



**MATTHEW MOSS  
HIGH SCHOOL**  
*Learning for Life*

Policy No.: 25

Policy: Literacy

Review Date: June 2017

Policy Name: Literacy

Nominated Lead Member of Staff: Deputy Headteacher (Literacy)

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# Literacy Policy

**Mission Statement:** MMHS is committed to raising the standards of literacy of all of its learners, so that they develop the ability to use literacy skills effectively in all areas of the curriculum and the skills necessary to cope confidently with the demands of further education, employment and adult life.

All teachers are teachers of literacy. As such, the staff of Matthew Moss High School are committed to developing literacy skills in all of our pupils, in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum, because:

- pupils need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects
- reading helps us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience
- writing helps us to sustain and order thought
- language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do, and on the things others have said, written or done
- responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry
- improving literacy and learning can have an impact on learners' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour. It allows them to learn independently. It is empowering

All schemes of learning will include specific literacy objectives. These objectives will inform what is taught, how it is taught, what is learnt and how it is learnt. Literacy should also form part of lesson plenaries when it is appropriate to the focus of the lesson.

## Implementation at Whole-School Level

Language is the prime medium through which learners learn and express themselves across the curriculum, and all teachers have a stake in effective literacy.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- **Senior and Middle Leaders:** lead and give a high profile to literacy.
- **English Department:** provide learners with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write and speak and listen effectively.
- **Teachers across the curriculum:** contribute to learners' development of language, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all learning.
- **Faculty Cluster Leaders:** support departments in the implementation of strategies and encourages departments to learn from each other's practice by sharing ideas.

- **Parents:** encourage their children to use the range of strategies they have learnt to improve their levels of literacy.
- **Learners:** take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements
- **Governors:** challenge the staff team to constantly improve the quality of literacy learning across the community of the school.

### **Key points for improving Literacy across the Curriculum**

Use the school's Marking for Literacy policy to focus on learners' literacy and what they need to do to improve.

It is the responsibility of both staff and learners to raise standards in literacy. This starts with an expectation that learners should write in accurate and effective full sentences and teachers are expected to model this, to challenge poor language use, both verbal and written, and to provide learners with the vocabulary and structures necessary for a high-level response.

Before setting learners to write, teachers should model the process of writing: the thinking, the planning, the drafting and the editing.

Integral to developing learners' wider reading and reading for enjoyment is how teachers facilitate reading for meaning through using a range of methods and approaches.

All teachers should promote high standards of literacy...whatever the teacher's specialist subject.

(Department for Education (2012), Teachers' Standards)

"All teachers should have a better understanding of the role literacy plays in their subject..and...(this will) enable them to understand how improved reading, writing and speaking and listening skills would help them make more progress in their own subject."  
 "Direct teaching of reading skills such as skimming, scanning and reading for detail (including on the internet); using the index and glossary; identifying key points and making notes; summarising; or using more than one source."

Teachers must foster thinking and talking about texts by creating an environment of rich dialogue and response towards all types of text.

Questioning by both teachers and learners is foundational in improving comprehension. It should involve the explicit exploration and development of literal, inferential and evaluative questioning.

### **Speaking and Listening**

We will teach learners to use language precisely and coherently. They should be able to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively.

We will develop strategies to teach learners how to participate orally in groups and in the

whole class, including: using talk to develop and clarify ideas; identifying the main points to arise from a discussion; listening for a specific purpose; discussion and evaluation.

### **Reading**

We aim to give learners a level of literacy that will enable them to cope with the increasing demands of subjects in terms of specific skills, knowledge and understanding. This applies particularly in the area of reading (including from the screen), as texts become more demanding.

We will build on and share existing good practice. We will teach strategies to enable learners to: read with greater understanding; locate and use information; follow a process or argument; summarise; synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading. This must be planned within the scope of reading for enjoyment and tasks should engage learners with the world beyond the classroom.

Teachers should clarify learners' purpose for reading. They should relate the reading to learners' lives; pre-teach concepts that might inhibit understanding; and activate or build background knowledge.

Teachers must also develop learners' toolbox of comprehension strategies such as making connections, asking questions and forecasting predictions. It could also involve previewing the text or questions related to the text so that it focuses reading. Teachers should pre-teach vocabulary through games, along with drama, to explore and bring new language alive.

