

Literacy Policy: East Barnet School

"Words for life" – The National Literacy Trust

Definition

Literacy is defined as the four strands of language – listening, speaking, reading and writing – therefore, to communicate clearly and effectively in social and academic situations, our students need to demonstrate proficient use of all four literacy skills.

Principles

- We hold the belief that raising standards of literacy is central to improving achievement throughout the curriculum areas.
- We recognise that all teachers are teachers of Literacy as we all have a crucial role to play in supporting students' literacy development.
- Our vision is to empower all students, from the least to the most able, with a set of thinking, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills so that they have the ability to access, process and express knowledge appropriately in curriculum areas, examinations and life beyond school.
- As The National Literacy Trust state, we are teaching and supporting our students to develop "words for life".

Aims

To:

- Raise standards of literacy across the curriculum by teaching, modelling and providing students with the opportunity to develop the skills required for the four strands of language – listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Encourage and promote existing literacy initiatives and events, for example, author visits, reading events and competitions, in order to develop and establish a reading culture.

Raising Standards of Literacy – Teaching and Learning

Learning through speaking and listening

Talk is our main means of communication in life and in lessons is the most fundamental tool in developing understanding. It is not simply asking and answering questions. Lessons should provide opportunities for purposeful speaking and listening to take place so that students can explore, clarify and present their ideas and develop their understanding by actively listening to others.

Requirements

All teachers should use these strategies in lessons, **as appropriate to the individual lesson and subject content**, to develop students' speaking and listening skills:

- Encourage students to use varied and specialised vocabulary as well as using Standard English *where appropriate*.
- Use talk in lessons to question, discuss, analyse, inform, explain etc (see appendix 1 – Purposes of talk and writing).
- Model the type of talk you expect students to use within a given environment and/or activity.
- Give students feedback on the quality of their speaking and listening (see appendix 2 - Speaking and Listening attainment ladder).
- Provide students with opportunities to actively engage with their learning through discussion.
- Encourage students to actively listen.
 - **Active listening** is making a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, trying to understand the complete message being sent. You may wish to refer to the following website for more about active listening: <http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>
- Encourage students to comment on others' views and challenge them.
- Give opportunities for paired, larger group and whole class discussion as well as individual presentations to a variety of audiences.
- Use presentations as part of the formal assessment process where appropriate.

Learning through text/reading

Reading should first and foremost be for enjoyment and we all have a role to play in helping to develop and establish a reading culture within the school. However, at a more practical level, we want our students to be able to read confidently and competently so that they are able to access and understand lesson and examination material, as well as the everyday media and literature that surround us.

Requirements

All teachers should use these strategies in lessons, *as appropriate to the individual lesson and subject content*, to develop students' reading skills:

- Give students the opportunity to read independently and **actively**. This could include highlighting text, giving students something specific to look for whilst reading or note taking. (See appendix 4 – Active Reading Strategies).
- Encourage and promote reading for pleasure as well as for learning.
- Show/teach students how to locate information in texts, for example how to skim and scan, use sub-headings, use an index etc. (See appendix 3 - Skimming and Scanning).
- Ask students to show understanding of texts through writing (a variety of text types can be explored here, a summary, notes, even diary entries or newspaper articles if appropriate) and/or orally summarising what has been read.
- Extend students' subject specific vocabulary by displaying subject specific words in each teaching and learning room.
- Provide opportunities for students to read texts in a variety of ways, for example, individually, as a whole class or in smaller groups.
- Develop students' research and study skills, for example encourage students to select information from a range of texts and sources.
- Encourage students to make use of dictionaries/thesauri available in most classrooms.

Learning through writing

Writing is an essential communication skill. Students need to be able to communicate in written form in lessons, examinations and life beyond school. They must understand the different purposes for writing and apply the appropriate form and tone confidently to their own.

Requirements

All teachers should use these strategies in lessons, ***as appropriate to the individual lesson and subject content***, to develop students' writing skills:

- Make explicit to students the text type/form, purpose and audience of the writing, for example, a leaflet to inform young children about a new theme park. (See appendix 1 – Purposes of talk and writing).
- Explain the possible layout and features of the text type that students are asked to produce before they begin writing, for example, what a letter/ leaflet/ newspaper article looks like.
- Teach students a variety of ways to plan the structure of their writing.
- Teach students about the writing process; practise a combination of **modelled** writing and **shared** writing in lessons.
 - **Modelling** is the teacher or student showing how they construct a piece of writing by allowing others to witness their thought process and not just the outcome.
 - **Shared** writing is the teacher or student scribing and guiding the writing but with the students' input.
- Display/provide useful phrases to encourage students to develop their writing.
- When marking students' writing, include a comment or target about the quality of the writing (a literacy component such as paragraphing, punctuation, grammar, spelling etc) if appropriate.
- Provide students with the opportunities to plan, draft and evaluate their own and each other's writing.
- Ensure that the presentation and language of all resources are clear.
- Encourage students to make their handwriting clear and legible. The following website has very useful suggestions about how to improve handwriting:
<http://matadornetwork.com/life/eight-easy-tips-to-improve-your-handwriting/>

Reviewing the policy

This policy is a working document which will be reviewed and adapted accordingly every two years. A whole staff literacy survey will be carried out every two years which will enable all staff to further reflect on their own practice in the promoting, teaching and marking of literacy. The results of this survey will highlight areas of good practice as well as areas that need to be addressed which will feed into the development and use of this document.