

THE FRIARY SCHOOL
POLICY FOR LITERACY

Issue 2
Approved: 2005
Review: 2008

**This policy is designed to support all the school's aims,
and objectives 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.17**

“If standards of achievement are to be improved, all teachers will have to be helped to acquire a deeper understanding of language in education. This includes teachers of other subjects than English, since it is one of our contentions that every school should have an organised policy for language across the curriculum, establishing every teacher's involvement in language and reading development throughout the years of schooling.”

The Bullock Report: A Language for Life (HMSO 1975)

*“Pupils should be taught to express themselves clearly both in speech and writing and to develop their reading skills.
They should be taught to use grammatically correct sentences and to spell and punctuate accurately in order to communicate effectively in written and spoken English.”*

National Curriculum Orders, 2000 (all subjects)

1 Introduction

Literacy underpins the school curriculum by developing students' abilities to speak, listen, read and write for a wide range of purposes, using language to learn and communicate, to explore and organise. Helping students to express themselves clearly both orally and in writing enhances and enriches teaching and learning in all subjects. All departments and all teachers have a crucial role to play in supporting students' literacy development.

2 Principles and Aims

Guiding Principles

We are committed to:

- supporting students' learning in all subjects by helping teachers to be clear about the ways in which their work with students contributes to the development of students' communication skills;
- developing a shared understanding between all staff of the role of language in students' learning and how work in different subjects can contribute to, and benefit from, the development of students' ability to communicate effectively;
- recognising that language is central to students' sense of identity, belonging and growth;
- raising students' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards;
- developing students' confidence and powers of self-expression;
- helping teachers identify and address areas of strength and weakness in students' language.

Specific Aims

The National Literacy Strategy covers three separate strands, each with its own set of aims. Those strands are *Speaking and Listening*, *Reading* and *Writing*, and although they are separately described, we recognise that these three language modes are interdependent.

Speaking and Listening

Talk is our main means of communication and is fundamental to the development of understanding.

We want our students to develop increasing confidence and competence in speaking and listening so that they are able to:

- clarify and express their ideas and explain their thinking;
- adapt their speech to a widening range of circumstances including paired and group discussions and speaking to a larger audience;

use varied and specialised vocabulary;

- speak for a range of purposes e.g. to narrate, to analyse, to explain, to reflect and evaluate;
- listen with understanding and respond sensitively and appropriately.

Reading

We want our students to enjoy reading, to be able to use their reading to help them learn and to develop increasing confidence and competence in reading so that they are able to:

- read fluently, accurately and with understanding;
- become independent and critical readers and make informed and appropriate choices;
- select information from a wide range of texts and sources including print, media and ICT and to evaluate those sources;
- apply techniques such as skimming, scanning, and text-marking effectively in order to research and appraise texts.

Writing

Many lessons include and depend on written communication. We want our students to develop increasing confidence and competence in writing so that they are able to:

- write in a widening variety of forms for different purposes e.g. to interpret, evaluate, explain, analyse and explore;
- develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader using wide-ranging and technical vocabulary and an effective style, organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently;
- present their writing clearly using accurate punctuation, correct spelling, legible handwriting and appropriate presentational devices such as bullet points;
- apply word-processing conventions and understand the principles of authoring multi-media text.

3 Implementation

To ensure successful implementation of the policy all departments and classroom teachers are required to:

- take account of the needs of all students, with regard to gender, ability and social and cultural factors;
- value students' language achievements;
- structure lessons appropriately in ways that support and stimulate language development and show how learning objectives for students are to be achieved;
- recognise how resources will be organised and used to support this teaching;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of common goals and clear, shared expectations of students' developing ability to talk, read and write effectively and, specifically, establish whether targets have been achieved;
- be aware of the issue of boys' underachievement in some aspects of literacy;
- ensure that literacy skills which have been agreed as areas of focus for the department are being delivered.

4 Resources

In resourcing the policy for literacy, we will provide:

- displays and reading material relevant to the topic or national curriculum subject and of relevant vocabulary;
- relevant material at appropriate levels of interest and difficulty and from a range of text types;
- reading material of high quality which is up to date, relevant, and balanced in its presentation of ethnicity, culture and gender;
- access to school and public libraries and to ICT sources of information;
- access to appropriate audio visual equipment;
- a classroom environment which is conducive to good literacy practice.

