



# Literacy Policy 2020-2021

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(responsibility for Phonics)

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Lead Governor: Doug Green

Signed:

Date:

The November 2014 Ofsted Inspection report made the following comments about Literacy at Heltwate:

*There has been significant improvement in the way adults assess and record information about pupil's progress in English and Mathematics. The school can now demonstrate that pupils make good and increasingly outstanding progress from their individual starting points.*

*The monitoring of the teaching of literacy across the school is particularly vigorous, it involves lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and pupil progress meetings.*

*The teaching of phonics across the school is a particular strength because teachers' skills in this area are very effective. As a result, pupil's reading skills have rapidly improved. This in turn allows them to build their skills in other subjects.*

*As a result of good teaching and well planned activities pupils make good, and for some, outstanding progress in developing literacy and communication skills.*

*Pupils throughout the school continue to make good progress, particularly in English and Mathematics.*

Prior to this revision the policy was reviewed and updated in November 2016

Although Literacy was not specifically mentioned in the 2018 Ofsted inspection. The report commented that “ You have empowered staff to take on leadership roles for which they are held to account. In addition, you are perceptive at recognising where staff have shown an aptitude and a willingness to develop their skills further. This has ensured that staff are more effective in their work and make more of a contribution to the leadership of the school, helping to raise standards.”

## **Policy Statement**

Literacy/English should be an integral part of all lessons with focus on children achieving a high standard of literacy skills to become as independent as possible when leaving school.

## **Environment**

Heltwate School provides a rich learning environment in which all children can learn and achieve, alongside enjoying their education and time spent here. Resources are well planned and used to support all levels of ability. Expectations are high to ensure behaviours in class allow for all children to learn.

## Reading

### Aims for Reading

- To encourage children's interest in books by creating an inviting atmosphere in which to read with a range of different books available. Classrooms to also have an area in class with both age appropriate and level appropriate books for children to access.
- To encourage appreciation of books; this is reflected through appropriate care, treatment and storage of books.
- Reading information within the environment is deemed to be essential so pupils will be provided with opportunities to read in meaningful situations and to respond appropriately to what they have read.
- Pupils to be heard reading on an individual/ small group basis at least once a week to ensure their progression in reading skills. Guided reading to be taught once each half term to develop comprehension skills through fiction and non-fiction reading material.
- Reading fluency and accuracy will be developed using both 'Letters and Sounds' and the National Curriculum, where a phonetical approach is an integral tool, incorporating blending for reading and segmenting for spelling.
- Comprehension will be paramount and pupils will extract information from text or illustrations according to their level ability and this will be monitored through individual/ small group work.
- Staff to have up-to-date training in how to support children's reading by using a phonics approach as the primary method, where suitable for individual children.
- Alphabetical knowledge to be taught using a phonics scheme in the lower school with continued support for students as they progress to upper school.
- Literacy co-ordinators will update staff regarding new reading materials to enable staff to match or differentiate the resources available to the needs of their pupils.
- Staff will provide INSET for parents and Teaching Assistants in order to clarify the Literacy Policy and to demonstrate profitable and pleasurable 'book sharing' strategies.
- Pupils will experience a variety of texts and will be taught to appreciate a range of styles, genres and themes, including those of other cultures. This will be planned for by class teachers within their literacy lessons and through cross-curricular links
- Pupils will be given the opportunity to read with others in collaborative situations.
- Alphabetical knowledge, dictionary skills and literacy terminology will be taught.
- All pupils will be offered the opportunity to attend book fairs.

