



LITERACY POLICY STATEMENT

Intent:

While the college has always understood that reading is crucial, it is even more important in the current climate. Having robust systems for **collecting data around reading**, conducting forensic **analysis**, implementing targeted **interventions** and **reviewing** the impact of these, has never been more important (assess, plan, do, review). All of our students have felt the impact of this pandemic and we must lift and carry them out of it over the medium and longer term. This will happen through strong recovery curriculum, short, medium and long term, but also through their well-being: never under-estimate the power of getting lost in a book.

Literacy is fundamental for academic achievement and success in life beyond the classroom. If students are not able to read, write and communicate effectively (with fluency and at an age-appropriate level) they will be unable to access the rest of the curriculum. We strive to ensure that students master the relevant literacy skills: **'The Big Four'** (Reading, Writing, Vocabulary and Spoken Language) to enable them to have successful educational outcomes across all subjects.

We believe that the driving force to unlocking the full curriculum is **reading**. Reading will be the master skill of the college, unlocking the academic curriculum for our learners. Through prioritising reading, children have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. As learners progress through school, they experience a gradual increase in reading skill and challenge. It is vital that at each step teachers recognise the fundamental causes of reading barriers faced by learners, while helping our learners negotiate the ever-increasing trajectory of challenge in the texts they read.

The commitment to developing Literacy and Reading across the college is exemplified by the proposal to have this as an appraisal object for all teaching staff for the forthcoming appraisal cycle. All teachers are teachers of literacy. As such, the staff at St. John Bosco Arts College are committed to developing literacy skills in all of our learners, in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum, because:

- learners 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
- writing helps us to sustain and order thought
- vocabulary helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate what we do, and on what others have said, written or done
- responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry
- Improving literacy and learning can have an impact on learners' self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. It allows them to learn independently. It is empowering.



Roles and Responsibilities

Vocabulary is the prime medium through which learners learn and express themselves across the curriculum, and all teachers have a stake in effective literacy.

- **Senior leaders:** lead literacy across subjects and give a high profile to literacy.
- **English department:** provide learners with knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, orate and listen actively. The team will also promote national/local literacy events and celebrations to enrich learners' cultural experiences.
- **Teachers across the curriculum:** contribute to learners' development of vocabulary and reading for pleasure, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons.
- **Literacy coordinator:** to track and monitor catch up premium learners, provide relevant teaching resources and support the process of CPD across the college.
- **SENDCO:** support learners with specific literacy difficulties using appropriate, personalised learning programmes and support the process of CPD.
- **Library Manager:** Support learners with homework, research, wider reading and actively promote national/local literacy events and celebrations to enrich learners' cultural experience. To monitor usage of the LRC and encourage wider reading, independent research and reading for pleasure. To undertake reading interventions.
- **Parents:** encourage their children to use the range of strategies they have learnt to improve their levels of literacy.
- **Learners:** take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs, reading widely, proof reading their own work and making improvements.
- **Governors:** to hold the college to account for the teaching and learning of key literacy strategies. A literacy update will be presented to governors at each full governing body meeting.

Key points for improving Literacy across the Curriculum:

It is the responsibility of both staff and learners to raise standards in literacy. This starts with an expectation that learners should respond in full sentences and in Standard English; teachers are expected to model this, to challenge poor oracy, grammar and to provide learners with the vocabulary necessary for a high-level response. Before setting their learners to write, teachers should model the process of writing: the reading, the thinking, the oracy, the planning, the drafting and the editing.

Integral in developing learners' wider reading and reading for enjoyment is how teachers facilitate reading for meaning through using a range of teaching methods and approaches.



- Teachers must foster thinking and talking about texts by creating an environment of rich dialogue and response towards all types of text. The reading of images and film, fiction, poetry and non-fiction is vital in developing talk and response, the starting point for comprehension.
- Questioning by both teachers and learners is pivotal to improving comprehension. It should involve the explicit exploration and development of literal, inferential and evaluative questioning.

