluency in language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects and we recognise the significance of Literacy as a whole school issue. We aim to raise literacy attainment, in order to maximise the potential of every student and to ensure students have the opportunity to become effective readers, writers and communicators. There are three components of effective language use:

Spoken Language

- Students should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English.
- They should be taught to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication.
- They should also be taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas.

Reading and Writing

- Students should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Students should be taught the strategies used by expert readers to tackle non-fiction as well as fiction texts, and should be given regular opportunities to practise them. They should develop a clear understanding of the various forms and conventions of non-fiction text to support their learning in all subject areas.
- Students should develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Students should also be taught the correct use of grammar. They should build on what they have been taught to expand their range of writing and the variety of grammar they use.
- The writing they do should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations.

Vocabulary Development

- Students' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. Teachers should therefore develop vocabulary actively building systematically on pupils' current knowledge.
- They should increase students' store of words in general. All subjects should work to develop students' Tier Two and Tier Three vocabulary. They should also make links between known and new vocabulary and discuss the shades of meaning in similar words. In this way, pupils expand the vocabulary choices that are available to them when they write.
- In addition, it is vital for students' comprehension that they understand the meanings of words they meet in their reading across all subjects, and older pupils should be taught the meaning of instruction verbs that they may meet in examination questions.

Creating a positive reading and writing ethos in the school

As a school, our policy is to encourage pupils to read and write as widely as possible. Form tutors are asked to encourage private reading through the weekly 'Drop Everything and Read' session in form time. These sessions are accompanied by tasks on screen which develop students' non-fiction reading skills. Students are required to bring a reading book as part of daily equipment. From very soon in Year 7 students are introduced to the Library where they are given a variety of opportunities to develop their reading skills through library skills lessons, competitions and a variety of reading events throughout the year including Book Buzz, Readathon and World Book Day.

Literacy Interventions

Students with a need to develop specific literacy skills are also supported at the school. Students are selected for intervention based on baseline data, such as CATS test results. All pupils' reading ages are tested. In Year 7, this data is used to establish those who would benefit from the Catch-Up programme in English. This structured programme of phonics, comprehension, individual reading, writing and discussion targets areas of weakness, primarily amongst those who are judged not to be Secondary Ready. This works alongside key aspects of the Year 7 English curriculum. Any students significantly below their chronological age are monitored by the Learning Support Department by targeting these students in timetabled lessons and in 'Buddy Reading' sessions. Spelling ages are also tested so that they can be provided with additional support for spelling.

A cohort of students in Year 7, 8, 9 also have timetabled weekly Literacy lessons. The Reading Ages of these students are tracked by the Learning Support Department. These sessions allow for additional work on core aspects of literacy such as spelling, vocabulary and punctuation.

What every department should do:

- Support the entitlement of each student to have access to the curriculum, regardless of reading and writing ability.
- Ensure that literacy skills and conventions particular to the subject are taught and are made explicit, including having exemplars of writing in the subject available.
- Mark consistently for literacy across the department, according to the whole-school policy.
- Display key words in the classroom and have access to reference materials such as dictionaries in classrooms.

What every teacher should do:

- Consider reading/spelling age data when planning for the needs of students.
- Teach the literacy conventions of the subject taught and provide models of well-written work.
- Promote active reading skills such as highlighting, skimming, scanning etc.
- Teach subject key words and give advice on how to spell these key words.
- Encourage students to write in full sentences, beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full-stop and have high expectations for punctuation accuracy.
- Use the agreed whole-school codes when marking for literacy (table below).
- Model the use of Standard English within the classroom and provide students with opportunities to speak in both formal and informal ways.
- Provide opportunities for individual, pair and small group speaking and listening activities.

Literacy Marking Codes

| Code | Guide to marking codes |
|-------------|--|
| <u>the</u> | The underlined letter should be a capital letter. |
| P | Punctuation needs attention. Eg. A full stop could be missing. |
| // | There should be a new paragraph. |
| ? | Re-check for meaning/sense. |
| ^ | There is a word (or words) missing. |

Spelling Policy

Spelling is an important skill that all students should be taught in order to improve and develop literacy skills. It needs constant, continual practice and reinforcement.

Confident spellers are able to read, understand and produce written material more easily and able to communicate more effectively.

Aims of the spelling policy:

- Increase the confidence of students by knowing how to spell a wide range of words.
- Present a co-ordinated and coherent approach to the teaching and marking of spelling.

What every department should do:

- Teach learning strategies to help students learn subject spelling lists.
- Mark consistently for spelling across the department so that students know what is required of them in terms of corrections.
- Prioritise marking of high frequency and key subject words.
- Use key words, glossaries, word banks and other strategies to provide support for subject specific vocabulary.
- Equip classrooms for spelling by displaying key words, spelling strategies and dictionaries (where available).

What every teacher should do when marking spelling:

Identify up to 3 key spelling mistakes in the piece of work being marked.

Underline the mistake.

Write SP in the margin.

Either write out the correct spelling for the student or give the opportunity for student to find the correct spelling, as judged appropriate by the teacher.

Ask students to write out the correct spelling three times – this could be done during the lesson or as a homework task.

Regularly monitor that the students are recording and learning spelling and revisit frequent errors.

Methods to teach/learn spelling:

- Introduce new words by looking and talking about the spelling of them.
- Use of the 'LOOK-SAY-COVER-WRITE-CHECK' method.
- Looking at word roots and word families
- Mnemonics
- Simple rules
- Syllables
- Games