

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar, Alford

A Selective Academy



Literacy Policy

Competence in literacy is essential to pupils accessing the curriculum and thus learning in all subjects. National research carried out in the creation of the National Literacy Strategy suggests that literacy skills are most effectively developed as part of a coherent and consistent framework, which is applied in all areas of the curriculum. Consequently, the teaching of literacy skills must be the responsibility of all teachers if pupils are not only to be equipped with the life skills they need but also empowered to meet the demands of communication skills assessment, which now account for a significant percentage of GCSE marks in a range of subjects.

It is important that those who may struggle with aspects of literacy are identified quickly, as early intervention will help pupils to access the curriculum and promote their learning. In conjunction with their professional judgement and knowledge of the pupil, teaching staff may use a range of data sources (KS2 results, VR scores, CATs, and Spelling Age Tests) to help them understand the needs of individual pupils and identify where weaker literacy skills may be hindering progression.

The English Department's Role

Whilst a whole school approach is essential to a successful literacy strategy, the English Department obviously play a key role within this. The English Department accepts responsibility for the initial teaching of the technicalities of language use: to this end, all Y7 pupils reading and spelling ages are assessed upon entry to the school and their scores shared with the SEND department who will undertake further testing where necessary. Furthermore, all pupils in Year 7 receive a weekly Literacy lesson where skills and knowledge are explicitly taught, applied to their work and assessed. Differentiation is provided to ensure that pupils can secure or extend their skills as necessary. Pupils are also given guidance with regard to their reading choices to encourage progression and development: each pupil receives a reading record containing a number of activities to complete under the guidance of their teacher as well as a recommended reading list. Focus on literacy skills will remain in Year 8 through the use of HL tasks to reinforce knowledge and understanding and, where the need arises, weekly language lessons. In the rare event that a pupil should still be experiencing difficulty with literacy in the Summer term of Year 8, arrangements may be made (where possible) to withdraw them from option subjects which they are not to continue at Key Stage 4 in order to provide intense literacy support. At Key Stage 4, any further intervention will be provided on a pupil-by-pupil basis, although key literacy skills will still form a part of all whole class teaching.

Whole School Role

In order to improve the standard of literacy throughout the school the following principles form the framework in which all learning and teaching will take place:

- **Whole School Literacy Focus** posters to be displayed in all teaching rooms, shared with parents via the Tuesday letter and referred to in marking. This will address one point of grammar or punctuation and one set of easily confused words each term. Suggestions from staff for aspects of SPaG they would like to be covered are welcomed and a box will be placed in the staffroom to allow for anonymity.
- **Schemes of work** will clearly **outline literacy skills** relevant to both the teaching of that subject and the use of Standard English. These may focus on text type, appropriate vocabulary, text structures, reading and research strategies.



Queen Elizabeth's Grammar, Alford

A Selective Academy



- **Learning and teaching** should be differentiated to meet the needs of the pupils within the group, including increased focus on literacy skills where necessary.
- **Key terms** for each subject should be referred to regularly. They should also be displayed in subject rooms.
- **Key literacy terms and rules** should also be displayed in subject rooms where literacy counts for a percentage of GCSE marks.
- **Library resources** will support and extend aspects of literacy - advising and encouraging pupils in their text choices for all subjects and in research and extension tasks.
- **Displays** throughout the school will support the need for good written English – exemplifying good work, promoting book choices and making use of 'text rich' sources.
- All aspects of literacy and **success** within it will be **valued** through daily assemblies, the merit system and Headteacher's commendations.

In addition, subject teachers are responsible for:

- **Teaching** both the spelling and understanding of specialist terms, including exam command words, the stylistic conventions of subject specific genres and the more mechanical processes such as paragraphing and punctuation. For the former, a range of techniques could be employed such as phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual and for the latter the use of modelling and exemplifying structures may prove useful;
- **Differentiation** to meet the needs of those who are Gifted and Talented, or have specific learning needs. Pupils with dyslexia, for example, will not benefit from rigorous correction of every spelling mistake and a range of support strategies can be used to help these pupils access the written word, such as a multi-sensory approach. To aid familiarity, it is useful to give pupils with specific needs, or their TA, key terms before they are used in a lesson. Please also refer to guidance on Dyslexia Friendly Strategies. The Special Needs Co-ordinator is also available to discuss further the support of these pupils;
- **Marking** where pupils have made literacy errors in their work; the table below indicates a range of symbols that can be used to indicate these.

