

Written English Policy

- 1. Rationale:** In order to promote literacy throughout the academy, all subject teachers are to concern themselves with written expression.

Departmental responsibilities: Subject teachers are responsible for teaching the spelling as well as the understanding of specialist terms. A range of techniques could be employed (phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual) in order to promote learning of the terms and understanding of their use. A multi-sensory approach can also be helpful when supporting those with literacy difficulties, or with dyslexia. The inclusion of 'Key Terms' in the Y7-9 student planners is intended to emphasise the importance of such vocabulary work to the pupils. It is useful to give pupils with specific needs, or their TA, key terms before they are to be used in a lesson, so that they can familiarise themselves with them. The English department accepts responsibility for teaching the technicalities of language use, but matters such as paragraphing and punctuation are clearly important factors of presentation in all subjects.

Staff awareness: It is important that differentiation is applied to marking the work of pupils who are either classified as "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 photocopies of handouts on different coloured paper, giving a question and then returning to the pupil later to respond to it or asking pupils to carry out reading for the lesson prior to the lesson taking place. The Special Needs Coordinator can provide information and, if necessary, guidance as to how the marking guidelines can be modified to support the needs of these pupils in particular subjects.

2. Marking:

- 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 for the pupil and **Sp** added in the margin.
- If it is felt that the pupil should know the word, attention can be drawn to this by highlighting (underlining or ringing) the word and placing **Sp** in the margin, leaving the pupil to make the correction.
- In either case, repeated errors need only be underlined or ringed.
- If punctuation is omitted or incorrectly used, a **P** should be placed in the margin and the mistake highlighted. In some cases correction will be possible and desirable, but weak punctuation often needs discussion with the pupil.
- Grammatical errors, such as incorrect agreement of subject and verb ('we was'), should be brought to the pupil's attention and **Gr** placed in the margin. Again, repeated errors of this kind need discussion rather than correction (or perhaps a referral to the English department).

3. Whole text literacy:

- *Writing Frames*: Poor literacy can also exist in the realms of understanding and adapting the whole text. The use of writing frames can assist weaker students in understanding the stylistic conventions of subject-specific genres as well as more mechanical processes such as paragraphing.
 - *Modelling*: Again, in order to facilitate understanding of the stylistic conventions of certain genres, pupils are helped by a teacher 'modelling' the writing process. This includes an explanation of the decisions that you would make as you write, for example why you would choose a particular word to signal a comparison or argument, or the way in which you would structure a topic sentence so that it relates to the question.
- 4. Comments:** Poor literacy is not always attributable to laziness or haste and it is natural to be sensitive to negative comments about the way we express ourselves. Most pupils whose spelling or punctuation is weak do not need to be told so. The most helpful approach is to focus on one or two errors only, and offer praise if these have been successfully tackled next time.

It is hoped that subject teachers will feel free to add their own strategies to these guidelines. However, experts do not support the strategy of requiring pupils to write out correct spellings more than once.