Teachers should also vary the way the text is read. This could involve silent reading, bringing a text alive by reading to pupils, oral reading by learners, audio recordings or guided reading. Teachers should do everything to avoid reading becoming a dull and slow business – and this isn't achieved by simply reading extracts, but by approaches that are imaginative, innovative and lively. For example, text reconstruction uses graphic organisers (also known as visual diagrams) to help readers make sense of a text. The type used will depend on the purpose of the text or what needs to be drawn out. For example, a venn diagram would enable learners to compare and contrast, a story board or timeline would help learners to sequence events or steps. These response activities develop learners' reading strategies, their ability to skim, scan and/or read closely, for key words and synonyms, to answer questions, and to comprehend. It also increases learners' appetite for reading for enjoyment and improves comprehension skills, when underpinned by collaborative talk.

### **Writing**

It is important that we provide for co-ordination across subjects to recognise and reinforce learners' language skills, through:

Achieving high standards of written accuracy: spelling, grammar and punctuation, as well as fluency, style and academic language, is a fundamental entitlement of every member of the Matthew Moss community. The Academic Language programme (AL) is

designed to help us deliver this entitlement and we all need to be familiar with how it works.

When embarking on a written task, teachers should ensure that learners are clear about the audience, form and purpose. All written tasks should be valued (from notes to essays) in order to ensure that best efforts are consistently applied. This demands that learners are allowed sufficient time to complete written tasks to the expected level of excellence.

All teachers in all areas are responsible for developing in learners the skills required to produce high quality writing for a real audience and a real purpose. They will achieve this by being consistent in their expectations of written tasks, by using and providing critique and by expecting re-drafting in order to achieve excellence. All learners in all subjects should have examples of high quality written work in their portfolios.

Staff should have access to specific training, theory and research to enable them to develop good writing skills in all the learners they encounter. It is important that staff are proactive in identifying their needs and seeking appropriate professional development.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We will make use of available data to assess the standards of learners' literacy. Senior and middle leaders, Faculty Cluster Leaders, the Head of English and the Deputy Headteacher i/c Literacy, will decide how to monitor progress in the school.

Possible approaches are:

- sampling work – both learners' work and departmental schemes
- observation – learning walks and lesson observations
- Faculty Cluster Meetings
- learner voice
- scrutiny of development plans

### **Stretching All Learners**

Matthew Moss High School learners are entitled to our highest expectations and support. Some will need additional support and others will need to be challenged and extended. Strategies that we can use include:

- questioning
- adjusting the demands of the task

- the use of additional support
- use of group structures
- resources
- making objectives clear
- creating an atmosphere where learners evaluate their own and others' language use

### **Higher Prior Learners**

We will:

- identify higher prior learners
- promote ways of structuring learning for higher prior learners
- develop a teaching repertoire which supports and challenges them

### **English as an Additional Language**

Our EAL learners need to hear effective examples of spoken English and also to refer to their first language skills to aid new learning in all subjects of the curriculum. The use of their first language enables them to draw on existing subject knowledge and to develop English language skills in context. Our EAL learners will be fully integrated across subjects with staff working alongside the EAL team to ensure that all learners can access the curriculum.

### **SEN**

We will provide for our learners with special educational needs appropriately, supporting their learning and providing them with challenges matched to their needs, through using a range of teaching strategies such as guided group work, writing frames and oral activities. Those pupils in Years 7 and 8 with specific literacy difficulties will be supported through the work of the iRead team.

### **Pastoral Programme**

All learners in every year group will be involved in regular paired reading form time to foster a fluency, effectiveness and enjoyment in reading and a disposition to read for pleasure.

### **Breakthrough to Learning**

All Yr7 learners will benefit from exposure to the Academic Language scheme teaching academic language use. For further information see the literacy action plan.

## **Literacy Non-Negotiables**

- Verbal responses should be extended
- Key words and definitions should be used in every lesson
- Use integrated quotes with detailed explanations whenever appropriate
- Spelling of key subject vocabulary should be practised
- Learners should respond to the teacher's marking, including Marking for Literacy
- Learners and teachers should take pride in the presentation of work
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar should be a main focus for all members of staff and all learners
- Teachers will promote the use of sophisticated and effective language use in lessons and around school

### **Associated Policies:**

**Special Educational Needs**

**Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance**

**Pupil Premium**

**Numeracy**

**Home Learning**

**Marking + Feedback**

**Curriculum**

**EAL**