- All pupils will be enrolled on the computerised library system and will be encouraged to borrow books for use in school once they have shown the ability to care and look after school property. This is temporarily under review, as we are awaiting new library resources.
- Pupils will be taught to access information using the Library, computer software and the Internet.
- Reading will be cross-curricular and not all opportunities take place during literacy sessions.
- Pupils will be able to access reading materials through use of symbols e.g. Communicate in Print

### Implementation for Reading

- Timetabled literacy lessons will take place for all classes (based on EYFS development matters, the National Curriculum and Letters and Sounds) Literacy/ English lessons now follow a program called, 'Cornerstones' up to year 9, and in some instances this will continue into year 11. Some students will be working based on accredited units only once they reach KS4.
- Timetabled phonics lessons for classes working up to year 9. Teachers to assess children at the start of each academic year to determine whether children are ready to complete Phonic based work. If cohort are unable to access a Phonics curriculum then teachers should plan for Communication lessons. Those who teach phonics should have two lessons per week on their timetable.
- Colour groups to timetable themselves into the library where appropriate
- Regular 1:1/ small group reading sessions, (preferably once a week)
- Regular reading books or phonic work to be sent home for children to share with parents where appropriate, plus a reading diary or record sheet to encourage parent/ school links
- Staff INSET for new resources and training
- Reading and Phonic leaflets to share information with parents about strategies used to support reading at Heltwate. These leaflets to be shared with parents at the start of each academic year.
- Access to wide range of reading resources, both fiction and nonfiction which should include newspapers, comics, effective interactive wall displays, Internet access, CD ROM's, DVDs, Big Books, play scripts, plus access to the public libraries
- All classrooms should develop attractive reading areas where space allows
- Guided Reading and Functional literacy should be developed for learners at St George's site. Any children working about Phonic Phase 5 at Heltwate site to begin Guided reading as class teacher decision.
- To have annual whole school 'Book Week' to encourage a love of reading
- Children to be taught Phonics using the scheme, 'StoryTime Phonics' which follows progression from 'Letters and Sounds' whilst allowing the children to access good quality reading books and resources.

- Teaching will be tailored to the level of ability for each pupil. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately and pupils may not reach expectations as stated in the National Curriculum.
- A guide to support children who are non-verbal has been implemented throughout school

### Aims for Writing

- Writing is a developmental process, therefore whatever level individuals achieve their writing will be highly valued
- Pupils will learn to write in order to communicate meaning to a wide range of audiences
- Drama and role-play activities will be used to stimulate creative writing opportunities.
- Children will be able to choose to write in their free time
- Children will have the opportunity to complete free writing in diary work activities in lower school and as open ended tasks in Upper School
- Pupils will use a range of strategies to develop their spelling skills including phonic lessons, use of word books and encouragement to use dictionaries
- Pupils will learn to punctuate their writing to increase meaning according to their level of understanding
- Pupils will be encouraged, where possible, to orally rehearse and to re-read their writing and self-correct or support-correct their errors
- When writing, pupils will be encouraged to use a wide range of vocabulary
- Pupils will be taught to write for a range of purposes at text level
- Writing will be cross-curricular and, where appropriate, take place in purposeful activities outside of Literacy sessions
- Children will learn from Cornerstones schemes of work, which cover objectives taken from the National Curriculum or from EYFS Development Matters.

### Implementation for Writing

- Staff will follow the Cornerstones schemes of work for Literacy, using objectives from the National Curriculum or EYFS Development Matters. This will be adapted to meet the needs of learners.
- Staff will follow plans from Story Time Phonics and Dockside to teach phonics, which will aid the development of spelling skills.
- Children with phonics awareness will have a word book or use of dictionaries to aid spelling
- Common exception words to be taught in target time and in Phonics planning. If appropriate, classrooms to display or have visual charts for these words
- 'Communication in Print' will be used to support writing activities
- A multisensory approach to written work will be encouraged, (teaching must be directed through all the senses to increase and reinforce learning potential. Therefore, the pupil's pre-literacy skills must be encouraged / developed first, including auditory discrimination skills, visual discrimination skills, visual memory skills, gross / fine motor control)
- Pupils will be taught to use a range of punctuation strategies
- Teaching will be tailored to the level of ability for each pupil. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately and pupils may not reach levels as stated in the National Curriculum, Letters and Sounds and EYFS Development Matters guidance.
- Children with physical needs will be taught how to access writing through a whole text approach, including the use of computing aids to support writing skill development.
- Children will be encouraged to use ICT on the interactive whiteboard to select choices, to order elements of sentences or whole texts and to have a deeper understanding of writing in a range of settings
- Communication devices will be used to ensure non-verbal children can share their understanding and ideas
- Writing will be developed for all children incorporating the school ethos that all children can achieve. Teachers will ensure resources are personalised for the children in their class
- A guide to support children who are non-verbal/non writing has been implemented throughout school

