

Literacy policy

Albany Academy

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Our Inside Out school improvement strategy makes clear that a fundamental purpose of a world class schools is to ensure children are literate. This policy is based on the EEF recommendations for improving literacy.

Literacy is fundamental for success in school and later life. Students who cannot read, write and communicate effectively are highly unlikely to access the challenging academic curriculum in secondary school and are more likely to have poor educational outcomes across all subjects.

The policy follows the evidence based 7 steps from the EEF and provides a summary of what and how teachers will implement these steps.

Step 1 – Prioritise disciplinary literacy across the curriculum

Faculty Leaders will:

1. Audit existing literacy practices, attitudes, and resources in school—INVOLVING both teachers and students.
2. Create subject specific literacy plans, rooted in the discipline, that address barriers to accessing the curriculum related to reading, writing and communication.
3. Support teachers to define effective reading, writing, and talk in their subjects.
4. Evaluate the quality and complexity of existing reading materials in school, assessing the degree of academic challenge such texts pose.
5. Ensure that the development of disciplinary literacy is coherently aligned with curriculum development.

Senior Leaders will:

1. Support Faculty Leaders and teachers in developing their disciplinary literacy and provide training for them to teach literacy techniques effectively.
2. Monitor the quality of delivery and the impact of literacy teaching.
3. Report on the impact of this policy to Local Governors.
4. Update this policy to reflect latest evidence and best practice.

Step 2 – Provide targeted subject instruction in every subject

Teachers will:

- Before the lesson - Define the word:
 1. Identify Tier 2 and 3 language in their schemes and knowledge organisers.
 2. Know the etymology and morphology of the word before the lesson
- During the lesson:
 1. Say the word
 - Introduce the new word by writing it on the board, saying it
 2. Chorus the word
 - have the students repeat the word to practice saying it
 3. Explain the word
 - explain the etymology and morphology, linking to other tier 2 and 3 words
 4. Chorus the word
 - have the students repeat each part of the word

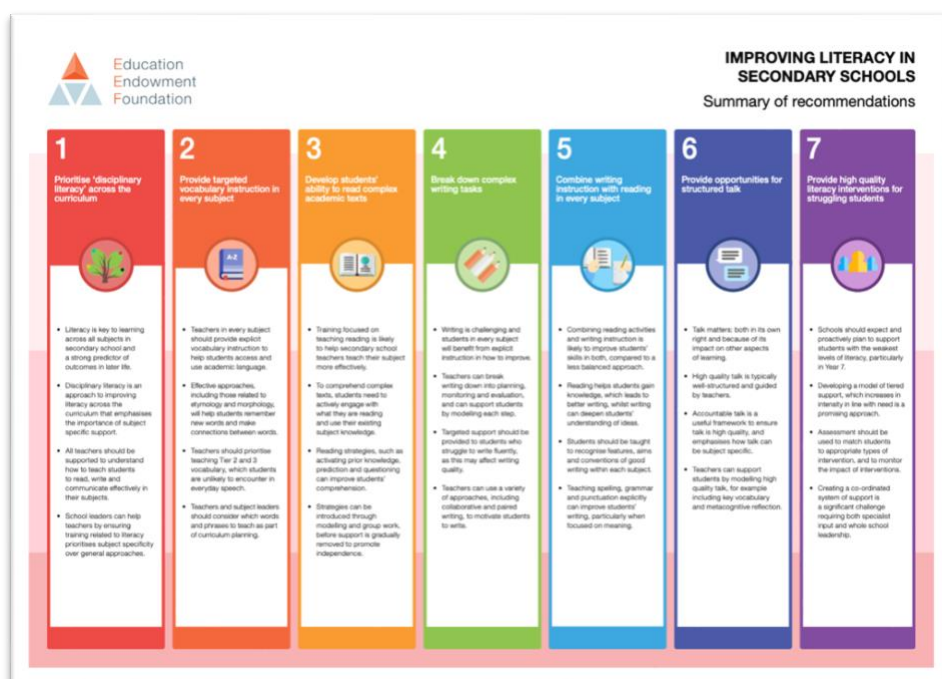


Figure 1 - EEF Literacy

5. Assess the word
 - direct question on the meaning, sound, etymology and morphology
6. Provide opportunities to read the word in context
7. Provide opportunities to practise using the words verbally and in writing to promote confidence

Teachers will not have students copy the word or definition, because this may lead to incorrect spellings and will not aid memory of the word.

