

Cowbridge School



Literacy Policy

Formulated by: Mrs R Williams, Assistant Headteacher

Adopted by: Main Governing Body

Last Reviewed: Spring 2026

Review: Annually or subject to changes in statutory guidelines or legislation

Next Review: Spring 2027

Date of any amendments made to policy and brief points:

Date	Details	Approved by
Autumn 2022	Updated with reference to the Curriculum for Wales 2022, Additional Learning Needs and Blended Learning Replaced reference to 'Students' and 'Pupils' with 'Learners'	Main Governing Body 19.01.2023
Spring 2024	No changes	
Spring 2025	No changes	
Spring 2026	Changes specific to 3-19 continuum	

1. Defining Literacy

‘Pupils should be taught in all subjects to express themselves correctly and appropriately and to read accurately and with understanding.’

QCA “Use of Language Across the Curriculum.

- 1.1 At Cowbridge School, we accept the fundamental principle that literacy is the key to improving learning and raising standards across the 3-19 continuum. It enables learners to gain access to all Areas of Learning and Experience; to read for information and pleasure; and to communicate effectively as ethical, informed citizens. Poor levels of literacy impact negatively on what learners can do and how they see themselves. The teaching of literacy is not the responsibility of the English Department alone:

“Literacy is, or ought to be, a shared responsibility- it is too important to leave to English teachers.”

HMI John Hertrich, “Implementing effective literacy initiatives in Secondary School: Lessons from Research”, Maureen Lewis and David Wray.

- 1.2 All teachers, from Nursery to Year 13, are teachers of literacy. In our all-age context, literacy is a shared responsibility that ensures a seamless transition between the Lower, Middle, and Senior phases of the school. We recognise that literacy is one of the mandatory cross-curricular skills within Curriculum for Wales and that it is the “responsibility of all practitioners, across all curriculum areas and all phases of the school, to develop and ensure progression” in this skill. Crucially, we believe that literate learners will ultimately emerge as confident and articulate communicators, fully prepared to enter the adult world, whether to continue their academic studies or to enter the world of work. The importance of developing our learners’ literacy skills cannot be under-estimated, because:

- (i) language is the main medium we use for teaching, learning and developing thinking, so is at the heart of teaching and learning;
- (ii) learners need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects;
- (iii) reading helps us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience;
- (iv) writing helps us to sustain and order thought;
- (v) language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do, and reflect on the things others have said, written or done;
- (vi) responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry;
- (vii) improving literacy and learning can have an impact on learners’ self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour: it allows them to learn independently - it is empowering;
- (viii) good literacy skills are a key factor in raising standards across all subjects.

1.3 **A literate learner is one who can ...**

Early Years (Ages 3–5)

- recognise letters and simple words
- begin to understand that print carries meaning
- listen to and enjoy stories, rhymes, and songs
- develop fine motor skills for early writing (tracing letters, scribbling with intention)
- start forming simple sentences verbally
- begin to write whole words which are gradually formed into sentences

Lower School (Ages 5–7)

- read simple sentences and familiar words
- develop basic comprehension skills, answering questions about stories
- write short sentences with increasing control over spelling and punctuation
- begin using phonics to decode unfamiliar words
- express ideas verbally with growing confidence

Lower School (Ages 7–11)

- read fluently with comprehension across a range of texts
- write longer pieces with appropriate structure (stories, reports, explanations)
- use grammar, punctuation, and spelling with increasing accuracy
- develop critical thinking by discussing texts and forming opinions
- present ideas clearly in speech and writing

Middle School (Ages 12–14)

- analyse complex texts and infer meaning
- write with a sense of audience and purpose
- use sophisticated, technical and subject-specific vocabulary and varied sentence structures
- engage in debate and discussion, presenting well-reasoned arguments
- critically evaluate sources of information

Senior School (Ages 14–16)

- read and interpret literary and non-literary texts critically
- write extensively and develop a clear argument supported by evidence
- refine writing for persuasion, explanation, description and narration
- understand the nuances of language, including tone, bias, and rhetoric
- deliver presentations with confidence and clarity

Post-16 / Sixth Form (Ages 16–19)

- engage with complex academic, professional, or technical texts
- write sophisticated analytical and persuasive pieces
- evaluate and synthesise multiple sources to form nuanced viewpoints
- communicate effectively in both formal and informal contexts

- demonstrate intellectual curiosity and independent thinking in literacy

In progressing through distinct developmental stages, literate learners will acquire a range of reading, writing, speaking, listening and critical thinking skills which will allow them to successfully access all areas of the curriculum and positively impact self-esteem, motivation, behaviour and independence.

