Hexham Middle School
Literacy Across the Curriculum Policy

September 2024

Next annual update: September 2025

Hexham Middle School

Literacy Across the Curriculum (LITAC) Policy

"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" EEF – 'Why Literacy Matters'.

Hexham Middle School is committed to improving pupils' standards of literacy with a consistent approach across all curriculum areas. Literacy refers to a person's ability to read, write and communicate effectively, in a range of ways to a range of audiences. The Education Endowment Foundation published a series of recommendations in their 'Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2' and 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools' reports – this guidance has influenced practice at Hexham Middle School.

Effective 'Literacy Across the Curriculum' will develop a pupil's ability to:

- Write for a variety of audiences and purposes, collect information, organise ideas and write accurately to demonstrate what they know across subject areas.
- Access information and read with fluency and comprehension.
- Communicate effectively, across a range of contexts, developing their ability to negotiate, hypothesise, present information, and clarify understanding.

In addition, a consistent approach should have an impact on pupil motivation, self-esteem, and ability to work independently. It is vital that pupils are allowed to become competent language users, to lead successful and productive adult lives. It is essential that all subject areas take responsibility for pupils' literacy development.

Aims:

- To raise the profile of literacy across the school.
- To have consistently high expectations of all pupils' literacy skills.
- To help raise levels of literacy by encouraging pupils to achieve their full potential in their reading, writing and communication skills.
- To develop a culture of reading across the school in all subject areas (see the HMS Reading Strategy).
- To ensure a consistent, whole-school approach to teaching, learning and assessment of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- To provide structured academic support to pupils struggling with areas of literacy.

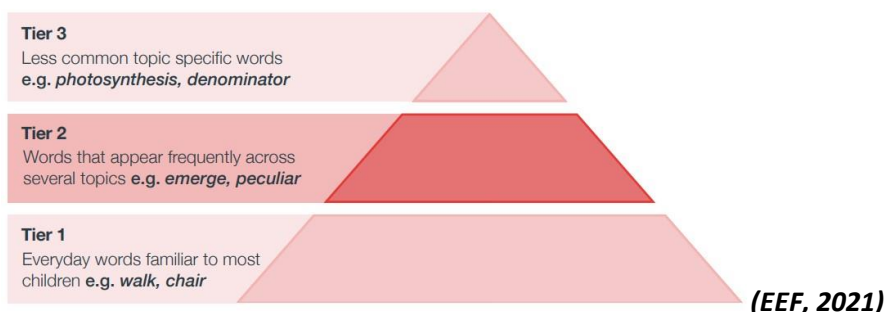## How the school will promote excellent literacy skills

General:

- High-quality staff development and training, including sharing of assessment information.
- Regularly refer to our literacy 'non-negotiables' to promote high standards across the curriculum (see appendix 1).

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- Value the opinions and ideas of all pupils and involve pupils in the progress of their literacy through meaningful assessment and regular feedback.
- Inform pupils of the purpose behind any reading, writing or communication task they're asked to engage with in all subjects.
- Ensure that texts in all subjects are engaging and accessible to all pupils through adaptive teaching.
- Introduce pupils explicitly to subject specific terminology through the use of 'Buzzwords' (this will include tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary).
- Where beneficial, offer pupils frameworks to support the structuring of extended writing tasks.

Disciplinary literacy/vocabulary:

- Specific **vocabulary instruction** in every subject – vocabulary features in every lesson so that pupils engage with new words/phrases throughout their school day.
- **Buzzwords** (key vocabulary) are identified in curriculum planning so that vocabulary develops progressively.
- Buzzwords (key vocabulary) are taught in every lesson across every subject (they may be a focus of a topic/unit of learning or change every lesson).
- Subject-specific **tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary** is provided and explicitly taught in every subject.
- Teachers focus on **morphology and etymology** of words so that retention and understanding of vocabulary is strong.
- **Knowledge Organisers, glossaries and word banks** will be provided for pupils so that vocabulary is used well and retained over time.
- Vocabulary retention is **assessed over time** through memory/retrieval starters and regular quizzing.
- **Frayer Models** are used in class so that pupils understand subject-specific vocabulary across every subject.


Tier 3
Less common topic specific words
e.g. *photosynthesis, denominator*

Tier 2
Words that appear frequently across several topics **e.g. emerge, peculiar**

Tier 1
Everyday words familiar to most children **e.g. walk, chair**

(EEF, 2021)

Reading Fluency:

- High-quality **staff development and training** provided across all subjects.
- Across all subjects, teachers and support staff use **well-chosen texts** and **model read** texts to their classes.
- **Repeated reading** is used by all teachers so that fluency is enhanced and reading confidence is increased.
- Strategies such as echo and choral reading, as well as Readers' Theatre, may also be used by teachers and staff in school.
- Some pupils (where fluency weaknesses are identified) have opportunities to **read aloud** with adults on a regular basis – progression is assessed regularly.
- Teachers know which pupils are struggling with reading and provide **targeted support** in the classroom.

