



# HILBRE HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES COLLEGE

## LITERACY POLICY

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Date to be reviewed:

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## OUR VISION:

At Hilbre, we believe that literacy and communication are essential life skills. As literacy is central to students' academic, emotional and social development, it should be at the heart of any curriculum. We want our students to develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through both the spoken and written language and finally, equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners and capable citizens.

Successful approaches to the teaching of reading and literacy should encourage students to employ a variety of strategies in their pursuit of knowledge acquisition, application and recall. To this end, our Literacy policy is of the utmost importance, and is a vision shared by all staff and students at Hilbre.

**'Within the traditional, silo-structure of secondary schools, students navigate hour-by-hour a curriculum featuring distinct texts from varying disciplines. This requires students to become a variety of readers, writers, and performers.'**  
*The Importance of Disciplinary Literacy, 2016.*

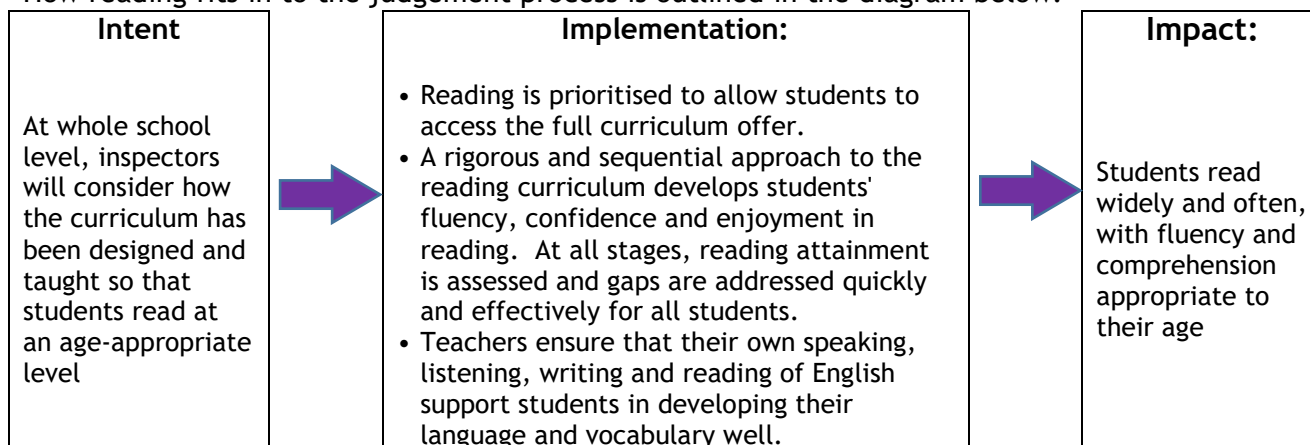
## AIMS:

- Ensure all staff are advocates for 'disciplinary literacy'- continually highlighting the importance of both through the implementation of clear, simple strategies.
- Ensure that staff have the tools to effectively teach, embed and consequently raise standards of literacy in their individual classrooms. Underpinning this will be a focus on: closing the word gap through targeted vocabulary work; promoting fluency in reading and proficiency in oracy, and finally; ensuring students have the reading stamina and resilience to close read even the most challenging of texts, ultimately giving them the best possible chance of success with the rigour and demand of the reformed GCSEs and A-Levels.
- Ensure students are equipped with the appropriate tools to read, write and speak to a standard that is required for success at Hilbre, in further education and in the demanding job market.
- To every reasonable end, aim to secure a basic standard of literacy for all students, removing possible barriers through a programme of manageable, targeted and measurable interventions (both within and outside of the classroom).

## CONTEXT:

In 2019, Ofsted released the final version of their new inspection framework. Under the new 'Quality of Education' judgement, inspectors will now explore how well students read, enabling them to access a full and rich curriculum. This new judgement will also allow Ofsted to recognise secondary schools which encourage students to read widely and deeply. In secondary schools, they will be interested in how far the curriculum accommodates the local context of students, in particular, how it equips students with the literacy skills that may be lacking from home environments, that is, how a school will equip students with the necessary 'cultural capital' that puts students on a more level playing field. As a school, we will need to address the strong links between reading, academic, social and emotional success.

How reading fits in to the judgement process is outlined in the diagram below:



### How to Improve Literacy

*The Education Endowment Foundation lists 7 strategies to improve literacy in secondary schools (July 2019):*

1. *Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum.*
2. *Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject.*
3. *Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts.*
4. *Break down complex writing tasks.*
5. *Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject.*
6. *Provide opportunities for structured talk.*
7. *Provide High Quality Literacy interventions for struggling students.*



1

Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum



- Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.
- Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.
- All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.
- School leaders can help teachers by ensuring training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity over general approaches.

