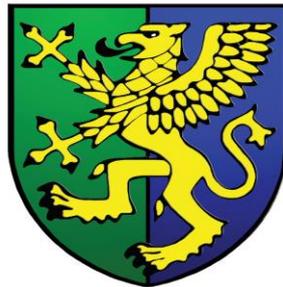


Literacy Policy

Updated Sept 2017



COWLEY
INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

All teachers should

- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject.

From Teachers' Standards DFE (with effect from Sep 2012)

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The Statement

Cowley International College is committed to raising standards of literacy in all its pupils, through a co-ordinated approach.

Literacy Policy

All teachers are teachers of literacy. As such, the staff of Cowley International College are committed to developing literacy skills in all of our pupils.

We believe 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 all subjects
- reading allows learning from sources beyond immediate experience;
- writing helps to sustain and order thought;
- language helps to reflect, revise and evaluate the things pupils 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 pupils' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour. It allows them to learn independently.
- It is empowering.

All learning will include specific literacy skills, whether through speaking and listening, reading or writing. It is vital therefore that these skills are taught explicitly where appropriate. Schemes of work and lesson plans will indicate where this should happen.

The Vision

The report, *Moving English forward*, emphasises the importance of headteachers and senior leaders in providing the context for effective provision for literacy across the school. Successful strategies have included:

- appointing a coordinator with a clear role and status
- using staff working groups and expertise
- developing whole-school policies and a specific literacy action plan
- encouraging teachers across different subjects to lead on literacy in their areas
- monitoring outcomes in literacy and evaluating the effectiveness of actions and provision.

Cowley will continue to endeavour to meet these requirements.

Implementation at Whole-College Level

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

The main drivers for success in terms of fostering literacy in a way that makes an impact right across the curriculum, and enriches students' lives are:

- the development of a culture of learning
- the fostering of reading
- developing speaking and listening, especially in group work
- structured approaches to grammar, punctuation and sentence construction
- consistent approaches to extended writing across the curriculum.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Senior Managers:** lead and give a high profile to literacy;
- **English Department:** provide pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write and speak and listen effectively;
- **Teachers across the curriculum:** contribute to pupils' development of language, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons;
- **Literacy co-ordinator:** supports 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;
- **Pupils:** take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements;
- **Governors:** an identified governor will meet with staff and pupils and report progress and issues to the governing body.

Across the college we will:

1. Identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' work
2. Identify key literacy objectives in each subject area as a way of improving and assessing literacy skills.
3. Identify literacy cross-curricular priorities for each year.
4. Seek to identify progression in the main forms of reading, writing, speaking and listening undertaken in each department and strengthen teaching practice accordingly.
5. Regularly review this literacy policy.

Speaking and Listening

All teachers are teachers of oracy. Teachers place a great emphasis on the correct use of English and correct technical vocabulary in each subject. Teachers understand that productive group work leads to higher levels of student engagement where students understand the variety of roles they can take in such work. They also understand that enriched student talk is often a precursor to extended writing.

We will teach pupils 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 pupils 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.

Staff training needs will be met through in-service training and support from the Teaching and Learning working group. Useful strategies such as the management of group talk and active listening will be practised across the curriculum.

All staff are encouraged to model good practice in terms of verbal communication. They also ensure that pupils speak appropriately and correctly.

Reading

We aim to give pupils 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 pupils strategies to help them to:

- skim and scan,
- read with greater understanding,
- locate and use information,
- follow a process or argument,
- summarise,
- synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading.

Staff will be provided with examples of strategies that can be used to help pupils cope with the increasing demands of subjects. For example, Modules five and six (*Active Reading Strategies* and *Reading for Information*) in the National Strategies folder 'Literacy Across the Curriculum' still have much to offer in improving reading skills. www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/nationalstrategy/ks3/english/index.php?..

In addition to this, Key Stage 3 pupils partake in DEAR (Drop Everything And Read). Pupils are involved within daily DEAR sessions; they read for 15 minutes during a designated teaching period, which changes daily due to it being on a rotational basis. Staff also participate in DEAR, acting as reading role models to their pupils.

The school uses the Renaissance Learning Accelerated Reader Program. Every student in Year 7, 8 and 9 is tested for reading ability at the beginning and end of the academic year. The library contains a wide selection of books that are classified by reading difficulty. Year 7 and 8 students choose books appropriate for their reading ability and, having read them, take an online 'quiz'. Results from the quizzes are monitored to make sure that students are making progress and reading at the correct level. Reading becomes quite competitive as library displays show how many words each form has read. Students read during form period once a week.

