



**GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

# **Whole-School Literacy Policy**

Reviewed: June 2016

## **CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b><u>SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION</u></b>	
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Rationale	3
1.3 Policy Aims	3-4
1.4 Policy Consultation	4
1.5 Relevant Personnel	5
1.6 Roles and Responsibilities	5-6
1.7 Dissemination of the Policy	6
1.8 Staff Training	6
1.9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	6

## **SECTION 2: WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY SKILLS** 7

### **APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix 1</b> Marking for Literacy development – key principles and codes	8
<b>Appendix 2</b> Oracy/ Literacy Assessment Matrix	9
<b>Appendix 3</b> Literacy/ Oracy for learning, including Cursive Writing guidelines	10-11

## SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This policy is one of a number of inter-related policies concerned with student welfare including, for example, The Special Educational Needs Policy. Therefore, this policy does not exist in isolation, but is complementary to others. These policies inform the work of St Dominic's Grammar School in respect of safeguarding student welfare and facilitating an appropriate education.

The Literacy Policy is underpinned by its links to other aspects of St Dominic's education policy; it is central to department models of self-evaluation, the SDP, subject area Schemes of Work, PRSD objective identification, the school Assessment for Learning/ Marking Policy and whole-school target setting, ensuring a cycle of continuous improvement.

### 1.2 RATIONALE

*"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. Literacy is the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential."* (Kofi Annan)

St Dominic's Grammar School is committed to developing the highest standards of literacy in all our students so that they can develop the ability to utilise literacy skills effectively in all areas of curriculum and as a platform for the demands of further education, employment and adult life. All elements of the school's Literacy Policy are reflected across the curriculum, supporting learning and teaching and raising standards in the four modes of language communication: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

Literacy targets are kept under constant review and strategies for further improvement and development are on-going. Whole-staff professional development and involvement in the promotion and provision of literacy is at the heart of improving standards in students' performance across all curricular areas of study.

*"...every teacher, regardless of the subject they teach, must promote and model high standards of literacy."* (Count, Read: Succeed)

### 1.3 POLICY AIMS

The overarching aim of this policy is to ensure that there are procedures in place which allow all staff to facilitate the promotion and provision of high standards of literacy attainment and development. This Policy aims to:

- recognise that all teachers are facilitators of literacy through their subject;
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of all staff in developing high standards of literacy.

- Raise overall student attainment by raising literacy and oracy skills across all subject areas; to embed an understanding of the responsibility of all teachers in the delivery of literacy provision.
- To ensure that all staff must be conscious of their responsibility to act as role models in the use of written and oral language.
- recognise that language and communication skills are central to students' sense of identity, belonging and growth;
- support 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;
- encourage teachers to raise students' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards;
- ensure that the SLT and Heads of Department expect, and set, the highest possible standards for literacy through PRSD appraisal, Book Look evaluations and collegial marking;
- encourage teachers to develop students' confidence through opportunities for self-expression;
- ensure a high level of competence in the areas of ICT, media/ digital literacy and sixth form transition skills;
- involve all staff in the assessment and facilitation of literacy skills and to devise whole-school strategies and systems for literacy development;
- create a shared accountability, with progress in literacy tracked to ensure improvement is achieved and maintained;
- highlight the use of effective use of external and internal data, including diagnostic testing to measure and benchmark attainment in literacy;
- support any department that is not making adequate provision for the promotion of literacy to put clear actions in place to address areas for improvement.

#### **1.4 POLICY CONSULTATION**

This policy is revised regularly in consultation with stakeholders. The nature of the consultation process is dynamic and may be inclusive of, for example: changes in the use and form of verifiable data; staff consultations, especially with the English Department; on-going professional development; continuing links with The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator; ratification by the Board of Governors.

## **1.5 RELEVANT PERSONNEL**

The School Literacy Development Team comprise:

- the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr J Reid;
- the Principal, Mrs C Mc Cann, who is responsible for overseeing the general welfare of students within the School;
- The Literacy and Oracy Co-Ordinators, D Kelly and C O'Brien, who are responsible for supporting departments in the implementation of the Literacy Policy, providing INSET and materials. They are also responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing Literacy/ Oracy provision within the school.
- The Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator, M Kennedy, and relevant support staff, who are responsible for the identification of support needs and provision of one-to-one support for selected students.