2. Policy Aims

- (i) To adopt a whole-school approach to literacy across the curriculum in keeping with the principles and practices established by Welsh Government and the Curriculum for Wales Cross-Curricular Skills Framework.
- (ii) To enable all learners to reach their potential in the key literacy skills of reading, writing and speaking and listening. Additional provision will be made for learners who speak a different language at school from the one they speak at home.
- (iii) To support the development of literacy skills across all phases and throughout the curriculum.
- (iv) To raise staff awareness of key literacy strategies.
- (v) To encourage staff to take responsibility for the development of literacy through the inclusion of appropriate schemes of learning and lesson planning.
- (vi) To support the development of literacy through the deployment of a range of resources in the school, including blended learning.
- (vii) To identify specific roles and responsibilities within the school with regard to the development of literacy work.
- (viii) To establish procedures for monitoring literacy across phases, to ensure seamless transition, and across the curriculum.

3. Development of Literacy at Whole-School Level - Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The role of the Senior Leadership Team is to:

- (i) participate in the strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the whole school literacy strategy;
- (ii) specify expectations of all teachers;
- (iii) support the development and implementation of a whole-school literacy policy;
- (iv) provide INSET, resources and opportunities for staff to accommodate the Cross-Curricular Skills Framework within schemes of learning.

3.2 The role of the Senior Leader in charge of Literacy is to:

- (i) work with the Senior Leadership Team to determine a strategy for developing literacy across the curriculum and to ensure the effective development and implementation of the literacy policy;
- (ii) review the Curriculum for Wales Cross-Curricular Skills Framework provision and identify opportunities to develop and apply literacy skills;
- (iii) audit existing examples of good practice in literacy across the phases and curriculum;

- (iv) encourage teachers of English and Languages, Literacy and Communication to provide assistance and advice to other Areas of Learning and Experience so that a consistent approach exists across the School;
- (v) advise on how good standards of literacy help to improve standards across the curriculum;
- (vi) advise staff on how to introduce and consolidate the teaching of literacy skills;
- (vii) ensure consistency of approach across the School;
- (viii) identify areas of literacy with which teachers need most support when teaching, within the context of a particular phase or area of learning, and implement measures to address issues;
- (ix) monitor, evaluate and review the impact of applying the literacy policy.

3.3 The role of a Subject / Phase / Area of Learning Leader is to:

- (i) identify opportunities for developing literacy skills in schemes of learning;
- (ii) map progression in literacy skills across phases, progression steps and year groups;
- (iii) ensure coherence and consistency in the application of literacy skills linked to the Curriculum for Wales Cross-Curricular Skills Framework, across the 3-19 continuum and all associated teaching staff;
- (iv) work with teaching staff to plan progressive, differentiated and challenging tasks that will allow learners to demonstrate understanding and develop and consolidate the full range of literacy skills;
- (v) monitor, evaluate and review the impact of approaches on standards of teaching and learning.

3.4 The role of a teacher is to:

- (i) be familiar with the Curriculum for Wales Cross-Curricular Skills Framework and progression through it;
- (ii) contribute to learners' development of language, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons;
- (iii) understand the importance of literacy skills in relation to raising standards of work;
- (iv) fully integrate relevant literacy skills into planning to provide challenging and stimulating learning experiences for learners;
- (v) identify opportunities for developing and applying literacy skills within schemes of learning and plan tasks that will allow learners to demonstrate understanding of, and consolidate, the range of literacy skills;
- (vi) mark learners' work for skills in literacy where appropriate, in line with the whole school marking policy;
- (vii) monitor, evaluate and review the impact of approaches on standards of learning in lessons.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will take place through the following mechanisms:

- (i) analysis of prior, predictive and attainment data to track progress made by individual learners, with reference to National Reading Test data and assessment data, as appropriate;
- (ii) analysis of internal tracking data to monitor progress against the relevant Progression Steps, utilising a range of formative and summative assessment tools to identify individual developmental trajectories, in the absence of formal national testing;
- (iii) the use of lesson visits and observations, quality assurance exercises and line management discussions with phase/curriculum leaders and assistant phase/curriculum leaders to evaluate the impact of literacy provision on learners' day-to-day communication and reading fluency.
- (iv) whole school self-review procedures;
- (v) discussion with, and reports to, governors.

