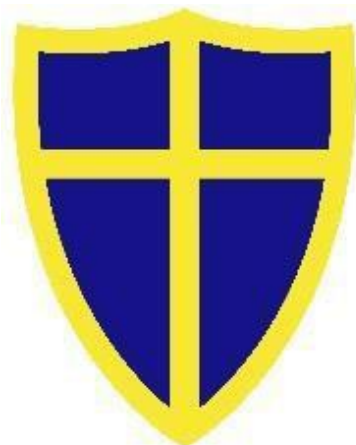


**BLUE COAT CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL  
AND MUSIC COLLEGE**



**Literacy Policy**

Written: March 2021  
Policy duration: 2 years

## Literacy at Blue Coat

### Rationale

Here at Blue Coat, we believe that literacy is fundamental to our pupils' success, giving them lifelong communication skills and enabling them to develop their future in whatever way they choose.

Our aim is to ensure that our students are receiving **consistent, frequent and effective** teaching and learning of literacy that has an impact on their learning. It is the responsibility of all teachers to promote literacy skills throughout lessons. We want our students to use literacy as a tool to help them to be successful at whatever they put their minds to and fulfil the school's vision to *live life in all its fullness*.

### **There are four strands to literacy:**

- reading
- writing
- speaking
- listening

We believe that literacy begins with reading, the heart of which is 'reading for pleasure'. Children should be encouraged to read widely and in areas and subjects that interest them. They should be encouraged to talk about what they've read, to read aloud to their teachers and peers and to have fun with words and language. The foundation for this is laid in KS3 with our Year 7 Accelerated Reader programme. Students who struggle with decoding and phonics are supported to advance with their reading skills and we give the children the space and time they need to fall in love with books and reading.

But, most importantly perhaps, we are the best role models for sparking a reading culture within school and we talk to our students about books and media, discussing what we're reading. Having adults as literacy role models is essential to a child's development and our Library is at the centre of this for the school. It is an outstanding resource where pupils can borrow a wide range of reading material at levels suitable to their ability and find a space to work and read.

When pupils are competent and confident readers they will be great writers. We develop writing skills by encouraging students to write for a variety of forms, by extending their vocabulary and by writing often. We encourage pupils to participate in regular writing events and plan competitions to promote writing and we firmly believe that it is every teacher's responsibility to develop their pupils' ability to write. Being able to discuss, present, debate and communicate are vital skills for pupils. We teach speaking and listening skills explicitly and our students have participated in public speaking events and debates.

## **Skills**

### **Reading**

- To read and understand a range of texts.
- To be able to use the skills of skimming, scanning and close reading.
- To be able to research (online and in books/the Library) effectively.
- To be able to review and adapt texts to show understanding.

### **Writing**

- To be able to plan and draft ideas and also edit and review effectively.
- To be able to take notes.
- To write in detail, for different audiences and purposes.
- To use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- To develop and extend vocabulary.

### **Speaking and Listening**

- To ask relevant questions and provide accurate and substantial responses.

- To use formal and informal speech as appropriate.
- To communicate in a variety of situations effectively (discussions, presentations, role play etc.).
- To speak fluently and confidently in discussions and debate to develop and think through ideas.

## **Suggested Strategies**

### **Reading**

#### **In Tutor Time**

- Encourage reading for pleasure!
- Develop a reading display wall of the books they are currently reading – see the ‘BookFlix’ wall in the English Dept. for ideas. This could be updated on a regular basis and is an excellent way of finding out what kinds of genres, fiction or non-fiction pupils are interested in.
- Tutors nominate a ‘top reader’ and ‘best book’ of each half term. For these categories, the tutor and pupils could decide on the criteria for choosing these pupils – who’s read the most? Who’s picked a genre they wouldn’t normally read?
- Teachers support pupils by reading alongside or to them.
- Group reading, reading aloud or using e-books can encourage reluctant readers.

