

Definition of Literacy

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world.

1. Purpose

All teachers are teachers of literacy. At Howard House School, we believe that literacy is a key factor in the effective teaching of all subjects and is essential to the improvement of learning and student development. Literacy is an integral element of all good teaching. Teachers at Howard House have a responsibility to develop students' competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening in their own subjects and to ensure that students can access the curriculum effectively and reach their full potential. This policy will develop a shared understanding between all staff. By working together teachers can provide consistency to students and promote high standards of English.

*'Teachers in a secondary school need to understand that literacy is a key issue regardless of the subject taught. It is an important element of their effectiveness as a subject teacher.'*¹ (Department for Education 2012)

2. The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely both for pleasure and academic purpose
- appreciate our rich and varied literacy heritage
- acquire a wide range of vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions of reading, writing and spoken language
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting language and style in, and for, a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn, to elaborate and explain clearly

The development of an effective literacy skillset is fundamental to the achievement of a rich and fulfilling life. We aim for all learners at Howard House to leave having met the requirements of the National Curriculum and to be able to confidently read, write and speak; this ensures students are prepared for their adult life. Confidence in literacy is empowering. High levels of literacy lead to improvements in self-esteem, motivation and behaviour.

*'To be literate is to gain a voice and to participate meaningfully and assertively in decisions that affect one's life. To be literate is to gain self-confidence. To be literate is to become self-assertive... Literacy enables people to read their own world and to write their own history... Literacy provides access to written knowledge- and knowledge is power. In a nutshell, literacy empowers.'*²

3. Development of Literacy Skills

The development and consolidation of literacy skills will be implemented using a range of guidelines. The Literacy Co-ordinator will support teachers in the implementation of strategies and encourage others to share good practice. Each half-term, all teachers will meet to discuss literacy implementation and to have a work scrutiny, examining each other's marking. There is a whole school policy on marking and feedback, which all staff will follow. The Literacy Co-ordinator will liaise with other teachers to facilitate the delivery of cross-curricular literacy skills. In addition to this, the Literacy Co-ordinator will share reading assessment data with all teachers, so teachers are aware of each student's reading age.

4. The Role of the Teacher

All teachers should ensure that they plan opportunities to embed literacy into their subject specific curriculum.

5. Reading

In lessons, teachers will:

- provide opportunities for reading as a class, in groups and individually
- encourage reading aloud
- encourage further reading around the subject
- monitor the level of text so that students are challenged but not alienated by what they are reading
- assess if students are maintaining their attention when they read
- make use of the school library
- use visual prompts to support reading
- promote skimming and scanning in lessons
- encourage paired reading with peers to support less confident readers
- Teaching approaches like 'reciprocal reading' and allowing students to practice reading - comprehension strategies

6. Writing

In lessons, teachers will:

- model high standards of presentation
- promote punctuation, spelling and grammar in all writing tasks
- insist on the use of full sentences when writing
- take opportunities for peer literacy marking
- model pieces of writing
- use 'scaffolding' to support writing
- teach students how to plan writing
- Provide opportunities for students to redraft their own work in the light of feedback
- encourage students to use the 'Word of the Week' in their writing
- teaching subject specific spelling

7. Speaking and Listening

In lessons, teachers will:

- lead by example, ensuring Standard English is always used
- challenge students when slang or inappropriate colloquialisms are used
 - create opportunities for discussion in a range of contexts and forms: whole class discussion, small group discussion, paired discussion, individual contribution
 - use questioning to elicit language from students

8. Promoting a Love of Reading

At Howard House, all teachers encourage a love of reading, for both academic purpose and personal pleasure. There is a consensus amongst teachers that reading is essential to the literacy development of students. All students have access to a school library, which can be used throughout the school day and after school. There are a wide range of books in the library, with many different genres. All students have the opportunity to have at least one book of their choice ordered per term, paid for by the school. This is to encourage a love of reading, whereby

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students can discover what genres of literature they enjoy reading the most. Teachers also promote a love of reading by:

- fostering a reading culture within, and beyond, the school
- celebrating reading events (National Poetry Day; World Book Day; Shakespeare Day; Refugee Week; Black History Month; Roald Dahl Day; Holocaust Memorial Day; National Storytelling Week)
- placing posters around the library which provides information on which novel each teacher is currently reading
- recommended reading lists for both KS3 and KS4
- teaching students reading strategies (word, sentence and text focus)
- providing KS3 with twenty minutes of silent reading time per week in their English lessons
- promoting and entering students for competitions (poetry and short stories)