5 Assessment

When assessing students' work across the curriculum we will:

- make explicit to the students the key features of language which will be assessed in individual pieces of work;
- value their oral contributions and listening skills alongside their reading and writing;
- take into account students' performance in speaking and listening, reading and writing when assessing and reporting on students' progress in subject areas.

When responding to students' work we will:

- make comments which are positive and supportive;
- target specific areas for improvement (a selective and focused identification of errors);
- give guidance on how to achieve the short-term targets set. For example, whilst "improve your spelling" is unhelpful and vague, the identification of a particular spelling error e.g. doubling of letters before adding -ing is specific and presents the student with a target which can be addressed;
- create opportunities for students to reflect on the quality of their own work and for peer assessment.

6 Success Criteria

Pupils:

- show increasing ability to understand and use the strategies of successful and effective speakers, readers and writers;
- demonstrate that their levels of literacy and learning are high;
- develop as literate and independent learners.

Teachers:

- demonstrate the importance they attach to literacy skills in lesson planning;
- deliver high standard of teaching and learning in their lessons.

Departments:

- identify opportunities to teach and practise specific literacy skills needed to succeed in the subject;
- demonstrate a supportive and active learning environment within subject rooms, e.g. books, posters, word banks, examples of text types, dictionaries, etc.

APPENDIX ONE

STATEMENT OF CURRENT PRACTICE

This is a statement of literacy provision in The Friary, following the audit carried out in the Autumn 1999. It should be noted that:

- the areas identified are those where departments feel that the aspect of literacy is a mainstay of that department's work;
- the audit specifically addresses literacy provision at KS 3;
- by the nature of the subject, English is involved in almost every literacy descriptor, so only the principal elements are indicated in this audit for English;
- English makes a special contribution to the literacy policy through the delivery of a 'literacy hour' lesson for all pupils in Year 7;
- the Special Needs Department supports the literacy work in the school through the Skills Club and other intervention for individual pupils.

Department

Speaking and listening in order to:	
- listen to and carry out instructions	M. Lang: IT: Geog: Sci: Maths: D&T: Art: Music
- listen to and consider the ideas of others	Eng: Hist: M. Lang: Geog: Sci: RE: PE: Art: Music
- listen for, select and recall	M. Lang: Geog: Art: Music
. explain informally, and more formally	Hist: IT: Maths
. describe events, activities or problems	M. Lang: IT: Geog: Sci: PE
. explore and develop ideas with others	Eng: IT: RE: D&T: Art: Music: PE
. consolidate ideas and understandings	Geog: Sci: Maths: Music
. ask questions as well as answer them	Hist: M. Lang: IT: RE: Maths: D&T: Art: Music
. speculate, hypothesise and imagine	Hist: Sci: Drama: Eng: PE: Maths
. narrate, recount or relate	Eng: Hist: PE
. reflect on experience and learning	IT: PE
. express views, ideas and feelings	Eng: Hist: M. Lang: RE: Music: Art
. plan, organise and arrange activities	Maths: D&T: Music
. solve problems collaboratively	D&T
. investigate and evaluate experiences	Music: PE: Art: Drama: D&T
. persuade, discuss or argue a case	Eng: Hist: RE: Maths
. comment on the talk of others	Eng: Drama
. speak with varying degrees of formality	Eng: Drama

Reading Pupils have read/will read	<u>Department</u> Department
- written instructions	M. Lang: IT: Geog: Sci: Maths: D&T: Art: Music
- descriptions of processes	Geog: Sci: Maths: D&T: Music
- descriptions of structures & mechanisms	Geog: Sci: D&T: Music
- texts about ideas and theories	Geog: Sci: RE: Maths: Hist
- narratives of events or activities	Eng: Hist: M. Lang: RE: Music
- discussions of principles or problems	M. Lang: RE: Hist: Sci: Maths
- texts which classify, survey or introduce	M. Lang: Geog; Maths: D&T: Music
- to explore ideas and understand them	Eng: Maths: Sci: RE: Art
- texts in different media (e.g. CD ROM)	IT: Sci: Art: Music: Eng
- to locate and relocate information	M. Lang: Sci: Eng: Hist: Geog: Maths
- to research and investigate	IT: G: Sci: D&T: Art
- to question views or information	Eng: M. Lang: RE
- to sift, sort and take notes from text	Eng: M. Lang: Maths: Art: Music
- to skim, scan or search for information	Eng: M. Lang: IT: Art: Music
- to follow up their own interests	Eng: Hist
- making use of school or public libraries	Eng: Music

