



Literacy across the Curriculum

Ermysted's Grammar School

The Governing Body of Ermysted's Grammar School (the 'School') ratified this policy on 27 June 2024.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Literacy involves the ability to read and write; however, it is also the capacity to recognise, reproduce and manipulate the conventions of a range of texts and a variety of modes. Literacy and English are intertwined, and it is an important aspect of our ability to communicate. There are also new forms of literacy (on-screen literacy and moving image media) to consider alongside the more traditional print literacy. Literacy is important because it enables pupils to gain access to the subjects studied in school, to read for information and pleasure, and to communicate effectively. Competent literacy skills enable pupils to read, understand and access materials, so that pupils are able to achieve their educational potential across the curriculum.

All departments and all teachers have a crucial role to play in supporting pupils' literacy development. All teachers are teachers of literacy. As such, the staff of Ermysted's Grammar School are committed to developing literacy skills in all our pupils, in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum, because:

- pupils 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;
 - language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do, and on the things others have said, written or done;
 - responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry;
 - literacy and learning can have an impact on pupils' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour.
- Literate pupils learn independently. Literacy is empowering.

2. Aims

- 2.1 Ermysted's Grammar School is committed to raising the standards of Literacy for all of its pupils, so that they develop the ability to use Literacy skills effectively in all areas of the curriculum and as a platform for the demands of further education, employment and adult life. Literacy underpins the school curriculum by developing pupils' abilities to speak, listen and communicate, to think, explore and organise. This includes helping pupils to express themselves orally and in writing. Ermysted's Grammar School aspires to be a literate school in order to produce powerful communicators across the curriculum. This will comprise:
- The successful application of reading and writing skills
 - The ability to speak articulately in a range of contexts and for different purposes.

3. Outcomes

To achieve our aims, pupils should be able to:

- Read widely and fluently with independence and understanding, for a variety of purposes. These will include for enjoyment, research and study.
- Read using methods that are appropriate to the material and reading purpose.
- Write for a range of purposes, organising the content and style to suit the audience, and form.
- Use spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax appropriately and with confidence.
- Develop legible handwriting and use word processing skills effectively.

- Speak and listen with confidence, clarity and fluency in a variety of situations in formal and informal contexts, also enabling active participation in activities both within and beyond school.

4. Delivery of Literacy

- 4.1 In the opening remarks of the guidance report to *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*¹, Sir Kevan Collins comments that “In secondary schools, the challenge of improving literacy is fundamental ... literacy is key to academic success across the curriculum and is more important than ever as curriculum reforms place new demands on students and teachers.”
- 4.2 All schemes of work and most lessons will include specific literacy objectives. These objectives will inform what is taught, how it is taught, what is learnt and how it is learnt.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Literacy development across the curriculum will require:

- All teachers to understand that they are a teacher of literacy.
- A shared understanding among teachers of the relationship between language and learning, and how the work undertaken in different subject areas can contribute to the development of literacy skills.
- Teachers to be aware of the language demands made upon pupils in their subject areas
- The development of consistent approaches and appropriate resources within subjects to improve their pupils’ use of language.
- Use of strategies to support transition between KS2 and KS3, KS3 and KS4, KS4 and KS5, KS5 and Higher Education.
- Whole school and Faculty CPD appropriate to the development of literacy skills within the subject. This includes a Teaching and Learning group whose focus in 2024-2025 is Literacy, and it remains a regular part of the agenda in Heads of Faculty meetings.
- Intervention strategies in consultation with the SLT and SENDCO.
- Evaluation via the school monitoring processes of all learners and those learners in disadvantaged groups.

5.2 Specific Roles and Responsibilities:

- Governors and school leaders: lead and give a high profile to literacy within the school.
- Languages Faculty: English teachers provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively. The faculty will play a key role in identifying literacy priorities, targets and individual need.
- SENDCO: Will play a leading role in identifying need and providing targeted intervention.
- Librarian: supports whole school reading including promoting and running enrichment activities.
- Teachers across the curriculum: contribute to pupils’ development of language, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons.
- Parents: encourage their children to use the range of strategies learnt to improve their literacy.
- Pupils: take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements.

6. Disciplinary Literacy at Ermysted’s Grammar school

- 6.1 The EEF guidance makes seven recommendations to help strengthen literacy in secondary schools. These are:
- **Prioritise ‘disciplinary literacy’ across the curriculum**
 - Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.

¹ [Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.eef.org.uk/guidance/improving-literacy-in-secondary-schools)

- Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.
- All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach pupils to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.
- School leaders can help teachers by ensuring training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity over general approaches.

- **Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject**
 - Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help pupils access and use academic language.
 - Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help pupils remember new words and make connections between words.
 - Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which pupils are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech.
 - Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning.

- **Develop pupils' ability to read complex academic texts**
 - Training focused on teaching reading is likely to help secondary school teachers teach their subject more effectively.
 - To comprehend complex texts, pupils need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.
 - Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning, can improve pupils' comprehension.
 - Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.