Reading

Reading proves the master skill of school; therefore, we need to nurture our learners' reading. The act of daily reading matters; young children who are read to daily can hear up to a million more words a year than their peers who are not read to. We aim to give learners a level of literacy that will enable them to cope with the increasing demands of subjects in terms of specific skills, knowledge and understanding. This applies particularly in the area of reading (including from the screen), as texts become more demanding. We understand how stories can act as a mirror for learners to learn about themselves, while opening a window on the world for them too. For every learner in our care, we will endeavour to fill their day with the richness of countless books (and articles/blogs etc.) that help them to access a wealth of powerful reading experiences, to develop both their imagination and their knowledge.

We will build on and share existing good practice. We must define for students different approaches to reading, and critically appraise their impact. If a student doesn't know why they are reading a text, they won't know how to approach their reading. If they are reading to extract information, they may only need to scan the text; if they need to fully understand the entire text, they will need to read for comprehension. Our weaker readers may not know the difference between the two, or what strategies to use in different situations. It is our job to ensure these instructions are explicit for all:

- **Skimming** - Skimming is reading rapidly in order to get a general overview of the material.
- **Scanning** - Scanning is reading rapidly in order to find specific facts.
- **Comprehension** - To comprehend a text means a reader must accurately understand written material by decoding what is read, making connections between what they have read and what they already know and thinking deeply about this.
- **Inference** - Making an inference involves using what a reader already knows to make a guess about what they don't know. Readers who make inferences use the clues in the text along with their own experiences to help them figure out what is not directly said by the writer.
- **Synthesising** - Synthesising a text is the process of pulling together background knowledge, newly learned ideas, connections and inferences into a complete and original understanding of the text.

The teaching of reading must be planned within the scope of reading for enjoyment and tasks should engage learners with the world beyond the classroom. Teachers should clarify learners' purpose for reading. They should relate the



reading to learners' lives; pre-teach concepts that might inhibit understanding; and activate or build background and context.

We recognise that one of the most important ways to make a difference to learners' lives is to ensure that children become engaged with reading from the beginning. For this to happen, however, children need to learn to read as fluently as possible and be motivated to continue reading. It is vital, therefore, that phonics is a priority in teaching reading to take away any barriers. We want all of our learners to competently and fluently learn to read and thus read to learn.

Teachers will vary the way texts in their subject are read using a range of disciplinary strategies. Reading materials are carefully selected and chosen to support the progression model of the curriculum. The type of activities used will depend on the purpose of the text or, what needs to be extracted. This could involve silent reading, bringing a text alive by reading to learners, oral reading by learners, audio recordings or guided reading. The teacher reads to learners with the appropriate degree of fluency (pace, expression, stress and intonation). Typically questions and/or explanations are interspersed throughout. Teachers should do everything to avoid reading becoming a dull and slow business - and this is not achieved by just reading extracts, but on teaching approaches that are imaginative, innovative and lively.

Decoding words

For our learners with a poor understanding of language, being able to decode words is essential for equality, because their understanding of language, their vocabulary and their knowledge of the world will expand rapidly when they can read for themselves. Therefore, decoding and encoding will be taught through systematic synthetic phonics. This will be recognised and reinforced by all staff through:

- Reading unfamiliar words, by saying the sounds corresponding to the letters in the words and then blending the sounds together, either aloud or silently.
- Reading familiar words accurately and silently 'at a glance', that is, no longer saying the sounds consciously.

To teach word reading and spelling successfully, teachers need to understand the principles underpinning the teaching of word reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding). This should include understanding how the alphabetic code of English represents the sounds (phonemes) of the language with single letters and groups of letters (graphemes).

Writing

A wide spoken language gives them more that they can write about and more words for what they want to say. Their expressive and receptive language develops through talk and listening. It is important that we provide for co-ordination across subjects to recognise and reinforce learners' vocabulary skills, through:

- Making connections between learners' reading and writing, so that learners have clear models for their writing



- Using the modelling process to make explicit to learners *how* to write
- Being clear about audience and purpose
- Providing opportunities for a range of writing including sustained writing.

