

THE SYDNEY RUSSELL SCHOOL



Literacy Strategy 2023-24



LITERACY STRATEGY

Aims

- To develop and improve students' ability and confidence in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- To ensure that all students have the literacy skills necessary to be successful in life and in public examinations.
- To embed the teaching of literacy across the whole school.
- To support teachers in other subject areas in the delivery of key literacy skills.

The school's Literacy Policy is based on the principle that it is the responsibility of every member of staff, teaching and non-teaching, to develop and maintain high standards of literacy across the school. All members of staff are expected to reinforce the importance of literacy by modelling good practice and ensuring that the development of literacy is built into the Programmes of Study.

Shared Vision – Using Reading to Promote Literacy

The school's shared vision is that every pupil learns to read quickly and continues to read – widely and often. Reading is celebrated at Sydney Russell to underpin high standards of literacy.

CPD to Improve Literacy

At Sydney Russell, all teachers are expected to challenge misconceptions, develop, and maintain high standards of literacy in pupils across the school. Therefore, each academic year, one-two pedagogical priorities (that are explicitly literacy-driven) are strategically chosen and shared with staff, and appropriate training is mapped over the course of the academic year to give teachers opportunities to share and build their expertise in their respective subject-domain(s) and phase(s). This is to ensure that our teaching and learning is always literacy-centred with evidence-informed*, achievable and centralised actions to support students' mastery of cross-disciplinary literacy.

At the Primary, for 2023-24, the priorities are as follows:

- 1) To improve pupil curriculum knowledge and skills through themed teaching.
- 2) More opportunities for explicit teaching of reading and writing.
- 3) Developing writing in the wider curriculum.
- 4) Improve end of key stage results.

At the Secondary, for 2023-24, the priorities are as follows:

Talk Like an Expert

- 1) Teachers and students use academic vocabulary when speaking in class.
- 2) Academic vocabulary is explicitly taught and applied within lessons

*Evidence-informed: In the Secondary, some of the priorities and pedagogical approaches are informed by the key principles outlined in the EEF's guidance report, *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*, 2018.

[EEF_KS3_KS4_LITERACY_GUIDANCE.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/EEF_KS3_KS4_LITERACY_GUIDANCE.pdf)

Programmes of Study and Reading at Sydney Russell

All Programmes of Study should reflect the need to promote high standards of literacy which should be designed to uphold school expectations. How and when elements of literacy are delivered will depend on the subject or phase, and the particular elements of the programme but the following features are compulsory:

- a) Students' work, in exercise books and folders, should be presented neatly; with the appropriate date and headings (see later).
- b) The spelling of subject specific vocabulary should be taught explicitly.
- c) Students should be taught a range of strategies to enable them to read text books and other materials. Students should also be taught how to access and present information effectively.
- d) Students should be encouraged to use the school library, and at secondary level, should encouraged to use the library for revision and research, to embed what has been taught.
- e) It should be made clear to students that downloaded material will not be accepted as their work.
- f) Every lesson should give students opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and their confidence in expressing ideas.
- g) Explicit teaching and application of key vocabulary (subject specific and academic) should be included within all schemes of work
- h) When writing a Programme of Study, the Subject or Phase Leader should consider students' prior knowledge, so that the instruction of new, key vocabulary is designed to help students connect old knowledge with new.

Primary Phase

Spoken Language:

In the primary phase we encourage our children to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English. We provide our children with a range of opportunities to talk and listen, we use role-play and drama to explore situations, we have regular story times and we encourage our children to listen and respond to others. We develop their vocabulary in a number of ways and encourage them to use their new vocabulary in speaking and writing.

Reading:

We believe that reading is of extreme importance as it allows children to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.' The Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions: word reading/decoding and comprehension. We ensure that this is delivered effectively in various ways including the teaching of systematic phonics, teaching of tricky and high frequency words, listening to inspirational reading role-models and guided reading sessions to develop a deeper understanding of written text.

Writing:

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions: transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing). In the primary phase we recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary and these are taught explicitly within English lessons but reinforced constantly through all areas of the curriculum. We aim to help our children develop an understanding that writing is both essential to thinking and learning and enjoyable in its own right and to enable them to plan, draft and edit in order to improve their published work.

