THE COTSWOLD SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT

Policy:	**Literacy Policy**
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Aims

To develop pupils' abilities to read, write and communicate verbally in order to access both the Curriculum and each pupil's potential. In addition, attitudes to reading will be targeted to promote an ethos of reading for pleasure and the wider awareness of literacy development will be shared across the school and be part of whole school culture.

Mandate

Language is at the centre of teaching and learning across the curriculum. It is the medium through which pupils learn, and the medium through which they articulate that learning. Literacy includes speaking and listening, reading and writing. Improving literacy is the most effective way of improving attainment for pupils of all abilities in all subjects. All teachers are teachers of Literacy, and every department must contribute.

Every QCA National Curriculum document states explicitly: 'Pupils should be taught in all subjects to express themselves correctly and appropriately, and to read accurately and with understanding.' OFSTED makes it equally clear: 'Teaching cannot be satisfactory ... if basic skills are not taught effectively.'

Key requirements:

Reading:

- To create an environment where reading is promoted across the school
- To provide time in school every week for all pupils to read
- To support reading through a range of varied and appropriately differentiated reading resources
- To promote and support reading in non-school hours

Writing:

- To provide pupils with a range of challenging writing tasks and support to meet the differing demands of each task in each subject.
- To provide pupils with 'real' audiences and creative writing outlets where possible
- To support writing with frames or scaffolds where appropriate, and use modelling where possible
- To ensure grammar, spelling and handwriting are supported in all subjects and rewarded in relevant formative assessments

Speaking and Listening:

- To raise awareness across the school of the importance of speaking and listening, although no longer examined within the GCSE curriculum.
- To support all subjects in assessing speaking and listening
- To provide extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills

Literacy provides students with the tools that they need to communicate effectively through speaking and listening, reading and writing. It therefore underpins student progression across all subjects. Consequently, all teachers at TCS are also teachers of literacy and, as such, they should seek to embed all three of the above literacy skills within their pedagogical practice and classroom environment.

The relevance of literacy across the curriculum

1. Literacy has been identified as a key skill that is integral to raising achievement across the curriculum as well as to equipping young people for the workplace. Literacy supports learning in a number of ways, providing students with the vocabulary and the organisational control that is needed to progress across all subjects (see 2013 Ofsted report 'Improved Literacy In Secondary Schools: a shared responsibility').

2. This literacy policy outlines how literacy is to be developed at The Cotswold School with the aim of promoting a shared understanding of how to enable students to transfer their literacy skills between different subjects.

Defining literacy

Literacy involves the ability to read and write; however, it also involves recognising, reproducing and manipulating the conventions of a range of texts as well as developing speaking skills. There are also new forms of literacy which relate to the development of digital technology and the use of multimedia which also require consideration. The Department for Education has suggested a range of ways in which literacy should be encouraged within the curriculum including the development of:

I. **Speaking and listening skills**. Speaking encourages students to organise and structure ideas, while active listening is key to picking out important information. These skills could be further enhanced by tasks which integrate speaking and listening skills with reading and writing tasks as this can help to reinforce both skill sets.

- ***Learning through Speaking and Listening***: this includes developing strategies to teach pupils how to participate orally in groups and in the whole class, including: using talk to develop and clarify ideas; using active listening skills to identify the main points to arise from discussion; listening for a specific purpose; discussion to promote debate and the evaluation of ideas. Students should be able to use language precisely and coherently in order to respond to and build on their ideas constructively.

II. **Reading skills.** This should include being able to interpret a range of different text types as well as understanding how style and format can affect how different meanings are communicated.

- Reading and Learning from text: to enable students to use their reading skills to help them to learn and to develop increasing confidence and competence in reading different types of texts. In particular, they should be able to interpret the meaning behind these texts and the different ways in which this can be communicated through language. Students should be able to use strategies which enable them to: read with greater understanding; locate and use information; follow a process or argument; summarise; synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading.

III. **Writing skills**. In conjunction with grammar, punctuation and spelling, students should also learn about the craft and different styles of writing for different purposes. The idea of 'text type' is central to this, whereby a 'text' is a piece of writing and the 'type' of text relates to its purpose or the reason

why it is being written. These skills should be reinforced both within specific subject areas as well as across the curriculum.

- ***Learning through writing***: students should be able to use writing to express their ideas and thoughts. This in turn requires an understanding of how to organise their writing so that they can write in a widening variety of forms for different purposes e.g. to interpret, evaluate, explain, analyse and explore. Topic sentences are an effective way to do this and should be used as a cross-curricular tool to help organise extended pieces of writing. Students should also be clear about the tone, style, conventions, audience and purpose which underpin their work.