## **1.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The Board of Governors will ratify the Policy and ensure that it is reviewed at regular intervals in line with the Policy Review Schedule.
- Senior Leadership Team, who are responsible for leading, facilitating, monitoring and evaluating the provision of Literacy in St Dominic's.
- Heads of Department, who are responsible for the provision of Literacy within their own department, and ensuring the implementation of the Literacy Policy. They are also responsible for including opportunities to develop Literacy skills within units and schemes of work, Assessment for Learning/ Marking Policy.
- All teachers, who are responsible for contributing to pupil's development of language and Literacy skills through the promotion of opportunities in lesson planning. They are also responsible for implementing the Literacy Policy, including standardised marking of assessment. Teachers should refer pupils with a Literacy need that has not already been identified to the Literacy Co-Ordinator and/ or the SENCO.
- Students should be aware of the importance of Literacy in raising attainment in all their subject areas. Students should use target setting and self-evaluation to recognise their own literacy needs and highlight these for improvement.
- Parents/ Guardians should support the school in the development and implementation of this policy. They should: encourage their children to use the range of strategies they have learnt to improve their levels of Literacy; encourage full use of the library and other borrowing facilities available to pupils.

## **All staff (teaching and non-teaching)**

Staff should:

- familiarise themselves with the information included in this policy;
- take responsibility for effective Literacy provision for all the pupils in their care;
- Implement the Literacy Policy, and guidelines contained therein;
- Differentiate materials and teaching for pupils identified as having a specific Literacy need;
- Teachers should be cognisant of Literacy targets for students who have an IEP.
- Provide Oracy opportunities as indicated within their subject area SoW.

### **1.7 DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY**

The Literacy Policy is available to the school community through the school's website. Copies are also available from the School Office. Going forward, the St Dominic's app will be a repository for Literacy/Oracy information and resources.

### **1.8 STAFF TRAINING**

All teaching staff will be provided with training to support the implementation of this policy. Teaching staff and Literacy support staff are encouraged to attend relevant training courses whenever possible.

### **1.9 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the Policy Review Schedule. Literacy provision will be frequently monitored throughout the year in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, including the SENCO, Heads of School and individual teachers.

## **SECTION 2: WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY SKILLS**

*Teaching and learning in the development of literacy skills is of a high quality when:*

- good questioning is used to promote learning and understanding for all;
- the learners feel confident to reflect and take time to respond, question and seek help;
- promotion of talking and listening, leading to high-level thinking skills is a regular feature of lessons;
- teachers enthuse the learners to develop an awareness and understanding of vocabulary and the potential and power of language with regard to their learning;
- the learners are given the opportunity to talk about their learning and refine their skills in talking and listening, reading and writing;
- the appropriate use of a wide variety of comprehension strategies is explicitly taught;
- a positive disposition towards listening, speaking, reading and writing is promoted;
- the learners are given the opportunity to work in effectively organised pairs and groups as a means of developing their literacy skills, their understanding and knowledge;
- teachers facilitate the learners in developing their oral, reading and writing skills through a scaffolded approach, moving at an appropriate pace from fully supported work, to semi-independent and finally to independent work;
- ICT is used effectively to support the learners' literacy development and engagement with language.

*[ETI and Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate on Promoting and Improving Literacy in Post-Primary Schools April 2015]*

## LIST OF APPENDICES

**Appendix 1** Marking for Literacy development – key principles and codes

**Appendix 2** Oracy/ Literacy Assessment Matrix

**Appendix 3** Literacy/ Oracy for learning, including Cursive Writing guidelines

### APPENDIX 1

#### Marking for Literacy development - key principles:

- Make Success/ Marking Criteria explicit.
- Mark work selectively and for improvement, in accordance with departmental and subject area Marking Policies.
- Target the correct spelling of (a) homophones and commonly misspelt words and (b) subject specific and exam directed vocabulary.
- Allow time for assessed work and comments to be read and reflected upon in class by students.
- Students should comment and set their own targets to promote student responsibility for progress in learning and performance.
- Assessment for Learning aims to motivate students to communicate their subject knowledge and understanding effectively through correct use of language orally and in written form.
- Provide prompt feedback and highlight success where appropriate.

*The following marking codes provide consistency across all departments; teachers are encouraged to supplement these with individual and subject specific assessment annotations and comments as appropriate.*

#### Abbreviations for common Assessment for Learning across all departments:

- ▶ *SP* spelling (correct selected spelling indicated)
- ▶ *Gra* grammatical error e.g. *I seen you*
- ▶ *FS* full stop required
- ▶ *CAP* capital letter required
- ▶ *P* correct punctuation required
- ▶ *//NP* new paragraph
- ▶ *?* meaning is unclear
- ▶ *Vertical wavy line:* irrelevant material
- ▶ *E.G?* supporting example required
- ▶ *Horizontal wavy line:* your phrasing is incorrect/unclear