[Deliberate vocabulary development](#)

Step 3 – Develop pupils’ ability to read and access academic texts

Faculty leaders and class teachers will develop appropriate reading strategies for their subjects.

These may include:

- Activating prior knowledge
- Prediction
- Questioning
- Clarifying
- Summarising
- Reciprocal Reading

[Key concepts in reading](#)

[Plan for Reading](#)

Step 4 - Break down complex writing tasks

Teachers will break down tasks. They may do this by:

1. Providing word-level, sentence-level and whole- text level instruction.
 - Eg; provide sentence starters
2. Ensuring that students understand the subject- specific connotations of Tier 2 vocabulary used in writing questions.
 - Eg; what ‘evaluation’ means in this subject
3. Explicitly teaching students strategy planning
 - Eg; use graphic organisers
4. Helping students self-regulate their writing
 - Eg; by providing a checklist of features included in high quality answers; using it as a self- or peer-assessment
5. Modelling how each strategy should be used
 - Eg; by speaking aloud to explain what they are doing and why, before students use the strategy themselves.

Teachers will remove the break down scaffolds over time as the students develop their automaticity and accuracy.

Writing Cycles

Teachers may also use a writing cycle where appropriate which will include planning, drafting, editing and redrafting stages.

Motivation

Teachers may support students' resilience and perseverance by using collaboration, competition and self talk as appropriate.

Step 5 - Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject

Teachers will combine writing with reading in their subject. They may do this by strategy planning:

1. Writing before reading
 - Eg by asking students to bullet what they currently know about a topic or generate questions they will later try to answer through reading;
2. Using annotation
 - Eg asking students to underline information about the types of evidence being cited
3. Writing short summaries
 - Eg asking students to write one sentence summary of a paragraph they have read
4. Creating checklists
 - Eg asking students while reading a text to highlight phrases that illustrate cause and effect
5. Anticipating common misconceptions
 - Eg explaining how authors avoid errors in high quality texts

Teachers will promote speed and accuracy by actively teach spelling and grammar. They may do this by:

1. Teaching groups of related spellings
 - Eg by prioritising words that are linked to content that is currently being studied
2. Pre-teaching spellings of challenging words and anticipating common errors
 - Eg homophones such as 'there' vs. 'their' or joining errors, for example, 'alot' instead of 'a lot'
3. Helping students recognise familiar patterns of letters
4. Using collaborative approaches
 - Eg grouping students and asking pairs to come up with memorable strategies for spelling challenging words
5. Teaching students to self-quiz using retrieval practice
 - Eg using flash cards
6. Insisting on fluent and legible handwriting

Step 6 - Provide opportunities for structured talk

Teachers will actively provide opportunities for structured talk. They may do this by:

1. Modelling by using subject Tier 3 vocabulary
2. Deliberately sequencing talk activities alongside reading and writing tasks
3. Using sentence starters and prompts to help students to structure and extend their responses.
4. Selecting questions that are open-ended,
5. Setting goals and roles, particularly for small group discussions
6. Using wait time to develop students' responses
7. Giving precise feedback relating to different elements of accountability.
8. Using metacognitive talk about use of HPL skills and behaviours and subject specific skills

[Oracy: Talk for writing](#)

Step 7 - Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students

Students will be tested using the Cats GL Reading Assessment in Year 7. Students in the bottom 35th percentile nationally will be retested. Students in the bottom 35th percentile in both tests will undergo **Thinking Reading** screening in school.

After screening appropriate interventions will be identified and implemented and shared with staff and parents. This intervention may include **Thinking Reading**, which is 3 x 30 minute sessions each week in school.

Reading for pleasure

We also aim to promote reading for pleasure amongst students. We do this by:

- All students in Years 7 & 8 are enrolled in the Accelerated Reader programme.
- An additional English lesson in Year 7.
- Reading for pleasure at the beginning of each English lesson.
- Reading for pleasure during tutor periods.
- The school library being open before school, after school and every break and lunch time.

Further Reading

[EEF Improving Literacy in secondary schools](#)

Quigley A 2018 *Closing the Vocabulary Gap*

Beadle P 2015 *How to teach literacy*

Murphy J & Bennet T 2019 *The researchED Guide to Literacy: An evidence-informed guide for teachers*

Walkthrus:

- [Key concepts in reading](#)
- [Plan for Reading](#)
- [Whole class reading routines](#)
- [Oracy: Talk for writing](#)
- [Deliberate vocabulary development](#)