




# Literacy Policy

Adopted by Netherhall School Governing Body

on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023

Signed:  (Neil Watt, Chair of Governors)

Date by which the policy was last reviewed: Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022

Anticipated review date: Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

## Equality Act 2010

Our school is committed to equality both as an employer and a service provider. We welcome our general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. In addition, we recognise our specific duties to publish information every year about our school population; explain how we have due regard for equality; publish equality objectives which show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities and reduce or remove them.

We recognise our duty to ensure no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age, any disability they may have, their ethnicity, colour or national origin, their gender identity or reassignment, their marital or civil partnership status, being pregnant or having recently had a baby, their religion or belief, their sexual identity and orientation. We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion and British values.

## **Introduction**

Netherhall School is committed to raising the standards of literacy of all of our students, so that they develop the ability to use these skills effectively in all areas of the curriculum, and as a platform to cope confidently with the demands of further education, employment and adult life. As such, this policy should be read in conjunction with the whole school approach to disciplinary literacy.

## **Rationale: “Every Teacher is a Teacher of English”**

Literacy is central to the whole school curriculum and is at the forefront of every lesson at Netherhall, regardless of the subject discipline. This principle is evident in our one-page overview of how we teach disciplinary literacy at the school. Through the emphasis we place on developing students’ skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, thinking and exploring ideas, we aim to help them to become the best of independent learners. Our focus is on helping students to express themselves articulately, both orally and in writing. All staff, including the school librarian, all teachers and teaching assistants have a crucial role to play in supporting students’ literacy development. **(Teaching Standard 3.3 Demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher’s specialist subject).**

It is clearly understood that poor levels of literacy impact negatively on what students can achieve and have a negative impact on their self-esteem. Conversely, competent literacy skills enable students not only to achieve well in examinations, but to be able to communicate effectively and precisely in their lives now and in the future.

## **The Policy in Action**

*Our policy has been informed by the recommendations put forward by the Education Endowment Foundation. The summary of recommendations document is provided for reference in the appendix.*

### **Learning through oracy – our key areas:**

- Using talk to explore issues, concepts, idea and feelings.
- Adapting structure and vocabulary according to purpose and audience.
- Listening and responding to others.

In order to achieve these objectives, our planning will include specific reference to purposeful oracy-based activities. This includes, as appropriate:

- Using a range of strategies to engage students in oracy-based activities.
- Ensuring that oracy-based activities have a clear sense of purpose, which is fully understood by students.
- Planning for explicit teaching of oracy skills.
- Modelling effective examples of successful oracy for students.
- Challenging students to extend their thinking through skilled questioning.
- Evaluating oracy-based activities through verbal staff feedback, peer and self-assessment.

We will provide opportunities for structured talk, both inside and outside of the classroom.

### **Learning through reading - our key areas:**

- Developing research skills and the ability to skim and scan – reading for information.
- Reading for meaning – thinking about what has been read.
- Understanding the importance of purpose or intention.

In order to achieve these objectives, our planning will include specific reference to purposeful reading activities. This includes, as appropriate:

- Improving the students' reading diet by using high quality reading materials which are up to date, authentic and challenging.
- Modelling how to read texts, utilising the whole school strategy of reciprocal reading to clarify, question and summarise meaning, depending on the purpose of the reading.
- Developing students' skills in understanding the importance of the writer's purpose or intentions.
- Using the whole school strategy of reciprocal reading to develop students' ability to understand, describe, select or retrieve information from texts.
- Ensuring that there are effective displays of reading material in classrooms and social areas, relevant to each subject area – including subject specific vocabulary which students are encouraged to use regularly.
- Ensuring that access to thesauruses, dictionaries, glossaries and lists of appropriate subject vocabulary etc. are readily available during lessons.
- Encouraging students to read for pleasure and enjoyment through mediums, such as the '10-in-10' challenges at Key Stage Three and the weekly nominations of *Champion Readers*.

We will prioritise disciplinary literacy across the curriculum; provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject, utilising mediums such as *Never Heard the Word* grids and active engagement tools of *Bedrock Mapper* and *Plickers* to improve student knowledge and retention of key vocabulary; develop students' ability to read complex texts; and provide high-quality literacy interventions for struggling students.

### **Learning through writing – our key areas:**

- Writing accurately.
- Writing with a sense of purpose and audience.
- Structuring writing effectively.

