ST JOHN FISHER
HARROGATE

Literacy Policy

Designated Teacher: Deputy Headteacher
Adopted: October 2026
Review Period: Annually
Review Date: October 2027

‘Literacy is the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realise his or her full potential.’

Kofi Annan, (77th Secretary of the UN)

1. Policy Statement

Literacy is fundamental to academic success, personal development, and future opportunity. This policy sets out the school’s commitment to ensuring that every student becomes a confident reader, an effective writer, and an articulate speaker. Literacy is the responsibility of every teacher, in every subject, and is embedded across the curriculum as part of our commitment to adaptive teaching and meeting the needs of all students. It is also key to ensuring that all students can engage with the future Dfe changes to the curriculum and the year 8 reading assessments.

2. Aims

- Ensure all students develop strong literacy skills in reading, writing, and oracy.
- Provide consistent literacy skills practice across all subjects.
- Close identified gaps for disadvantaged students, SEND and those students with identified literacy needs, through support in and outside of the classroom.
- Promote a culture of reading for pleasure in addition to academic success.
- Equip students with the communication skills needed for further education, employment, and life.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all teaching and support staff, all curriculum areas, all students in Years 7 to 13, and all whole school systems including assessment, CPD, and intervention.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- Senior Leadership Team: ensure literacy is a whole-school priority, provide resources and training, and monitor implementation, and model excellent practice in and beyond the classroom.
- Literacy Coordinator: oversee literacy strategy, provide CPD and signpost research and support; coordinate interventions alongside the SENDCo; quality assure reading in Period 1 and support curriculum areas as necessary.
- SENDCo: together with the Literacy Coordinator, deliver, monitor and analyse the impact of literacy interventions, identify student need, and advise staff on inclusive literacy strategies and appropriate support for SEND learners.
- Heads of Department: embed literacy in schemes of learning and monitor departmental practice.

- Classroom Teachers: teach literacy skills relevant to their subject and model high-quality reading, writing, and speaking.
- Support Staff: reinforce literacy strategies in whole class, small-group and one-to-one settings.
- Students: engage actively in literacy activities and use subject vocabulary accurately.

5. Reading Strategy

- Whole school development of wider reading and reading for pleasure through the Period 1 programme, initiatives and the Year of Reading Funding allocation. For example, Battle of the Books.
- The school has invested in a full-time librarian and has a well-stocked library. The librarian provides support for students choosing books that are most suitable; providing support for teachers regarding book choices for students, provides a safe supportive environment for students to read for pleasure and providing a quiet space conducive to post-16 study and research.
- Disciplinary literacy through key vocabulary instruction mapped in schemes of learning.
- Reading intervention for students below chronological reading ages and identified though STAR, CAT and SEND assessment. Targeted support for phonics, fluency and comprehension delivered by trained professionals.

6. Writing Strategy

- Whole-School Writing approach: All subjects teach disciplinary writing, pre-teach vocabulary, and provide opportunities for shared and independent writing. (Identify success criteria, provide models; I do, we do, you do; adapted to subject).
- Classroom Expectations: modelling, extended writing (where appropriate to the curriculum area), explicit grammar teaching, and consistent marking codes.
- Feedback and Improvement: regular editing opportunities, DIRT time, and peer/self-assessment. Feedback in line with whole school policy.

7. Oracy Strategy

The oracy framework recognises that the development of strong oracy skills contributes to the development of excellent linguistic, cognitive development in addition to social and emotional skills.

- Purposeful Talk: Structured talk regularly in lessons and modelling of academic language, strategies such as think-pair-share, questioning, debate and collaborative discussion.
- Opportunities: Assemblies, presentations, debate clubs, reading activities, leadership roles, and speaking assessments should provide opportunities for students to develop confidence and communication skills.

8. Gaps in Reading Knowledge

The school uses a range of assessment and diagnostic tools to identify students who may require additional support with reading phonics fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary development. Screening and assessment information is used to ensure that appropriate interventions and support can be implemented at an early stage.

Phonics

The school uses the Ruth Miskin Read Write Inc. phonics programme to deliver phonics in small group catch up. The programme is delivered by a trained specialist.

Reading Fluency

School uses a bespoke programme designed by the trust sister school, using the Radzinski fluency rubric as a guide and draws on strategies such as choral reading to support pupils. The programme is led by a Teaching Assistant who has receives training linked to the intervention.

Reading Comprehension

As with the Reading Fluency programme, school uses a comprehension programme that is led by a Teaching Assistant who has received training linked to the intervention.

9. Supporting Pupils with Specific Literacy Needs

The SEND Team

The SEND team including a specialist Dyslexia teacher supports our students, including all our SEND students, in the development of the literacy skills through a range of bespoke interventions based on specific needs. All provisions are designed using a Graduated Response and are tracked throughout. These provisions include the following strategies that are tailored to the needs of our learners:

Alpha to Omega

A structured, multisensory literacy intervention designed to support students with Dyslexia and significant literacy difficulties. It is suitable for secondary school levels and can be adapted for small groups or 1:1 delivery by trained staff.

Technology to Support Literacy

A range of strategies and packages are available to our students to support the development of their literacy skills including exam reading software, Read Aloud, and Reader Pens.

The Bespoke Pathway

As part of our KS4 offer, a small number of children may be placed on the Bespoke pathway. As part of this, students may access additional teaching that helps to ensure success in core literacy skills.

English as An Additional Language (EAL)
The school uses The Bell Foundation Framework to assess learners with (EAL, understand their proficiency in English across listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and track learner progress over time.

10. Assessment and Monitoring

The school monitors the curriculum and learning to make sure that all our students make the best possible progress from their starting points. The school tracks students' progress through the curriculum using a combination of formative and summative assessment and the outcomes and progress of specific intervention programmes.

School leaders will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on students' learning through:

- Conducting learning progress walks (LPW)
- Reviewing marking and feedback and progress in books (SLOTS)
- QLPRs
- Planning scrutiny

11. Professional Development

The school has a coherent CPD programme which incorporates research-led professional learning on literacy through Learning and Development sessions (L&D). Leaders ensure that professionals delivering specialist programmes have appropriate training.

14. Legislation, Guidance and Research

This policy reflects the requirements and expectations set out in the:

- National Curriculum programmes of study for English
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Reading framework 2023
- What is literacy? | National Literacy Trust
- Disciplinary Literacy | Durrington Research School
- (funded CPD) Unlocking Reading - Support struggling readers | FFT
- Three steps to reading | Huntington Research School
- Huntington Research School Podcast series 2025-26 - Deployment of Teaching Assistants - YouTube