- **Break down complex writing tasks**
 - Writing is challenging and pupils in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.
 - Teachers can break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and support pupils by modelling each step.
 - Targeted support should be provided to pupils who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality.
 - Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and paired writing, to motivate pupils to write.

- **Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject**
 - Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve pupils' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.
 - Reading helps pupils gain knowledge which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen pupils' understanding of ideas.
 - Pupils should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.
 - Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve pupils' writing, particularly when focused on meaning.

- **Provide opportunities for structured talk**
 - Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning.

- High quality talk is typically well-structured and guided by teachers.
- Accountable talk is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality and emphasises how talk can be subject specific.
- Teachers can support pupils by modelling high quality talk, for example including key vocabulary and metacognitive reflection.
- **Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling pupils**
 - Schools should expect and proactively plan to support pupils with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Y7.
 - Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach.
 - Assessment should be used to match pupil to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.
 - Creating a coordinated system of support is a significant challenge requiring both specialist input and whole school leadership.

7. Methodology-specific whole-school examples

7.1 Promoting structured talk:

- Opportunities include access to a range of extra-curricular clubs, which include Young Enterprise and Debating clubs for all year groups, and pupil participation in annual competitions such as the Bar Mock Trials and The Rotary Club Speakers for Schools. During enrichment week, external providers such as Bradford University STEM encourage Y9 pupils to use their presentation skills to present their findings, and “The Knotted Project” works with Y8 to express themselves through physical theatre. Pupils’ confidence and creativity are nurtured through involvement in Shakespeare for Schools, and the chance to be involved in School productions such as the forthcoming “Bugsy Malone.” Additional opportunities for self-expression include access to the School Council, and the KS5 student advisors and prefect scheme. The careers programme also developed pupils’ ability to present themselves in a formal setting, such as in Year 10 when pupils conduct a mock interview with employers.

7.2 Promoting Reading and Writing:

- The Accelerated Reader programme was started in February 2022 with Y7 and Y8 in response to a perceived gap in reading engagement, potentially as a result of reduced access to the library due to Covid restrictions. The competitive nature of this programme, and ability for pupils, parents and staff to record and monitor reading progress is intended to encourage pupils to access texts at and beyond age appropriate level, and to engage with a range of texts. This is now delivered to Y7 from 2023-2025. Accelerated Reader STAR tests screen Year 7 for their reading age. Combined with CATs scores and whole school tracking, these help to identify pupils who may need further intervention. This has included Y10 reading mentors providing one to one reading support for Y7 identified pupils during form time.
- The library plays a key role in promoting love of reading and is a thriving central hub of School, and is supported by pupil library helpers. A fortnightly library lesson is timetabled for Y7, Y8 and Y9 pupils. The Ermysted’s Award encourages pupils to read a range of fiction and non-fiction representing all six faculty areas. Reading competitions and key reading events are promoted by the library including the Carnegie book Shadowing, and The National Reading Champions Quiz, World Book Day, World Poetry Day and Pride Month in June celebrating diversity in literature. In addition, the School takes part annually in Shakespeare for Schools. The library actively supports Y6 into Y7 transition including Y6 creating a bookmark quest and Shelfies displays of favourite reads. Pupils learn how to use the library independently and how to use AccessIt Online in order to browse On-line resources and the library catalogue and also to write their own book reviews.
- Form time activities also include a focus on reading and/or interpretation of the media. Y7 and Y8

forms embark on a shared reading project, where four books are read in rotation, and/or listened to as an audio book, in order to encourage discussion between peers as they parallel read. Teachers display “Ask me What I am Reading” posters in classrooms to encourage discussion around reading.

- A range of “non-negotiables” have been created at subject level regarding both spoken and written literacy which will be promoted across all subjects to encourage pupils to recognise the cross-curricular nature of this skill and to strengthen the quality of their responses.