In order to achieve these objectives, our planning will include specific reference to purposeful writing activities. This includes, as appropriate:

- Implementing the school's "I CAN" (completion / accuracy / neatness – copy available in the appendix) approach to improving presentation and organisation of written work.
- Developing students' skills in structuring their work clearly, sequencing their writing effectively, and using and linking paragraphs.
- Developing students' ability to write in a variety of forms by explicitly teaching the conventions of those forms in terms of structure and style.
- Ensuring that students develop the skills of adapting their writing to suit specific purpose and audiences.
- Developing use of an increasingly wide range and technical subject specific vocabulary.
- Modelling examples of good practice in specific types of writing.
- Engaging students in the use of strategies to help with the spelling of subject specific vocabulary.
- Ensuring that the need for technical accuracy in all written work is emphasised before writing begins, and again before work is submitted, and that the whole school strategies are implemented.

We will break down complex writing tasks; combine writing instruction with reading in every subject; and provide high-quality literacy interventions for struggling students.

### **Marking for Literacy – marking with sensitivity and with clear impact in mind**

When marking students' written work for literacy, it is essential to use professional judgement regarding the frequency of errors marked, and the way in which we expect students to respond. This will depend on each individual student's ability and confidence in correcting their own work, particularly when dealing with students with dyslexia. It is essential that we help them to improve without overwhelming them. However, as a staff, we will generally adhere to the following:

- Following the appropriate level of teacher input regarding structure, purpose and audience (see writing section above), remind students to take care with technical accuracy.
- Before students submit written work, give a reminder – and time - for them to make a final check for any basic technical errors.
- Depending on the length and style of the writing, use the marking annotations as outlined below for the first paragraph – or approximately ten lines of writing – and indicate where you have stopped marking by using a \* in the margin.
- As a guide, on a typical page of writing, correct only three examples of key errors and then instruct the students in a comment at the end of their work, to carry out further corrections themselves, as indicated below.
- When work is returned, build in to the lesson reflection time for students to make corrections and identify any further similar errors in their own work.
- Check how effectively this has been done when the work is next submitted, or by discussing with students during the lesson.
- If appropriate, ensure students leave space at the end of their work to address any issues.

### **Literacy Intervention**

At the start of the academic year, pupils in years 7-9 are tested to assess reading and spelling ages through the use of GL NGRT and NGST online assessments. Those pupils identified with a significant discrepancy between test and chronological ages are selected for intervention, to support improvements in these fundamental areas. Interventions in spelling and both through reciprocal reading with a specialist teacher or teaching assistant and paired reading with older students are carried out during regular morning registration sessions and pupils are re-tested towards the end of the term, to measure improvement.

Further, more specific interventions, through *Read Write Inc's Fresh Start* programme, are offered to pupils who appear to have very specific needs in terms of either using phonics to decode literacy or recognising phonic blends in spelling. The planning and implementation of these programmes are done in liaison with both the school's SENDCO and phonics lead. All interventions are having a positive effect on improving basic levels of literacy in school.

### **Whole-school strategies**

From 2019-20, the school have introduced initiatives aimed to increase the awareness of the importance of literacy. These include *Word of the Week* and *Spelling of the Week* (examples provided in appendix). *Word of the Week* seeks to increase student vocabulary, specifically Tier 2 words which appear more frequently in written language than in spoken language; whilst *Spelling of the Week* helps students to identify patterns. We share the roots of vocabulary, increasing awareness of word families and etymology, offering appropriate synonyms and antonyms. Each week, a new word and spelling is shared with all students through corridor display. Form tutors share these with their form groups and students are awarded achievement points for using them in their work. Crucially, individual teachers will make suggestions for future weeks informed by their marking and identification of common errors in student work.

*Never Head the Word* grids (example provided in appendix) have been introduced to encourage students to increase their command of subject-specific vocabulary through the promotion of Tier 3 words: those which relate to specific fields of knowledge, such as the sciences. Each half-term, students complete a grid focused on between 10-15 words identified by the class teacher at the beginning of a new unit. Students are encouraged to openly discuss whether or not they recognise the word; if they can use it in the correct context; and if they can provide a definition. *Never Heard the Word* grids help to provide a clear focus on subject-specific vocabulary which is necessary to succeed on class assessments and

homework tasks. This strategy is implemented across the curriculum at Netherhall School and is a resource students have become very familiar with. These are used in tandem with active engagement

