

Literacy and Oracy at Beacon Hill Community School

Literacy interventions in school acknowledge the importance of implementing effective literacy training, strategies, and interventions. Prioritising literacy across the curriculum is an important school initiative aimed at enhancing the well-being, social skills, life opportunities, and academic achievements of all students.

Literacy Vision

- Implement a range of strategies across the Federation to promote a culture of reading for pleasure, as well as reading for understanding.
- Improve reading and writing skills for everyone in the school, not just the bottom 20% but any students who require intervention. This will ensure that all students enhance their opportunities to do well in their studies and succeed both in and outside of school.
- Promote Oracy in lessons, encouraging students to talk in a way that makes them feel confident and able to express themselves clearly and with confidence.
- Support students in developing their extended writing, incorporating Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary accurately and effectively.

Importance of literacy and why it is our priority

- Literacy enables pupils to access the curriculum, communicate their understanding and become independent learners.
- Strong reading skills support achievement across all subjects. Literacy is therefore the responsibility of every teacher, not only English teachers.
- Reading enjoyment remains low nationally. In 2026, only 36.1% of children and young people said they enjoyed reading, while 20.3% read daily.
- Pupils need explicit support with vocabulary, fluent reading, comprehension, writing and structured talk.
- We identify pupils who require additional help and provide timely, targeted support so that literacy difficulties do not become a barrier to achievement.
- Developing confident readers, writers and speakers prepares pupils for further education, employment and participation in wider society.

Literacy and Oracy Initiatives and Impact

We currently run the following interventions, using external assessments to pinpoint the reading component students need support with. Students are then supported with interventions at the correct level and programme to suit their needs. Most of our interventions are DfE-approved and research-driven, showing high-impact results in short time frames.

- Reciprocal reading is accessed by all students during the in-tutor-time initiative. Staff have training to implement this into regular departmental practice.

Reading buddies – Students are pair together between those who enjoy reading and are more able with those who need extra support during tutor time to support with guided reading.

- Herts for Learning (HFL) - a reading intervention focused on fluency and comprehension which supports pupils to make accelerated progress in reading comprehension whilst encouraging them to rediscover a love of reading. Targets those not doing any other interventions, without a dyslexia diagnosis and with a reading age of one year below their age but no more than 5 years. This is delivered over 8 weeks with two, 2.5-hour sessions a week.
- Fresh Start Phonics (Read, Write, Inc follow on) - Fresh Start is a systematic synthetic phonics programme for struggling readers aged 9-13+. Pupils are taught at their challenge point, so they learn to read accurately and fluently in just 20-25 minutes a day. Fresh Start is for students who: are not yet able to read age appropriate materials, have missed schooling or are late arrivals into school, are new to the UK education system, or are learning English as an additional language.
- Reading for Pleasure sessions are timetabled lessons. Planned sessions to promote the love of reading and support students in developing this.
- Literacy & TA codes - the federation delivers feedback to students by using literacy codes where these are regular occurrences. These codes highlight spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes. Teacher will then address these with students to ensure they are aware of how this SPAG is used.

Additional Literacy Support

- Ms Crooks (SENDco) and the Teaching assistant team work closely with students and parents for those students on specialised speech and language targets; these may differ from the programmes listed above.

Classroom Reading Strategies

Classroom reading strategies work alongside the progress students make during interventions.

- Echo and choral reading - Echo reading is where the class or small group copy out loud what you have just read in small chunks. They need to use the same intonation which will aid understanding and help develop reading confidence. Choral reading is where the class read the text out loud together.
- Preview and Predict: Encourage students to preview text elements and make predictions before reading.
- Questioning: Teach students to ask questions before, during, and after reading for active engagement.
- Visualising: Foster mental imagery creation while reading to enhance comprehension.
- Connections: Help students relate the text to their experiences, other texts, or the world.
- Summarising: Guide students in summarizing main ideas and key details after reading.
- Annotating: Teach students to annotate by highlighting and jotting down notes for better understanding.
- Reciprocal Teaching: Have students take turns summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting.
- Graphic Organisers: Use visual tools like concept maps and story maps to organize information.
- Close Reading: Analyse specific passages closely, focusing on details, language, and meaning.
- Read Alouds: Model fluent reading and comprehension strategies through reading aloud.
- Literature Circles: Facilitate small group discussions on a common text for collaborative learning.
- Fluency Practice: Incorporate activities for improving reading fluency, like repeated readings.
- Diverse Texts: Provide a variety of texts, reflecting diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Independent Reading: Allocate time for students to choose and read books independently.

Key Oracy Strategies for All Staff

- **Structured Discussions:** Encourage organised conversations with clear guidelines for turn-taking and active listening.
- **Talk Tactics (introduced through Voice 21):** Through directed class discussion, students are encouraged to think strategically about their contributions to group talk - Instigate, Probe, Challenge, Clarify, Summarise and Build ideas and understanding.
- **Debates and Discussions:** Foster critical thinking and communication skills through effective and considered speaking and listening.
- **Think-Pair-Share:** Facilitate progressive idea development through individual reflection, partner discussions, and sharing with the class.
- **Role-Playing:** Enhance communication skills by engaging students in role-playing activities.
- **Questioning Techniques:** Promote open-ended questioning to stimulate meaningful conversations.
- **Vocabulary Development:** Emphasise the use of a rich vocabulary, including Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary to enhance oral expression.
- **Public Speaking Opportunities:** Gradually expose students to public speaking tasks like presentations and speeches.
- **Storytelling:** Improve narrative skills by encouraging students to share stories.
- **Feedback and Reflection:** Provide constructive feedback and encourage self-reflection on Oracy skills.
- **Inclusive Practices:** Ensure all students have equal opportunities to participate in Oracy activities.
- **Utilise Technology:** Incorporate technology tools for Oracy, such as video presentations and online discussions.
- **Real-World Connections:** Relate Oracy activities to real-world situations to highlight practical applications.