

St Alban's Catholic High School



Literacy Policy

Approved by Student's Committee on: 07 February 2022

Recommission Date: April 2025

“Teachers should develop students’ spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for students, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.”
(DfE, 2014, p.10)

“Literacy should be interwoven in the fabric of everyday school life and involve all staff.”
(Literacy Guide for Secondary Schools: National Literacy Trust p.4)

Section 1 Principles and Aims

1.1 Principles

The development of an effective literacy skillset (speaking, listening, reading and writing) is fundamental to the achievement of a rich and fulfilling life. We use these skills every day in order to communicate with, and make sense of, the world around us. As such, the better we are at these skills the more successful we can expect to be in life. At St Alban’s we recognise that at the heart of improving literacy skills is the opportunity to practise them. Improving literacy and learning can have an impact on students’ self-esteem, motivation, behaviour and attainment.

1.2 Our aims:

- to foster an understanding amongst all staff of the importance of literacy in students’ learning;
- to raise standards of literacy in all subject areas by making this a regular part of teaching and learning;
- to promote an understanding in students of the importance of literacy and its impact on succeeding academically and socially;
- to give students confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in a range of different contexts and for different audiences;
- to promote a love of reading for pleasure within the school community.
- to promote a reading culture within St Alban’s through shared, powerful reading experiences.

Section 2 Teaching to communicate effectively

2.1 Reading.

In reading, students should be taught ways of following and understanding information, deciphering implicit as well as explicit meaning, and using this information appropriately. Teachers should try to use a range of

different texts relevant to the topic taught and incorporate the explicit teaching of reading skills for different subject disciplines (disciplinary literacy). They should dedicate some time to ensuring students understand how to find information easily in a text that is regularly used in the classroom, for example a subject-specific textbook. This includes visual and multimodal texts. Time should also be dedicated to the explicit pre teaching of key vocabulary in order to remove reading barriers and to enrich the vocabulary of all students.

Reading helps student to learn from sources beyond their immediate experience and inspires them to acquire knowledge. We aim to:

- create an environment where reading is promoted across the school;
- provide time in school every week for all students to read;
- support reading through a range of varied and appropriately differentiated reading resources;
- promote and support reading in non-school hours.

2.2 Spoken Language

In speaking, students should be encouraged to use Standard English in the classroom. They should be taught to speak the language of the subject confidently, and to use particular phrasing or vocabulary with skill and confidence. Different opportunities for formal and informal talk should be created regularly and students should be taught the practical skills needed to communicate effectively in a range of situations.

Language helps students to prepare, reflect on, revise and evaluate the tasks they undertake, and on the things others have said, written or done. We aim to:

- raise awareness of the importance of speaking and listening across the school;
- encourage a more systematic approach to the use of speaking and listening tasks in all subjects;
- support all departments and subjects in embedding speaking and listening within their area.

2.3 Writing

Students should be taught to develop their knowledge of and skills in writing. They should be taught to refine their drafting skills and develop the resilience to write at length. They should be taught to write for a variety of purposes and audiences across a range of contexts. This requires an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Writing helps students to sustain and order thought, and to record their ideas and learning. We aim to:

- provide students with a range of challenging writing tasks;
- provide students with real audiences and creative writing outlets where possible;

- support writing with frames or scaffolds where appropriate, and use modelling, within subjects;
- ensure grammar, spelling and handwriting are supported in all subjects;
- promote and support writing in non-school hours.

Vocabulary should be developed actively, with teachers building on general word knowledge as well as words that are subject-specific. Teachers should try to provide students with vocabulary that would be useful in their speaking and writing about their subject. Where possible, synonyms and their different shades of meaning should be taught so that students have a range of vocabulary choices available to them when writing or speaking. Students should be taught the language of each subject and encouraged to use it regularly in lessons. It is also important to study the etymology of words, and their affixes, so students can start to decipher complex words independently.

Section 3 Responsibilities

3.1 Literacy Co-ordinator

- To coordinate the literacy initiatives for the school across the academic year and monitor their success
- To produce, monitor and review activities to be used in Form time to promote literacy
- To support staff in the implementation of literacy in the classroom, providing appropriate training for staff to enhance their knowledge and practice in employing appropriate literacy strategies
- To ensure parents are well informed of how they might support their children in developing literacy skills
- To monitor the provision, implementation and outcomes of literacy initiatives, and monitor provision for literacy across all subjects.

3.2 Form tutors

- To promote literacy in form time through the range of activities provided. These include:
 - tasks on punctuation and grammar;
 - whole class reading for pleasure;
 - group discussions on topical issues;
 - tasks on listening for information;
 - a weekly news quiz;
 - the word of the week;
 - the register and read initiative

3.3 Teachers

- To ensure that whole school literacy initiatives are implemented
- To ensure relevant posters and resources are displayed in classrooms
- To ensure that literacy is planned for where applicable, considering information from Section 2
- To ensure that marking includes correction of punctuation, grammar and incorrect spellings (using their own discretion)
- To help promote a love of reading for pleasure.

3.4 Departments

- To identify specific speaking, reading and writing skills required in the subject area and teach these skills accordingly
- To identify and teach subject-specific vocabulary
- To plan opportunities for students to develop and practise literacy skills
- To use display space to promote, reinforce and support literacy skills.

3.5 Heads of Departments/Faculties

- To ensure that the school policy is in operation through lesson observations, work monitoring and student interviews
- To encourage and make time for the necessary training and the sharing of good practice in department time.

Section 4 Monitoring and assessment of impact

4.1 To monitor the implementation of the literacy initiatives we will:

- monitor books for marking in accordance with the literacy policy;
- monitor the implementation of literacy initiatives in lessons, tutor time and through displays around the school;
- conduct student interviews regarding their experience of literacy across the curriculum.

4.2 To monitor the impact of the literacy initiatives we will:

- analyse data regarding students' attainment and progress towards making three levels of progress;
- sample students' work from across departments;
- conduct student interviews.

"Literacy is about people's ability to function in society as private individuals, active citizens, employees or parents... Literacy is about people's self-esteem, their interaction with others, their health and employability.

Ultimately, literacy is about whether a society is fit for the future."

Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools: Ofsted

Signed by J McCall, Chair of Governors:

Date:
