University Academy Holbeach

Principal: Sheila Paige

Whole School Literacy Policy

Literacy Coordinator: Miss Robb

1. Purpose of this policy

This policy sets out:

- Aims for whole school literacy within University Academy Holbeach.
- Guidance to inform good practice amongst all departments and staff.
- Teaching and learning strategies that will support the raising of standards in literacy across the curriculum.
- Additional key fundamentals in the Academy's commitment to raising standards of literacy.

2. Aims

Literacy can be defined as the ability to communicate effectively using language, and includes the core skill of reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Literacy is fundamental for effective learning and is the key to unlocking the curriculum.

By promoting and supporting a whole school approach to literacy, the Academy aims to:

- Develop the ability of all pupils to communicate effectively.
- Develop the reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills of all pupils.
- Raise the achievement and attainment of pupils in the Academy, regardless of ability.
- Prepare pupils effectively for further education (post-16) or the workplace.
- Encourage in pupils a love of learning both in, and beyond, the classroom.

3.   A Whole-School Approach

For departments, the improvement of literacy within each subject has considerable benefits:

- Literacy supports learning. Pupils need vocabulary, expression, and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of the curriculum across all subjects.
- Reading enables us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience.
- Through language, pupils will express and discover meaning.
- Responding to higher-order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry.
- Better literacy leads to improved self-esteem, motivation, and behaviour. It allows for pupils to learn independently.

In raising the attainment of learners in literacy who are most at risk of not gaining the skills they need for success; the following factors are important:

- Teachers with high expectations for pupils' achievement in literacy.
- An emphasis on speaking and listening skills from an early age.
- A rigorous, sequential approach to developing speaking and listening and teaching reading, writing, and spelling using systematic phonics.
- Assessment and tracking of progress to determine the most appropriate programme or intervention.
- Carefully planned provision to meet individual needs.
- Thorough monitoring of the impact of provision.
- High quality pastoral care to support learning in literacy.
- Highly effective use of time, staff, and resources.

The English department have a key role to play in developing pupil literacy. However, the wider development and fostering of pupil literacy is the responsibility of all departments and teachers irrespective of subject.

4. Ethos

The Academy is committed to creating a love of reading amongst its pupils, as well as a love of learning both in and out of the classroom. To promote this, all subjects have an important role to play in encouraging reading amongst all pupils and in supporting the planning and delivery of all lessons to effectively engage learners. Both the English curriculum and all other subjects need to work in partnership with children and their parents/carers to promote excellence in all aspects of literacy including the spoken and written word.

Staff training and the use of the Learning Resource Centre both have an important role to play in this. Adequate intervention based on rigorous monitoring and assessment will also contribute to creating a culture of aspiration, as well as good pastoral care and support offered by all staff.

5. The Literacy Coordinator

The purpose of the Literacy Coordinator is:

- To develop a whole-school vision of literacy in the Academy.
- To initiate and lead literacy development throughout the Academy including literacy interventions and the appointing of Literacy Mentors amongst pupils.
- To update and review the whole-school literacy policy as appropriate.
- To drive good practice in the monitoring and evaluation of literacy in the Academy.

- To advise staff on good practice resources and methodology.
- To help organise staff training.
- To organise literacy events in the Academy, working closely with the LRC staff.
- To communicate literacy goals to staff.
- To work closely with the Fresh Start manager.

6.   Reading

To support pupils in their reading developments, departments will:

- Select texts that are appropriate to the age and ability of pupils to facilitate access to learning.
- Provide examples of key words to pupils to learn and discuss to enable an understanding of key concepts and how to apply them in speaking and writing.
- Ensure that schemes of work indicate where reading takes place and how it can be supported.
- Encourage independent reading.
- Ensure that literacy is embedded in all lessons and homework.

Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring how reading is supported in subject lessons through lesson observations and the reviewing of schemes of work and lesson plans. Where appropriate, further support can be made available for all staff through CPD.

Teachers will:

- Ensure they are aware of and understand pupil levels/ages of reading where appropriate (Literacy Coordinator to provide all staff with this data).
- Where appropriate use the 44 sounds taught by the Fresh Start Programme to further support pupils on the programme to sound out words when reading.

- Indicate pupil levels of reading and spelling ability/age on their registers where pupils receive additional support.
- Where appropriate differentiate texts according to pupil reading ability.
- Where possible ensure texts are presented clearly to pupils by using non-seif fonts.
- Encourage pupils to read aloud in lessons to practice and develop fluency with a wide range of texts.
- Provide opportunities to ask higher-order questions to pupils about texts such as 'how' or 'why' questions to support analytical and evaluative skills.
- Support pupil reading by identifying new or potentially challenging key words in texts for pupils to learn and discuss.
- Display common subject-specific key words in classrooms.
- Encourage the development of literacy through discussion of language and the origins of words and connections, including those which are cross-curricular.
- Encourage and support pupils' use of skimming and scanning as techniques for identifying key information in texts as well as whole text meaning and purpose.
- Where appropriate encourage the use of annotation and/or forms of text marking so that pupils develop skills of close reading.
- Encourage the use of dictionaries and thesauruses as literacy tools within the classroom.
- Where appropriate use a range of techniques to support pupil learning from texts such as table completion, cloze activities, highlighting and annotating key words and phrases.
- Mark pupil work according to the Whole School Marking Policy which includes marking for literacy.
- Seek advice and ideas in supporting literacy in their subject areas.

