

# St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy



## Literacy Policy

*“We commit ourselves to love, respect and serve one another as disciples of Jesus Christ”*

Policy Approved: June 2020
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## **Rationale**

*St. Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy recognises that the development of literacy is essential to the learning and progress of its students. Good levels of literacy not only lead to success in students' school experiences but also success in further education, employment and adult life.*

St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy recognises that:

- Students need developed vocabulary and expression to access the wide range of subject knowledge demanded of the curriculum.
- Reading skills enable students to access information and gain wider understanding of the world outside their own experiences.
- Writing allows students to be expressive and structure and develop their own thoughts.
- The ability to verbally respond to higher level questioning leads to development of thinking and analysis skills.
- The growth of social media puts an emphasis on quick communication and has led to the inconsistency and lowering of standards of literacy.
- Many students of secondary school age need more encouragement to be wider readers.
- Examinations in many subject areas now incorporate marks for the accuracy of literacy.

## **Aims**

*In line with the National Curriculum, St. Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy aims to make students' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary integral aspects of the teaching of every subject.*

St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy will enable students to:

- Speak confidently and convey ideas using standard English and a high level of vocabulary in order to communicate effectively. Students will be able to structure and express their ideas and thoughts clearly in order to analyse, hypothesis and evaluate.
- Expand their vocabulary including subject specific vocabulary and cross-curricular language as well as increase their comprehension of meaning and links between vocabulary.
- Read with fluency and understanding as well as be encouraged to read for pleasure.
- Write for a variety of different purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations while using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

## **Responsibility for Literacy**

- All staff in the academy are responsible for the promotion of high standards of verbal and written literacy including encouraging the use of standard English in conversation. In lessons, all teaching staff will promote accuracy in written work and the use of subject specific vocabulary. Staff will support the development of students as independent wider readers by highlighting themselves as readers.
- The Literacy Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring the school's literacy policy is upheld as well as supporting staff by producing resources and offering opportunities for further training as part of the school's Continuous Professional Development. The Literacy Co-ordinator will ensure the literacy policy is regularly reviewed and updated as well as monitoring the impact of interventions that have been put in place.

## **School Strategies**

### Literacy across the Curriculum

- All staff understand that they are teachers of literacy and will promote high standards of literacy in all subject areas.
- Teachers will model high standards of literacy in their own writing and use of standard English when speaking.
- All subject areas will develop vocabulary through the use of key words in lessons as well as on classroom displays. Teachers will be aware of the three tiers of vocabulary and how they should be incorporated into their teaching.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes will be highlighted when marking students' work in accordance with the school's marking policy and time will be made for students to make corrections in lesson time.
- Literacy will be promoted through the use of classroom and subject area literacy displays in all subjects throughout the school.
- Those subjects with examinations that have literacy marks awarded will support students in understanding how these marks are given and also teach towards the acquisition of these marks.
- Teachers will incorporate opportunities for speaking & listening development into their lessons through the use of class questioning, discussions and group work.
- Reading activities are incorporated into both lesson and homework activities with a focus on comprehension skills.
- Wider reading will be promoted through the use of classroom displays linking reading to subject areas as well as showing teachers as readers through teachers' 'favourite reads' or 'currently reading' posters.
- Literacy activities will be conducted weekly during tutor time with a focus on the development of students' vocabulary and verbal communication.
- The Learning Resource Centre will be open for students before and after school as well as break and lunch times for students to read independently. Staff will be able to advise and encourage students to borrow books from the library service.
- Opportunities for extra-curricular activities will be looked for including collaboration between departments such as the German pen pal scheme (Languages & English Departments).

## Literacy in the English Department

*As well as meeting the expectations set for all departments across the curriculum, the English department will use additional strategies for the development of literacy skills.*

- Students will complete reading tests during Years 7, 8 and 9 to assess vocabulary, comprehension and reading ages. These will be used to identify areas for development and students needing intervention.
- Intervention will be put in place for identified students in order to develop reading and comprehension skills. These will include intervention homework booklets which will focus on developing comprehension, inference and analysis skills and a reading programme for Year 7 students with Year 9 student mentors.
- In Key Stage 3, ten minutes at the start of lessons will be allocated to reading with accompanying homework tasks to develop understanding of the texts being read and widen the opportunities for independent reading.
- In Key Stage 4, reading strategies will include activities focused on building reading speed and reading for meaning. Homework booklets will also be used to broaden the range of texts being read.
- Literacy focuses will be linked to schemes of work in a looping cycle across the year groups and identified on the English Department's long term plans. These will allow teachers to build upon students' pre-existing knowledge and embed learning into their long term memories.
- PIXL strategies will be used to develop spelling in Years 7 and 8. Spelling lists will be focused on spelling rules for similar sounding words, including prefixes and suffixes. Spelling lists will include revisiting rules to build long term memory.
- All schemes of work will include a focus on developing vocabulary with activities focused on introducing new vocabulary to students with clear links to the meaning of new words.
- Set points in the long term plans are identified for speaking & listening opportunities in each year including presentations, group discussions and drama activities.
- Reading for pleasure will be encouraged within the department through recommended reading lists given at the start of each academic year. Displays throughout the department also include reading lists, major literary authors, reading linked to TV & film and wider reading for other subject areas. Year 7 students will be introduced to the Learning Resource Centre during English teaching time so they are aware of the books available in school and how the borrowing process works.
- In lessons students will be able to access additional resources and materials to support them with literacy skills including literacy place mats in exercise books and on tables and English key vocabulary booklets.
- The English department will offer opportunities to develop literacy skills through extra-curricular activities. These include lunch time clubs promoting reading for pleasure and the discussion of current affairs as well as opportunities for students to enter school literacy competitions and national writing competitions.
- The English department's website offers a variety of resources and activities dedicated to developing literacy skills.

### Literacy in Learning Support

*Students identified as needing additional support with developing literacy skills can be offered intervention in Learning Support. This includes:*

- Phonics intervention for Year 7 students concentrating on recognising and pronouncing the small sections and sounds of words in order to read, understanding and pronounce those words correctly. Students are assessed at the beginning, middle and end of the process.
- Improving reading skills in Key Stage 3 in small groups or one-to-one sessions focusing on building vocabulary as well as deduction and inference skills. Students are assessed through written work and speaking & listening activities.

### Literacy at Home

*Parents can also assist the school with developing their children's literacy with strategies that can be used at home.*

- Encouraging children to spend at least 20 minutes each night reading. This could be done by reading independently or to a member of the household.
- Exposing children to a wider range of reading which could include newspapers, magazines, online articles and different genres of books. The English department will provide students with recommended reading lists. Children can also be encouraged to visit the school's Learning Resource Centre or local libraries to try new books.
- Promote reading by having discussions about what children have read. This could include asking questions about plot, characters and what parts of a story they enjoyed.
- Encouraging children to focus on the accuracy of spelling and punctuation in homework tasks and creating an expectation of children proof-reading their work before it is handed in.
- Helping children to practice spellings of key vocabulary.
- Using the English website to access resources and activities to develop written literacy.