2

Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject



- Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.
- Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words.
- Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech.
- Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning.

3

Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts



- Training focused on teaching reading is likely to help secondary school teachers teach their subject more effectively.
- To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.
- Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning can improve students' comprehension.
- Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.

4

Break down complex writing tasks



- Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.
- Teachers can break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and can support students by modelling each step.
- Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality.
- Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and paired writing, to motivate students to write.

5

Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject



- Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.
- Reading helps students gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen students' understanding of ideas.
- Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.
- Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve students' writing, particularly when focused on meaning.

6

Provide opportunities for structured talk



- Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning.
- High quality talk is typically well-structured and guided by teachers.
- Accountable talk is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality, and emphasises how talk can be subject specific.
- Teachers can support students by modelling high quality talk, for example including key vocabulary and metacognitive reflection.

7

Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students



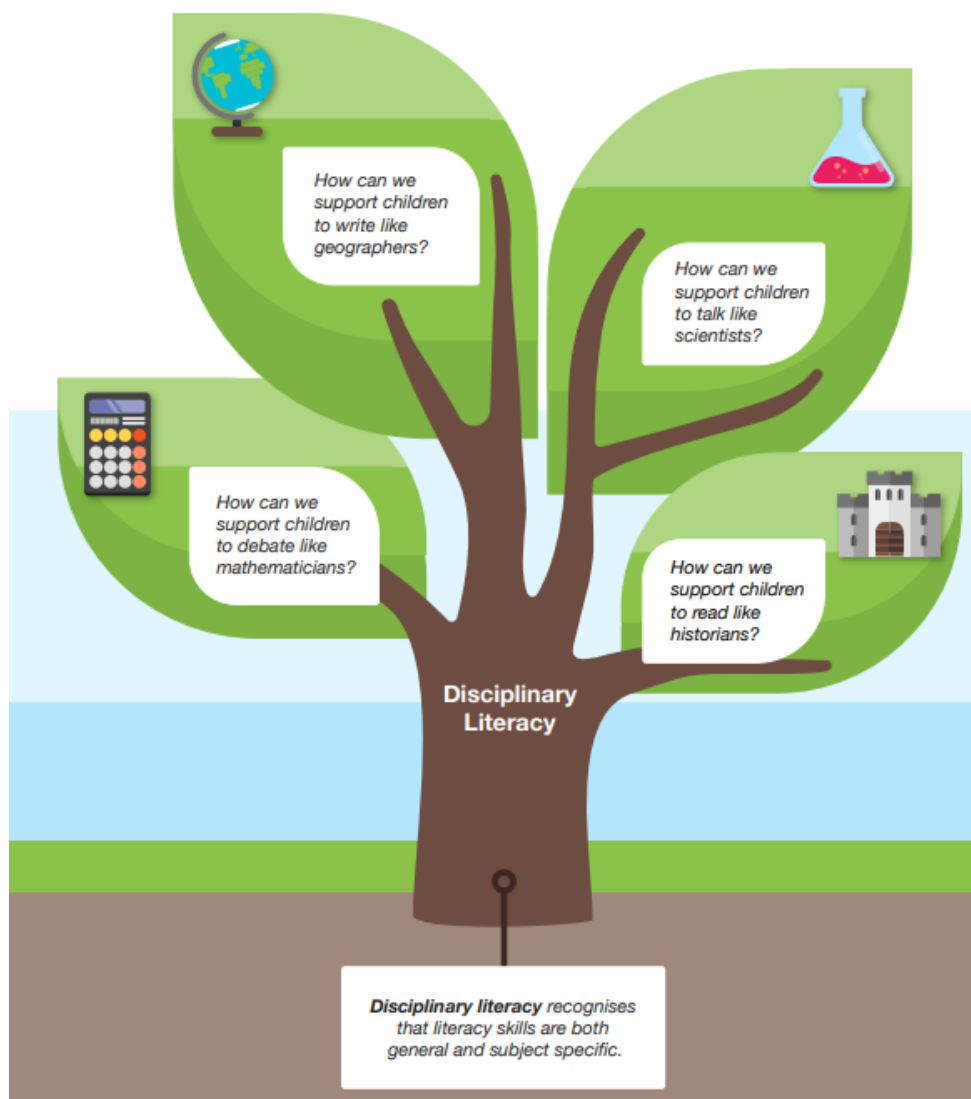
- Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7.
- Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach.
- Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.
- Creating a co-ordinated system of support is a significant challenge requiring both specialist input and whole school leadership.