#### **Across the Curriculum-Active Reading**

- Pupils should be encouraged in every subject to read. Can pupils talk about what they’ve read to a partner? Do they understand what they’ve read?
- Ask pupils to represent the information they’ve read in a picture or diagram to show their understanding of the text.
- Teachers to provide the information from a specific section of a text in the incorrect order and get pupils to rearrange them in the correct order.

#### **Across the Curriculum-Developing Understanding**

- Pupils write three relevant questions they would like answered before reading a text. After reading the text, the students should be able to answer their questions to show that they understood what was read.
- Provide pupils with vocabulary lists of challenging words they will be using in the next lesson.
- Use word games such as keyword Pictionary and the odd one out (provide a list of four key terms – three of which are similar – and pupils need to state which one is the odd one out).
- Encourage pupils to look up or use synonyms to develop their vocabulary.
- Make key words an integral part of the lesson. Reinforce through spellings, use and definitions. One pupil could spell the word, one define it and one use it in a sentence.
- Teach the skills of skimming, scanning and close reading. The BBC have excellent resources designed to help under-confident readers.

#### **Across the Curriculum-Reading for Pleasure**

- As subject teachers, provide displays of books you are reading (both subject related and for pleasure).
- Encourage reading around the subject-could be set as homework tasks.
- Provide subject-specific reading lists.

## **Writing Strategies**

#### **In Tutor Time**

- Encourage pupils to keep writing journals.
- Use ‘word of the week’ to develop vocabulary and test commonly misspelt high frequency and

low frequency words in your subject.

- Set spelling tests - allow pupils to see it is not just something that is important in English. The English Department and the Hub have banks of spellings to support you.

### **Across the Curriculum-Spelling**

- When marking pupils' work, plan to address spelling mistakes in the next lesson.
- When teaching complex new vocabulary, help pupils to develop strategies for remembering the terms and spelling such as mnemonics.
- Teach pupils the strategies for spelling such as: look, cover, spell, check; exploring the root word; sounding out the syllables.
- Use subject specific glossary/knowledge organisers.

### **Across the Curriculum-Writing Skill**

Writing has different forms, purposes, rules and features and requires a clear understanding of grammatical rules.

- Show pupils examples of mediocre and excellent writing.
- Teach pupils how to plan-don't assume they know how. Talk them through the process of how to generate ideas.
- Model by writing at the same time as pupils. Talk through what you, and they, find easy and difficult about the process.
- Use connectives in talk to encourage their use in writing.
- When stating the success criteria for a PowerPoint presentation or an extended piece of writing, include a literacy objective such as: to include paragraphs and connectives, or to use more complex sentences.
- Reinforce a word of the week in lessons to extend students' vocabulary.

## **Speaking and Listening Strategies**

### **In Tutor Time**

- Encourage pupils to give presentations.
- Discuss what makes a formal presentation effective.
- Give them clear success criteria.
- Have group discussions in lessons.

### **Across the Curriculum-Encouraging Effective Speaking and Listening**

- Make pupils aware of the need to speak formally.
- Encourage pupils to respond in full sentences both verbally and in writing.
- Encourage pupils to be active listeners.
- Use podcasting or videoing to encourage effective spoken communication.
- Boost effective discussion skills by teaching pupils what makes an effective discussion and what the aims of their discussions are before putting them in groups to discuss ideas.
- Promote debates within lessons, but let pupils watch examples and discuss the features of an effective debate before they begin.
- Pupil-led starters. Pupils prepare the starter before-hand and then deliver it.

## **English Department Approaches in Literacy**

Being able to communicate – to write, read and speak fluently – is the foundation of everything we do in English Language and Literature.

In English we provide the following measure of support in literacy:

- Accelerated Reader lessons in Year 7, supported by the Accelerated Reader Lead, English Mentor and class teacher. All pupils are tested and supported in their reading. We actively listen to students read out loud and

celebrate milestone achievements in terms of numbers of quizzes passed, improvement in reading age and numbers of words and books read.

