

# Literacy Policy

2023/2024

PARTNERSHIPS | OPPORTUNITY | INTEGRITY | EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | PEOPLE-CENTRED

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Heworth Grange  
School

*Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions*

# Contents

- 1. Intent..... 3
- 2. Reading..... 4
- 3. Vocabulary and Spelling..... 6
- 4. Drafting, Redrafting and Re-reading..... 6
- 5. Marking for Literacy..... 7
- 6. Writing: Extended Opportunities ..... 7
- 7. Literacy Intervention Groups ..... 8
- 8. Academic Talk..... 9
- 9. Roles and Responsibilities ..... 9
- 10. Appendix 1: Definitions..... 10

## 1. Intent

'Enriching lives, Inspiring Ambitions' is realised in our environment, and within our classrooms, consistently. Teaching and learning lie at the very heart of everything we do, and we have high expectations of all our pupils, and therefore of the curriculum provision. Literacy skills are the cornerstone of academic achievement and lifelong learning, offering a pathway to understanding, critical thinking, and effective communication. They enable pupils to grasp complex texts, think critically, and communicate persuasively, transcending subject boundaries.

We believe that every pupil has the right to a high-quality education, no matter their starting points and/or educational and social needs. A commitment to a love of lifelong learning should be aimed upon for all our pupils. We believe that a love and effective use of literacy not only leads to a love of lifelong learning and a wealth of cultural experiences but also as pupils progress through school on their reading journey, their fluency, confidence and enjoyment with reading develops.

Every classroom should be filled with learning, where pupils can build on their knowledge of topics in each subject area. Opportunities within school life are planned to ensure a rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum as demonstrated in this document.

Our curriculum will focus on pupils' development by providing exciting and challenging learning and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences. By working together, we aim to develop links between different subjects and to support and develop literacy skills. Our approach encompasses a multifaceted strategy that aims to foster a deep appreciation for reading, writing, and oracy. We strive to create an environment where pupils not only read to learn but also learn to love reading.

This policy aims to showcase how we at Heworth Grange School will:

- Improve reading ages of all pupils, as there is a strong link between reading ability, academic success, and emotional wellbeing.
- Use assessment, not assumption to guide actions.
- Use an evidence-based approach to improve whole school literacy using the EEF seven strands of disciplinary literacy which informs departments how they develop literacy skills within their subject areas.

Through our literacy curriculum pupils:

- Develop a love of literacy through the provision of reading in lessons.
- Are guided in their literacy progress using engaging and age-appropriate reading material to help them consolidate and practice key literacy skills to enable them to progress in their fluency and comprehension.
- Will be able to access each curriculum area at a deeper level through explicit teaching of Tier Two and Tier Three vocabulary.
- Develop the resilience and expertise to practice the written word within our culture of drafting and re-drafting academic work.
- Develop their extended writing skills and work independently in all curriculum areas.

- Develop confidence in oracy and provide the opportunities to improve communication skills giving them the foundations for future learning and life.
- Will experience and have models of good literacy skills in their academic environment to support their development of their own language and vocabulary.

## 2. Reading

We have embraced a comprehensive school-wide reading initiative to ensure a love of reading is encouraged for all throughout the school with structured and planned reading promoted through Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four. Success in reading unlocks the curriculum and equips our pupils to lead independent lives, pursue their ambitions and thrive in society. Heworth Grange School develops pupils' abilities to read increasingly complex texts and fosters their motivation to read widely for different purposes, including pleasure, happiness and as part of a wellbeing strategy.

Pupils are encouraged to read through a plethora of resources in our well stocked school library, where pupils are encouraged to handpick books that resonate with their interests and take home to read for pleasure. This thoughtful approach not only fosters a love for reading but also empowers pupils to become discerning readers, enhancing their literary horizons.