Actions

1. It is critical that teachers at TCS use a 'common language' to promote literacy by developing their awareness of the different ways that literacy is being developed across the curriculum. Staff referencing the same techniques to promote literacy will enable students to transfer their skills between subjects more easily. Teacher awareness of the different techniques used to promote literacy will be raised through whole staff training and the presence of 'literacy reps' within school. Each Department is to have a representative and these will focus on literacy at department meetings and also attend literacy 'hub' meetings termly, chaired by LS/JH.

2. When planning for literacy, teachers at TCS should ensure that they provide:

   i. The success criteria for literacy within written and discussion based pieces of work are shared and discussed in terms of tone, style, conventions, audience and structure. Where appropriate, topic sentences and mnemonics should be used (once 'common language' is established) to help structure extended written work more effectively.
   ii. Subject specific vocabulary is communicated and used effectively within lessons and consolidated through the use of display.
   iii. Feedback should be provided on general literacy skills both within lessons and when marking of both classwork and assessments (this includes: spelling, punctuation and grammar).
   iv. A community of 'readers' will be established within the school through the use of book clubs and library lessons. These should be established beyond English lessons, utilising tutor periods and extracurricular time for example. Writing and speaking skills will be promoted through the creative writing, debating and public speaking clubs.
   v. The development of literacy skills within the school will be monitored and evaluated through various quality assurance processes including LW, tracking of 'The Big Write' and work reviews.

An integrated approach to literacy across TCS

1. Reading and manipulating information is fundamental to all subjects. As such, literacy is inherently bound up with the development of Reading, Writing, Communication and Maths skills (RWCM). Consequently, all departments and all teachers have a role to play in supporting students' literacy development.

2. Developing literacy across the curriculum will require all teachers to understand that they are a teacher of literacy and to acknowledge how different subjects can contribute to the development of literacy skills. They also need to develop an awareness of the language demands made upon students in different subject areas.
3. A whole school approach will also require a consistent approach to literacy, whilst enabling specific subjects to develop their own resources as appropriate.
4. Whole school and departmental CPD will ensure that teachers are able to facilitate the development of literacy skills within subjects. It should be made apparent how literacy can be incorporated into medium term planning and schemes of learning. This training will be supported by members of staff who will act as 'literacy mentors' who have developed their understanding of different strategies which can be drawn upon to promote different aspects of literacy within the classroom. These mentors will be able to work with individual staff and/ or departments to help to incorporate different aspects of literacy into their planning more effectively. It is, however, understood that departments are likely to identify different literacy priorities and approaches as being useful in their subject area.
5. The use of subject specific vocabulary should be promoted across all departments and careful consideration needs to be given to which terminology is introduced and when. Best Practice would be to reinforce an expectation that all departments begin teaching a new topic with a subject specific literacy bank. It is expected that all students should be able to use specialist vocabulary appropriately, fluently and with confidence. The use of glossaries and display within the department will ensure that this permeates the learning environment.
6. Further to this, teachers should recognise the importance and constant reinforcement of high-frequency, non-subject specific terminology. This is the vocabulary which students will be encountering evenly across all subjects, thus should be regularly reinforced and monitored for understanding.
7. Teachers should make the success criteria for literacy clear in for pieces of written or discussion based work.

Assessment of and marking for literacy

There is an expectation that all teachers within the school will provide feedback on general literacy skills including spelling, punctuation and grammar. Expectations regarding marking for literacy are reinforced by LWs and work reviews.

Feedback and marking should relate to speaking and listening, reading and writing across the curriculum, as appropriate. Within our context, high standards of verbal and written articulacy should be encouraged at all times. For each class, every opportunity should be taken to ensure that:

i. subject specific technical terms are used correctly and spelled accurately.
ii. vocabulary tests on terminology are given as appropriate.
iii. the criteria for written and discussion based work in terms of tone, style, conventions, audience and structure are shared and discussed. This will ensure that ideas are clearly structured and easy for the reader to follow, whether it be imaginative prose,

mathematical symbols, notes or any other form, there is a shape (e.g. a logical sequence) that gives it coherence.

iv. students can use various means of conveying information; for example, speeches, prose, narratives, graphs, maps, statistics, brief notes, diagrams. v. students draw upon and analyse a range of different texts to inform their ideas.

v. When evaluating students' progress in literacy via work reviews, teachers and heads of department should ensure that their work shows improvement in the development of their literacy skills by the same pupil over a period of time. For example, they have widened their vocabulary compared to a year ago; they have learned how to improve their note taking.

Monitoring literacy across the school

Each department will be issued with a checklist of methods that they could draw upon to promote literacy. This can be used to assess current schemes of learning and identify further opportunities for incorporating the teaching of literacy into these (Appendix A).

Departments will monitor the implementation of the literacy policy via observations, departmental meetings work reviews, learning walks, student focus groups and other quality assurance processes.

