



# Haslingden High School and Sixth Form

## Literacy Policy

### Policy Context

The education system has seen major changes over the last three years. The final version of the new national curriculum was published in September 2013 whilst the reform of GCSEs and the abolishment of the Key Stage 3 levels marks the end of a system that has been in place for over 20 years. Through all this change, the development of literacy skills has remained central to a young person's life chances

Haslingden High School's number one aim is to ensure that every student reaches his or her potential regardless of age, ability or background and leaves school fully prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment. Achieving high standards of literacy is central to this aim: we are committed to developing students' reading, writing and oral communication across the curriculum and understand that success in the application of language is vital to our students' future life chances.

The link between high standards of literacy, success and equality is well documented.

- *1-in-6 people in the UK struggle with literacy. This means their literacy is below the level expected from an eleven year old.* (National Literacy Trust)
- *93% of the British public say literacy is vital to the economy and essential for getting a good job*
- *'While good readers gain new skills very rapidly, and quickly move from learning to read to reading to learn, poor readers become increasingly frustrated with the act of reading, and try to avoid reading where possible.'* (Daniel Rigney)
- *'Students who begin with high verbal aptitudes find themselves in verbally enriched social environments and have a double advantage.'* (Daniel Rigney)
- *'Spoken language forms a constraint, a ceiling not only on the ability to comprehend but also on the ability to write, beyond which, literacy cannot progress.'* (Myhill and Fisher)

*Geoff Barton, 2012*

As well as being a formal requirement, literacy, in its wider context is the key to improving learning and raising standards. The revised standards explicitly state **all teaching staff** must demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of Standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject. Although the teaching of literacy skills is largely the role of the English department, all subjects have both a moral and formal responsibility to contribute to this.

At the heart of this, however, remains the desire to improve outcomes now, and in the future, for all students.

### **Policy Outcomes**

The achievement of the aims outlined above and the success of this policy will be demonstrated through student performance. Haslingden students should be able to:

- Communicate clearly and with assurance.
- Speak with confidence, clarity and fluency utilising appropriate language.
- Speak and listen for a variety of purposes (social, exploratory, presentational and evaluative talk) in both formal and informal contexts.
- Read widely and fluently with independence and understanding, for a variety of purposes. These will include study, research and enjoyment.
- Read using reading methods that are appropriate to the material and reading purpose.
- Write for a range of purposes, organising the content and style of what is written to suit the purpose and readership.
- Use spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately and with confidence.
- Develop a legible handwriting style where appropriate and be able to use word-processing skills effectively.

### **Promoting Literacy**

In order to optimise student literacy skills and to demonstrate best practice in promoting these in the classroom:

- Extended writing opportunities will be included in all subjects for each key stage.
- All teachers will provide opportunities for students to read aloud in class.
- Key terms and vocabulary must be made clear and explored with students to ensure that they recognise and understand them.
- Teachers identify any particular features of key terms and help students with strategies for remembering how to spell them or why they might be capitalised.
- Teachers teach and reinforce core reading skills, e.g. how to skim a text to extract main elements of its content quickly or how to scan a text for pieces of information.
- Teachers make expectations clear before students begin a task, e.g. conventions of layout in a formal letter.
- Teachers reinforce the school's expectations that the date is written on all pieces of work, that it is labelled as classwork, homework or assessed work and that the presentation of work is of a high standard.

- Teachers model and reinforce the importance of accuracy in spoken and written language, correcting this when necessary.
- Teachers identify when it is important to use Standard English and when other, less formal registers are appropriate.
- Teachers help students with key elements of literacy as they support them in lessons, e.g. pointing out spelling, punctuation or grammar issues as they look at work.
- Teachers' marking supports key literacy points: key pieces are marked for the spelling of key words, basic spelling and grammatical errors, and errors of layout.
- Teachers plan and ask a variety of questions to promote thought, giving students appropriate thinking time.
- Teachers explicitly teach the vocabulary that will help students progress.
- Teachers plan opportunities for collaborative talk between students in lessons.

**To achieve this:**

- Faculty Improvement Plans will make explicit reference to supporting students' literacy skills.
- Extended writing tasks will form the main outcome for block B assessment week for all subjects.
- Staff must develop departmental approaches to the teaching and application of literacy skills within their subject area and embed these in schemes of work. Each faculty will produce a subject specific literacy policy that outlines how and where teachers support and develop students' literacy skills.
- Staff will be provided with materials and training to teach key areas of literacy
- Staff must ensure that key subject vocabulary is displayed in classrooms and referred to in lessons.
- Staff should reduce teacher talk to give students more time to discuss using appropriate exploratory language.
- Staff must adhere to the marking policy, commenting on literacy in the marking of key pieces *as a minimum requirement*.

**Specific Literacy Support Provided at Haslingden High:**

- Based on KS2 data and liaison with feeder primaries, students are placed in a reading or spelling catch-up programme in the first week of admission to year 7. Students

involved in mathematics catch-up are also involved in an additional extra-English lesson.

- All year 7 students' reading ability is then screened and following this testing, students working below age 9.5 in reading comprehension are placed in an appropriate catch-up programme (15 minutes per day, 4 times per week and an extra English lesson per week.)
- The IDL programme is used for catch-up sessions and for students with dyslexia.
- Progress of students on a catch-up programme is monitored termly using Assessment block data and the programme is adjusted accordingly.
- In Y8 and Y9, the progress of students on the SEN register is tracked and those failing to make progress are placed on a catch-up programme or given additional support by a specialist literacy teacher.
- All Y7 and Y8 students are timetabled into the Library for one lesson per week.
- All Y7 and Y8 students follow the Accelerated Reader scheme. Progress is tracked half-termly.
- 'Literacy Leaders' meet weekly every Monday after school.

**Literacy is promoted across the curriculum by the:**

- Displays of key words and model answers in subject classrooms.
- Regular work scrutiny at departmental and SLT level with literacy as a specific focus.
- Promotion of wider reading for pleasure across the school e.g. teachers' favourite books, posters, 2 designated literacy displays that are regularly updated.
- Celebration of World Book Day and involvement in the Lancashire Children's Book of the Year prize.
- All year 7 students receive a new book due to involvement in the Book Buzz scheme.
- Introduction of reading logs in English for year 7 and 8 students.
- Wide access to the library for all students.
- Twice weekly silent reading in tutor time with laminated displays of what the students and tutors are reading.
- **The Summer Reading Challenge** to encourage reading for pleasure during the summer break.

- Form Reader Scheme linked to Accelerated Reader.
- Film Club (KS3 and 4 students are encouraged to write and post reviews of films).  
Inklings – creative writing club.
- Promotion of Literature and enrichment, e.g. numerous theatre trips.
- Literacy slides at the beginning of assemblies
- SLT support of literacy across the curriculum in conjunction with the Curriculum Leader for English.

#### **Priorities for Development:**

- Phonics catch-up programme – to ensure that there is a designated phonics teacher able to deliver sessions for struggling readers in KS3.
- To ensure that Accelerated Reader is being utilised to its full potential.
- To embed extended writing opportunities into all subject areas
- To ensure that staff receive training about teaching students to respond accurately to exam command words
- To ensure that model answers for the longer exam questions are available for all GCSEs and A Levels
- Address the training needs of staff with internal CPD.
- Develop the use of ICT to promote reading eg. writing blogs, website creation, completing effective research
- Develop the library scheme of work to address expressive reading in year 7
- Development of QR codes to address common literacy errors

#### **Responsibility**

Ms L Marsland (AAHT Literacy) has designated responsibility for the implementation of the literacy policy with Mrs S Morgan(Literacy Coordinator)