5. Including All Learners

5.1 Differentiation

Learners at Cowbridge School are entitled to our highest expectations and support. Some will need additional support and others will need to be challenged and extended. Strategies that we can use include:

- (i) questioning;
- (ii) adjusting the demands of the task;
- (iii) the use of additional support;
- (iv) use of group structures;
- (v) resources that support and challenge;
- (vi) making objectives clear;
- (vii) intervention programmes;
- (viii) creating an atmosphere where learners evaluate their own and others' work.

5.2 Literacy Progress

Literacy intervention provision varies each academic year depending on timetabling and staffing constraints. Targeted intervention will be used to help learners to catch up with their peers as quickly and effectively as possible in order to maximise access to the curriculum.

5.3 Higher Attainers

We will seek to:

- (i) identify higher attaining learners;
- (ii) promote ways of structuring learning for able learners by using Curriculum for Wales National Cross-Curricular Skills Framework objectives and appropriately differentiated tasks ("stage not age");
- (iii) develop a teaching repertoire which supports and challenges higher attaining learners.

5.4 English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Our learners learning EAL need to hear good examples of spoken English and also need to refer to their first language skills to aid new learning in all areas of the curriculum. The use of their first language enables them to draw on existing knowledge and to develop English language skills in context, for example, a group of learners could learn about paragraph organisation in their mother tongue.

5.5 Additional Learning Needs

We will teach our learners with additional learning needs appropriately, with due regard to their individual development plans (IDPs). We will support their learning and provide them with challenges matched to their needs, by using a range of teaching strategies such as guided group work, small group intervention, writing frames and oral activities. Classroom teachers will use differentiated classroom strategies and liaise with the Additional Learning Needs Department, as appropriate, to support in the delivery of additional learning provision (ALP).

5.6 Transition

A smooth and effective transition in literacy from Year 6 to Year 7, through close collaboration with our cluster primary schools, is essential in ensuring continued progression. Literacy is a key priority within the Statutory Transition Plan, supporting a shared and consistent approach to the development and progression of literacy skills across the age range. Cluster schools work collaboratively to develop reading skills, including the use of a consistent approach to assessing reading ages, ensuring accurate information is shared to inform teaching, learning, and targeted support. Alongside reading and writing, there is a strong focus on the development of oracy skills, recognising the importance of spoken language in supporting comprehension, confidence, and academic success. A collective approach to promoting reading for pleasure is embedded across the cluster, with shared strategies designed to foster positive attitudes towards reading and to support engagement and enjoyment. This collaborative approach promotes continuity, progression, and consistency in literacy provision as students move from primary to secondary education.

6. Curriculum for Wales Cross-Curricular Skills (Literacy) Framework

- 6.1 The key aims of the Cross-Curricular Skills (Literacy) Framework are to:
- (i) help teachers across phases and of all areas of learning and experience to identify and provide opportunities for learners to apply literacy across the curriculum;
 - (ii) describe the expectations for literacy for learners;
 - (iii) help determine learner progress in literacy.
- 6.2 The five strands of the Literacy Framework are:
- (i) Translanguaging
 - (ii) Listening
 - (iii) Reading
 - (iv) Speaking
 - (v) Writing

7. Curriculum for Wales

Literacy is one of the mandatory cross-curricular skills which underpin the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales. In developing learners' literacy skills, the strands outlined in the framework can be applied and connected across the various areas of learning and experience, where appropriate, by using a range of real-life contexts to introduce and explore literacy concepts, as well as to consolidate them.

8. Literacy Across the Curriculum

The school aligns its strategy with the mandatory cross-curricular skills of the Curriculum for Wales, tracking progress through Progression Steps 1-5.

8.1 Speaking and Listening

- (i) Talk is our main means of communication in everyday life and is fundamental to the development of understanding.
- (ii) We want our learners to develop increasing confidence and competence in speaking and listening. We will, therefore, provide activities across the phases and the whole curriculum for learners to:
 - utilise oracy, play-based learning and digital storytelling to build a rich vocabulary before formal writing begins.
 - develop the ability to listen attentively and speak confidently for a range of purposes, adapting register for formal and informal contexts;
 - listen to and carry out instructions;
 - listen to others and respond to and build on their ideas and views constructively;
 - ask questions as well as answer them;
 - use language precisely and coherently.
- (iii) We have developed strategies to teach learners how to participate orally in groups and in the whole class, including:
 - using talk to develop and clarify ideas;
 - using talk to identify the main points to arise from a discussion;
 - listening for a specific purpose;
 - discussion and evaluation.
- (iv) We strive to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills by:
 - encouraging learners to speak in full sentences, using standard English (not slang);

- correcting grammatical errors (would have NOT would of; wrote NOT writ; brought NOT brung), fillers (er, um etc.) and unnecessary repetition (like, OK);
- giving learners thinking time before asking them to provide a verbal response;
- using fewer “What...?” questions – asking more “How...?” and “Why...?”;
- enforcing a ‘no-hands-up’ policy as often as possible;
- encouraging “active listening” – giving learners a list of things that they need to specifically listen out for during the lesson;
- expecting clarity e.g. hand away from the mouth; sitting up straight/standing when presenting to ensure voice projection;
- modelling competent speech;
- praising speech specifically, not just knowledge and understanding.