Form tutors will:

- Read selected fiction with pupils in identified tutor periods weekly.
- Support the Accelerated Reader programme during tutor periods by giving pupils time to read during the school day.
- Discuss reading with their tutees to encourage engagement and enjoyment.

Form tutors can discuss form reading activities with the Literacy Coordinator who is responsible for the allocation of reading materials.

7. Writing

To support the whole-school development of pupil writing skills, departments will:

- Ensure that schemes of work include adequate and regular opportunities for pupils to complete extended writing tasks. Extended writing means writing for a specific purpose that demands the use of continuous prose organised into paragraphs, for example:

  o Formal letter
  o Science report
  o Historical essay
  o Physical Education evaluation
  o Religious Education discussion

- Ensure that schemes of work include opportunities for pupils to complete extended writing on a range of different purposes related to the subject.
- Ensure that schemes of work include reference to the kinds of provisions offered to support pupil writing in subject lessons.

Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring how writing is supported in subject lessons through lesson observations and the reviewing of schemes of work and lesson plans. Where appropriate, further support can be made available for all staff through CPD.

Teachers will:

- Support pupil writing by regularly setting opportunities for extended writing in their subjects.
- Teach key words winked to their subjects to foster comprehension and accuracy.
- Encourage pupils to plan using mind-maps, lists or notes. Where appropriate encourage pupils to draft extended writing to improve the quality of their work.
- Promote high standards of the presentation of pupil work by instilling a high expectation for pupils to write neatly and legibly and to underline all headings with a ruler.
- Where appropriate encourage pupils to work together to discuss ideas and plans for writing as well as to work independently.
- Encourage pupils to proof-read their work regularly.
- Encourage pupil to use dictionaries and thesauruses when writing.
- Encourage the use of good standard English in writing, unless this is specifically not required e.g., in a transcript of a conversation.
- Where appropriate model the writing process to pupils.
- Where appropriate support pupil use of connectives in their writing e.g., for comparison.
- Where appropriate support pupil use of, and reinforce the importance of, topic sentences to create fluency and cohesion in their writing.
- Where appropriate provide writing frames to scaffold pupil writing on the understanding that for some pupils these can be restrictive.

- Regularly mark pupil writing according to the Whole School Marking Policy, especially with reference to subject-specific terminology.
- Ensure spelling are regularly checked and corrected.

8. Handwriting

Good handwriting and presentation are important aspects of literacy as they relate to the ability to communicate clearly. To enable pupils to become fluent in handwriting and presentation, departments and staff should ensure they:

- Instil high expectations of good presentation in pupil written work.
- Highlight poor handwriting to pupils to encourage clearer and more legible handwriting.
- Monitor pupils' use of pens to ensure that pupils use adequate pens for written responses e.g., black or blue biro or fountain pen.
- Support by modelling good presentation in their own written responses and in their use of the whiteboard/smartboard.
- Highlight specific pupils with handwriting difficulties to the Literacy Coordinator to enable further intervention to be put into place.

By working together, staff can raise expectations for good handwriting to enable pupils to write clearly and well for the purposes of good communication.

9.   Speaking and Listening

Good speaking and listening provides an array of opportunities for pupils to develop and consolidate learning. Departments should ensure they:

- Create regular opportunities in their schemes of work for pupil speaking and listening of both formal and informal kinds.

  - Formal
    - Presentation to a group or class.
    - Role play.
    - Group work with identified roles.
    - Demonstration of learning to a group or class.
  - Informal
    - Paired discussion of a topic
    - Group work to plan a topic or activity.
    - Question and answer session as a whole class.

- Identify ways in which pupils can learn through talking and indicate these in schemes of work.
- Identify in schemes of work where pupils could use talk to clarify, explain, or justify their ideas.
- Identify in schemes of work where pupils can use talk for a range of different purposes such as to narrate, analyse, or explain.

Teachers will:

- Provide adequate opportunities for pupils to learn through talk through both structured formal tasks and through less structured informal tasks.
- Provide opportunities for pupils, where appropriate, to talk about reading and writing in their subject, including the processes of both.

- Ensure pupils have opportunities to talk about key words and specialised vocabulary to help pupils internalise learning.
- Where appropriate use questioning to promote discussion of learning as a whole class and amongst different groupings of pupils.
- Where appropriate encourage higher-order questioning amongst pupils to promote engaged talk in lessons.
- Where possible give pupils opportunities to listen to good standards of spoken English.
- Monitor their own use of talk in lessons to model a good standard of English to pupils through the correct use of language and pronunciation unless a specific activity requires otherwise e.g., drama or role-play.