The structures and vocabulary features of some important types of non-fiction texts

Each department will teach learners how to write in ways that are specific to that department's subject needs.

The text types are:

- information
- recount
- explanation
- instruction
- persuasion
- discursive writing
- analysis
- evaluation
- Formal essay.

Oracy

We recognise that oracy and reading are intrinsically linked. Book-related talk introduces children to language that they might not hear in ordinary conversation, especially the vocabulary of the book itself. This primes them to understand what they read later, in their leisure reading and across the curriculum. We will teach learners to use vocabulary precisely and coherently. They should be able to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively.

A language-rich environment is one in which adults talk with children throughout the day. The more children take part in conversations, the more they will understand once they can read and the more vocabulary and ideas they will have to draw on when they can write. We will develop strategies to teach learners how to participate orally in groups and in the whole class, including:

- thinking out loud, modelling new language for children
- paying close attention to what the children say
- rephrasing and extending what the children say
- asking closed and open questions
- answering the children's questions
- explaining why things happen
- deliberately connecting current and past events ('Do you remember when...?')



- providing models of accurate grammar
- extending children's vocabulary and explaining new words
- connecting one idea or action to another
- helping children to articulate ideas in well-formed sentences

Vocabulary

Each department will:

- identify and display key vocabulary;
- Use teaching and learning strategies to explicitly teach vocabulary;
- revise key vocabulary;
- teach agreed learning strategies which will help learners to learn subject spelling lists;
- concentrate on identifying the Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary across the curriculum, taking into account the differing abilities of learners;
- test or revise high frequency words regularly in context;
- identify where learners need to be explicitly taught the morphology and etymology of words i.e., prefixes, suffixes, root words and word families.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will make use of available data to assess the standards of learners' literacy. Senior managers, the Head of English and the literacy coordinator, will decide how to monitor progress in the school.

Possible approaches are:

- sampling work - both learners' work and departmental schemes
- Robust data for reading ages e.g., GL assessments
- observation - learner engagement and explicit literacy teaching
- literacy team meetings and collaborative planning time
- learner interviews (pupil voice)
- scrutiny of development and curriculum plans
- Encouraging departments to share good practice by exhibiting or exemplifying learners' work.

Adaptation

Learners of St. John Bosco Arts College are entitled to our highest expectations and support. Some will need additional support and others will need to be challenged and extended. Strategies that we can use include:

- questioning
- adjusting the demands of the task
- the use of additional support
- use of group structures



- resources
- making objectives clear
- creating an atmosphere where learners evaluate their own others' work as appropriate to the task
- promote ways of structuring learning for all learners
- Develop a teaching repertoire that supports and challenges all learners.

English as an Additional Language

Our learners learning EAL need to hear good examples of spoken English and also to refer to their first vocabulary skills to aid new learning in all subjects of the curriculum. The use of their first vocabulary enables them to draw on existing subject knowledge and to develop English vocabulary skills in context. Our EAL learners will be fully integrated across subjects with staff working to ensure that the learners can access the curriculum. Staff who teach EAL learners are given additional training and support in developing personalized provisions for each learner by the SENDCO and EAL specialists as appropriate.

SEND

The wide range of learning difficulties experienced by children with identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can have a significant impact on children's and young people's access to the curriculum

Learners with SEND are supported so that they make good progress with their literacy. We monitor our learners to identify any who may need extra literacy support and, through our various intervention programs, differentiated lesson planning and other measures, we provide appropriate resources, mentoring and tailored teaching to address the needs of learners so that they may realise their potential across our curriculum.

Specific interventions for 'red' and 'amber' readers. We have identified some priorities that we believe will further improve the teaching of literacy and learning across the curriculum, whilst promoting efficacy in vocabulary, precision of expression and an interest in reading, research and effective communication.

We will teach our learners with special educational needs appropriately, supporting their learning and providing them with challenges matched to their needs, through using a range of teaching strategies such as targeted reading intervention, development of vocabulary, guided group work, writing frames and oracy activities.