## What is Disciplinary Literacy?

At Hilbre, we believe that ‘disciplinary literacy’ reflects our school’s togetherness and allows opportunity for staff with subject specific knowledge to tailor literacy for their subject.

Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers in every subject to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.



## **How can School Leaders Prioritise Disciplinary Literacy? (EEF, 2019)**




Secondary teachers are likely to have experienced a significant amount of training focused on literacy or been asked to support new whole school literacy initiatives, yet many teachers feel ill-equipped to improve literacy outcomes in their subject area. Teachers have recognised the importance of literacy and strategies promoted as ‘literacy across the curriculum’, but this, often, does not translate into the successful application of literacy in their subject discipline.

- **Auditing existing literacy practices**, attitudes, and resources in school—involving both teachers and students; this could include an evaluation of existing literacy policies and roles such as the literacy coordinator.
- **Creating subject specific literacy plans**, rooted in the discipline, that address barriers to accessing the curriculum related to reading, writing and communication.

- **Supporting teachers to define effective reading, writing, and talk** in their subjects; for example, history teachers might discuss what reading strategies are deployed by historians to appraise historical sources.
- **Evaluating the quality and complexity of existing reading materials** in school, assessing the degree of academic challenge such texts pose to our secondary school students as they progress through school; relating this to baseline data of students' reading ability.
- Ensuring that the development of disciplinary literacy is coherently **aligned with curriculum development** - for example, in Art, that the development of drawing skill is paired with teaching students how to make high quality annotations utilising specialist vocabulary.



## LITERACY PLAN 2020-2021

<p>Autumn term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise ‘disciplinary literacy’ across the curriculum.</li> <li>• Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for structured talk.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students at Hilbre High School will be taught specific vocabulary in each subject and will have opportunities in AFT for high quality structured Talk.</b></p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Each department will be responsible for literacy within their subject.</li> <li>2) Each department will embed Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary into their curriculum planning. In class, teachers should encourage students to use their specific higher order vocabulary in their written and oral responses.</li> <li>3) In AFT, students will have opportunities to engage in high quality talk with the Form Tutor about a range of themes, issues and events.</li> <li>4) CPD sessions for staff focusing on teaching strategies to embed sophisticated subject terminology within lessons.</li> </ol> 
<p>Spring term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop students’ ability to read complex academic texts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students at Hilbre High School will be taught how to comprehend complex texts and actively engage with that they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.</b></p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Through increasing the vocabulary range of students with well-planned lessons looking at higher order vocabulary.</li> <li>2) CPD sessions for staff specifically for developing students as strategic readers.</li> <li>3) At the end of the term, each subject will have an end of unit homework that focuses on a piece of academic writing.</li> <li>4) CPD sessions for staff on the different reading pedagogical framework.</li> <li>5) In AFT, students will have opportunities to engage in high quality talk with the Form Tutor about a range of themes, issues and events.</li> </ol> 
<p>Summer term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop students’ ability to break down complex writing tasks.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students at Hilbre High School will be taught how to break down complex writing, breaking writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation.</b></p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Developing and using literacy mats/knowledge organisers with sentence starters and paragraph stems to aid extended writing tasks.</li> <li>2) Creating a checklist of features included in high quality answers or using it as a self or peer assessment tool.</li> <li>3) Provide opportunities for students to showcase their writing in real world contexts (Writing Blog, newsletter, competitions etc.) Celebrating and rewarding successful writing.</li> <li>4) CPD sessions for staff focusing on teaching strategies to improve extended writing activities within the classroom.</li> <li>5) In AFT, students will have opportunities to engage in high quality talk with the Form Tutor about a range of themes, issues and events.</li> </ol> 