Year 7 and 8 pupils are responsible for bringing their Accelerated Reader book to school everyday in order to participate in DEAR and to read during registration; Year 9 are responsible for bringing their own book, either from the school library or from home. The Accelerated Reader Programme encourages pupils to read by providing them with targets, which are based on their individual reading ability, and staff ensure that pupils are recognised and rewarded for achieving their targets in a variety of different ways. AR quizzes serve as a quick assessment of student reading comprehension in a friendly, inviting format; pupil progress is regularly analysed and used to inform intervention strategies, and 'millionaire reader' information is disseminated to all staff.

Cowley International College offers an array of reading interventions; teaching staff, support staff and Year 11 pupils are involved in supporting weaker readers. Staff and pupils are involved within reading intervention during registration periods; this consists of paired reading and enables weaker pupils to be provided with extra support from teaching staff and have further opportunities to read to staff on a focused, one-to-one basis.

The very weakest readers in Year 7 are supported during their Library lessons. They are involved within focused one-to-one sessions with the Level 3 Support Assistant; a highly competent Level 3 Support Assistant.

Reading is at the heart of literacy for Cowley. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to access the library; the library is open from 8am until 4:30pm – therefore, pupils are encouraged to read before and after school, as well as during break and dinner times. In addition, a full programme of events is arranged over the year to promote engagement with reading – for example: Book Buzz, Carnegie Award, ‘Chapter Chat’ reading club, Scholastic Book Fair and the Summer Reading Festival.

Writing

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

- Making connections between pupils’ reading and writing, so that pupils have clear models for their writing;
- Using the modelling process to make explicit to pupils *how* to write;
- Being clear about audience and purpose;
- Providing opportunities for a range of writing including sustained writing.
- Implementing the whole school Literacy Focuses throughout all subject areas, referencing Literacy Focuses within marking and asking pupils to respond to the marking accordingly.
- Providing pupils with opportunities to develop their handwriting. Pupils identified as requiring support are involved in handwriting coaching during registration.
- A whole college presentation policy that has been implemented and is monitored regularly through work scrutiny, and reinforced through training days at the start of each academic year.
- A WOW (Word Of the Week) strategy which supports pupils in developing their vocabulary.

Teaching programmes for English in Years 7 and 8 are highly structured, with a strong emphasis on grammar, punctuation and sentence construction. This is supported by structured homework. Each module of work in Years 7 and 8 seeks to develop students’ reading, writing, and speaking & listening.

Effective ways to promote pupils' writing skills, can be found in Ofsted's report, *English at the crossroads*. It provides a summary of best practice in teaching writing. The best practice in teaching writing included some or all of the following features:

- choice for pupils over the topics for writing
- topics that genuinely interested pupils and that were not always based on responses to texts
- opportunities for pupils to talk about ideas and the task before beginning writing
- sufficient time for pupils to write
- interesting homework that focused on developing pupils' independent learning skills
- effective demonstration of writing by teachers
- a consistent focus on developing writing skills across the curriculum
- well-focused feedback from teachers, including thorough marking that identified clear targets for improvement.

English at the crossroads paragraph 115 www.ofsted.gov.uk/news/english-crossroads

Spelling:

Each department will:

- Identify and display key vocabulary
- Revise key vocabulary
- Teach agreed spelling strategies to learn subject specific spelling lists
- Concentrate on the marking of high frequency and key subject specific words, taking account of differing abilities of pupils
- Test or revise high frequency words regularly
- Set personal spelling targets
- Encourage pupils to use the whole school 'word of the week' in discussion and written work in order to develop their vocabulary and spelling.
- Ensure that incorrect spellings are written out correctly 3 times.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Ofsted inspectors are advised as follows:

When looking at pupils' work, it is helpful to review the type of errors made in the early pages against those in the middle and nearer the end. It is reasonable to expect repeated errors to be identified as targets for improvement and followed up by explicit teaching, focusing particularly on the parts of words that the pupils found tricky. It is also reasonable to expect that there would be improvement overall in the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar over a period of time.

Also...

Key subject terms should be spelt correctly. Basic sentence punctuation should be accurate. If it is not and is not identified, how will pupils improve?

