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Rayner Stephens High School  
Whole School Literacy Policy

September 2022

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## 1 Rationale

Rayner Stephens High School recognises the essential importance of literacy in order to raise our students' attainment and progress, as well as to equip our students with the necessary skills to be successful in life. Literacy is integral to our core purpose: to inspire confident learners to thrive in a changing world.

The development of an effective literacy skillset (speaking, listening, reading and writing) is fundamental to the achievement of a rich and fulfilling education and life after education. We use these skills every day in order to communicate with, and make sense of, the world around us. At Rayner Stephens, we recognise that at the heart of improving literacy skills is the opportunity to practise them. Improving literacy and learning can have an impact on students' self-esteem, motivation, behaviour and attainment. It allows students to learn independently and is empowering.

Our curriculum is underpinned by developing students' abilities to speak, listen, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including using language to learn, communicate, think, explore and organise. Helping students to express themselves clearly, through development of vocabulary, both orally and in writing, enhances and enriches teaching and learning in all subjects and prepares the student for life after school.

## 2 Aim of the Literacy Policy

The aim of the Whole-School Literacy Policy is to raise literacy attainment at every level of ability. Staff work together to integrate the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing into the curriculum to maximise the potential of each pupil. We aim to achieve this through the following key areas:

- Support students' learning in all subjects by supporting teachers to be clear about the ways in which their work with students contributes to the development of students' literacy skills.
- Raise students' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards and aspirations.
- Develop a shared understanding, between all staff, of the importance of reading and vocabulary development in students' learning and how work in different subjects can contribute to and benefit the development of their ability to communicate effectively both in school and in preparation for life beyond school.
- Support staff to implement effective literacy development and wider achievement across the school.

## 3 Speaking and Listening

Teachers and Teaching Assistants will encourage students to participate widely in lessons. Lessons will be planned in which students are regularly required to be actively involved in speaking and listening.

## 4 Reading

Across school, in order to ensure that learners read often, reading opportunities have been built into the curriculum through the rubrics in place at Key Stage three. These opportunities are intended to develop cultural capital. There will be a focus on disciplinary reading in the Spring and Summer Terms, to ensure all staff teach students how to read successfully in their own subject area.

In the designing of the curriculum, staff have been asked to ensure that rubrics are text rich and that they have clearly identified opportunities to promote literacy in their planning.

The school has also subscribed to The Accelerated Reading Programme which is based in the library which aims to encourage independent reading and to create a culture of reading within the school.

Word conscious students are able to more easily access the breadth of the curriculum at secondary school, as well as finding ways to understand unfamiliar content. Teachers use strategies to explicitly teach students key vocabulary to develop their word consciousness.

Teachers use available data on students' reading abilities in order to make informed choices about appropriate texts used within their lessons. They also plan support for students so that they can successfully access these texts. We promote reading for pleasure across the school through a range of planned activities.

In form time for 30 minutes, all students are read to in their tutor groups. We read a range of texts from different cultures, traditions and time periods. By reading to them, we are able to supplement the text with valuable context that boosts student knowledge and understanding. In addition to providing our students with access to some of the best fiction ever written, the tutor group reading programme is also designed to complement the curriculum, drawing links to ideas, themes and figures studied in lessons.

## 5 Writing

Our whole school aim is for every student to produce writing that they are proud of. The Lead Teacher for Literacy works closely with Subject Leaders and departments to develop effective strategies for the teaching of the written text types used in their subject. Subjects are expected to have a clear idea of a gold standard of writing.

The school's Feedback Policy ensures that teachers' marking of writing reinforces correct English punctuation, grammar and spelling.

Work will be marked for literacy, errors will be identified by the teachers with the students expected to amend and correct these errors.

Word of the Week: Each week, all pupils are taught the spelling and meaning of a high impact tier 2 word in tutor time, students will be taught the definition, morphology and etymology of the word and are then taught how to apply this word to their learning across the range of subjects.

Key words in each module or unit of work are identified and taught to students using a range of strategies. These words are also included on their Knowledge Organisers where students are set Independent Learning tasks linked with this vocabulary in order to help embed it into their long term memories.

Many departments have produced writing frames to support students in the writing process. Subjects should adapt and/or withdraw these as students gain in confidence and develop planning and writing skills.

## 6 Literacy Interventions

Targeted literacy interventions take place to support students. Students with lower ARTS (Access Reading Test Scores) and SATS literacy scores could be selected to take part in one or more of the school literacy interventions. The interventions usually target KS3 students but bespoke programmes are delivered to KS4 students. The interventions include:

- Form Time Reading- Twice a week for 30 minutes a session, students come out of their form time and work on their reading fluency.
- In KS3, selected students have additional English Intervention lessons. In these lessons they read a class reader, and work on inference skills. They also focus on development of vocabulary.
- We have invested in the vocabulary software Bedrock to use as an intervention tool for learners who have been identified as needing specific vocabulary intervention. Bedrock focuses upon broadening the vocabulary of our learners, in order to make them 'word rich.' The vocabulary is cross curricular, and will help them in all subject areas.
- Handwriting intervention runs through the ASPIRE center where learners who struggle with their handwriting are able to access support.