Writing in order to:	Department
- devise instructions or guidance	PE: Sci: IT: Maths
- map ideas and relations	Hist: Maths: Sci
- record points and ideas	Maths: Art: Sci: Hist: Music: D&T
- give explanations and account for	Maths: Sci: IT: Hist: Art
- describe objects, events or activities	PE: RE: Geog: IT: M. Lang
- explore and develop ideas	Maths: RE: IT: Eng: Art: Hist: D&T
- describe processes and structures	D&T: Sci: Geog
- frame questions	Eng: M. Lang: Maths: RE
- speculate, hypothesise and imagine	Sci: Maths
- narrate, recount or relate	Eng: IT: Hist: RE: Sci: Music
- reflect on and analyse	Music: PE: IT: Hist: Eng
- express views, ideas and feelings	Eng: M. Lang: RE: Art: Music
- plan, organise and arrange	Eng: Maths: D&T: Art: Music: Hist
- resolve dilemmas and solve problems	D&T: Maths
- investigate and evaluate	Geog: D&T: Art: Music
- persuade, discuss or argue a case	RE: Hist: Eng
- comment on the ideas or writing of others	Eng: Music
- take notes from reading, film, discussions	Hist: M. Lang
- record, log or keep journals	Maths: Music
- re-formulate, translate or transcribe	RE: M. Lang
- work collaboratively with others	D&T: PE: Music: Sci: Eng
- draft, re-draft and edit	IT: M. Lang: Eng
- display or publish	RE: IT: M. Lang: Eng: Music
<u>- present to different audiences</u>	Eng: IT

APPENDIX TWO

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

As a result of responses to a questionnaire following the Whole-School Literacy training day (Nov. 26th, 1999), departments have identified the following areas for development:

DEPARTMENT	IDENTIFIED AREA
Art	Writing frames; using pupils to demonstrate/explain; range of resources.
Business Studies	Writing frames; range of reading material; lesson diary
Design & Technology	Writing frames; word banks; focused listening/talking skills.
English	Reading for pleasure; extended writing skills; literacy hour skills to be extended through the school.
Geography	Range of reading materials; pair and group work; key words displayed.
History	Using pupils' own written work to get started; note-taking; extended writing.
Information Technology	Skim/scan for information skills; greater emphasis on speaking and listening; drafting written work.
Maths	<i>Using and Applying Mathematics</i> (AT1) involves discussion; subject vocabulary; using pupils to demonstrate/explain.
Modern Languages	Talking skills/exercises developed; skim/scan exercises; writing frames
Music	Subject-specific vocabulary; pair discussion when listening to music
PE	Verbal discussion/contributions on rules etc./internet research.
RE	Note-taking; pair and group work; persuade, argue, discuss case.
Science	DARTS; writing frames; using pupils to demonstrate/explain.

Choosing Texts

Adapted from 'Use of Language in the National Curriculum' NATE 1995.

The following may be used when selecting texts and when generating texts, i.e. worksheets, study units.

1 Scanning for overall impressions

print

- is the print clear?
- are the lines of print short enough to be easily read?
- Is the style and size of font appropriate?

illustrations

- are the illustrations appropriate? informative? attractive? accurate?
- are the illustrations representative? (e.g. of the whole community?)
- are the graphics clear? helpful?
- how well does the text relate to illustrations and graphics?

signposts

- are headings and sub-headings clear? helpful?
- are the contents pages, index and glossary appropriate? clear?

quality

- is the text balanced in its presentation of gender?
- is the text balanced in its representation of different peoples and cultures?
- is the information accurate? up-to-date? reliable?
- is the content relevant and accessible?

2 Looking closely at a sample page

sentences

- how long are the sentences?
- how complex are the sentences?
- are the sentences mainly 'active' or 'passive'?
- is the subject of the sentences often 'delayed'?

vocabulary

- is the choice of vocabulary and terminology appropriate?
- are difficult words made clear, i.e. re-phrased in the text?

cohesion

- is the text clearly organised? logical? easy to follow?

3 Asking students to comment

- choose students to represent the full range of ability with which the text may be used:
 - i) what are their general impressions?
 - ii) can they use the index to find information?
 - iii) can they relate the illustrations to the text?
 - iv) can they read and understand the text? (Use a simple cloze test: copy a passage from the text and obscure every seventh word; if students cannot reconstruct the text to make reasonable sense, it is probably too difficult for independent use.)
 - v) are there any words they don't know and can't deduce from the context?