## APPENDIX 2

### *Oracy/ Literacy Assessment Matrix-[presentations; group discussions; debates etc.]*

	<b>ORACY</b>	<b>LITERACY</b>
<b>18-20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, articulate and expressive speech used consistently.</li> <li>• Fluent speech.</li> <li>• Very effective use of pace.</li> <li>• Very effective use of projection.</li> <li>• Very effective variation of tone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent use of Standard English throughout.</li> <li>• Higher order vocabulary used.</li> <li>• Very effective variation of sentence style.</li> <li>• Subject specific vocabulary used to great effect.</li> <li>• Coherent structure with effective use of techniques and devices.</li> </ul>
<b>15-17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly clear diction with occasional hesitation and lack of fluency.</li> <li>• Effective use of pace.</li> <li>• Effective use of projection.</li> <li>• Effective variation of tone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly consistent use of Standard English.</li> <li>• Some attempts at using ambitious vocabulary.</li> <li>• Some variation of sentence style.</li> <li>• Subject specific vocabulary used.</li> <li>• Logical structure</li> </ul>
<b>11-14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts to speak clearly throughout with some hesitation and lack of fluency.</li> <li>• Occasionally effective use of pace.</li> <li>• Occasionally effective use of projection.</li> <li>• Occasional variation of tone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some misuse of grammar – slang may be used.</li> <li>• Generally basic language used.</li> <li>• Simple sentence structure used.</li> <li>• Limited attempts to use subject specific vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>6-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited ability to speak clearly.</li> <li>• May struggle to communicate purpose and content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited use of correct grammar.</li> <li>• Simple, straightforward style of language.</li> <li>• May refer to subject specific vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>1-5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very basic ability to communicate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very basic ability to communicate.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 3

### Writing for Learning

- A continued focus on extended writing opportunities across the curriculum.
- Students will develop, express and present ideas in a variety of forms and formats, using traditional and digital resources, for different audiences and purposes
- Where possible, students will be given the opportunity to write for different purposes across all subject areas which will include extended writing;
- All students will use cursive writing\*;
- Teachers will ensure pupils are aware of the success criteria for that piece of work and, where possible, pupils will be shown a quality piece of work;
- Pupils will be given clear and encouraging guidance on how to improve a piece of work;
- When learning vocabulary and spelling, teachers will use the “look/say/cover/write/check” rule;
- When marking work, all errors in spelling and punctuation are corrected by all subject teachers using the common assessment system as outlined in the Literacy Policy. When correcting spelling, the word should be written out in full\*\*.

\*\*In the case of a pupil with specific learning difficulties, certain words in each assignment should be targeted. Where a pupil has a lot of difficulty with spelling, it may not be appropriate to draw attention to every error. Concentrate on the marking of high-frequency and key subject words taking into account the differing abilities of pupils;

#### *\*Cursive handwriting:*

The brain thinks more rapidly and fluently in words than in single letters where the pen is lifted off the page much more frequently. Cursive handwriting therefore encourages fluidity of thought processes when writing and is also much quicker. All pupils have been taught cursive writing; this needs to be reinforced from beginning of Year 8 and across all subject areas. Cursive writing materials to aid this practice are available from the Literacy Co-ordinator.

The following strategies are helpful:

- ▶ Start small – 2 / 3 letter words
- ▶ Explain the importance of cursive writing
- ▶ Opportunities for handwritten assignments in every subject

Modelling, guiding, sharing should be used where appropriate.

## **Reading for Learning**

- Students will have access to a range of complex and demanding texts, both fiction and non-fiction.
- Students will locate, collate and process information from a range of sources, including library texts, the internet, Fronter virtual platform, St Dominic's app and media texts.
- Wider reading and reading for pleasure within the "taught curriculum" should be an explicit part of the whole-school reading policy. Research shows that encouraging pupils to enjoy reading will have an impact on attainment.
- Students should be able to work out inferential meanings from textual material across all subjects. Explicit teaching of command terms and examiner expectations in different subjects is a key objective.
- Students should develop an interest in words, their derivations and meanings in different subjects as a cross curricular focus on language.
- Teachers will draw students' attention to structure, layout, form, print and other signposts.
- Teachers will offer guidance on close reading of examination questions, with focus on key terms, stimulus statements and arguments.

## **Oracy for Learning**

- Students should be given opportunities to use both formal and informal language, and develop understanding of adapting language to suit the circumstance;
- Students will have opportunities to participate in competitions, and be prepared to be entered for UCAS accredited qualifications.
- Students should be encouraged to use Standard English consistently, and minimise use of slang terms in the classroom;
- Students should be supported in their use of subject specific terminology, including guidance on pronunciation of more difficult terms;
- Teachers will make pupils aware of expectations in Oracy exercises to ensure consistency across all departments;
- Where possible, teachers will try to give additional Oracy opportunities e.g. debates/ public speaking competitions linked to their subject area. Support from Oracy Co-Ordinator will be offered in each case.
- Teachers will offer guidance and feedback, correcting errors where appropriate.