(EEF, 2021)
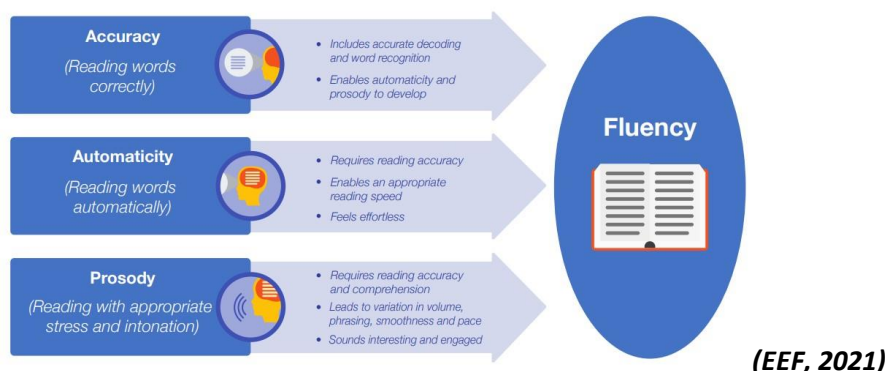
Reading Comprehension:

- High-quality **staff development and training** provided across all subjects.
- The **VIPERS** approach is used across the school to teach reading comprehension strategies. Teachers will focus on the skills – vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval, summarising/sequencing.
- Staff will **adapt** the approach to reading comprehension to ensure that all pupils can develop their comprehension skills whilst accessing ambitious texts across the curriculum.
- The strategies will be **modelled** so that pupils see the process of comprehending a text from expert teachers – this will develop pupils' metacognitive approaches and increase reading confidence.
- **Targeted reading comprehension support** will be provided based on ongoing assessment.
- The approach to VIPERS will be adapted as necessary to a) suit the subject (for example, including provenance in history) and b) ensure that engagement is sustained.
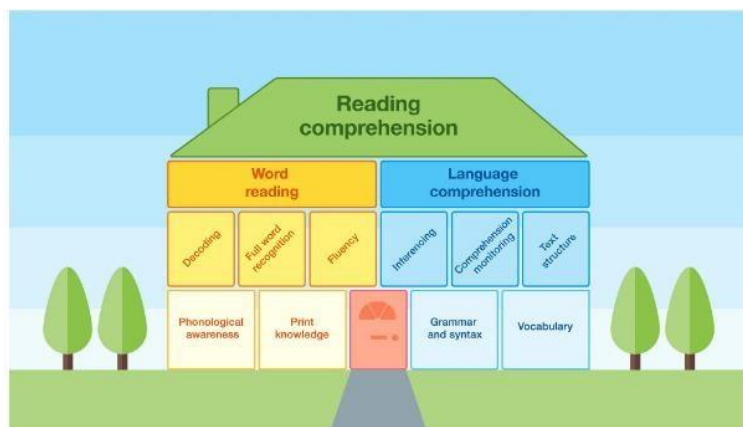
Subject-specific reading:

- Teachers incorporate **well-selected, engaging and visually appealing texts** into all subjects, when appropriate.
- Texts will include a range of fiction, non-fiction and, where appropriate, poetry.
- **Pre-reading** may be used so that pupils engage with more complex reading in a low stakes manner and generate interest in the subject content.

Writing Composition:

- The 'HMS Great Writers' approach is **structured so that writing develops in small steps**, pupils are immersed in **vocabulary** and a **shared writing experience** and pupils take **ownership** of their writing through high-quality **drafting and editing** sessions.
- **High-quality models** of particular types of writing and presentation are always provided.
- Pupils focus on **purpose, audience and layout** so that they understand the reasons for writing.
- Actively teach the **style of writing** necessary for the different subject areas, for example, how to write like a geographer and highlighting how this is different to other subject areas.
- **Model** and demonstrate the writing process for pupils through live modelling, shared writing and high-quality model pieces.
- Focus on **content, vocabulary and technical skills**.
- Offer opportunities for **extended writing** through planning, drafting and revisiting work.
- Offer opportunities for written work in a **range of genre and for a range of purposes and audiences**.
- Encourage the learning of correct spelling through the use of **'Buzzwords'**.
- Use the school's agreed correcting method in conjunction with the TLF marking policy and LITAC non-negotiables to provide feedback on pupils' work (see appendix 1).
- Encourage the highest standards of handwriting and presentation at all times.

Opportunities to talk:

- Provide regular opportunity for **class, paired and group discussion** promoting collaborative working and improved oracy.
- Make reference to the pages in the pupils' planners which give oracy tips and guidance for pupils.
- Make explicit the expectations of such discussions – guide pupils by **modelling high quality talk**.
- Make explicit the **value of talk** as an essential part of learning.
- Set occasional speaking and listening tasks for homework, where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for use of varying degrees of formality in spoken and written work.

