Ripon Grammar School

WHOLE SCHOOL LITERACY AND ORACY POLICY

1. POLICY

As a selective grammar school promoting academic excellence, we strive to support our students in achieving the highest levels of literacy and oracy. Though the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are all valuable in their own right, research has shown the impact that the development of each of these skills can have on one another. For this reason, this policy seeks to set out a balanced and fully integrated approach to the development of literacy and oracy across all departments and throughout all key stages of the school.

Guiding Principles:

1. Though the English department plays a vital and important role in developing literacy and oracy, disciplinary literacy must be prioritised across all subject disciplines. Students must be taught to read, write and talk like historians, scientists, economists and geographers (as well as like literary critics).

2. Though most students enter the school with strong reading skills it is important that all students continue to develop the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening throughout their time in secondary school and across all of their subject disciplines. The school must guard against complacency and must also remain alert to students with literacy needs (which can emerge later in secondary school for some students).

3. The school will continue to promote a culture of reading and celebrate the importance of oracy in all aspects of school life, both academic and pastoral. Students will be encouraged to read regularly and across a range of genres and opportunities to develop and demonstrate oracy skills will be built into school structures and systems wherever possible.

2. PROCEDURES

Reading

2.1.1 Wherever possible lessons across all subject disciplines and all key stages should provide regular opportunities for students to engage with a wide range of disciplinary texts. This should include complex academic texts, but might also include lighter thematically linked texts. Texts might include digital and audio texts as well as appropriate podcasts in order to expose students to a rich range of disciplinary language and discourse.

2.1.2 Engaging with a text should include reading individually and as a class, reading silently and aloud and reading that is led by the teacher and by students.

2.1.3 All students should be expected to be actively engaged in the reading process in class, either through reading aloud themselves or by closely following (or annotating) the text while somebody else reads.

2.1.4 Students should be encouraged to read with fluency, expression and careful pacing and teachers should model and explicitly teach these skills.

2.1.5   As well as exploring the content of disciplinary texts, subject teachers should also explicitly teach students about the features of these texts: their structure, intended audience and purpose and their vocabulary.

2.1.6   Teachers should check for comprehension either during or after reading. It is important not to confuse fluency of reading with reading comprehension.

2.1.7   Teachers should also be sensitive to the background knowledge that students might require in order to fully access and understand texts. This might include disciplinary knowledge from the topic, broader disciplinary knowledge (from earlier in the course perhaps) or non-disciplinary knowledge (such as general knowledge, cultural capital or knowledge of English idioms).

Writing

2.2.1   Wherever possible, lessons across all subject disciplines and all key stages should provide students with regular opportunities to complete appropriate extended writing tasks.

2.2.2   Where possible, students should be expected to write in full sentences and where appropriate teachers should explicitly teach and model the required skills. If we want students to successfully communicate complex ideas, we should give them regular opportunities to rehearse the use of complex sentence structures.

2.2.3   Teachers should identify and explicitly teach the tier 3 vocabulary students are required to possess and understand as they progress through the curriculum. Students' understanding of tier 3 vocabulary and spelling accuracy can be aided by teachers discussing the morphology and etymology of words as well as relevant synonyms and antonyms. Providing word lists and glossaries where appropriate will also support students' writing and comprehension.

2.2.4   Though the more complex aspects of punctuation and grammar remain the remit of the English department, all subject teachers have a responsibility for helping students to identify errors in the accuracy and fluency of their written expression.

To this end, teachers should:
- Urge students to check and proofread their work before it is submitted for marking.
- Encourage students to make use of dictionaries to check their spelling.
- Remind students that effective written communication requires legible handwriting. Carefully presented work should be advocated and praised.
- Identify basic grammatical and punctuation errors in students' work (missing capital letters, spelling mistakes, errors in tense agreement). In longer pieces of extended writing, teachers might choose to only identify those errors in a selected part of the response (e.g. the first paragraph or page).
- When returning marked work to students, teachers might discuss common errors (e.g. common misspellings or confusion of tier 3 vocabulary) and should provide students with the opportunity to engage with and respond to their feedback and make corrections.

Oracy

2.3.1   Lessons should provide very regular opportunities for students to engage in high quality structured talk using subject specific vocabulary. This might include regular opportunities for structured paired talk and group work, but can also be achieved through expecting all students to contribute fully to whole class discussions.

2.3.2   Teachers should support students by modelling high quality talk and through their high expectations of all students (for example, expecting all students to contribute and insisting on students using full

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sentences and an appropriate academic register in their responses).

2.3.3   Oracy means more than simply providing opportunities for talk: it requires teachers to explicitly teach and reinforce the features of effective talk. To this end, teachers should regularly and explicitly remind students of the features of effective talk (e.g. turn taking, active listening, using an academic register). It is particularly important that these skills are taught and established in KS3, but these expectations should be maintained and reinforced as necessary throughout all key stages.

2.3.4   Where possible, subject curricula across disciplines should include opportunities for students to engage in formal spoken language presentations or debates.

2.3.5   Where possible, teachers across subject disciplines should seek to expose students to high quality examples of disciplinary discourse, such as through the use of relevant video resources or podcasts.

3   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.3   **Senior Leaders** will:

- Lead and give a high profile to literacy, including within observation procedures and strategic developments.

- Co-ordinate and provide relevant training to ensure that teaching staff feel confident and able to promote and develop literacy and oracy across the curriculum.

3.4   **The English Department** at RGS has a leading role in providing students with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively, including:

- Identifying literacy priorities, targets and objects.

- Making literacy-related contributions to departmental & school development plans.

- Supporting the Inclusion Department in identifying students who need literacy intervention to facilitate their progress across all aspects of learning.

- Supporting teaching staff in all subject departments to facilitate the delivery of literacy skills across the curriculum.

3.5   **Heads of Department** will:

- Demonstrate in their curriculum planning how the Literacy and Oracy Policy will be applied within their subject.

- Help to monitor the delivery of the Literacy and Oracy Policy through lesson observations, learning walks and work review procedures.

3.6   **Teachers across the curriculum** contribute to students' development of language since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons.

Teachers will:

- Understand that they are all teachers of literacy

- Make referrals to the SENDCo if they have any literacy concerns about individual students.

- Model good practice in their own spoken and written English.

- Be aware of the specific language demands made upon students in their subject areas.

Whole School Literacy Policy

- Draw attention to students' spelling and grammar errors and guide them as to how they can make corrections.

- Encourage students to take ownership of and pride in their literacy standards.

- Remind students of the need to use appropriate English for the occasion, taking account of audience and purpose. They should be aware of when colloquial English is appropriate and when it is not.

- Where appropriate and in context, correct students' spoken English, as they may not be aware that they are using incorrect grammatical structures

3.5 **The Inclusion Department** will ensure that:

- Students with learning difficulties in literacy, and who require additional support, are identified and supported in order to facilitate progress across all aspects of learning.

- Literacy support is available as needed throughout school.

3.6 **The Library will support the development of literacy in the following ways:**

- By collaborating with teachers across all subject areas to embed reading and research into the curriculum and to help provide resources and expertise to enhance teaching and learning.

- By promoting a reading culture through relevant displays and reading initiatives and by encouraging students to develop positive reading habits.

- By providing a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and digital resources to support both academic and recreational reading and by ensuring that resources reflect diverse cultures, experiences and abilities.

- By supporting students in developing skills to locate, evaluate and use information effectively and responsibly, including providing guidance on research skills, references and the safe use of digital resources.

- By maintaining the library as a safe and welcoming space where students are encouraged to read, explore and grow as independent learners.

B Fearnley
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