Pupils complete NGRT tests that provide staff with Reading Ages that are recorded on Class Charts and SIMs. Staff are expected to use this information to make lesson adaptations accordingly to meet pupil needs and support pupils where appropriate. Pupils that have an NGRT test score that indicates they are fluent, highly competent readers, should be selected to read aloud to model fluency to other pupils. This is monitored via learning walks, pupil voice and external visits. To support staff, consistent CPD and up to date training is used to utilise the data and allow for more effective teaching and personalisation of resources to ensure all pupils are provided with the opportunities for challenge. In addition to this, Reading Ages are reported to parents through reports and appropriate additional reading lists so parents can support their children at home with their reading development.

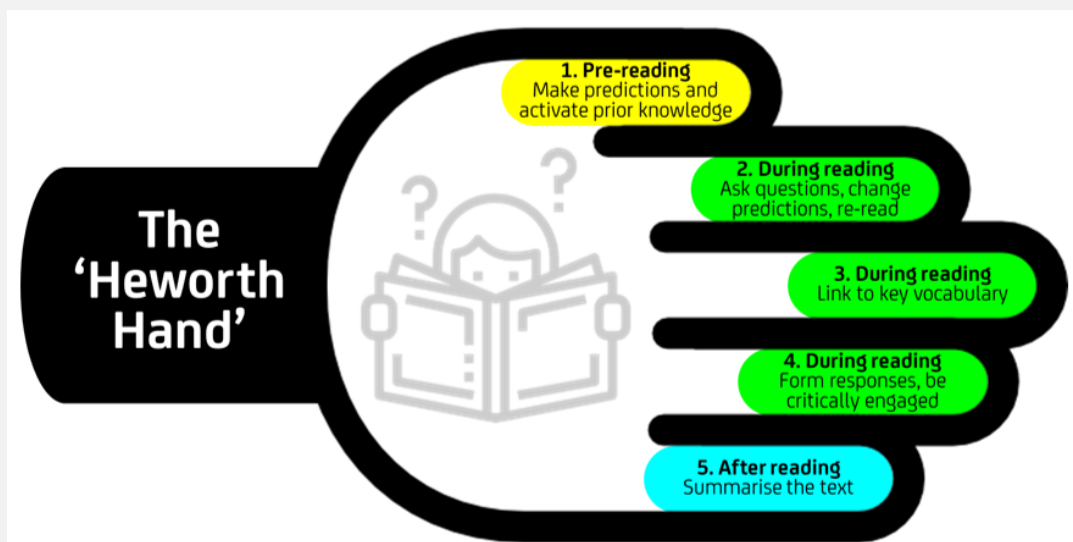
For all pupils during form time, we allocate fifteen minutes, three times a week to the invaluable practice of reading. In Key Stage Three, pupils embark on a personal reading journey, selecting texts that reside within their reading ability, monitored by their form tutor. This means that their chosen material is calibrated to be both engaging and appropriately challenging, nurturing their growth as proficient readers. However, ambition is always maintained, and no pupil is prevented from reading a more challenging text if they should wish. During these designated reading for pleasure sessions, pupils who have not yet reached their expected reading level are provided the chance to read aloud with their form tutor. This collaborative activity aims to enhance their reading skills. Form tutors utilise a fluency grid and receive ongoing training and support to ensure effective development of pupils' reading abilities. In Key Stage Four, pupils read non-fiction academic reading packs that have been collated by subject leaders to support and challenge thinking in a range of academic areas linked to the GCSE curriculum. For example, students explore articles from Science Daily focused on the human impact on environment.

Furthermore, during Key Stage Three, we allocate dedicated literacy lesson time to the essential practice of reading. In this context, students collaboratively explore excerpts selected from the diverse

range of library books available to pupils. The classroom teacher exemplifies prosodic reading, aiming to enhance students' fluency and cultivate their proficiency as readers. The selected extract is read aloud by the teacher, serving as a model of excellence in reading. Research shows that when groups of people read together and listen to a text being read aloud, the least fluent are the greatest beneficiaries. Pupils from more socially advantaged backgrounds are far more likely to experience the pleasure and excitement of these books outside of school but for pupils in more disadvantaged areas, school is the only place where they are likely to have high-quality texts read to them. Whole class reading aloud is not only likely to improve pupils' reading ability and potential for academic success, it will also give them access to a world of ideas they may not otherwise be able to experience. This is based on the newest developments of the Faster Reading Research by The University of Sussex: *Just reading: the impact of a faster pace of reading narratives on the comprehension of poorer adolescent readers in English classrooms*.