EYFS and Y1

Children in the Foundation Stage work towards the Early Learning Goals by following Development Matters and work is planned with links to other curriculum areas so that the children have a range of learning experiences. Pupils have

access to a variety of play-based activities alongside more structured teaching and opportunities for self-initiated learning.

In EYFS and Year 1, pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme where they are taught to:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills.
- Read common exception words on sight.
- Understand what they read.
- Read aloud with fluency and expression.
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar.
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words.
- Acquire good handwriting.

Y2 – Y6

Children in these year groups follow the Read Write Inc. Literacy and Language program. English is taught in mixed-ability classes.

In Year 2, we have daily lessons in phonics, SPaG, handwriting and guided reading.

Phonics follows the Phase 6 Letters and Sounds program.

Guided Reading is done as a whole class with a specific objective covered each day using Reciprocal Reading for developing comprehension skills.

In handwriting, we follow the Nelson handwriting scheme and cursive writing is encouraged from Year 2.

Although writing is a focus during Literacy lessons, we ensure that the children produce high quality writing during wider curriculum lessons.

In Year 3 – 6, we have daily whole class guided reading session using VIPERS to develop comprehension skills.

High quality texts are used to engage the children and facilitate interesting writing, through the process of planning, drafting, editing and publishing. SPAG and handwriting are taught discretely in weekly lessons. Pen licences are awarded to children with neat, cursive joined up handwriting from Year 3. Skills learnt during the English lesson are transferred to writing in the wider curriculum lessons. Below is a short summary of the expectations of pupils in English lessons:

- Develop a deep understanding of what they read; complete texts by leading authors are introduced using a three-step approach.
- Learn spelling, punctuation and grammar in context, allowing pupils to use it with understanding; punctuation and grammar banks are provided to support children's learning.
- Learn to articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly to one another; learn how to present and debate; to reason and justify their answers.
- Learn to write confidently by following our highly supportive three step approach, building upon the story or non-fiction text they have studied.
- Engage in writing every day that leads to extended pieces of writing at the end of each unit of work.

Homework

There is an expectation that children read every night. The school has reading certificates which reward children for home reads. Children from Y1-Y6 have differentiated spellings to learn at home. These are tested weekly.

Purple Mash is also used to support learning at home.

Secondary Phase

- All students are encouraged to have a reading book on them. It is a compulsory item of equipment for Years Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten students.
- In Year Seven, Eight and Nine, students have regular reading and comprehension lessons where they visit the library and complete an Accelerated Reader quiz. Their progress is monitored and students receive certificates to mark their success. By Year Nine, we hope that this reading habit has been adopted as an independent skill. All teachers should promote reading and when in lessons, should use strategies (such as predicting, clarifying, summarising, questioning) to check comprehension. Teachers encourage students to become more independent in these strategies, taking on these roles themselves.
- Students in Year Seven, Eight and Nine are also given a Knowledge Organiser for each POS which includes the etymology, word class and student friendly examples of subject specific vocabulary. This is stuck into exercise books and explicitly referred to in the lesson. Students can underline when they use the key vocabulary so teachers can check it is being used correctly.
- Students in Years 7 and 9 will complete the AR Star Reading Test three times per year. Students in Year 10 will complete the New Group Reading Test (NGRT – GL Assessment) twice per year. The most useful information (e.g. a student's reading age) will be shared with the students, teachers and parents. Staff will use this information to inform and adapt their teaching – particularly in subjects where there is extensive reading or complex vocabulary.

Secondary Phase

- Where students struggle to write clearly, they will be encouraged to attend the Handwriting Club.
- Students who struggle with literacy will be identified early, not only through the principles of the Sydney Russell banding system and Key Stage 2 (prior) attainment, but through teachers' professional judgement, the NGRT or Accelerated Reader.
- Librarians provide reading interventions for students in Year 7 and 8 within library lessons
- Reluctant readers in Year 9 can be referred to the Reading Buddy Scheme which assigns a student to a Year 10 or 12 reading mentor who reads a library book with the student and helps them to develop comprehension and inference skills
- Year 9 and 10 students who would benefit from developing their writing skills can be nominated to join the Write Back Scheme.
- Rewards for progress in reading are given to students by English teachers and librarians.
- Influential writers are invited to do assemblies and workshops with students to inspire an enthusiasm for reading and writing