Reading, writing and communication (literacy) Ofsted 21 Oct 2011

www.ofsted.gov.uk/.../reading-writing-and-communication-literacy

Cowley will make use of available data to assess the standards of pupils' literacy. Senior managers, in conjunction with Learning and Teaching representatives from each department will monitor progress in the school.

Possible approaches are:

- sampling work – both pupils' work and departmental schemes;
- observation
- meetings
- pupil interviews
- scrutiny of development plans
- encouraging departments to share good practice by exhibiting or exemplifying pupils' work.

The following information is given to Ofsted Inspectors. It is useful for teachers to be aware of it and its implications.

Observing lessons and reviewing literacy across the curriculum

It is likely that there will be a greater focus in all lesson observations under the (2012) framework on how well particular groups of pupils achieve. Also, with the increased emphasis on reporting what makes teaching effective in improving learning, it will be necessary for inspectors to record in evidence forms where aspects of teaching clearly have an impact on learning, whether positive or not. For literacy, this will be easiest where there are readily identifiable actions which affect the progress of pupils. However, the real skill of observation may be in identifying where opportunities are missed in teachers' planning or in their teaching. This may also feature in recommendations for the school at the end of the inspection.

A set of questions may help [the inspectors] to assess what [they] see in any lesson.

Questions to use when observing 'literacy' in any subject

- Are key terms and vocabulary clear and explored with pupils to ensure that they recognise and understand them? Are they related to similar words or the root from which they are derived?
- Do teachers identify any particular features of key terms and help pupils with strategies for remembering how to spell them or why they might be capitalised (e.g. 'Parliament' in history or citizenship)?
- Do teachers remind pupils of important core skills – for example how to skim a text to extract the main elements of its content quickly or to scan a text for information about a key word or topic?
- Do teachers make expectations clear before pupils begin a task – for example on the conventions of layout in a formal letter or on the main features of writing persuasively?
- Do teachers reinforce the importance of accuracy in spoken or written language – for example, emphasising the need for correct sentence punctuation in one-sentence answers or correcting 'we was...' in pupils' speech?
- Do teachers identify when it is important to use standard English and when other registers or dialects may be used – for example, in a formal examination answer and when recreating dialogue as part of narrative writing?
- Do teachers help pupils with key elements of literacy as they support them in lessons? Do they point out spelling, grammar or punctuation issues as they look at work around the class?
- Does teachers' marking support key literacy points? For example, are key subject terms always checked for correct spelling? Is sentence punctuation always corrected?

Reading, writing and communication (literacy) Ofsted 21 Oct 2011

www.ofsted.gov.uk/.../reading-writing-and-communication-literacy

Including All Pupils

1. Differentiation

Cowley International College pupils 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;
- creating an atmosphere where pupils evaluate their own others' work.

3. The more able

We will seek to develop a teaching repertoire which supports and challenges able pupils.

4. English as an Additional Language

Our pupils learning EAL need to hear good examples of spoken English and 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. For example, a group of pupils can learn about paragraph organisation in their mother tongue.

5. SEN

We will teach our pupils 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.

Assessment

Available data from KS2 should be used to inform planning and to assist us in responding to early pieces of work. We will also use this data to set numerical and curricular targets for each cohort. The best Assessment for Learning (AFL) informs lesson-planning and target-setting and helps us to maintain the pace of learning for our pupils.

In order support whole College literacy development, standard codes are to be used to identify key areas for improvement. When appropriate (once per half term), a piece of written work should be marked specifically for literacy development. The codes are as follows:

Pr	to indicate Presentation
Rp	to indicate Range of Punctuation
//	to indicate Organisation (of paragraphs)
G	to indicate Grammar
Rr	to indicate Re-read carefully
Exp	to indicate Expression
Sp	to indicate Spelling
Sv	to indicate Suitable vocabulary

The 'PROGRESS' mnemonic poster is displayed in teaching rooms to support pupils and staff.

Further guidance on marking is available in the College Marking Policy

The English Department

In addition to all the whole-school aspects of this policy, the English teachers at Cowley International College have a leading role in providing pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively. The English department is well-placed to offer good advice and expertise. The role of the English department includes:

- A key role in identifying literacy priorities, targets and objectives and the particular contribution they can make to whole school priorities;
- Making a contribution to the school's action plan;
- Using data to identify curricular targets.