In Key Stage Four, pupils engage in Meaningful Reading, delving into appropriately challenging embedded academic extracts carefully selected to ignite a passion for broader subject-specific exploration, for example, this could be a piece of research from the British Medical Journal or an historical interpretation from a historians view of the past. We encourage teachers to embrace and provide pupils with any opportunity for pupils to read. Teachers actively seek out opportunities for reading in lessons to develop a rich diet of vocabulary and disciplinary texts across a range of subjects in the curriculum. This approach not only promotes literacy but also instils a lifelong love for learning within the unique context of each subject, enriching our pupils' educational journey.

When any type of reading takes part at Heworth Grange School, teachers and pupils use the 'Heworth Hand' (shown below) to support understanding of a text pre-reading, during reading and after reading.



### **3. Vocabulary and Spelling**

As integral aspects of literacy, vocabulary and spelling will be explicitly focused on across both Key Stages. To enrich our pupils' vocabulary and language proficiency, teaching staff employ a diverse array of strategies to systematically impart vocabulary knowledge. Among these, one noteworthy technique is the utilisation of Frayer models.

In this method, pupils actively engage with new vocabulary by recording both the term and its corresponding definition within their exercise books. The overarching aim is to seamlessly integrate these newly acquired words into their lesson activities and subsequent work, thus reinforcing their understanding. We empower our pupils to not only expand their vocabulary but effectively harness the potency of language in their academic endeavors and in various aspects of their lives.

As part of whole school practice, key words for every lesson are identified at the start and throughout lessons, with definitions, applicable context and application implemented as part of routine practice. Teachers will make sure words are explicit in all lessons allowing them to be identified, learnt and then applied in learning. Teachers will encourage pupils to use any new vocabulary during oracy tasks.

As part of our universal offer, all pupils in Key Stage Three use the Reading Wise vocabulary module, in which teachers provide the context for vocabulary learning in the classroom and the Reading Wise vocabulary module embeds the new words in pupils' long-term memories. This works by using techniques such as spaced repetition to reinforce words over time, thus interrupting the forgetting process. Descaffolding is also used to support vocabulary learning, as at the first interaction of a word, pupils have images, definitions, synonyms, antonyms, word type and an example sentence. As they gain confidence, the system 'descaffolds' - so at the second interaction (assuming they got it right first time), they no longer have images, for example, the scaffolding continues to fall away until the pupil has mastered the word.

Pupils use Reading Wise for 20 minutes a week in school as part of Literacy lessons and for at least 15 minutes a week at home to allow for spaced learning and repetition to happen. Reading Wise is accessible for pupils to use both at school and at home. Pupils also complete simple pre and post quizzes composed of thirty words from the target vocabulary lists to help gauge impact and demonstrate progress quickly and easily.

### **4. Drafting, Re-drafting and Re-reading**

All pupils across Key Stage Three and Four are provided with regular opportunities to draft, re-read and re-draft written work in lessons.

Drafting is an integral part of the learning process whether this is used to enhance spoken English before taking part in a discussion, or as a planning process for a piece of extended writing. Pupils re-draft work, following in class formative assessment, in order to make improvements identified by the teacher and to correct spelling, punctuation and grammar errors.

Re-drafting allows for learners to be reflective and ensures that vocabulary is used precisely and for

effect. Best practice is seen when pupils identify and highlight Tier Two and Tier Three vocabulary themselves, check their spelling and ensure the context is right for their usage.

## **5. Marking for Literacy**

As part of the whole school marking policy, there is a focus for feedback on literacy across Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four, with particular reference to the literacy assessments objectives at Key Stage Four. These assessment strategies will have reference to the use of Tier Two and Tier Three vocabulary used and identification any literacy errors using a specific literacy marking code (below) meaning a lack of clarity in the work. Furthermore, there is a changing focus on literacy marking throughout the academic year to ensure teacher knowledge is being refreshed and any misconceptions are addressed.