4 Assessing overall suitability

use

- how often will the text be used?
- which students would you use this text with?
- how would you use it with the students:
 - i) for background reading?
 - ii) giving essential information?
 - iii) stimulating interest and further enquiry?
 - iv) enjoyment?
- how will different students need to be supported in using this text?

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT 2/3

A Whole-School Approach to Spelling

Each department has its own vocabulary of specialist or commonly used terms. A supportive spelling environment will be created if:

words likely to cause difficulty are taught explicitly

- technical vocabulary is displayed in the classroom and referred to in the lessons
- key words for a particular assignment are written in a box on worksheets
- spelling aloud and the use of glossaries is encouraged
- pupils have a clear strategy for learning spellings that they find difficult e.g. through 'look, spell, cover, write and check', patterns within words and mnemonics
- dictionaries and thesauruses are available in all classrooms

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT 3/3

Departmental Support Materials

Speaking and Listening

- In our teaching we should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to engage in purposeful talk, both formally and informally.
- In planning for talk we should consider pace and timing so that purposeful talk is maintained.
- Whilst teacher exposition is essential we should take account of demands on concentration to ensure that students are required to listen for realistic lengths of time.
- We should give students regular opportunities to speak and listen in the following contexts:
 - i) in pairs with a working partner;
 - ii) in small groups with opportunities to take on the role of chair or scribe;
 - iii) with the teacher or another adult;
 - iv) in whole class discussions;
 - v) presentations to a wider audience.

In these contexts some of the following activities should take place:

- exploring and describing events, activities and problems, exploring and developing ideas with others;
- reporting back to a wider audience in order to consolidate ideas and understanding;
- asking questions as well as answering them;
- speculating, hypothesising and imagining;
- planning, organising and reviewing activities;
- investigating and solving problems collaboratively;
- evaluating experiences and reflecting on learning;
- talking at length and adopting the 'expert' role.

Reading

- We should use available data on students' reading levels in order to make informed choices about appropriate texts and to plan appropriate support for students in order that they may successfully access texts (Appendix Three).
- We should take opportunities to demonstrate and foster pleasure in reading.
- We should make opportunities for students and teachers to share their reading experiences.
- We should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to:
 - ii) read and follow instructions;
 - iii) read and engage with narratives of events or activities;
 - iv) follow up their interests and read texts of varying lengths;
 - v) question and challenge printed information and views;
 - vi) read, with understanding, descriptions of processes, structures and mechanisms;
 - vii) read and explore ideas and theories;
 - viii) learn how to sift and select, and take notes from text and read to locate and relocate information;
 - ix) learn how to scan and skim for overall meaning as well as for key points, words and phrases;
 - x) use reading to research and investigate from a variety of media, e.g. printed word, ICT texts, moving images.

Writing

- We should draw attention to the purpose and intended audience of each piece of writing. Whilst the audience for students' writing is often teacher and peer group, students should be encouraged to write for a range of intended readers. Such writing could include explaining a scientific principle to a younger audience, writing guidance for peers on an aspect of the subject, writing to agencies to elicit information or to express a viewpoint.
- We should pay close attention to writing as a learning tool as well as a product of the learning.
- We should help students to appreciate the differences between standard English and non-standard forms of the written language.
- We should help students to recognise the appropriate form for their written responses so that they know when to respond in note form and when more formal constructions are required.
- We should limit the use of pre-structured writing e.g. copying, sentence completion.
- We should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to:
 - i) make notes from a variety of sources – printed word, moving images and ICT texts;
 - ii) use writing to plan, organise and record;
 - iii) write logs and journals in order to clarify thoughts and develop new understanding;
 - iv) plan, draft, discuss and reflect on their writing;
 - v) learn the conventions of different forms of writing in different subject areas, e.g. by using writing frames and providing clear models for writing;
 - vi) write at appropriate length, sometimes briefly;
 - vii) write collaboratively with other students;
 - viii) present some writing for display or publication.
- We should: expect high standards of presentation in most of students' finished writing;
- provide good models of particular kinds of writing;

provide dictionaries, glossaries and lists of appropriate subject vocabulary and encourage students to use them;

help students to use a range of strategies to learn spellings, including:

- 1 look – say – cover – write – check
- 2 making connections between words with the same visual spelling pattern;
- 3 exploring families of words.