## **Phonics**

### Aims for Phonics

- Children to have a Phonic or Communication lesson at least once a week but where possible twice a week

- Children to have access to a phonic lesson following a devised scheme, where suitable
- Children who are not yet ready to access a formal phonic lesson are to have a Communication lesson which could include EHCP work, Intensive Interaction, PECs and Speech and Language activities
- Children to have access to a phonics program that follows guidance from Letters and Sounds
- To teach systematic phonics
- To develop children's reading, (oral blending), and spelling, (segmenting), strategies
- To support children to become more confident with their literacy skills in both reading and writing
- To develop children's speaking and listening skills
- To encourage children to have strategies to use independently to support life skills
- Develop children's ability to recognise individual letters and groups of letters
- Develop children's ability to know which letter(s) are representing which sounds
- To develop children's ability to blend individual sounds together to read real words
- Develop a desire to read and a sense of achievement as reading skills progress
- To encourage children to become independent readers and writers
- Where appropriate, children should use phonics as their primary approach to decode unknown words and for children to read phonetically irregular words quickly and efficiently to speed up their own decoding.
- To develop a love of books through high quality stories taught in Phonic lessons

#### Implementation for Phonics

- Story Time Phonics (TTS) (rolled out in September 2018)
- Classes to follow Story Time Phonics. If children are not ready for this program children to have a Communication lesson
- Staff INSET to ensure all staff are aware of new strategies and resources or opportunities to meet with the coordinator for support with planning and assessment
- Timetabled phonics sessions (1-2 per week depending on class)
- Resources to be checked and monitored regularly to ensure they are available for all staff and children to assess
- Base- line assessments to take place at the start of each academic year to ensure planning is aimed at the correct level to suit the majority of the class. Further assessments to take place each term and to be recorded on Earwig to allow for whole school development and monitoring
- Children to be heard reading every week by a member of staff and, where possible, this reading session should integrate fully decodable phonics books to consolidate learning
- If it is deemed suitable, homework activities will be sent home to parents.
- Resources in library to support each phase to be used by class teachers as and when appropriate
- Assessments to take place on a minimum termly basis to assess progress against a baseline assessment
- Teaching will be geared to the level of ability for each pupil, where possible. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately and pupils may not reach levels expected as stated in the National Curriculum.
- Children who are non-verbal to be encouraged to use a range of phonic programs to ensure they can assess new learning.
- ICT to be used, where appropriate, to enable all children to show their understanding whether verbal or non-verbal

#### Information about Story Time Phonics

- Systematic synthetic phonics program
- Each lesson is differentiated with opportunities for teachers to differentiate further
- All sounds taught are supported by a real-life, high quality story book
- Interactive and multisensory opportunities in all lessons

- Phonic Fairy videos showing the writer of the program reading stories
- Work is made more exciting by hands on, active lessons
- Other resources to be used as and when appropriate for the individual class
- New program from September 2018- resources and adaptations to be made throughout the school year following feedback from teachers
- Story time phonics is being used by Castle Special School, Cambridge successfully

Information about Dockside (Taken to St George's and available for teachers as appropriate)

- Systematic phonics program which follows methods and orders of teaching stated in Letters and Sounds
- It is a 'second chance structured phonics scheme' and is therefore aimed at children who have experienced phonics previously
- It is aimed at older children
- It aims to get children from non-readers to NC level 3, (in a mainstream setting)
- It follows a step by step progression
- It has cumulative progress
- Teaches children to blend and segment for effective reading and spelling
- It has no assumptions of what learning is already known
- It has age-appropriate content
- Gives clear and direct support with planning and assessment
- Other resources to be used as and when appropriate for the individual class