Error	Guidance	Marginal Notation
Spelling	<p>If a word is incorrectly spelt which the marker considers to be new to the pupil, or outside their normal vocabulary, that word should be written out correctly.</p> <p>If it is felt that the pupil should know the word, attention can be drawn to this by simply highlighting the word, leaving the pupil to make the correction.</p> <p>In either case, repeated errors need only be underlined or ringed.</p>	Sp



Queen Elizabeth's Grammar, Alford

A Selective Academy



Grammar	Errors, such as incorrect agreement of subject and verb ('we was'), should be brought to the pupil's attention. Repeated errors need discussion rather than correction (or perhaps a referral to the English department).	Gr
Punctuation	If punctuation is omitted or incorrectly used, the mistake should be highlighted. In some cases correction will be possible and desirable, but weak punctuation often needs discussion with the pupil.	P
Expression	Weak or clumsy expression or a lack of sophistication necessary to gain the higher marks, rather than a specific grammatical error.	Exp
Tense	Errors and inconsistencies in the use of tenses, for example using the past and present to refer to the same situation within a sentence.	T

It is important to remember that poor literacy cannot always be attributed to laziness or haste. Furthermore, it is natural to be sensitive to comments about the way we express ourselves. Most pupils whose spelling or punctuation is weak do not need to be told so. In most cases, therefore, it is helpful to focus on one or two errors at a time. It is also important that such correction is done in an encouraging way which emphasises and values the importance of literacy.

Naturally, due to the nature of the subjects, the Modern Foreign Languages Department will encounter a number of instances where considerable correction is necessary. As far as possible, the marginal annotations for spelling, punctuation and so forth should remain consistent in order to help the pupil. However, a higher proportion of corrections are likely to be in evidence and here the frequent repetition of language specific work may form an important part of the learning process.

It is hoped that subject teachers will feel free to add their own strategies to these guidelines, should they prove effective; it is also desirable that they share these with all subject staff in order to promote the learning of that pupil in all subjects.



Queen Elizabeth's Grammar, Alford

A Selective Academy



Whole School Literacy Foci

TERM 1 – COMMAS

- **Commas** can be used to separate items in a list e.g. In my pencil case I have a pen, two pencils, a rubber, a ruler and a troll.
- **Commas** are also used to include extra information in sentences e.g. The cat, which was black and white, sat on the mat. If we take out the information between commas, the sentence will still make sense.
- **Commas** should also be used before certain connectives – for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (FANBOYS) e.g. the ice cream was tasty, but I ate too much.
- **Commas** should also be used after certain longer connectives such as however and nevertheless.

TERM 1 – PRACTICE / PRACTISE

- **Practise** is a verb meaning to do something repeatedly in order to become more skilful at it e.g. I will practise for my guitar recital". As a verb, it can take different endings e.g. he practises, we are practising, she practised.
- **Practice** is a noun meaning (1) use of a plan or method e.g. It works well in practice; (2) habit or custom e.g. It was his practice to work late on a Thursday; (3) repeated practice to develop a skill e.g. I must do my piano practice; (4) the work undertaken by a professional such as a doctor or lawyer or the building where this happens e.g. the doctors' practice was closed because of a water leak.

TERM 2 – OF / HAVE

- **Of** is a preposition and indicates the relationship between items e.g. "He is the son of the man over there." or "This is one of my pens."
- **Have** is a verb and can be used on its own as in "I have a car" or as an auxiliary (helper) verb for modal verbs such as could, should and would.
- **Would have, could have and should have** are often mistakenly written as 'would of', 'could of' or 'should of' because of the way we speak but what we are saying is the abbreviated version e.g. **would've, could've or should've**. Avoid this by writing in full Standard English – "I should have done my Home Learning last week."

TERM 2 – PARAGRAPHING

- Follow the **TiPToP** rules for paragraphing.
- **Time** – start a new paragraph when there is a change in time e.g. in the case of flashback, flash forward or later on in your story / different period in history. (This rule can also apply to the following subjects: geography).
- **Place** – start a new paragraph when you move location in your narrative, whether it's moving from inside to outside or moving to a different part of the world. (This rule can also apply to the following subjects: geography).
- **Topic** – start a new paragraph when changing point or idea in your essay / story. (This rule can also apply to the following subjects: geography, science, religious studies, business studies, MFL, D&T, music).
- **Person** – start a new paragraph when introducing a new character to your narrative / discuss a new person in your essay. This also applies when writing a dialogue – start a new line for a new speaker.





