

## Impact North West Schools Literacy Policy

Date approved: September 2023  
Approved by: Impact North West Schools Proprietor Board  
Frequency of review: Annual  
Next review due: September 2024

### OUR VISION

At Impact Northwest Schools, we believe that literacy and communication are essential life skills. As literacy is central to our learners' academic, emotional and social development, it should be at the heart of any curriculum. We want our learners 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 learners to employ a variety of strategies in their pursuit of knowledge acquisition, application and recall.

### 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 Impact Northwest Schools, 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.

*Working in partnership with...*



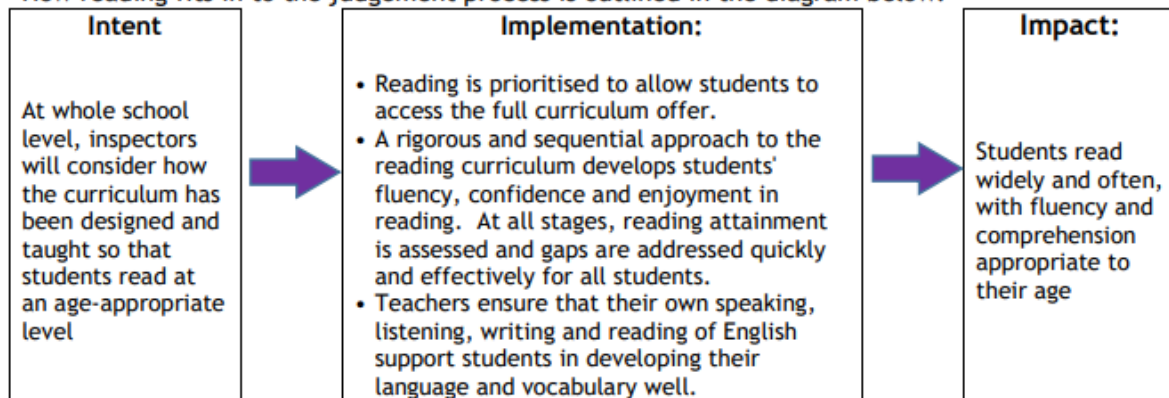
1



## 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.

Working in partnership with...





## 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

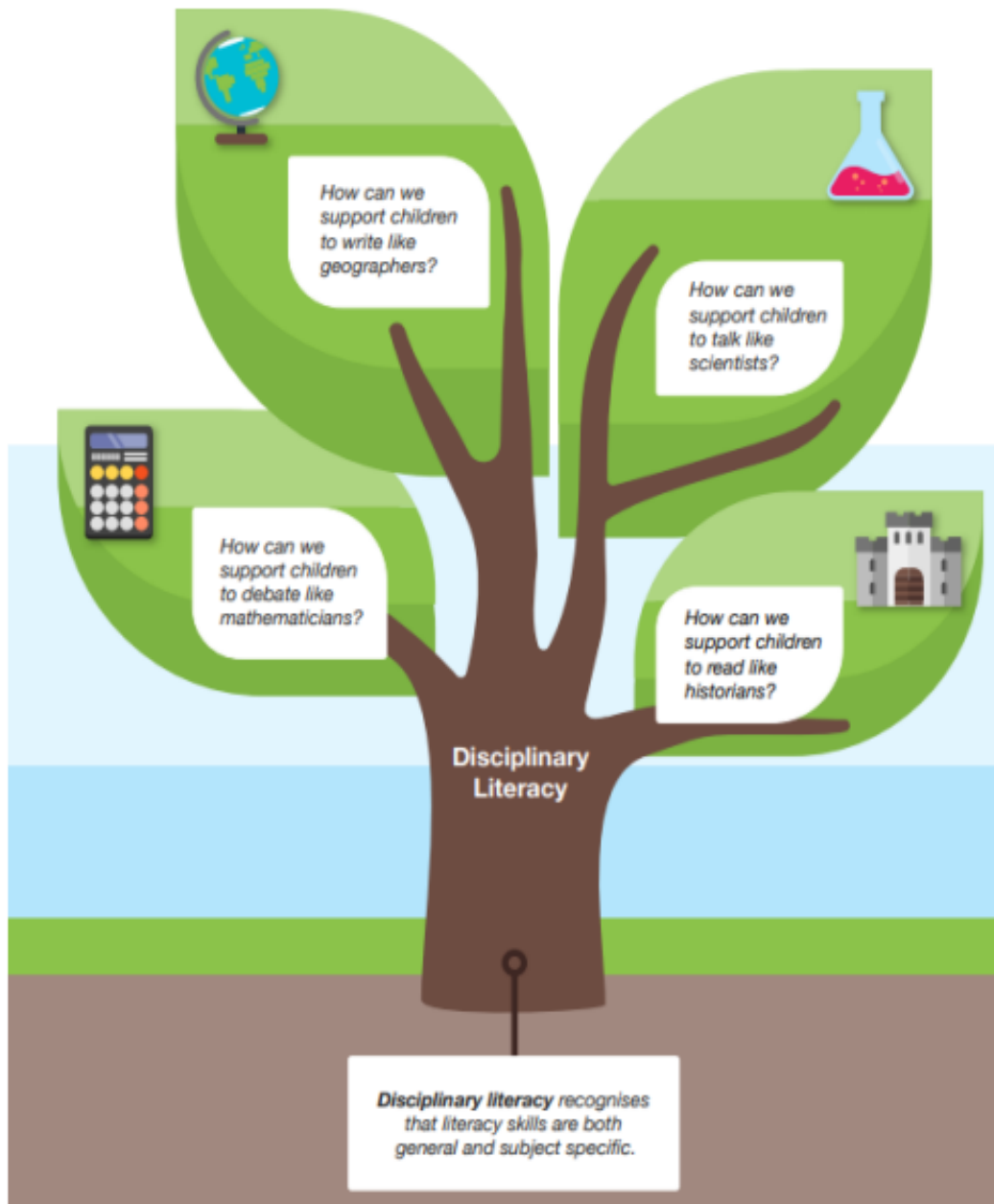
Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students



- 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.

**What is Disciplinary Literacy?**

At Impact Northwest Schools, 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.



Working in partnership with...



### How can School Leaders Prioritise Disciplinary Literacy?

- Auditing existing literacy practices, attitudes, and resources in school—involving both teachers and learners; this could include an evaluation of existing literacy policies and roles such as the literacy leader.
- 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.

### Marking For Literacy

- Subject Leaders must ensure their 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, meetings, staff and learner voice.

Linked to IMPACT schools Marking and Feedback Policy.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION: LEARNERS AND INTERVENTION:

All learners will be baseline assessed in terms of their reading and spelling at the start of the academic year. Following this baseline assessment, this will determine if they need further intervention.

- Monitoring will take place through:
  - Learning walks
  - Book scrutiny
  - Planning/assessment checks
  - Disciplinary literacy has been implemented across the curriculum

*Working in partnership with...*



- Discussions with learners and staff

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **SLT – Teaching and Learning:**

- To monitor literacy provision through lesson observation, learning walks, scheme of learning reviews and 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 leader:**

- 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 learners' development of language, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons.
- Ensure all lessons include a literacy element.

### **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.

*Working in partnership with...*



- 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

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every year by Impact lead Jayne Jones and Literacy lead Kellie McKeown. Following every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

### **Links with other policies**

- This policy links with the following policies and procedures:
- Curriculum policy
- SEND policy and information report
- Marking and feedback policy
- Home-school agreement
- Assessment policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Behaviour policy

*Working in partnership with...*