### Marking for Literacy – Staff Guide

In Margin	Meaning	Guidance
<b>CL</b>	<b>Capital letter or used incorrectly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle missed capital</li> <li>• Write CL in margin</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students correct by writing over the error</li> <li>• Students check rest of work</li> </ul>
<b>Sp</b>	<b>Spelling mistake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle the part of the work that is incorrect</li> <li>• Write Sp in margin</li> <li>• Focus firstly on subject specific vocabulary / basic errors</li> <li>• Depending on the complexity of the words then...</li> </ul>
		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>For the less confident students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff write the correct spelling above the incorrect word</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student writes correctly at the bottom of work</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>More confident students:</p> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student finds the correct spelling</li> <li>• Student writes above word and writes correctly at the bottom of work</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>
<p>For the less confident students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff write the correct spelling above the incorrect word</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student writes correctly at the bottom of work</li> </ul>	<p>More confident students:</p> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student finds the correct spelling</li> <li>• Student writes above word and writes correctly at the bottom of work</li> </ul>	
<b>??</b>	<b>Meaning not clear/ sentence muddled</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline the part of any sentence which doesn't read well or is not grammatically correct</li> <li>• Write ?? in the margin</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student writes the correct work at the bottom of work</li> </ul>
<b>NSE</b>	<b>Non-Standard English</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline the word</li> <li>• Write NSE in the margin</li> <li>• Write standard English alternative above the word e.g. "friend" instead of "mate"</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student writes the correct word at bottom of work</li> </ul>
<b>P</b>	<b>Punctuation missed or used incorrectly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle the misused or missing punctuation</li> <li>• Write P in the margin</li> <li>• Correct or add the appropriate piece of punctuation</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student checks the rest of work for similar errors</li> </ul>
<b>Λ</b>	<b>Word missing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write symbol in where the word has been missed</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student inserts the missing word(s)</li> </ul>
<b>// NP</b>	<b>New paragraph</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the symbol at the point in the text where the new paragraph should have been taken</li> <li>• Write NP in the margin</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student checks the rest of the work for any similar errors and indicates with the same symbols</li> </ul>
<b>FS</b>	<b>Write in full sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline the sentence which needs to be corrected</li> <li>• Write FS in the margin</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student re-writes the sentence in full at the bottom of work</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	<b>Wrong tense used</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline the word or sentence</li> <li>• Write T in the margin</li> </ul> <p>In reflection time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student re-writes the word or sentence and checks the rest of the work for similar errors</li> </ul>

tools, such as *Bedrock Mapper* and *Plickers*, to ensure that teachers are not solely dependent on a single vocabulary instruction method, as educational research tells us this will not result in optimal learning for our students.

## Improving My Writing – My Response to Teacher Corrections – Student’s Guide

<b>In Margin</b>	<b>This Means</b>	<b>My Teacher Will</b>	<b>I Will</b>
<b>CL</b>	<b>Capital letter or used incorrectly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle the missed capital letters</li> <li>• Circle if I have used a capital letter incorrectly</li> <li>• Write CL in the margin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the correction over the mistake</li> <li>• Check and correct the rest of my work</li> </ul>
<b>Sp</b>	<b>Spelling mistake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle the part of the word that is incorrect</li> <li>• Write Sp in the margin</li> <li>• Write the correct spelling above the incorrect word – or leave it for me to correct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find the correct spelling if required and write the correction above the word</li> <li>• Write the correction at the end of my work</li> </ul>
<b>??</b>	<b>Meaning not clear/ sentence muddled</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline the part of any sentence which doesn’t read well or is not grammatically correct</li> <li>• Write ?? in the margin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write an improved version of the sentence once at the bottom of my work</li> </ul>
<b>NSE</b>	<b>Non-Standard English</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline the word</li> <li>• Write NSE in the margin</li> <li>• Write standard English alternative above the word e.g. “friend” instead of “mate”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the correct word at the bottom of my work</li> </ul>
<b>P</b>	<b>Punctuation missed or used incorrectly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle the misused or missing punctuation</li> <li>• Write P in the margin</li> <li>• Correct or add the appropriate piece of punctuation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the rest of my work for similar mistakes and correct them myself</li> </ul>
<b>Λ</b>	<b>Word missing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write symbol in where the word has been missed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert the missing word(s)</li> </ul>
<b>// NP</b>	<b>New paragraph</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the symbol at the point in the text where the new paragraph should have been taken</li> <li>• Write NP in the margin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the rest of my work for any similar mistakes and indicate with the same symbols</li> </ul>
<b>FS</b>	<b>Write in full sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline the sentence which needs to be corrected</li> <li>• Write FS in the margin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-write the sentence in full at the bottom of my work</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	<b>Wrong tense used</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline the word or sentence</li> <li>• Write T in the margin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the correct word or improved sentence at the bottom of my work</li> </ul>

## Appendix

1. Summary of recommendations for improving literacy in secondary schools from the *Education Endowment Foundation*. This is used by Netherhall staff to guide their intentions, implementations and assessment of impact of their in-class literacy-focused practice.
2. The school's **I CAN** (completion / accuracy / neatness) approach to presentation – displayed in all exercise books and files in each subject.
3. An example of *Word of the Week* and *Spelling of the Week* displays shared with students each week.
4. An updated example of *Never Heard the Word* grids from English lessons.