## LITERACY LEARNING JOURNEY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:

Year Groups	DEAR/AFT Programme	Competitions, Whole School Events and Rewards	Teaching Strategies
7, 8, 9, 10, 11	<p>The Great Debate - students will engage in discussions with Form Teachers on important issues at the time and develop oracy skills.</p> <p>Word of the week on Monday morning each week - topical based on what the students will be discussing in The Great Debate.</p> <p>DEAR timetabled once per week for 20 minutes. The students, with their Form Teachers, will read an extract that focuses on an issue and engage in high quality discussions about the reading.</p> <p>DEAR. Reward points for participation.</p> <p>Once every 4 weeks, the students get to pick an issue that they would like to class to discuss in The Great Debate.</p>	<p>Visible Literacy noticeboards throughout the school.</p> <p>Reading logs sent home to parents/carers to encourage more reading at home.</p> <p>Newsletter to include book recommendations for students.</p> <p>Annual summer reading challenge launch to prevent summer slide in reading - reward linked to competition.</p> <p>Literacy awards for the end of year.</p> <p>World Book Day and other literacy related events marked and celebrated as a whole school (Refugee Week/Mental Health Week/Assemblies/National Poetry Day, etc.)</p> <p>Promotion of online Literacy games.</p> <p>Half-termly competitions e.g. Free Write, Spoken English and Exploding word activities.</p> <p>Debate and Newspaper Clubs.</p> <p>National Writing/Speaking competition entries.</p>	<p>Literacy 'Do Now' tasks within lessons.</p> <p>Tiered vocabulary instruction in each subject.</p> <p>Whole School reading and literacy updates announced on Mondays and Fridays.</p> <p>CPD Sessions dedicated to delivering high quality training to staff.</p> <p>Each subject having an end of unit homework that focuses on a piece of academic writing.</p> <p>Reading strategies to be incorporated into lessons for more difficult texts.</p> <p>Developing and using Literacy Mats/Knowledge organisers with sentence starters and paragraph stems to aid extended writing tasks.</p> <p>Creating a checklist of features included in high quality answers or using it as a self or peer assessment tool.</p>

Years 12 and 13	TBC  The A Level mindset - a programme for AFT in for Key Stage 5 to engage in high quality discussions.  Quotes that impacted the World. Every Monday, a new quote will be sent to Key Stage 5 Form Teachers to share.	TBC	TBC
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## Marking For Literacy:

- Subject Leaders must ensure their departmental feedback policy is in line with the school's marking and feedback policy.
- Subject Leaders and SLT undertake quality assurance of written work to ensure feedback is allowing students to progress their learning. This may involve learning walks, informal conversations, book scrutiny, department meetings and staff voice etc.
- Subject Leaders will check departmental feedback as part of quality assurance process. Line Managers will regularly discuss and evaluate the quality of feedback during meetings and take steps to rectify issues, where necessary.

SYMBOL	MEANING
© or <i>sp</i>	Check the spelling and write it correctly three times
C	You need a capital letter
D	You need more detail
? or ~	Point made/answer is not clear
P	Incorrect punctuation (e.g. full stops, commas, etc.)

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION: STUDENTS AND INTERVENTION:

- All students will be baseline assessed in terms of their reading and spelling at the start of the academic year when they join the school in Year 7. Following this baseline assessment, this will determine the reading programme they are placed on as well as if they need further intervention.
- *For students (who require more literacy intervention) their progress will be measured on a termly basis through the Lexia programme. TBC*

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION: THE LITERACY POLICY:

- Learning walks.
- Book scrutiny.
- AFT walks.
- Discussions with students, staff, parents/carers and governors.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **Assistant Headteacher - Teaching and Learning:**

- To monitor literacy provision through lesson observation, learning walks, scheme of learning reviews and departmental reviews.
- Provide training opportunities for staff to improve their skills in delivering explicit teaching of literacy.
- To monitor and evaluate literacy provision across the school.

### **Literacy Coordinator:**

- To lead, maintain and ensure literacy is an important focus across the school.
- To analyse reading age data and review this regularly.
- Provide practical tips and ideas for staff to implement into their lessons and AFT.
- To support staff to implement literacy activities into their scheme of work.
- To implement literacy initiatives within school, in order to raise the profile of literacy.

### **Teachers:**

- To understand and fully support the notion that the teaching of literacy is the responsibility of all teachers.
- Model the highest standards of literacy through teaching and any learning resources produced.
- Liaise with any intervention support so that any literacy needs are identified swiftly and are specific so that any interventions are timely and effective.
- Contribute to students' development of language, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons.
- Ensure all lessons include a literacy element.

### **Support Staff:**

- Support literacy needs of the students.
- Work to support teaching staff with the promotion of literacy skills.
- Contribute to the development of literacy within the school.

### **Parents/carers:**

- Encourage their children to read at home.
- Encourage the development of literacy skills.
- Engage with school literacy initiatives.

### **Students:**

- Take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements.
- Celebrate achievements in literacy.
- Read at home regularly and across a variety of genres.
- Persevere when reading more challenging texts, ie. they may use strategies like looking for visual clues in accompanying pictures, photos or diagrams to assist in their understanding.
- Respect for others when communicating, even when views differ.
- Attempt spellings, even if only part of the word or a guess.