



Avonbourne Boys' & Girls' Academies
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Literacy Policy

Literacy Policy

Statement of Intent:

At Avonbourne Academies, we want our students to be excellent communicators. It is essential that students are taught the skills of effective reading, writing and oracy in order for them to achieve their full potential as well as to support them as they communicate with, and make sense of, the world around them.

Literacy is fundamental for success in school and later life. Students who cannot read, write and communicate effectively are highly unlikely to access the challenging academic curriculum in secondary school and are more likely to have poor educational outcomes across all subjects.¹

The skills of literacy are used in every subject and activity in school and as such are a priority for all areas of school life. With good levels of literacy, we unlock the curriculum and provide a foundation for excellence in all subjects, giving our students the experiences and opportunities to be the best they can be.

Overall Aims:

The Academies seek to develop an effective literacy skillset among students of all year groups, which includes speaking, listening, reading and writing. We recognise that these skills are fundamental to students' motivation, self-esteem, engagement, and behaviour both within the classroom and beyond. The curriculum at Avonbourne Academies has been developed alongside the core aims of the literacy framework, which includes:

- Ensure that all students are supported to become **fluent readers**.
- Ensure that students are taught how to read and write academic texts in **different subjects**.
- Develop students' **vocabulary**, ensuring that they learn both subject specific terminology as well as academic vocabulary.
- Provide opportunities for students to **explore and celebrate a variety of texts and perspectives**, providing a wider cultural experience.
- Support the **development of writing** in all subjects.
- Teach students how to develop their **spoken language** skills.

Implementation

We will support all students in their skills of communication by:

- Ensuring all staff are 'teachers of reading' through ongoing CPD opportunities, supporting all students to comprehend the academic texts through which the curriculum is delivered;
- Ensuring that challenging, academic texts are available and familiar to students;
- Explicitly instructing key Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary in all subjects, implicitly instructing a breadth of vocabulary;
- Explicitly teaching writing skills to break down extended academic writing;
- Expecting high-quality presentation in written work;

¹ ¹ Ricketts, J., Sperring, R and Nation, K. (2014). Educational attainment in poor comprehenders. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5. P. 445

- Recognising and referring students who require additional support to make expected progress;
- Modelling and practicing what effective talk sounds like in each subject;

Reading

At Avonbourne Academies, we believe that a love of reading is of immense benefit to our students, both academically and personally. Reading is a way for our students to explore the world. We want them to question the minds of great (and not so great) individuals and understand the experiences and bias, the insights and perspectives of the people who have come before us. We believe that we have a moral imperative to open this opportunity up for all our students.

In order to do this, we need to ensure that students can decode texts, understand them and enjoy them. We are focused on ensuring that we do everything we can to close the 'reading gap'. Our aim is to continue to see improved reading ages by the end of each school year.

The academies' Reading Curriculum continues to expose all students to rich academic texts and new vocabulary on a daily basis. Teaching via booklets, the DEAR programme, library lessons and weekly reading homework on Bedrock/Sparx Reader ensures reading is at the forefront of all students' days.

Whole-school reading routines support all students to access the texts whilst reading. The use of reading rulers, enforced by equipment checks, supports all students to track texts and helps weaker readers to chunk booklet reading. Since June 2022, a literacy CPD briefing series has upskilled staff around instructing reading, supporting all staff to be proficient 'teachers of reading'. CPD has focused on optimising classroom reading routines (in line with Lemov's *Reading Reconsidered*), decoding and fluency, vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension.

We are committed to delivering an equitable reading offer to all students. This is called Drop Everything and Read (DEAR). Our DEAR programme, ensures that students are explicitly taught the techniques of how to read, that they read classics which will stretch and challenge them whilst their understanding to the narrative is constantly checked by a variety of questioning techniques. Furthermore, the library, open every lunchtime, is a quietly thriving hub of activity in the school, supporting students to access and enjoy a range of books.

All students in Y7 and 8 are tested at the start and end of each academic year using NGRTs. Students underperforming in their reading are also retested by the NGRT in February to more closely monitor their reading skills. The results of NGRTs are published to Arbor marksheets, supporting all teaching staff to be aware of which readers require extra support with decoding or comprehension in the classroom.

Students scoring below a SAS of 90 in NGRT are considered for interventions. We have a wide range of interventions in place to support rapid reading catch-up. Students are initially identified as requiring support via NGRT or SEN testing. However, each intervention has rigorous diagnostic testing to assess whether students qualify for an intervention and what their specific weaknesses are.

- **Direct Instruction:** Explicit, intensive, consistent, and interactive small-group sessions, taking place during morning and afternoon tutor periods. Targeted at Y7 students to rapidly catch up with phonics, decoding and reading fluency. Decoding gains since January 2022 ranged from 0.3 years to 5.6 years for those on the programme.

- **Thinking Reading:** Intensive 1-1 intervention, 3 x 30 minutes a week during tutor time/DEAR, for students with significant reading difficulties (2-3 years below chronological age). Focus on phonological knowledge, decoding and building fluency. 23 students have completed TR making, on average, 4.6 years progress in reading age.
- **Lexonik Leap:** This intervention similarly targets students with significant reading difficulties, focusing on phonological knowledge, decoding and building fluency. Twice a week dependent during DEAR time. This will be used to expand our provision for weakest readers and within existing SEN literacy support.
- **Lexonik Advance:** Small group (4) intervention, targeted at Y8 and 9 students who require extra support with reading. 1 hour weekly for 6 weeks during lesson time. Focuses on phonological knowledge, decoding, fluency and vocabulary knowledge.


Writing

Academically, extended writing is vital to success in most disciplines and, similarly, to reading ability, we want to build on these skills to allow all our students to feel confident as they approach examinations and coursework. While reading provides a way for our students to explore the world, writing provides a way for them to become a part of the narrative. Writing allows individuals to share their own perspectives and influence others. We want all our students to have this ability and motivation and will encourage them to confidently write, expressing themselves in the best way they can.

The strategies which underpin our whole school drive to improve writing are research led. Writing is explicitly instructed using techniques (such as sentence-level practice exercises) from *The Writing Revolution* from Judith C. Hochman and Natalie Wexler, Alex Quigley's *Closing the Writing Gap* and we partake in a national reading and writing series from Daisy Christodoulou.

Oracy

Students are continually exposed to academic talk in each subject, modelled by teaching staff, and have a breadth of structured opportunities to develop their oral academic responses, such as frequent paired discussions in the classroom. These discussions are typically scaffolded to support all students develop their academic speaking skills.

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