

Hurworth School Whole School Literacy Policy

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Lead Reviewer: Head of English

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The definition of literacy is, "The ability to use language effectively." This means that all parts of language are important and this incorporates the need to speak, listen, read and write to a certain functioning level. A lot of emphasis is placed on reading and writing in this document but a child needs to hone their listening and speaking skills too and can do this if we, as a school, allow opportunities for this to happen. In each subject area there are plenty of opportunities to develop and use these skills. Becoming functional in a language means that a person can use all four areas competently and use language in an appropriate way depending on the situation.

People end up with literacy skills at different levels (as they do with all specific skills). Someone might have an excellent portfolio of literacy skills which allows them to function highly but every child needs to be able to function in the real world in an occupation where they feel comfortable and hopefully fulfilled. They need basic literacy skills to be able to access their intelligence and to be able to show competency in their chosen field.

This policy outlines the strands we are working on as a school.

Spelling

Spelling is still a very important skill as words **are** words because of their spelling. Often pupils' handwriting is poor because they are trying to cover up poor spelling. The correct spelling of words is an incredibly important functional skill and one which will make them feel confident (or not) in the outside world.

All Key Stage 3 pupils take a spelling test at the start of every half term. The spellings are set via ILTs and are repeated at the end of every half term.

When we mark a piece of work we correct **some** spellings. In any given piece of work only correct up to three spellings at a time. These correct spellings need to be found by the pupil, who must then copy these three times each and then cover and check a fourth time. We use the abbreviation *Sp* and circle the spelling mistake so that the pupils know which words they need to do. This will not teach those spelling rules but it will help them with personal spellings and this, hopefully, will lead to improvements as the "impression" of the spelling, by copying, will remain with them. Pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries as part of the planning process to create word banks. Spellings are assessed as part of every key writing assessment throughout KS3 and KS4 and are monitored and tracked via the relevant marking tokens.

Drafting – redrafting and re-reading work.

Some of our pupils think that once a piece of work is finished that it is completed. They usually hand it in without re-reading it and therefore the work contains many problems of grammar, syntax and punctuation, which we then correct. There are more complicated issues that they will not be able to pick up on (which we will correct) but many mistakes can be avoided by the pupil by simply re-reading their work.

We have extended our writing focuses to include drafting and rewriting. This will provide a focus on these important skills in English lessons.

Key words

The correct spelling and the use of key words in your areas are essential skills and there are many ways of introducing these to your students e.g. word walls, word lists in their books etc. It is a departmental responsibility that the pupils know and use these words with the correct spellings to enable them to use them competently in the exams. You can introduce words with a topic – and this helps to break down the long lists that we often see. At KS3 we have weekly writing challenges – these target a range of writing tasks and include key vocabulary and writing devices to boost vocabulary and spelling. At KS4 we have fortnightly writing challenges that target writing for purpose and audience and also boost key vocabulary and SPaG.

Reading Books

Registration: Key Stage 3 pupils have a literacy session once a week during registration. Accelerated Reader runs for the whole of Key Stage 3 and students' reading during this time will contribute towards their progress on this scheme. Tutors are requested to “take charge” of this reading session by either reading and letting pupils follow or allowing pupils to read around the class. In addition to this, there are further sessions dedicated to the discussion of current affairs. This promotes and offers the opportunity to practice speaking and listening skills.

The Library

There is a fiction library situated in Room 29 that is open every morning from 8.50 – 9.10 for borrowing or quiet reading. Library books are recorded on a Library Spreadsheet. Pupils are allowed to read their own books but must complete the star tests on them once completed. We encourage students to use the free plastic wallets to help increase the life of the books.

Pupils and parents can browse our library from home at www.arbookfind.com

and enter our code: **MK730488**. This online catalogue provides information on the book level and points along with a plot summary and picture of the front cover. You can also search by author, title, book level, interest level and genre. The catalogue does not, however, give stock information. The book your child chooses may be already on loan. You can also look on this website without using the code if you want to search for a book that you have at home which your child might want to use as your school reading book.

Handwriting Guidelines

Pupils come to us with a specific style which has been taught to them by their primary school. When they come to us they realise that we don't really mind what style they use as long as it is neat and legible. We don't need every child's writing to be the same but there has to be basic rules that the pupils know they cannot break. This gives us something to work with and basic steps for improvement in the pupils' work. Please ask for guidelines or guideline booklets if necessary. Remember, we want handwriting to be **legible** and the student should look to **improve** on a style that is not.

We need to continually strive for improvements in handwriting as students can only optimise their potential if the examiners can understand their handwritten work. If they present work to you which is unacceptable then this should be re-copied. There is a marking token to help you focus their work which could go in every exercise book if you feel this is appropriate.