## **Handwriting**

### Aims for Handwriting

- To teach pupils to form individual letters correctly
- To enable pupils to write neatly, clearly and fluently, (whether printed or joined)
- To encourage pupils to take care and have pride in their presentation of their written work
- Where appropriate, pupils encouraged to start using a joined up style of writing
- Where appropriate, pupils will start writing with a pen

### Implementation for Handwriting

- An agreed style of writing to be used throughout the school using guidance from Debbie Hepplewhite, (see appendix)
- Pupils will articulate the instructions for each letter formation as it is written, (see appendix for guidance on correct wording as letters are formed)
- Handwriting and formation of letters to be taught within phonics lessons with children practising on different media to form letters, (in the air, on one another's backs, in rice, in paint, on the interactive whiteboard and finally on paper)
- Children who are developing their fine motor skills to use fine motor skill sheets and to take part in other activities including jigsaw work and threading to encourage fine motor skill progression



- Sessions of letter formation and handwriting must be regular, particularly during the early stages and during the transition to joined writing. This may form part of phonics activities
- Staff members will be expected to form and join letters according to the policy when writing in children's books
- Teaching will be tailored to the level of ability for each pupil, where possible. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately and pupils may not reach levels as stated in the National Curriculum, therefore adapted 'Development Matters' guidelines will be utilised
- Children will develop their fine motor skills by taking part in dough disco sessions (if appropriate) to improve their dexterity.
- Patter to support teaching children about the correct way to form letters available as 'Sparkle Marks' from the Phonic Fairy.

### **Assessment Recording and Reporting**

- Assessment will be based on the National Curriculum and Development Matters statements for Literacy/ English and will be recorded with Cornerstones. Phonics achievement will be recorded against the different phases and recorded on Earwig.
- Pupils across the school will have evidence collected using Earwig as an online learning journal and assessment tool
- All staff members are expected to annotate children's work stating the amount of support given and provide children with constructive feedback. This should build on positive attributes of the work produced, but also constructively highlight areas for improvement. In EYFS classes, children's work will be annotated by what they have said and done rather than writing to the child, (see policy)
- Assessment will take account of all children regardless of their abilities and physical difficulties. Therefore levels on end of term reports will ensure children can progress and will show areas of literacy that are inaccessible to individual children due to their needs

### **Literacy and Accreditation**

Teachers working with students in Upper School KS4 following the accredited curriculum base their literacy coverage on accreditation units, following the OCR Life and Living skills modules.

- Students working in Upper School are expected to cover around 3 literacy modules per term, which allow for breadth of study and opportunity for progression through the varying entry levels as appropriate.

- The module overviews provide a starting point for teachers to then adapt and differentiate learning as needed within individual class groups
- Teachers are expected to ensure that learning covers a range of fiction, nonfiction and poetry texts
- Class teachers are required to provide lesson planning, resources and worksheets that meet the needs of individual learners
- Students' work is to be annotated in line with the school marking policy
- Evidence of students' work is to be kept in a record folder so it is easily available for moderation and scrutinies
- Work is to be moderated termly by the exams officer
- All students are to be baseline assessed during the Autumn Term against the National Curriculum. Students are then to be assessed again during the Summer Term to show academic achievement across the year

Students in KS4 working within Rainbow Rooms and Orange class also undertake accreditation. These students complete OCR Life and Living Skills modules, alongside ASDAN Life Skills Challenges in Communication. The above criteria also pertains to Rainbow Rooms' students, alongside the following:

- Class Teachers are to use OCR and ASDAN modules to accredit work being produced, whilst following the Heltwate School's adapted Cornerstones Curriculum.
- Class Teachers are to ensure all National Curriculum objectives are being met within the Rainbow Rooms'/Orange Class literacy cycle
- Class teachers are to assess academic achievement against the National Curriculum at the end of each term, in addition to an initial baseline assessment
- Students within Rainbow Rooms and Orange class are likely to complete less accreditation than in Upper School. This is due to their higher level of need, more rigorous academic assessments against the National Curriculum and focus on social targets within the Rainbow Rooms. Rainbow Room students also have a higher weighting of their timetable dedicated to Lifeskills and functional skills, enabling them to access the community more successfully.