7.3 Methodology-specific examples within the curriculum:

- **Creative Arts:** Key specialist terms are displayed and reinforced verbally and in writing within all subjects. In PE command words and decoding of exam questions are a focus at KS4 and 5. In Art, pupils are encouraged to regularly reflect on their own outcomes and make a written record of this in sketchbooks. They complete 'presentations' about the work of artists, designers, craftspeople that include their own written reflections. They critically analyse work after group discussions have taken place. All KS4 and KS5 students annotate their own work to explain their decision making and thought processes. This is an exam board requirement. They also complete in depth 'critical studies' about the work of artists, designers, craftspeople that include their own written reflections about the work and critically analysing the work and relating it to the development of their own work. In Food Literacy maps are used to support writing and in KS4 writing scaffolds are used for some longer GCSE homework answers.
- **Humanities:** A full range of communication skills are supported and employed within all Humanities', including structured talk, and the delivery of presentations, both written and verbal in a range of contexts. Key specialist terms and definitions are also a focus. For example, in Geography KS3 pupils are encouraged to use whiteboards to practise spelling of new technical terms. In History, for example, pupils write for a variety of audiences and purposes and are taught to select, interpret, analyse and evaluate a range of historical sources.
- **Languages:** In MFL and Latin, the focus is on cognates from English and other languages the pupils may know. This supports translations from and into the target language using the context to decipher. There is strong emphasis on use of grammar and metalanguage. Authentic materials of different registers are used for reading, also supporting writing. Key vocabulary and grammatical rules are displayed and referred to in all MFL classrooms and pupils are also immersed in opportunities to listen to and speak the target language, supported by language assistants in French and German.
- **In English,** achieving high standards of Literacy across reading, writing and speaking is central to the subject, shaping the design, planning and delivery of the curriculum. Modelling and scaffolding verbal and written answers play an important role, supported by use of visualisers and modelled examples. Challenging and diverse non-fiction and fiction class texts are employed. Spelling is specifically addressed through the use of Frayer models and exploration of different strategies to learn Tier 2 and Tier 3 spellings. English leads the fortnightly library lessons in Y7, 8 and 9 with a view to encourage pupils to enjoy and broaden their reading.
- **Maths and Computing:** Command words and specific vocabulary are explored, including reminding pupils about word etymology for spelling and using mathematical and computing language correctly. In computer science, essays are written at A level and shorter written answers at GCSE. In applied Maths KS5 students model situations from worded descriptions and interpret their findings in the context of the questions.
- **Science:** Specialist language is explicitly taught and reinforced, including focus on command words. Glossaries of key terms are supplied and learning of Tier 3 spellings built into units of work. In writing, pupils are taught the skills of synthesising, summarising and concluding, incorporating key words and data. Pupils are encouraged to read and retrieve key information and identify different perspectives. They are supported to discuss their viewpoints, findings and predictions in pairs, small groups and as a class.

8. Marking and Feedback

Ermysted's Grammar School has a Whole School Marking Policy (Appendix A) which identifies the key aspects of literacy that each department addresses in their marking of pupils' work.

9. Learning environment

Ermysted's Grammar School is committed to providing:

- Displays of reading material relevant to the topic or national curriculum subject; each classroom promotes subject specific vocabulary which pupils are encouraged to use regularly
- High quality reading material, which is up to date, relevant and balanced in its presentation of ethnicity, culture and gender; access for pupils to the school library; access for pupils to a good quality range of texts during lessons
- Dictionaries, glossaries or lists of appropriate subject vocabulary that are available during lessons, and which pupils are encouraged to use
- Access to appropriate audio visual equipment
- A classroom environment which is conducive to good literacy practice.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

We will make use of available data to assess the standards of pupils' literacy.

Methods of monitoring includes:

- work scrutiny – both pupils' work and schemes of learning
- observation – pupil tracking and literacy teaching
- faculty meetings
- pupil interviews
- scrutiny of faculty development plans
- encouraging faculties to share good practice by exhibiting or exemplifying pupils' work and peer observation.

11. Inclusion

Ermysted's Grammar School pupils are entitled to our highest expectations and support. Some will need additional support and others will need to be challenged and extended. Strategies in the classroom used include:

- questioning
- adjusting the demands of the task or the type of resources
- the use of additional support
- use of group structures or scaffolding
- modelling of quality reading and writing
- making focuses clear
- creating an atmosphere where pupils evaluate their own others' work
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary.

11.1 Interventions beyond Quality First Teaching:

The Languages Faculty Lead and SENDCO collaborate to organise additional literacy support where specific need is identified. All literacy support and intervention operating in this way is bespoke, according to need, and provided on a graduated basis.

- A handwriting support programme has been in place since October 2021 as a result of need identified through QATL. This is delivered by Teaching Assistants to pupils in predominantly Y7 and Y8.
- The SEND teams offers bespoke support to pupils who are specifically identified to require literacy interventions.

Appendix A

Marking for literacy

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to support literacy in school. On identified pieces of work:

- Key spelling errors should be underlined, and SP put in the margin-with the correction where considered necessary.
- P indicates where punctuation is needed to clarify understanding.
- In extended writing // and NP indicate where a new paragraph should be taken.

Teachers will be selective in what they mark. When they do correct errors, teachers will facilitate further learning, for example by indicating a correct version, a pattern or rule, or by prompting the pupil to reflect or to research further themselves.

NON- NEGOTIABLES FOR LITERACY

To support standards of literacy, the following are non-negotiable for work in all subjects:

- Write the **date** on the top right-hand side and **title** at top middle of the page.
- Use **capital letters** to begin sentences, to indicate **proper nouns** (e.g. Tom, England) and for the **pronoun 'I'** (this includes *I'll, I'm*).
- Use **full stops** to mark the end of declarative sentences. Or do you need a question mark? Of course you do!
- Use **homophones** *their/there/they're* >> *here/hear* >> *its/it's* >> *your/you're* correctly.
- Use paragraphs to indicate a shift in topic; start a new line for **speech**.

Remember: new speaker = new line.

- Your **handwriting** is legible, using blue/black pen (green when responding to feedback).
- Cross out mistakes with a single, neat line.
- Proof-read your work after you have completed it to check for mistakes.
- Include specific subject terminology correctly where appropriate
- In discussion, speak in formal Standard English and in full sentences.
- Listen attentively to others and think about what you could add.
- Put your hand up and wait for permission if you wish to contribute to discussion.