Marking of extended pieces of writing at Key Stage 4 will reference the use of SPAG, sentence structure, connectives and use of Tier Two and Three vocabulary. These marking will also consider and reference the conventions required for responding academically in that subject.

### **Literacy Codes**

**PR - Presentation**

**GR - Grammatical error**

**SP - Spelling mistake**

**// - New Paragraph**

**CL - Capital letter**

**0 - Missing punctuation**

## **6. Extended Writing Opportunities**

As per each curriculum area intention, opportunities for extended writing are provided across all subject areas. Recognising that writing is a multifaceted skill, we emphasize supporting pupils in planning, editing, improving, and evaluating their writing. Our goal is to nurture sophisticated writers who can apply these skills throughout their lives.

To achieve this, we strategically plan opportunities for pupils to practice extended writing while offering scaffolding to help them reach their full potential. Regularly utilised tools such as structure strips, sentence stems, and writing frames effectively support identified pupils.

These extended writing experiences not only enhance subject-specific skills and knowledge but also foster resilience and accuracy in writing, leading to more independent writers in each curriculum area. As part of our commitment to quality first teaching at Heworth Grange School, we provide scaffolds, sentence starters, and structure strips to support students during this process. Over time, our intention is to gradually reduce this support as pupils progress toward greater independence.

## 7. Literacy Intervention groups

Some pupils will need extra support to help them develop the key literacy skills they need to be successful in the future, and to help them access the curriculum at Key Stage 4. These pupils are identified through standardised scores, CAT tests, NGRT Tests and baseline assessments at the start of Key Stage 3 or upon entry into the school.

Pupils are then put into categories so that a waved intervention support plan can take place:

<b>Category 1 - SAS above 100</b> Reading age at or above chronological age	<b>Fluent readers</b>
<b>Category 2 - SAS 85-100</b> Reading age 1-2 years below chronological age	<b>Readers at risk of not Accessing the curriculum</b>
<b>Category 3 - SAS below 85</b> Reading age 3+ years below chronological age	<b>Early readers</b>
<b>Category 4</b> Readers new to English/ International new arrivals	<b>Readers new to English</b>

Category Two pupils will complete the Comprehension Module on the Reading Wise programme. The Comprehension Module uses three main components to engage pupils and build their skills and confidence. Pupils work independently on computers for twenty minutes. They practice literacy skills, known as the mega skills and they learn new strategies as they progress through the adventure narrative. Then the group comes together to discuss the new chapter. According to the Education Endowment Foundation toolkit: "On average, reading comprehension approaches deliver an additional six months' progress. Successful reading comprehension approaches allow activities to be carefully tailored to pupils' reading capabilities, and involve activities and texts that provide an effective, but not overwhelming, challenge." Additional Category Two interventions include peer reading groups which are small cross-age group sessions where pupils take turns reading to one another to bolster confidence and resilience in their reading skills. These sessions typically pair struggling readers with more proficient peers, catering to pupils who not only lack confidence and resilience in reading but also exhibit a reading age deficit relative to their chronological age.

Category Three pupils will complete the Decoding Module on Reading Wise, following a Single Word Reading Test to ensure this is the correct intervention and to ensure personalisation of the Decoding Module. Reading Wise technology assesses the individual's initial reading level and then delivers a sequence of interactive, multi-sensory lessons, each lasting two to three minutes. Pupils must complete each lesson with 100% accuracy to progress. Due to careful design, this is never frustrating for pupils and pupils are always successful, and they own each small success. Once a lesson is complete, they are rewarded with a snippet of something absurd, wonderful or humorous in the form of a GIF, a 3 second video. This makes pupils light up, preparing them for the next lesson. They continue like this for the duration of the session, employing a variety of multi-sensory techniques as they progress through the lessons. The research shows that, on average, using the Decoding Module increases Reading Age by nine months in twenty hours delivering animated lessons incorporating multi-sensory activities. Additional Category Three interventions are delivered through programs such as IDL, Stride Ahead or Toe by Toe, this is for pupils who have successfully completed Reading Wise but may encounter difficulties in achieving fluency and comprehension.

