



Literacy Policy

Approved: October 2022

Review: October 2024

Responsibility: SLT

Introduction:

At Ballakermeen High School, we recognise the importance of Disciplinary Literacy across the school curriculum and as such, we strive to create a culture of literacy that aims to give our students every opportunity to develop their literacy skills.

In addition to classroom teaching, BHS recognises the importance of our two libraries and the extensive range of Extra Curricular Activities and literacy support offered by library staff.

In the classroom, Ballakermeen High School has adopted the Education Endowment Foundation's recommendations for improving literacy in secondary schools.

Every curriculum area of the school will demonstrate how they will:

- Engage with the whole school aim to prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum
- Provide targeted vocabulary instruction
- Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts
- Break down complex writing tasks
- Combine writing instruction with reading
- Provide opportunities for structured talk

Ballakermeen High School will:

- Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students

General Expectations:

- Teachers must have a thorough knowledge of the students they teach in terms of their levels of literacy and whether or not they have any SEND that might affect their literacy skills
- They must check the SEND register and advice sheets at the beginning of the year and if they receive a new student into their class. Strategies to empower dyslexic students must be implemented
- LSS will provide colleagues with advice relating to particular SEN but colleagues are also encouraged to research how SEN might have an impact in their subject area and to differentiate as required



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1: BHS will prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum

Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.

- Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support
- All teachers will be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects
- School leaders will help teachers by providing training related to subject specificity over general approaches

2: Teachers will provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject

Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.

- Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words
- Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which students are unlikely to encounter in
- everyday speech
- Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning

3: Teachers will develop students' ability to read complex academic texts

Explicitly teaching reading strategies in the classroom will assist students in learning about their subject more effectively.

- To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge
- Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning can improve students' comprehension
- Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence



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4: Teachers will develop students' ability to write using academic registers, vocabulary and structures

Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.

- Where appropriate, teachers will break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and will support students by modelling each step
- Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality
- Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including scaffolding, collaborative and paired writing, to motivate students to write successfully

5: Teachers will combine writing instruction with reading in every subject

Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach. Reading helps students gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen students' understanding of ideas.

- Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject
- Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve students' writing, particularly when focused on meaning

6: Teachers will provide opportunities for structured talk

Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning. High quality talk is typically well-structured and guided by teachers.

- Structured talk should be used to ensure talk is high quality, and teachers should emphasise how talk can be subject specific
- Teachers can support students by modelling high quality talk, for example including key vocabulary and metacognitive reflection
- Teachers should explicitly differentiate between formal and informal talk and model appropriate exchanges and structures



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7: BHS will provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students

The school will identify students who require specific targeted intervention through initial testing and monitoring. We will proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Years 7 and 8.

- A Senior Leader will coordinate an appropriate targeted intervention for those students found to be in need
- Assessment will be used to match students to intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions