



Washwood Heath Academy

Literacy Intent

Statement of Intent

At Washwood Heath Academy, our aim is to provide our students with the best opportunities for academic and life success; we believe effective use of language and communication is at the heart of this. Having the understanding and ability to read, write, speak and listen well will enable our students to communicate effectively with others, understand written information and write accurately using Standard English. Our Knowledge-Rich Curriculum is embedded in the belief that language unlocks and reinforces learning so our whole-school approach to literacy is essential. On this journey, our focus is disciplinary literacy which cements the key message that language is subject specific. To reinforce a positive approach and response to this, we use the term 'Language for Learning'. Our language provisions are promoted through:

- Language for Learning in forms and subjects.
- Think-Speak-Write in subjects.
- Vocabulary rich teaching and learning.
- Reading enrichment which encourages engagement with academic reading and a love for reading for pleasure to develop students' cultural capital.
- Literacy enrichment which provides all students with general and subject specific opportunities.

The strategies in place are based on the understanding that our student body face substantial barriers when accessing the English language; a high number speak English as an additional language, with over thirty first languages, but many are not literate in their first language. In addition, there is a focus on building a link with our Primary phase in order to create an all through approach to literacy. The journey so far has resulted in an increase in the understanding and engagement with the importance of language and literacy in subjects; staff are aware that disciplinary literacy is at the forefront of our curriculum and is an integral part of our teaching and learning ethos. A key priority is to embed disciplinary literacy across all subjects in Primary and Secondary. The introduction of **Think-Speak-Write** and **Language for Learning** has led to the creation of learning opportunities which help students become 'word-rich', so that they speak, read and write like a historian, musician, scientist etc. Our students are aware that similar to 'The Matthew Effect', the more words they know, understand and use, the richer they will be in knowledge. We understand that gaps in literacy and language levels make social mobility much more of a challenge for our students; thus our aim is to put in place steps which will enable them to become confident users of the English language.

Our current participation in the **BEP Literacy for Life Programme** with the **National Literacy Trust** means that we are now making sound links between our existing language development practices and the research and strategies promoted by the project. Working with representatives from a range of subjects, we have created a Language Team to drive forward, monitor and review progress. All staff have been introduced to the **Literacy for Learning** project and been given access to the NLT website to support their planning of disciplinary literacy. Liaising with the wider MAT team at Saltley Academy and Tile Cross Academy, we are developing a unified approach to provide all students with an effective skill set focused on oracy, reading and writing. The MAT Register Continuum will promote the importance of informal and formal use of language in all forms of communication. This will pave the way for strategies to develop both oracy and written work.

Language Non-Negotiables and Expectations

To strengthen our current practices and further develop the teaching of language, our staff are expected to:

- Ensure that their own speaking, listening, writing and reading of English support students in developing their language and vocabulary well. Teachers should expect students to speak in sentences, using Standard English and subject specific vocabulary in formal talk.
- Use subject specific vocabulary in all lessons and spend time explaining new terminology, giving accurate definitions and putting new words and phrases into context. Teachers should expect students to use subject terminology and vocabulary in all lessons when speaking and writing.
- Support the development of reading in their lessons by teaching reading skills and having high expectations when students read aloud. New and unfamiliar vocabulary should be explained and explored before or during reading. Teachers should expect students to read at an appropriate volume and speed, read carefully and accurately to aid meaning with consideration of sentence markers and punctuation.
- Set academic reading as part of homework and extension tasks to promote independent reading.
- Reinforce all the skills and topics covered in the ‘Language for Learning’ sessions during their own subject lessons.
- Guide and expect students to learn, check and correct all spellings.
- Guide and expect students to punctuate their writing accurately and make this a part of live feedback and marking.
- Guide and expect students to use varied vocabulary and subject specific vocabulary in their spoken and written communication.
- Promote and expect students to write, speak and read like a scientist, mathematician, geographer, historian, etc.) in their lessons.

To promote the use of Standard English and subject specific language, and create a culture of reading, our students are expected to:

- Speak in full sentences, using Standard English and subject specific vocabulary in formal talk.
- Carry a reading book at all times and read independently when there are opportunities.
- Read academic texts to engage with a wide range of topics, genres and forms.
- Read for meaning with a focus on volume, pace and punctuation.
- Write accurately using punctuation, subject specific terminology and vocabulary and pay attention to organisation and presentation.
- Strive to become ‘word-rich’ in all subjects.

Implementation

- Language for Learning lessons delivered on a weekly basis, covering grammar and language skills applicable for all subjects.
- Disciplinary literacy planning is fast becoming a focus for all subjects.
- Monthly editions of The Literacy Times are shared to inform all students about latest research and information to support their learning. There are also updates related to language events and a promotion of reading for pleasure through the ‘Books of the Month’ recommendations.
- Think-Speak-Write in subjects and where applicable.
- Reading for pleasure promoted and rewarded through half termly library sessions for Y7 and Y8 students.
- Reading for pleasure promoted in English through weekly class reading activity focused on developing a wide range of reading strategies and comprehension and language skills.
- Reading for pleasure promoted through homework reading text for Y7 and Y8. Students are expected to read this independently.
- The expansion of the library through external and internal writing competitions and projects. There is more parental engagement with Scholastic.
- The introduction of Accelerated Reader for students below national standards in Y7 and this will be expanded to Y8 students too.
- Academic reading is being promoted through subject-specific reading by departmental reading champions.