8.2 Reading

- (i) We want our learners to enjoy reading; to be able to use their reading to help them learn; and, to develop increasing confidence in reading.
- (ii) We aim to give learners a level of literacy that will enable them to cope with the increasing demands of areas of learning and experience and subjects in terms of specific skills, knowledge and understanding.
- (iii) We will teach learners strategies to help them to:
 - decode words and develop phonological awareness;
 - read fluently, accurately and with understanding;
 - locate and use information from a wide range of texts/sources including print, media and ICT, and to evaluate these sources for accuracy and reliability;
 - apply techniques such as skimming, scanning and text-marking effectively in order to follow an argument, summarise, synthesise, compare, research, analyse and appraise texts;
 - become independent and critical readers who can make informed and appropriate choices;
 - read for pleasure.
- (iv) We strive to improve learners’ reading skills by:
 - providing reading material of a high quality in each phase and area of learning and experience, which is up to date, relevant and balanced in its presentation of ethnicity, culture and gender and appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils;
 - providing selected learners with a suitable reading intervention programme;
 - promoting reading for pleasure by offering a borrowing service through the ‘Book Nook’;
 - running a yearly Book Fair to further stimulate learners’ interest in reading;
 - providing a classroom environment which is conducive to good literacy practice;

- running a book club where learners can read and discuss a variety of books;
- providing parents with information about how to best support their child's reading and encouraging them to do so.

8.3 Writing

- (i) The importance of developing learners' writing skills cannot be under-estimated, as virtually all lessons include and depend on written communication.

- (ii) We want our learners to be able to:
 - value physical development and fine motor skills as the prerequisite for formal letter formation;
 - write ***extensively*** in a wide variety of forms, for different audiences and purposes;
 - plan, draft, discuss, reflect on and edit their writing,
 - develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader using wide-ranging and technical vocabulary;
 - organise and structure their work appropriately, using sentences/paragraphs, which are grammatically correct, and an effective style - appropriate to phase, age and stage;
 - present their writing clearly using accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting;

- (iii) It is important that we provide for co-ordination across phases and areas of learning and experience to recognise and reinforce learners' language skills, through:
 - emphasising the writing process (planning, drafting, and refining) while ensuring accuracy in grammar, punctuation, and spelling;
 - making connections between oracy, play-based learning and storytelling to build a rich vocabulary before formal writing begins;
 - making connections between learners' reading and writing, so that learners have clear models for their writing using the text type templates;
 - using the modelling process and text type templates to make explicit to learners *how* to write;
 - being clear about audience and purpose;
 - providing opportunities for a range of writing including sustained/extensive writing.

- (iv) In each phase and area of learning, we strive to improve learners' writing skills by:
 - providing effective models of accurate and coherent writing;
 - providing effective models of particular kinds of writing and, where learners are asked to write in a particular genre, e.g. a newspaper report, teachers will ensure that learners are familiar with the appropriate style and conventions;
 - setting writing tasks that have clear and immediate purposes, are objective driven and which are appropriate for the age, stage and ability of the learners concerned;

- teaching learners how to structure their writing using a variety of sentence structures, paragraphs and a wide range of punctuation, including higher order punctuation such as semi-colons, colons and brackets.
- providing dictionaries and thesauruses and teaching learners how to use them;
- displaying key words in every classroom and teaching key/subject-specific vocabulary and spelling;
- encouraging high standards of presentation;
- celebrating learners' best writing;
- offering learners opportunities to participate in writing programmes, including extra-curricular writing activities, competitions, etc.

Teachers across the school will correct errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling, using the marking codes for literacy and learners will correct errors using the 'look-say-cover-write-check' model. Correct spellings will be written, by learners in Year 7 and above, three times. For learners in Lower School, feedback on literacy will often be verbal and immediate, utilising 'Closing the Gap' strategies. From Reception onwards, incorrect spellings are highlighted and learners will rewrite one incorrect spelling correctly as part of DIRT.