Spelling:

- **Identify and teach subject specific 'Buzzwords'** up to a maximum of three per lesson and record these in exercise books.
- **Five spelling errors will be underlined** and the teacher will either (depending on their knowledge of the pupil) write the correct spelling for the child to copy three times, or ask the child to use a dictionary to find the correct spelling.
- **Limit the number of spelling corrections** to five per piece of work.
- **Allow pupils time** to copy out and correct mistakes (this may involve using a dictionary).
- **Provide lists of subject-specific 'Buzzwords'** on displays in classrooms and in books.
- **Quiz pupils on a regular basis** to ensure the retention of vocabulary, and, where possible, the meanings and application of the vocabulary.
- **Highlight spelling strategies** for unfamiliar words (see appendix 3).
- Teach the **etymology and morphology** of words to embed vocabulary in pupils' long-term memories.

Handwriting and presentation:

Staff will:

- Develop a classroom ethos of encouraging children to take pride in their work.
- Share expectations of consistency of quality and recognise well-presented work.
- Display great work to ensure shared expectations.
- Give verbal and written reminders throughout lessons and through high-quality modelling.
- Give time for pupils to check, re-read and edit their work.
- Teach and model organisational skills.
- Model high standards of handwriting and presentation in lessons and in books.

Pupils will:

- Recognise the importance of legible, neat handwriting and will see its value across the curriculum.
- Show pride in their written work so that presentation and handwriting are prioritised.
- Learn to use a fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting style.
- Recognise the different styles of handwriting and presentation required for a task, such as: note-taking, final pieces, diagram labelling.
- Engage with practice sessions to develop their skills.
- Access targeted support sessions where they may be deemed appropriate.
- Use the relevant writing tools: children should use black pen for writing and pencil for drawing and labelling.

We know that some children find handwriting more challenging. Children will be assessed and targeted support will be provided where it is needed. Some children may use word processing and others may access support to develop fine motor skills. Children will be supported in accordance with their individual plan and may be provided with more specialist equipment such as pen grips and writing slopes.

Monitoring:

- Middle and Senior Leaders will include monitoring of LITAC as part of their regular monitoring of lessons and pupils' learning.
- As part of the regular Quality of Education Reviews, Curriculum and Senior Leaders will review the development of disciplinary literacy and the assessment of pupils' literacy skills in their subject area.
- The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for LITAC will ensure effective development of whole school policy and practice. They will ensure that LITAC has a high profile across school, and will monitor the delivery of Literacy across the Curriculum and the impact of this.
- Regular professional development for staff, as well as the sharing of good practice, will continue to take place.

Appendix 1 – Non-Negotiables

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1	Presentation	Write your date and learning objective neatly and underline using a ruler.
2	Presentation	Your handwriting should be neat, joined, and legible.
3	Grammar	Use capital letters at the start of sentences and proper nouns.
4	Punctuation	Apostrophes only have two jobs – to show omission of a letter (contraction) or to show possession. They do not make plurals.
5	Spelling	Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelt differently, such as **there, their** and **they're** – check your use of homophones carefully.
6	Organisation	Check the structure of your work – you should use paragraphs effectively.

Appendix 2 – VIPERS as a reading comprehension strategy

V- Vocabulary

Write down any new words you're not sure of.
Ask a friend or the teacher what they mean and write down the definitions.

I- Infer

How do you think the character/s feel in the text? List their emotions.

Why are they feeling this way?

P-Predict

What do you think will happen next to the main character?

Do the events here help you to guess what might happen in the rest of the story?

E-Explain

Why this is happening?
Why the setting is important?
Who the character is?
The significance of this scene?

R-Retrieve

A quote that best shows each characters feelings in the extract.

A quote that best shows the setting in the extract.

The quote that jumps out the most for the reader.

S- Sequence or summarise

Write 3 sentences summarising the key details of your reading.

5 events that have led to this scene taking place.

VIPERS: English

Appendix 3 – Spelling strategies

The following spelling strategies are guidance taken from the National Curriculum for English:

- Emphasise the relationship between sounds and letters, even when the relationships are unusual.
  For example: h**igh**, fl**y**, cr**ie**s and **I** all contain the same 'I' sound but the letters used to create this sound are different.
- Learn root words to support spelling of more complex words.
  For example: the root word 'counter' is used in 'counteract,' 'counterpart' and 'counterargument' and helps establish the meaning. Counter means 'opposite' or 'against'. • Spot common spelling patterns through prefixes and suffixes.
  For example: beautiful, hopeful and grateful all share the suffix '–ful' whereas antibacterial, antidote, anticlockwise and antichrist all share the same prefix 'anti-'.
- Discuss the history/derivation of words and the relationship between them.
  For example: aqua comes from the Latin, meaning water. Words such as aquamarine and Aquarius derive from the Latin use of the word.
- Understand the difference between common homophones (words that sound the same but that are spelled differently).
  For example: pair/pear, there/their/they're, paw/pore/pour/poor etc.
- Point out words that follow patterns such as 'i before e except after c' but be careful to point out exceptions to the rule, such as 'caffeine'.
- Highlight words with silent letters such as 'autumn' 'thumb' and 'scissors'.