# IMPROVING LITERACY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

## Summary of recommendations

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.



## How we expect you to present your work at Netherhall



**The written work that you produce should show the pride that you take in your school work.** There should be no scribbles, doodles or graffiti on exercise books; the appearance of your exercise book and assessment book should be a reflection of the high standards expected of you by your teacher and the high standards that you set for yourself.

Here at Netherhall, we **CAN** and will produce high quality work:

### **Complete all work:**

- Work missed through absence is completed as soon as you can.
- Using green pen, you have completed your response to the teacher's marking when asked to do so.
- Incomplete work which has been commented on by your teacher has been completed.
- Homework has been completed and labelled.
- Worksheets / handouts are stuck neatly into your books.

### **Accurate work:**

- You try at all times to be accurate with spelling, especially of subject vocabulary and key terminology. *Never Heard the Word* grids will help you with this if used properly.
- You try at all times to be accurate with punctuation, especially using capital letters, full stops and question marks correctly.
- You label graphs, diagrams and tables correctly, using pencil for drawing.

### **Neat work – in each piece of work you should:**

- Write in blue or black pen for classwork, homework and assessments. Green pen should only be used for improvements, literacy checks and peer marking.
- Have the date in the top right-hand corner, underlined with a ruler.
- Have the title clearly written and underlined with a ruler.
- Write down the Learning Objective (LO) given by the teacher.
- Be neat and legible.
- Cross out mistakes using a single line only.



## Word of the Week



# VITALITY

(NOUN):

**STATE OF BEING FULL OF ENERGY AND LIVELINESS**

**I VEHEMENTLY BELIEVE THAT WITHOUT PHYSICAL EDUCATION, THE NEXT GENERATION'S VITALITY WILL SUFFER.**

**THE POEM 'DISABLED' PORTRAYS A SPEAKER LACKING IN VITALITY TRAPPED IN HIS "GHASTLY SUIT OF GREY".**



## Word of the Week



"THE LIMIT OF MY LANGUAGE IS THE LIMIT OF MY WORLD"

– LUDWIG WITGENSTEIN



### VOCABULARY

## VITALITY

(NOUN):

**STATE OF BEING FULL OF ENERGY AND LIVELINESS**

#### SYNONYMS

Energy  
Life  
Passion  
Excitement  
Effervescence

#### Idioms:

Full of beans

#### ANTONYMS

Dull, Lifeless  
Faded  
Muted  
Grey



#### MORPHOLOGY (WORD PARTS) ETYMOLOGY (WORD ROOTS)

**Vita** comes from the Latin – Life  
Linked to the essential things needed to survive as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

#### WORD FAMILIES: SIMILAR WORDS TO HELP WITH MEANING

**Vital** – Something essential that cannot be done without. Important.  
**Vitamin** – group of compounds that you cannot live without



## Spelling of the Week



# successful

**(adjective):**

**accomplishing a desired aim or result**

*“My spelling is wobbly. It’s good spelling,  
but it wobbles and the letters get in  
the wrong places.”*



***Never Heard the Word***

Year: 10 Term: 5 Unit Title: Macbeth

<u>Word</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Example of use</u>	<u>Understand?</u>
<b>Malevolence</b> (malice, spite, hatred)	The desire to do evil to others.		
<b>Paradoxical</b> (contradictory, incongruous)	When two opposite ideas are presented together.		
<b>Regicide</b>	To kill a reigning king or queen.		
<b>Hubris</b> (arrogance, pride, vanity)	Excessive pride or self-confidence.		
<b>Equivocation</b> (vagueness, ambiguity)	Using vague language to conceal the truth.		
<b>Machiavellian</b>	Cunning and manipulative.		
<b>Duplicity</b> (deceit, two-facedness)	Hiding one's true intentions behind dishonest words or actions.		
<b>Despotic</b> (dictatorial, authoritarian)	Ruthless, tyrannical.		
<b>Subversive</b> (disruptive, insurgent)	To undermine or destroy an established system.		
<b>Hamartia</b> (flaw, Achilles heel)	A fatal flaw that leads to the character's downfall.		