Presentation of Work

Primary Phase

a) Handwriting

Students use the Nelson Handwriting scheme as it complements the Literacy's PoS and consolidates students' learning of phonics and grammar. By the end of Year 6, all students would have been taught how to do joined up writing. Teachers should encourage all written work to be done in neat, joined up writing; ideally using an official handwriting pen.

b) Handwriting Pens

Most pupils use pencil; progressing to a pen licence when they have mastered joined, cursive writing skills. Like the secondary phase, students are encouraged to use an official handwriting pen: they are the red Berol, the yellow Staedtler or the silver or gold Verona. Gel pens and fountain pens are not acceptable.

c) Layout of Work

All written work at the primary phase should be set out under the date and title which adds context to the learning.

Secondary Phase

a) Handwriting

Teachers should encourage all written work to be done in neat, joined up writing, ideally using an official handwriting pen.

b) Handwriting Pens

Students are expected to do all their written work in black pen, and are encouraged to use an official handwriting pen. They are the red Berol, the yellow Staedtler or the silver or gold Verona. Gel pens and fountain pens are not acceptable, with the reason for this being to prepare students for examinations. Handwriting pens are designed to glide across the paper so that students can write quickly but neatly; other types of pen are designed to catch in the paper to slow the writer down. Students are expected to purchase a replacement if their pen runs out.

c) Layout of Work

All written work at the secondary phase should be set out in a similar format, as follows:

	Name	Title	Date
●			
●			

It should be clear when the learning is class or homework.

Literacy Supportive Classrooms

All members of staff are expected to model good practice and this should be reflected in all areas of the practice.

a) Classroom Displays

All notices and materials used for display should be meticulously proof-read to ensure that there are no errors with grammar, spelling or punctuation. If students' work is used as part of a display on classroom walls, it should be proof-read by an adult. Only work of the highest quality, in respect of content as well as presentation, should be used for classroom and corridor displays; its purpose is to provide students with examples of the standard of work to which they should aspire.

At Primary, classroom display board should be used as working walls to provide support for children during daily lessons. Literacy working walls could have, learning intention/topic title, key vocabulary, key phrases, P4C questions and shared writes.

b) Resources

All resources, the Programmes of Study, Knowledge Organisers, materials used in lessons, PowerPoints and examination papers should model good practice and should be proof-read to ensure that there are no errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation. Staff should not rely on a computer spell-check facility, which often allows Americanisms which are incorrect in English.

c) Literacy Supportive Materials

Posters with academic vocabulary and sentence starters for discussion to be displayed in all classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to create their own posters/displays with key vocabulary for their subjects.

Marking and Assessment

All members of staff should model good practice. They should use neat, legible writing when responding to students' work and ensure that their responses contain no errors of grammar, punctuation or spelling.

Primary Phase

Feedback and Marking

Teachers should emphasise constructive feedback. There should be clear systems for marking pupils' work. Pupils know their teacher's expectations for each activity. Short activities should be marked with the pupils in the lesson and extended pieces should be marked afterwards. Outcomes should be discussed with the group and individuals so that the marking is genuinely used to take forward pupils' learning. All marking follows the Literacy marking code.

EYFS Literacy Marking Code

Code	What this means
Green highlight	'Green to go' - success
Pink highlight	'Pink to think' – correction required
Sp	Spelling error (where appropriate for the child)
CL	Capital letter error (where appropriate for the child)
^	Missing word
*	Up-level

KS1 Literacy Marking Code

Code	What this means
Sp	Spelling error.
CL	Capital letter error.
^	Missing word
~~~~~	Wrong word
Pink highlight	Punctuation error
//	New paragraph (applicable in Yr 2)
*	Up-level

KS2 Literacy Marking Code

Code	What this means
Sp	Spelling error.
CL	Capital letter error.
Gr	Grammar error
T	Incorrect tense
^	Missing word
WW	Wrong word
P_	Punctuation error (P. = incorrect use of full stop)
//	New paragraph
*	Up-level

Secondary Phase

Teachers should be aware that G.C.S.E. and 'A' Level examinations in many subjects allocate some marks for grammar, spelling and punctuation. They should ensure that students are aware of this, identify technical errors in students' work with a coded target and give them strategies to improve.

Teachers should mark spelling, punctuation and grammar in accordance to the Literacy Marking Code.