The role of the library

The library provides diverse reading materials and supports all calendared Literacy celebrations with extra-curricular activities. The library also offers structured support for



homework and research. Reading and literacy across the curriculum are given high priority.

Pastoral programme

All learners in KS3 follow a literacy programme in morning registration time with a focus on the teaching of vocabulary, exploring root words, prefixes, suffixes and the etymology of vocabulary. The Literacy Co-ordinator will create weekly resources to share with staff that will be taught via the pastoral curriculum. As reading is proved to be the master skill of the school, reading for pleasure is prioritised in form times.

Texts will be carefully chosen for enjoyment and engagement. Also, texts will link thematically, emotionally to the main texts being studied within the English curriculum so that pupils can make links across texts. Text will be carefully chosen to foster the love of reading e.g., reading the first book in a trilogy to inspire all readers to go away and read the rest of the books independently. The books will be read to pupils by form tutors, this will allow for correct intonation and prosody of words and engagement with the text through gesture. PowerPoints will be provided with key vocabulary and comprehension questions. However, form tutors will not be expected to complete all of these in writing with the pupils as the main focus will be on the fluidity of reading and engagement with the text.

Assessment

Available data from KS2 and current reading age data (GL assessments) informs planning and assists staff in responding to baseline assessments, setting appropriate targets and subsequent interventions for learners.

The best assessment informs lesson planning and target setting; supporting staff to maintain the pace of learning for our learners; red, amber, green interventions.

All KS3 learners will complete reading tests using GL Assessment to track and monitor progress in their reading and spelling ages. The results will be used across the curriculum to inform planning and determine target groups.

Internal interim assessments will, in their marking, incorporate an element of specific literacy feedback and target-setting for each student as well as written comments.

Book monitoring is carried out by the leadership team and subject leaders as part of the curriculum review process. For detailed guidance on marking for literacy symbols, please see our marking policy.

Staff CPD

Staff are also expected to incorporate elements of literacy in their lessons and foster a love of reading via carefully selected materials.

Each classroom is to display subject specific vocabulary with subject areas encouraging appropriate use of these words.

Specific CPD need are identified through formal observations and SEND and learning reviews. INSET Training is with specific literacy focus is developed



accordingly. This CPD programme will continue to be under review, developed and personalised to supports departments in the implementation of successful English department strategies and encourage departments to learn from each other's practice by sharing ideas.

ITT learners and NQTs receive, as part of their induction to the college, training about Literacy across the curriculum and guidance about our policies.

Literacy Basic Standards

Literacy basic expected standards are as follows:

- verbal responses should be extended;
- key words and definitions should be explicitly taught and revisited;
- use integrated quotes with detailed explanations whenever appropriate;
- tier 2 and 3 vocabulary should be practised in context of the subject;
- learners should respond to the teacher's marking, including marking for literacy;
- learners and teachers should focus on the presentation of work;
- spelling, punctuation and grammar should be a focus for all members of staff and all learners;
- teachers will promote the use of Standard English in lessons and around school.

Strategies to support the development of Literacy across the curriculum

Reading and oracy will be a whole school focus. A whole school strategy to promote wider reading and reading for pleasure continues to be supported by the school community. Wider reading lists will be displayed on the college website. Subject areas have a 3D book shelf with suggested wider reading texts to extend reading and thinking around their subject, promoting reading for pleasure. A comprehensive calendar of literacy events will be adhered to in order to promote the teaching of cross-curricular literacy with a focus on wider reading and reading for pleasure. Whole school book-scrutiny will address issues of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Quality Assurance

The college has a Literacy Team leading Literacy across the Curriculum. They have clearly defined roles relating to literacy support, intervention and whole-school policies; their work and progress is monitored by the Headteacher, Line Manager and governors.

Interim assessment data already provides an overview of how each student is progressing across the curriculum. Trends are identified and intervention is targeted at those learners who need it. Policies and strategies are periodically reviewed in light of assessment data and the emerging needs of individuals or sub-groups.

Through their observations of teachers' lessons and through work sampling, SLT will monitor the effectiveness of our Literacy across the Curriculum policy.

