



# **The Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls**

## **Literacy Policy**

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Person responsible: Head of English

## INTRODUCTION

At The Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls, we recognise that the development of literacy skills is an entitlement for all students and the responsibility of the whole school community. We aim to meet the requirements set by Ofsted and the National teaching standards, which state that teachers must: 'demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever their specialist subject'.

(Ofsted report summary-'Improving Literacy in secondary schools: a shared responsibility'- April 2013)

This policy is designed to outline the importance of literacy across the curriculum. We believe that each department should aim to define the demands made on pupils' language within its area and decide on ways of helping pupils meet these demands. We also believe that basic literacy skills should be reinforced in all subjects through teaching and assessment.

Examples: In subjects such as History and Geography, pupils might develop skills in writing in an impersonal and objective style. In Mathematics or ICT, they might develop some of the reading skills they need to understand very concise and focused language. In Modern Languages, they might develop their awareness of the grammatical structures of language and the subtleties of meaning. In all subjects, teachers should be aware of the demands made on reading abilities of pupils and seek to help pupils meet these demands.

### Aims of the policy

- To raise literacy attainment in all subject areas to ensure that we maximise the potential of every student
- To ensure that all teachers are aware of their role in raising the attainment of literacy in their subject areas
- To ensure that all students are equipped with sufficient skills in Reading and Writing, in order that they can fully access all areas of the curriculum
- To ensure that all students are effective and confident communicators

The **Headteacher** will ensure that:

- the Literacy Co-ordinator will lead and support literacy development across the curriculum
- the Literacy Policy is followed and that all support necessary is given to staff in order to facilitate its implementation
- there are regular audits of current practice and procedure relating to literacy

The **Governing Body** will ensure that:

- it monitors the Literacy attainment within the school through the use of teacher assessments and examination results, particularly in English and subjects that assess Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG).

The **Literacy Co-ordinator** will ensure that:

- the Literacy Policy is implemented across the curriculum through the review and monitoring of teaching and assessment
- staff are given support in implementing the Literacy Policy across the curriculum

**In all subjects, students will have opportunities to improve their literacy skills in the three key areas of Writing, Reading and Speaking and Listening. All members of staff should ensure that they adhere to the following:**

## **Writing**

Whenever pupils produce written work, we should emphasise through our marking the importance of:

Basic technical accuracy

- Basic punctuation- full stops, capital letters and commas.
- Spelling of common words and of specialist vocabulary.

Effective organisation of material

- Sentence structure.
- Paragraphing.
- Use of headings and sub-headings.

Clear presentation

- Each piece of work should have a clear heading and date.
- Where headings are underlined, a ruler should be used.
- A line of writing should begin at the margin and end at the end of the line (unless this is varied for paragraphing).

Extended writing

- Departments should teach the writing type that it is expecting students to use.
- Writing frames and sentence starters can be used to help support students with their writing. Students should also be encouraged to collaboratively produce their own plans/ structures for extended pieces of writing, where appropriate.
- Sufficient time should be given to allow pupils to complete writing tasks.
- Pupils should be encouraged to write in full sentences (with the exception of note-taking, mind-maps etc.)
- Literacy Boxes are available to departments in order to support students with extended writing. These contain literacy mats and dictionaries. These should be used to encourage students to proof read their work in order to correct their own errors.
- When marking, literacy symbols should be used in order to identify errors. Literacy symbols should be displayed in all classrooms and a copy is included in students' planners. Students should also be encouraged to use these during peer-assessment.
- A 'Word of the Week' is distributed to staff, displayed and included in the Student Bulletin in order to encourage the use of a wider vocabulary.

Teachers should make use of DIRTime in order to allow students to correct errors in green pen. When possible students should be pointed towards a dictionary, rather than told the spelling; students are more likely to retain information they have looked up. It is also important to not set writing as a punishment, as this can lead to a negative impact on girls' attitudes to written tasks.

## **Reading**

Each department should have clear ideas about the reading demands made within its area and girls should be helped to meet these demands. Girls benefit from meeting different types of text and we should not shy away from exposing the girls to the difficulties of specialist language. However, girls may need guidance on how to extract meaning from unfamiliar and demanding material.

- Teachers should model the active reading of texts in lessons. Students should be encouraged to engage independently with texts through DARTs (Directed Activities Related to Texts) and other strategies.
- Collaborative reading of texts and discussion of material should be used in lessons where appropriate.
- Students should be taught to research independently and effectively, using a range of sources, including the school library.
- Students should be taught different ways of reading texts, including skimming and scanning.
- An English Dictionary should be available for use in every classroom.
- Year 7 students take part in the Accelerated Reading programme in order to encourage the reading of texts suitable for their reading age and in order to encourage pupils to read independently.
- Year 7 students have access to one Library lesson per fortnight in order to encourage independent reading and to give students the opportunity to select an appropriate reading book. This also allows students access to computers in order to participate in the Accelerated Reading programme.
- DEAR times are incorporated into the academic year, where students and staff are given time to read material of their choice.
- Participation in World Book Day is encouraged, with activities including fancy dress competitions, books trails, the design of book covers and talks/ workshops with an author in order to further encourage independent reading amongst students.
- Pupils take the Access Reading test in order to give students a 'Reading Age', which defines their level of understanding and their ability to access certain reading material. This information is shared with staff, and staff are encouraged to take this information into account when exposing students to reading material and to aid in their differentiation of resources.

Form Tutors are encouraged to ensure girls' texts choice in reading time are appropriate and, if possible, staff should model the importance and enjoyment of reading by spending this time reading their own material.

### **Speaking and Listening**

This is a crucial area of Literacy and should be regarded as being just as important as Reading and Writing. Teachers should not only plan opportunities for pupils to practise speaking and listening, but should also teach the explicit skills of speaking effectively.

- Teachers should encourage the use of Standard English in lessons and around the school generally. Girls should be corrected when significant errors in grammar and word choice are used in their speech.
- Girls should be given opportunities for guided, focused talk for a range of purposes, both individually and in groups. Teachers should model good talk and teach different talk types, where possible.
- Participation in the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge in Year 10 encourages students to speak using a range of formal strategies and to speak in front of a group of people.

Form tutors should ensure that one registration time per week is spent focusing on one of these areas of Literacy, whether this is through the completion of activities based on technical accuracy, time given to reading or discussion based activities.

## **Monitoring and Review**

All department areas will monitor and review the teaching and assessment of literacy within their subject areas by reviewing schemes of work and the delivery of literacy within lessons.

The Literacy Co-ordinator will monitor and review the implementation of the literacy policy across the curriculum, with the support of the Head of the English Faculty, and Assistant Headteacher, through the reviewing of teaching and assessment.

The Headteacher will support the monitoring and review of the implementation of the literacy policy, and ensure all staff receive any support deemed necessary.