### **Role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body has:

- The duty to set the framework of the school's policy on Literacy
- Responsibility to ensure that the school complies with this policy
- Delegated powers and responsibilities to the Head teacher to ensure that school personnel and pupils are aware of this policy
- Delegated powers and responsibilities to the Head teacher to ensure all visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy
- Appoint two coordinators for Literacy to work with the Head teacher
- The duty to support the Head teacher and school personnel in maintaining high standards of work completed in Literacy
- Responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy
- Responsibility for ensuring policies are made available to parents
- Nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the coordinator and to report back to the Governing Body
- Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

### **Role of the Head teacher**

The Head teacher will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy
- Support the coordinators to ensure the policy is implemented effectively throughout the school

### **Role of the Coordinator**

The coordinator will:

- Lead the development of this policy throughout the school
- Review and monitor
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy
- Talk to members of staff and be approachable when asked for guidance about the Literacy curriculum

- Observe a number of lessons each year to ensure a good coverage of texts is being used and also to monitor continuity and progression throughout school
- Collect examples of medium term plans/ phases of lesson plans which will be asked for and kept in a curriculum folder alongside examples of children's' work. The work collected will demonstrate effectiveness differentiation in planning
- Give new teachers a scheme of work to follow
- Monitor assessments based on guidance materials from the Deputy Head and ensure evidence is tracked on Tapestry in Lower school.

### **Role of the Nominated Governor**

The Nominated Governor will:

- Work closely with the Head teacher and the coordinators
- Ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date
- Ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy
- Report to the Governing Body every term
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

### **Role of School Personnel**

School personnel are expected to:

- Comply with all aspects of this policy
- Use Story Time Phonics and Dockside to teach phonics or an adapted version of 'Letters and Sounds'
- Develop planning from schemes of work in Literacy based Cornerstones
- To ensure lessons are supported by high quality resources, including ICT resources
- To make use of the school resources including the library, reading schemes, literacy games, phonic boxes, puppets, big books, computers and schemes
- Identify problems that may arise and offer solutions to the problem
- To ask for resources to be ordered which will benefit the learning of individuals, the class, or the school as a whole

- To complete assessment using the following moderation tools: National Curriculum level descriptors and Development Matters and provide evidence of these in reports for annual reviews
- Teachers and support are to ensure all work is differentiated according to levels and physical needs of all children. Where possible symbols will be used to support reading and writing to ensure all children can assess a full curriculum.

### **Role of Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Behave in a way that allows learning to take place
- To read once a week with a member of staff in class
- To take books home to read each week and return them to school in the same standard at they went out
- To respect resources used to support learning in class
- To take part in all lessons
- To use a word book where appropriate
- To ensure they have the correct resources and are in the correct mood to complete their best work in Literacy sessions
- To take part in all literacy lessons differentiated as appropriate

### **Role of Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- Hear children read at least once a week
- If spellings are given out by a teacher in Upper School, parents are expected to support children to learn these at home
- To encourage children to read and write
- To encourage children to look after books sent home
- To be responsible for reading books that are sent home

### **Role of the School Council**

The School Council will be involved in:

- Determining this policy with the Governing Body
- Discussing improvements to this policy during the school year
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Governing Body

### **Outside Agencies**

We have invaluable support for pupils who find access to Literacy particularly challenging. These pupils, where appropriate, will receive support from:

- The Speech and Language therapist
- 1:1 support with a designated Speech and Language Teaching Assistant in school
- The Occupational Therapist

### **Raising Awareness of this Policy**

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- The School Handbook/Prospectus
- The school website
- The Staff Handbook
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- School events
- Meetings with school personnel
- Communications with home, such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- Reports, such annual report to parents and Head teacher reports to the Governing Body

### **Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

Annually, (or when the need arises), the effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed by the coordinator, the Head teacher and the nominated governor and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.