Category Four pupils are pupils that are new to English/International new arrivals and need to use a



phonics programme. The Zip module on Reading Wise is an adaptive learning programme, using a smart algorithm, it understands when a pupil has mastered a letter-sound correspondence. This means that Zip is personalised, allowing pupils to learn at their own pace and repeating areas that are not secure. It identifies gaps and reinforces these areas. The Zip programme was part of a DfE-funded study into the effectiveness of the Reading Wise programmes. The study conducted a Randomised Control Trial into the Decoding programme; alongside this was an initial analysis of Zip and its impact on closing the gap between pupils reading ages and their chronological ages. There was significant improvement on closing the gap for pupils using the Zip Module. Additional Category Four interventions used are Flash Academy and Twinkle ESL programs.

In addition to this, any pupil not making the required progress will be identified by the literacy co-ordinator and the literacy teacher. Bespoke intervention will then be provided in the literacy lesson by the specialist in order for progress to be made at a more rapid speed.

All data is reviewed on a half-termly basis for all pupils. Those pupils in Key Stage 4 who have been identified as vulnerable literacy learners will be reviewed termly whole school.

## **8. Academic Talk**

Heworth Grange School has a focus on 'Speak Like An Expert', ensuring that in lessons, students are speaking like a Scientist or an Artist, for example. All staff have undergone the Voice 21 training and will use sentence stems and discussion roles within the classroom. In English, the curriculum has been planned so that students can develop their speaking skills by completing big questions in the form of class discussions. This takes place at least once every half term. Students take on roles including the 'challenger' and 'instigator' to help them understand how to effectively take part in an academic discussion. Students then evaluate their role and consider their contributions.

At any time, during any lesson, a teacher can ask for a meaning or example of the vocabulary in use and this must be given using academic talk. Colloquialisms will be corrected by staff.

## **9. Roles and Responsibilities**

- Pupils: take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements.
- Teachers across the curriculum: adhere to school and subject policies on literacy, spelling and marking; contribute to pupil development of oracy, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons.
- Subject Leaders: ensure that school policies on literacy, spelling and marking are adhered to in their subjects; provide a subject policy on literacy detailing how literacy skills are specifically promoted in their subject; subject development plans include literacy, and this is reviewed annually; relevant displays are used in all classrooms.
- Literacy Co-Ordinator: Co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the literacy intervention programs across the school and shares and develops best practice from across all departments.

- Senior Leaders: lead and give a high profile to literacy.
- Parents: encourage their children to value and expand their literacy both within and beyond their work in English and use the range of strategies they have learnt to improve their levels of literacy

## **10. Appendix 1: Definitions**

Tier 2 words are high-frequency words used by mature content users over a variety of content domains. More simply, they are words that are frequent enough that most native speakers would know what they mean, but usually require explicit instruction (having to look them up in a dictionary, or apply context inferencing, etc.) They lack redundancy in the language but are not so specialised as to be jargon or unique to specific contexts. They are often spelled in ways that don't phonetically follow the simple rules of English grammar and may be challenging for emerging vocabulary learners who know how to say the word but have difficulty trying to read them due to irregular or alternative phonetic grammar rules. Tier 2 words are words such as obvious, complex, reasoned, national, or informed. In contrast, Tier 1 words are extremely common, almost ubiquitous-frequency words that require little or no explicit instruction. They are usually root words themselves and are not typically modified with prefixes and suffixes. They are usually phonetically very easy to read and pronounce from reading. Words like baby, clock, or run are tier 1 words. Tier 3 words are extremely specialised, require explicit instruction, are relatively low frequency, and are usually limited to a content domain, like medical or engineering terminology. They frequently are composed of foreign language roots modified with suffixes and prefixes. These are words such as misappropriated, atrioventricular tachycardia, or antidisestablishmentarianism.