Developing and promoting literacy

Not only are all teachers of literacy, but students similarly must have chance to actively engage, improve and flourish with the aid of promotion and implementation at a whole school level. One of the ways in which this can be addressed is by understanding and focusing on how students perceive literacy. This could be improved by:

1. Student literacy council – a select number of students will create a literacy council which will be chaired by LS or JH. This will take place termly and will have a similar goal to meetings between literacy representatives in Departments: to generate ideas and solutions to perception and advertisement of literacy. The council will consist of a cross section of students to ensure that all key groups are well represented. This will enable the approaches to be discussed and devised at a student level, who will have a clearer appreciation of their year group and peers. This will enable a more 'student-friendly' approach to be conceived in developments at whole school level.

2. School newsletter - under the supervision of JH or LS, the current school newsletter will be amended to include a 'Student page'. This will be formed by student submissions of extra-curricular writing linked to their subjects. This will enable literacy to span the curriculum and Key Stages and, more importantly, create a positive perception of the value of literacy as students will **recognise their work** being published to a real-world audience and condition.

3. School magazine – further to the school newsletter, although there are extra-curricular activities at TCS which enable students to explore creative and non-fiction writing outside their subjects, a school

magazine will represent a unified forum which is directly accessible to and for the student body. Supervised by JH or LS, the school magazine will be run by students, for students with similar goals to those expressed above: cross-curricular engagement, span across Key Stages and recognition of real-world writing.

4. Literacy awareness– in an aim to promote visual exposure of literacy to students, displays around the school (not solely within the English Department) will be created. This will all be under the single umbrella link of 'Literacy Matters' (or #literacymatters). Class teachers will place themselves in conjunction with this by adding the slogan to key term displays which should already be in place in classrooms. This will further strengthen the consistency and cohesivity of literacy across all Departments for students to recognise.

5. Transition literacy support from KS2 – the movement between KS2 and KS3 is recognised as one of the most challenging steps for students socially and academically. The UK Government has started to target literacy at a more advanced level than previously, and although prescriptive in some views, has resulted in many students needing to have a stronger base knowledge as they enter secondary school. However there is still a need to have support in place to enable a more stable transition into the literacy needed to excel in secondary education. In order to secure this at TCS the following actions will take place and both the consistency and impact of this will be monitored through learning walks, work reviews and lesson observations (and accompanying paperwork).

Speaking

What are our aims for our pupils? To be able to…

- express and clarify ideas and explain their thinking
- use varied and specialised vocabulary
- speak for a range of purposes: narration, analysis, explanation etc
- adapt speech for paired and group discussions and larger audiences with confidence

Useful strategies

- 'Think, pair, share' and 'no-hands-up'
- Vocabulary lists and glossaries
- Vocabulary cards to prompt discussion (AxisFM in DT)
- 'Mastermind' and 'Ask the Expert'
- 'Say it in reverse' – good for checking understanding of processes
- 'Are you questioning my question?'- interrogating a statement
- 'Dictagloss' – good for picking out key words
- 'Guess my tone' – identifying intention from speech
- Pupil presentations – posters or power point

Listening

What are our aims for our pupils? To be able to…

- listen for comprehension
- pick out key words and technical terms
- identify the register of language used and the main points being made
- recognise cues to speak, and respond sensitively and appropriately

Useful strategies

- 'Pay attention, Pause, Paraphrase' and 'Say it Once'
- Video clips/podcasts used with Qs or What/How/Why grids
- Discrete thumbs up on the table – have they understood?
- 'Bunny rabbit ears!' – to signal the importance of listening
- The Human Dictionary – the pupil expert
- Pupils taking on the role of chair or scribe
- Pupils creating questions during listening
- Numbered turn-taking – to ensure participation

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Reading

What are our aims for our pupils? To be able to…

- read fluently, accurately and with understanding
- use techniques such as skimming, scanning, and text-marking to aid their approach to a text
- locate, select and synthesize information from a wide range of sources including print, media and ICT
- read critically, with an awareness of style, register and authority

Useful strategies

- Directed Activities Related to Text – DARTS
- Mind maps, highlighting, SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recall, Review)
- Establishing key vocabulary, especially with EAL pupils
- Illustrating from a text- using description to create diagrams/images
- Sharing reading experiences
- Providing extension reading lists

Writing

What are our aims for our pupils? To be able to…

- communicate meaning with an effective style, structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently
- present writing clearly, using correct spelling, accurate punctuation legible handwriting
- command a wide-ranging and technical vocabulary
- write in a widening variety of forms for different purposes and audiences e.g. to interpret, evaluate, explain, analyse and explore
- use word-processing, presentation, other ICT conventions correctly

Useful strategies

- Topic sentences
- PEE and E, TEAL and writing frames
- Free writing
- Displays listing 'Pivot words' and connectives
- Consistent marking for SPAG

This policy is written and administered with due regard to our duty and commitment as a school: to consider all aspects of equality and diversity.

Ratified by Governors and
signed as such by The Chair of Governors

(*24/04/2017*)