- During lockdown Year 7 have been accessing Accelerated Reader online from home with specialist programmes designed to provide access to books. Our school librarian is researching software that could be used to support reading across the school curriculum. Class teachers have also been reading a class novel – not connected to the curriculum – to their pupils.
- Sustained reading is better for pupils rather than small ‘chunks’ at the beginning of lessons. We have a range of non-curriculum novels and non-fiction texts in classrooms that pupils are invited to borrow.
- Homework projects are undertaken in KS3 to help students engage with what they’re reading.
- Use of word games to build vocabulary knowledge.
- We read aloud in lessons.
- We embed shorter (200 word challenges) writing activities into schemes of work that focus on a few grammatical aspects (i.e. using at least one simple and complex sentence). Little and often is the key – doesn’t always have to be an extended piece of writing to develop skills.

### **Literacy events at Blue Coat**

In recent years we have held a fantastic range of events to develop our pupils reading, writing, speaking and listening. These include:

- World Book Day
- Visiting writers and workshops
- Writing competitions
- Reading groups
- Book clubs
- Creative writing projects undertaken with The University of Warwick

### **Literacy at Home**

Many people assume that if their children have developed their reading ability and skills at primary school, there is little or no need to worry about their reading once they have reached secondary school. At Blue Coat we believe we all need to be doing all we can to continue to boost literacy levels both at school and also at home. Many pupils make good progress with reading at primary school but once they reach secondary education they don’t continue reading in the same way that they have done before.

Very few children read to their parents once they are beyond the age of eleven.

Children, unfortunately, will not always continue to make good progress in literacy at secondary school. Even though good progress may have been made at primary level, this is not always carried forward into their KS3 learning. It is important that pupils have a reading age that lies at a similar level with their chronological age. Without this, it is very difficult for them to achieve success at GCSE level. 68% of all pupil mistakes made in GCSE examinations are as a result of pupils misunderstanding the questions asked.

### **Top tips for boosting literacy at home**

1. Talk drives literacy – encourage your children to talk at home and try to stretch their vocabulary. Ask them about their day at school and their learning as a starting point for dialogue.
2. Let your children see you reading – it is particularly important that boys see adult males reading. Take an interest in what your children are reading – if they are enjoying a particular author, book or genre, then read it too and you can share the experience with them.
3. Encourage your children to read aloud – reading aloud helps cement literacy skills more than anything else.
4. Don’t assume, because your children read fluently, that they actually comprehend all they read. Ask them questions to check their understanding of more challenging vocabulary.

5. Whilst it is obviously better for children to read anything rather than nothing, it is particularly important that children read works of fiction. Fiction really extends vocabulary and comprehension – particularly for boys.
6. Continue to visit the local library and encourage your children to go with you.
7. If electronic devices are the only way your children want to read then do encourage them to use Kindle or similar e-readers, many smart phones now have free apps to download.
8. It is easy for children to become reliant on IT for writing. Sadly, this does not prepare all pupils for impending examinations where spelling, punctuation and grammar are of considerable importance. Encourage them to write, at least from time to time, by hand. Thank you letters provide a regular opportunity for most children to put pen to paper.
9. Encourage your child to participate in events like 'World Book Day' or encourage them to take part in the activities we promote and offer in school.
10. Make sure that your child reads during the summer holiday period. Pupils often regress in terms of their reading ability during this time, which puts them at a disadvantage in accessing the curriculum when they return to school in September.

Take a look at the short film clip showing why everyone should take time to read together.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4Nf0Hcuv4Y>

Helpful websites:

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/>

<http://www.worldbookday.com>

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go." Dr. Seuss, "I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!"

# LITERACY POLICY

**Written By:**

Mrs G Hathaway

March 2021

**Reviewed by:**

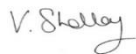
**Next Review Date:**

March 2023

**Approved by LGB:**

May 2021

Signed:



VICTORIA SHELLEY  
Headteacher

Date: 04/05/2021

Signed:



LYN JOHNSON  
Chair of Local Governing Body

Date: 04/05/2021