10. Literacy interventions

Where pupils have been identified by early-entry testing in Year 7 or otherwise to need additional support in literacy, the Academy will provide several possible interventions to support the development of basic literacy skills. These include:

- The Fresh Start Programme (Read, Write Inc.) for pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- A Reading Buddies scheme involving pupils reading regularly with a reading mentor from either KS4 or KS5.
- Additional mentoring in reading by staff allocated during registration and at other times to support pupils on a one-to-one or small group bases.
- One-to-one of small group teaching of basic literacy skills by a dedicated specialist English teacher or literacy assistant.
- Handwriting intervention.

The Academy also runs the Accelerated Reader scheme to support the development of pupil reading and all staff can contribute to its success by encouraging its use in tutor time.

Where staff are concerned about the literacy needs of pupils, these should be communicated to the Literacy Coordinator who will liaise with specific staff where appropriate e.g., Academy SENCOs.

11.   Monitoring the Teaching and Learning of Literacy

Heads of Department are responsible in the first instance for monitoring how literacy is being supported in their subject areas. This should be carried out through lesson observations, work scrutiny, and monitoring of lesson plans. Regular discussion with department members should give some priority to literacy concerns within the subject area and to promoting good practice within departments.

Support in relation to literacy can and should be sought where needed through the Literacy Coordinator.

SMT are also responsible for monitoring literacy across the curriculum through lesson observations and work scrutiny.

12.   Whole School Marking Policy

This policy is available for all staff on the shared network area. All staff are expected to adhere to its principles within their subject areas to support literacy across the curriculum.

Below: UAH Literacy Marking Code to be used by all staff.

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Literacy Marking Code

What does my teacher mean when using these symbols as part of the feedback on my work?	
✓	Correct / good point / well written
x	Incorrect / wrong point
Sp	Check and correct your spelling
Sp Obj	Rewrite the correct spelling as directed
P	Check and correct punctuation / add punctuation
C	Capital letter needed / not needed
??	This needs to make sense / be clearer
^	You need to add a word
//	You need to start a new paragraph
V	Improve vocabulary / think about your word choice
Te	Use the correct tense. Present tense: I play netball every week. Past tense: I played netball yesterday. Future tense: I'm going to play netball this afternoon

13. Training and Development

The Literacy Coordinator is responsible for providing a high standard of staff training in the development of pupil literacy across the curriculum. This should include teaching and learning strategies to support, for example:

- Developing pupil extended writing.
- Reading and writing non-fiction.
- Teaching basic reading strategies like skimming and scanning.
- The development of pupil oracy.
- The use of writing frames.
- Spelling and vocabulary development.
- Reading for information.
- Making notes and planning.
- The use of the LRC.

14. The Learning Resource Centre

The Academy building contains a two-level Learning Resource Centre. This facility is central to the development of literacy in the Academy and provides many opportunities to support pupil learning in literacy.

The LRC is committed to providing:

- A positive atmosphere in which reading and independent study can take place without interruption.
- Effective resources to support pupil literacy and learning, including fiction and non-fiction as well as e-books for both pupil and staff use.
- An imaginative and pupil-friendly approach to the organisation of resources that encourages pupil enjoyment of reading.
- Support for staff and pupils in using the LRC resources daily.
- Pupil participation in various LRC events.

15. The Role of Parent and Carers

Parents/carers have an important role to play in supporting the development of pupil literacy both at home and at school.

Where appropriate subject staff may wish to discuss how parents can support reading a writing in their subjects with parents either:

- At parents' evenings.
- By telephone where a specific issue arises.

To build academic vocabulary, parent/carers can:

- Encourage their child/children to read regularly and widely, making use of resources such as dictionaries or Google to define new and unfamiliar words.
- Talk with their child/children about what they have read, drawing attention to a writer's vocabulary choices.
- Sharing 'everyday' texts by reading them aloud and discussing the meanings of words e.g., newspaper articles, official letters, leaflets etc.

To help develop oracy, parent/carers can:

- Speak with your child/children about what they have learnt at school.
- Encourage your child/children to expand on their ideas and opinions e.g., 'that's interesting, why do you think...?'
- Challenge your child/children to use precise and ambitious words in their everyday speech.
- Verbally remodel grammatically incorrect sentences as part of everyday conversation.

To help refine writing, parent/carers can:

- Ask your child/children to read homework aloud. This can be a valuable step in editing and improving written work, as grammatical errors become more apparent when a piece of writing is read aloud.
- Set timers for extended writing homework tasks.
- Encourage your child/children to read regularly and widely.

To help foster a reading culture, parent/carers can:

- Encourage your child/children to visit the library and to borrow a book.
- Listen to a podcast/audiobook together.
- Make time to read with your child/children, or to talk about what you have been reading.