

Literacy policy

Queen Elizabeth's Academy

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1 Rationale

- 1.1 At Queen Elizabeth's Academy, we believe that all staff should demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject. Every member of the academy's community has a responsibility to develop pupil potential through language. Literacy is an intrinsic life skill.

To be literate is to be able to read, comprehend and communicate in both written and oral form

2 Aims

- 2.1 This policy aims to support all pupils to acquire knowledge of and develop their understanding and application of language. This includes their ability to decode and interpret what they read and what they hear. In addition, it includes their ability to control form, conventions and grammar in what they read, write and speak. Pupils need to extend their cultural literacy with an understanding of society and the world around them. This policy also promotes an evidence-informed, whole school approach resulting in consistent, principled and effective practices among teachers and positive outcomes for pupils.

3 Literacy

- 3.1 **Reading/writing/speaking and listening:** to be literate is to be able to read, comprehend and react to ideas in texts and language. It means being able to use language to communicate both in spoken and written forms. Literacy is an intrinsic life skill. Functional literacy is not enough; reading ages must be aspirational and keep pace with the demands of GCSE.

Non-verbal literacy: to be literate is to be able to read and communicate in a variety of different kinds of languages and texts – visual as well as verbal.

Literacy as participation: messages, ideas, feelings and identity are all mediated through language and texts of all kinds. To be literate is to be able to take control of these forms in order to participate as a member of society.

The four Cs of literacy:

Cultural literacy – how language and texts operate in culture and society

Critical literacy – the ability to decode, interpret and respond to all kinds of language and text.

Creative literacy- the ability to use language and texts of all kinds to communicate and organise ideas and feelings, to express identity and to influence others.

Competence-the ability to control the forms, conventions and tools of communication including spelling, punctuation and grammar.

“Teachers should develop pupils’ reading ... in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge ... and be encouraged to read for pleasure.” DfE (2013)

4 Reading

4.1 Teachers have a responsibility to help students to become confident readers:

- teachers read with and to students and model reading processes in lessons and in tutor time
- teachers are aware of how to use a simple phonics approach to support early or vulnerable readers
- students are encouraged to use specific reading strategies (skimming, scanning, annotation, highlighting) and become used to making their own choice of the most appropriate strategy
- the importance of reading for pleasure and engagement is explicit throughout the academy
- the Library provides a range of easily accessible stock including subject specific reading materials relating to all curriculum areas
- teachers develop students' reading stamina by fostering the opportunity to read texts of suitable challenge independently
- teachers use questions effectively to develop students' independent reading comprehension and their access to powerful knowledge
- teachers deliver explicit vocabulary instruction that will directly impact on students' ability to comprehend and decode unseen and unfamiliar texts

Words and meanings

Teachers have a responsibility for consolidating and developing students' vocabulary:

- students are encouraged to be experimental with word choices
- students have access to dictionaries and thesauruses
- students are encouraged to use subject vocabulary with precision in both talk and writing
- the learning environment is infused with subject vocabulary
- key words and concepts are displayed in an appropriate way
- adventurous vocabulary, concept formation and debating skills are modelled and supported
- root words and etymology are taught explicitly as part of a whole school approach to literacy where appropriate

Questioning

Questioning is one of the main ways in which teachers elicit language from students.

- classroom questioning is as inclusive as possible
- students are challenged to demonstrate a growing vocabulary when listening to and responding to questions
- follow-up questions are used to probe, challenge and extend thinking
- students are encouraged to frame their own questions

5 Writing

5.1 All teachers have a responsibility to help students become confident, skilled writers who can use writing to process and organise ideas and to communicate effectively:

- students are encouraged to write clearly in a variety of forms for a variety of audiences
- students can refer to models when writing
- direct vocabulary instruction supports students to develop precision in their choice of words
- scaffolding is used to support writing as appropriate
- All writing tasks have a clear and identifiable purpose, audience and format

Spelling

Accurate spelling is important for the convincing presentation of ideas in any subject. All teachers have a responsibility to help students become confident, skilled spellers.

- correct spelling is taught and valued but not in a way that discourages students from being adventurous with vocabulary
- students are equipped with a range of strategies for remembering or inferring spellings, including retrieval practice and application of knowledge on root words and etymology
- students are encouraged to use dictionaries to check spellings

“Teachers should develop pupils’ ... writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching.” DfE (2013)

6 Speaking and Listening

6.1 All teachers have a responsibility to help students become confident, skilled speakers and listeners:

- students are routinely asked to reflect on their use of talk and the vocabulary they use
- academic talk is modelled for students
- listening is encouraged in lessons and tutor time to enhance learning with the ‘I do’ part of the session