

St Mark's Literacy Policy

The community of St Mark's believes that every individual is created by God and is precious to God. Each person is called to serve God and their neighbour and to fulfil their potential.

St Mark's is a Catholic School which has at its heart a love of God, the education of its students and a mission to serve our neighbours and community. We seek to foster a spirit of truth, reconciliation, justice and peace. We are committed to developing the spiritual, intellectual, moral, cultural, social and physical potential of all our members within a safe and supportive environment.

Philosophy

Literacy is reading, writing and communication skills and the ability to apply these skills successfully in a range of contexts and for different purposes.

Literacy development is inextricably connected with the development of the whole young person and is linked to pupils' perceptions of themselves and their world. Language is the main medium we use for learning, teaching and developing thinking, so it is at the heart of learning and teaching. Pupils' capacity to think and learn is affected by their progress in literacy. The higher the standards in literacy, the better students will achieve. Literacy is important in the development of information processing, reasoning, enquiry, creative thinking and evaluation.

The aim of teaching literacy is to equip students with the skills to:

- be able to learn through talk, from text and through writing;
- read, write and communicate with confidence, fluency, enjoyment, understanding and discrimination;
- through speaking and listening, reading and writing, develop their powers of imagination, critical awareness and understanding;
- use their skills in speaking and listening to explore, articulate and extend their knowledge and understanding of different texts, tasks and contexts;
- apply their reading and writing skills successfully and to speak articulately in a range of contexts and for different purposes.
- understand the conventions of different styles of fiction and non-fiction text types, including e-texts, and be able to use these conventions confidently as readers and writers;
- plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing from notes to a finished form and be able to use a variety of means, including ICT, to produce texts for different readerships;
- be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes;
- understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately;
- understand and be able to apply punctuation accurately;
- have fluent and legible handwriting and use ICT to assist presentation skills;
- have an interest in words, their usage and meanings and an extensive vocabulary used appropriately for different purposes.

Good literacy skills are a key factor in raising standards across all subjects and so all teachers have a responsibility for teaching literacy. All teachers need to give explicit attention to the literacy needed to learn and succeed across the curriculum. Each department needs to take responsibility for teaching the types of speaking and listening, reading and writing required by that subject. Securing the understanding of key terms of each subject area is central to the objectives of that subject. Subject teachers are in the best position to make the meaning of subject specific vocabulary come alive. Pupils should be given regular opportunities to consolidate their literacy skills by using them purposefully in order to learn. Therefore:

- literacy skills must be taught across the curriculum;
- teachers must be equipped to deal with literacy issues in their subject area generically and specifically;
- strategies to improve students' literacy skills need to be taught across the curriculum, including strategies that will improve skills for speaking and listening for learning, for accurate reading and for writing for a range of contexts and purposes;
- marking for literacy must be approached in a similar way and to the same standard;
- pupils must transfer and apply literacy skills learnt in other areas;
- expectations of accuracy and presentation are similar in all classrooms.

Whole School Priorities

Literacy teaching and the application of literacy skills is a focus across the school. The school has a whole-school marking policy which emphasises the importance of literacy and is applied consistently. There are intervention plans to support students in developing their literacy skills. Departments consider their approaches for developing students' literacy and its importance to their subject area. Reading ages go to all departments and departments consider what they need to do to support students to access texts without retreating from the challenges within texts. In preparation for assessment, teachers make explicit to the students what is being assessed in terms of literacy. Teachers understand how to mark for literacy and advise students on the next steps to improve literacy skills. The school has a common marking code for literacy which all teachers employ. Marking for literacy promotes active responses from students. Departments ensure that presentation skills and appropriate layout for written tasks are taught. There is a high priority given to Literacy Teaching and Learning by the SLT with allocated INSeT time to support Literacy Teaching and Learning and embed practice within the school. There is a Literacy and Learning co-ordinator in post with the necessary resources to ensure effective practice. Parents are aware of and involved in the school's Literacy and Learning strategies.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Parents/Carers should look at their children's books/folders so they know what advice is being given regarding literacy and encourage their children to act on advice given.

Subject Leaders and SLT

Each department's Literacy Teaching and Learning Policy will outline the responsibilities of subject teachers in raising literacy skills of students and outline the responsibilities of Subject Leaders' in monitoring and evaluating the department's progress in the area of Literacy Teaching and Learning

The SLT will support and monitor the development of students' literacy within curriculum areas as part of Line Management interviews. The SLT and Subject Leaders will focus on students' progress in their development of literacy skills as part of the School's book and diary monitoring processes.

Governors

The Governors' Curriculum Committee will support the work of the school in this area by supporting, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Whole School Literacy and Learning Policy.

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