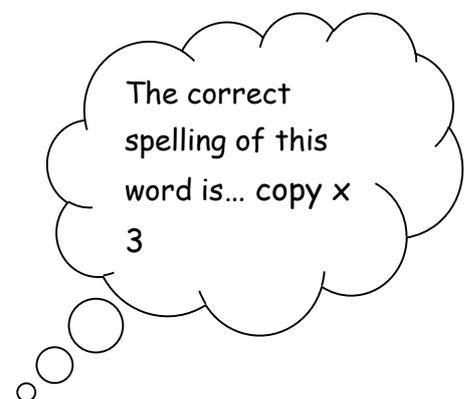
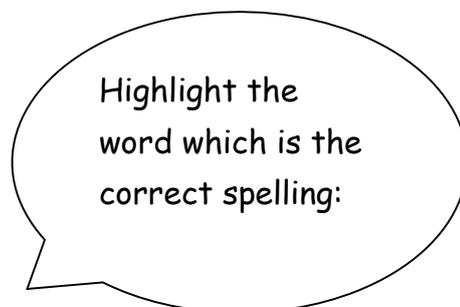
Handwriting Rules

- Always write on the line.
- Make sure your tall letters go $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up from the line e.g. l, h, t
- Make sure all your downward letters go $\frac{3}{4}$ way down the line e.g. g, y, p
- Close all round letters e.g. o, a, p, q, b, d
- Always use a capital "I" when you write about yourself, even if it is in the middle of a sentence.
- No text writing!
- Make sure you dot your letter "i" – do NOT put a circle, cross, love heart etc on top!
- Make a difference between capital and small letters.

Spelling Guidelines

Remember to correct common mistakes but not more than 3 per piece of work. Ask the pupils to write them out 3 times each and use the cover and check process. You may want to use this marking token to write the spellings, or alternatively you could create one for your own department.

Below are some examples of different approaches you could use.



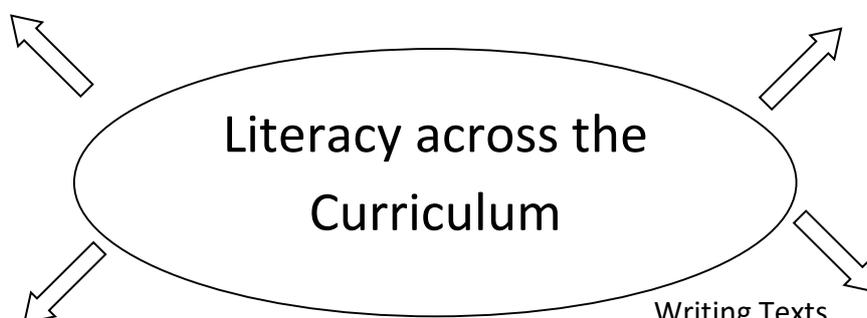
The following drop is everything we do in departments. All teachers discuss this as a department and make sure everyone understands the content of this document.

Other areas

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Understanding of other cultures and their language patterns
- Use of drops, double bubbles and model maps to plan

Reading Text

- Decoding/understanding
- Scanning
- Interpreting
- Deducing
- Explaining
- Synthesising
- Viewpoint of the writer



Spoken English

- Extended (alone)
- Discussions
- Role-plays
- Interviews
- Pair-work
- Group-work
- Performance
- Use of appropriate English in recounting, explaining, analysis, explanation

Writing Texts

- Extended
- Explanation texts
- Report texts
- Discursive (discussion texts)
- Instruction texts
- Entertainment texts
- Recount texts
- Summarising text
- Imaginative texts e.g. poems, plays, stories

Remember that texts are not just written – anything that communicates a message to someone is a text, so if you use video, internet, listening activities, etc. in your class you are asking the pupils to interpret and analyse a text.

Marking Tokens:

The Literacy Marking Token was a whole school initiative to maintain focus on literacy standards across the curriculum. The token is an exemplar that can be adapted to suit your subject or the ability of the students undergoing the assessment (there are several examples in 'Literacy' in 'Staff Resources'). We ask that each subject use this token for at least one assessment per term.



Marking Token

| 1 – Excellent 2 – Needs improvement 3 – Inadequate | | Future Targets |
|--|---|--|
| Spellings | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify misspelled words and copy them out 3 times Find correct spellings from a dictionary Peer mark for spellings |
| | 2 | |
| | 3 | |
| Grammar | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full Stops Capital letters Commas |
| | 2 | |
| | 3 | |
| Punctuation | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to use the following pieces of punctuation in your next assessment: Highlight as applicable |
| | 2 | |
| | 3 | |
| Paragraphs | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise your work into paragraphs by topic Sequence your work to shape your ideas Use PEE within your paragraphs |
| | 2 | |
| | 3 | |
| Connectives | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using more interesting opening connectives at the start of your paragraphs Target connectives within your paragraphs |
| | 2 | |
| | 3 | |

Reading ages are available on the school system for Years 7, 8 and 9. Staff should be aware of these and use these to differentiate tasks according to ability.

Lastly, please don't forget that we are an incredibly rich source of Literacy to our students. They may not hear correct grammar or pronunciation at home so it is imperative that we give them a very wide range of experiences here. Extending their vocabulary is an obvious one but even what is appropriate as far as "tone" and voice control goes is an area where pupils often have issues. Knowing how to act in situations where spoken English is needed is an incredible functional skill to acquire. Good manners are an insight into a person's personality and are only accessible through their use of appropriate language so it is important to keep re-teaching these skills in class, on the corridors and in the canteen.