TERM 3 – COLON (:) AND SEMI-COLON (;)

- The **colon** is used to introduce items in a list e.g. the ingredients needed are: chocolate, milk, bananas and ice cream.
- The **colon** can also be used to introduce a sentence which explains something about the previous sentence e.g. the student was furious: the teacher had lost his coursework.
- The **semi-colon** can be used to break up items in a longer list e.g. she enjoyed chess which her dad had taught her; played the piano which she had been having lessons in since she was six; visiting her local wildlife sanctuary and reading science fiction novels.
- The **semi-colon** should also be used to join two sentences of equal importance which are related in meaning e.g. The cat sat on the mat; the dog sat in the basket.

TERM 3 – AFFECT/EFFECT

- **Affect** is a verb meaning to have an effect on someone or something or make a difference to them e.g. the weather may affect the plans for House Athletics. As a verb, it can take different endings e.g. he affects, we are affecting, she affected.
- **Effect** is a noun meaning (1) a change that is produced by an action or cause e.g. the effect of his actions; (2) an impression produced on a spectator or hearer e.g. the news had a positive effect.
- **Effect** can also be a verb meaning to bring about or accomplish something, but needs an object for it to make sense in this usage e.g. none of the doctors could effect a cure.

TERM 4 – APOSTROPHE (')

- The **apostrophe** has two uses – omission and possession.
- The **apostrophe for omission** shows that a letter has been missed out when two words have been pushed together to form a **contraction** e.g. I am = I'm; they are = they're; would have = would've
- The **apostrophe for possession** shows when something is owned by someone e.g. the cat's tail, Andrew's book, the car's headlights. If the noun ends in -s, you should still write -'s e.g. Mrs Thomas's shoes.
- In plural nouns which end in -s you just need to add the apostrophe e.g. the foxes' tails were bushy. In plural nouns which do not end in -s, you should add -'s e.g. the children's books.

TERM 4 – WHOSE / WHO'S

- **Who's** is a contraction of who is and the apostrophe must be used to show that the 'i' has been missed out e.g. Who's going to the party tomorrow?
- **Whose** relates to possession, or someone owning something e.g. Whose coat is that? I have an uncle whose dog was on television.



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TERM 5 – ITS / IT'S

- **Its** is a pronoun of possession e.g. the dog chased **its** tail.
- **It's** is a contraction of the words **it** and **is** e.g. **it's** raining again.
- **TIP:** if you are unsure which one to use, try saying / writing the sentence replacing its/it's with 'it is' to see if it makes sense e.g. 'the cat drank it is milk' doesn't make sense so you would use **its** but 'It is my birthday' does make sense so you could use either **it is** or **it's** depending on the level of formality in your writing.

TERM 5 – CAPITAL LETTERS

Capital letters should be used on the following occasions:

- At the start of every sentence;
- On acronyms e.g. QEGS, NHS, NASA;
- On subject names which are also languages e.g. English, French, German, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese;
- On proper nouns (words which name people, places, days and months, events) e.g. Queen Elizabeth's Grammar; John Smith; Mexico; Monday; April; Christmas.

TERM 6 – THERE / THEIR / THEY'RE

- **There** is an adverb – it indicates the position of something e.g. It is over there. It can also be used before part of a verb e.g. There are a number of shops in Alford.
- **TIP:** you can remember this definition as it has the word 'here' in it.
- **Their** is a possessive pronoun showing ownership of something e.g. Their car has broken down.
- **They're** is a contraction of 'they are' and should always contain an apostrophe in place of the missing 'a'.

TERM 6 – FULL STOP (.) / QUESTION MARK (?) / EXCLAMATION MARK (!)

- **All** sentences **must** be finished with one of these punctuation marks.
- **All** questions starting with one of *who, what, where, when, why, how* - whether they are rhetorical or expecting an answer - should be finished with a **question mark**.
- The **exclamation mark** should only be used to indicate shock or surprise, never in place of a full stop on an ordinary statement. Only one should be used at a time – multiple exclamation marks do not make a statement sound more exciting or shocking.
- All other sentences (statements) should be finished with a **full stop**.

