

JUNE 2020



LITERACY POLICY

HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST

AMERICAN LANE, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE PE29 1TQ



Spring Common Academy

Literacy Policy

1. RATIONALE

Literacy promotes and develops our skills as communicators, and correspondingly encompasses communication which can be interpersonal (signing, speaking and listening) or symbolic (reading and writing). Literacy skills enable learning across the curriculum, underpin student's progress and achievement, and supports participation in life outside school both as children and adults in the community.

Why we value literacy

To be able to communicate and express ourselves is a fundamental right for each of us. Becoming literate moves communication from the transitory nature of speech to the permanence of the written word.

We want to expose our students to as many strategies as possible to allow them to explore texts for pleasure and for enquiry.

We want our students to see the purpose in the learning activities we provide, whether it be for enjoyment, to inform, or as functional life skills.

Access

Literacy is taught through a values-driven curriculum informed by the school values (see appendix). It is delivered through Pre – formal, semi-formal and formal education pathways in accordance with the school teaching and learning policy.

Teaching Literacy to Children with Autism Spectrum Conditions

General guidance on the approach to teaching and learning for children with ASC may be found within the Spring Common Academy Autism Handbook.

In Literacy students with ASC demonstrate a range of learning characteristics and thinking styles and this informs our curriculum design and planning. (See appendix)

2. AIMS

Literacy at Spring Common Academy offers all students opportunities to:

- develop their ability to respond, listen, understand and make a positive contribution;
- interact and communicate effectively with others in a range of social situations, helping them to form healthy and happy relationships with their peers, as well as the adults who support them;
- make choices, obtain information, question, and be actively involved in decision making to help them keep safe;

- develop creativity and imagination so that they can enjoy and achieve;
- have access to a wide range of literature to enrich and broaden their experience;
- develop literacy life skills that they will need to be independent.

Teachers will provide learning opportunities that:

- match the needs of the student;
- enable the student to make suitable and appropriate progress;
- take into account the targets set for individual students in their learning pathway and 'Education and Healthcare Plan';
- promote literacy skills through all areas of the curriculum.

3. CURRICULUM CONTENT

Speaking and Listening

At Spring Common Academy speaking and listening encompasses all forms of communicative responses and intent. (for further details see Spring Common Academy Communication Policy).

Outside organisations may be brought in to provide curriculum enrichment for classes, key stages, or the whole school. Examples of these include theatrical performances and drama or storytelling workshops. Trips to the theatre may also be organised to support curriculum topics.

Reading

Reading at Spring Common Academy is interpreted as any activity that leads to the derivation of meaning from visual or tactile representations e.g. objects, pictures, or symbols, including the written word.

A love of books is central to developing reading skills. We aim to expose our children to as many different types of reading experiences as possible. This includes picture books, sensory stories, novels, poetry, plays and non-fiction texts.

Strategies are used to enable pupils to progress in knowledge of phonics, grammatical awareness, comprehension, contextual understanding and information gathering.

Phonics

Phonics is taught through the Story Time Phonics scheme (please see Phonics Policy). Phonics teaching at Spring Common Academy should offer all students the opportunity to:

- access a programme at their individual level;
- learn the 44 phonemes of the English language;
- be measurable and continuous throughout their time at the school;
- improve their reading and writing skills to enable them to make progress in all curriculum areas.

Not all students benefit from discrete phonics teaching, and develop skills in spelling, reading and writing through a different means. All students will be assessed by the class teacher who will employ strategies that best suit their learning needs. See appendix A.

Writing

At Spring Common Academy 'writing' is interpreted as any activity that records student's experiences, information, thoughts and feelings. Students are given many different purposeful opportunities to communicate their opinion and write creatively.

Additionally, activities which promote the development of gross and fine motor skills are used to support fluency in mark-making.

4. ORGANISATION AND IMPLIMENTATION

Literacy planning at Spring Common Academy is linked to the three curriculum modes: Pre-formal, Semi-formal and Formal. The Teaching and Learning Policy outlines these in detail.

Planning

Planning is linked to assessment, so that learning is focused on key knowledge, understanding and skills for pupils, with objectives and outcomes which are precise and measurable within the context of lessons.

At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 the school incorporates developing a range of basic English skills (functional skills) with promoting a love of and understanding of the English language through a range of fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts. These texts may be multi modal, sensory, visual or auditory.

At KS4 the school uses OCR Entry Level accreditation in English in reading, writing and spoken language. Those working within a semi-formal curriculum will be able to complete a variety of Unit Awards, which are more specific to their needs.

The Post-16 curriculum makes use of the OCR Functional skills qualification for entry level students. Students with more complex needs access the 'ASDAN Transition Challenge', which includes English skills.

External accreditation is introduced and it provides an additional framework for curriculum delivery and gives students the opportunity to gain a range of certification and qualifications.

When developing literacy skills, staff will ensure that:

- planning or target setting for individuals or groups, provides pupils with suitable learning challenges;
- plans will always differentiate effectively to meet diverse needs;
- schemes of work, medium term plans and associated assessment procedures are designed to be flexible enough to meet the range of needs.

Long Term Planning gives an overview of curriculum coverage for an academic year.

Medium Term Planning is produced for each term and gives details of teaching objectives, outcomes, suggested activities and resources. Planning in KS2-4 is linked to the Topic Boxes.

Short Term Planning is produced weekly. It provides specific learning objectives for each lesson and includes details of differentiation to meet the needs of all students in the class.

It includes opportunities for all classroom staff to make assessments of student progress.

Cross-curricular activities to promote and extend language and literacy are actively sought and utilised.

5. ASSESSMENT

Literacy will be assessed using the SCALES assessment system (see Assessment Policy for details). The reading and writing SCALES are based on developmental milestones and end of Key Stage expectations. Within each SCALE students are assessed against their level of mastery – emerging, developing, established and consolidated. See appendix.

Where appropriate, students are assessed for a reading age, looking at both decoding and comprehensions skills, to give a baseline or an overview of their general reading level. Word decoding is assessed through the Salford sentence reading assessment in the autumn term, and in the summer term we assess reading comprehension using NGRT (New Group Reading Test).

Keywords, phonics and comprehension are also to be assessed regularly, for example, through the reading assessment booklets on an ongoing basis.

Assessments are moderated externally with other special schools.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation of practice in Literacy and English is undertaken on a regular basis by the Literacy Manager and Senior Management and is in line with the Whole School Monitoring Policy. All aspects of planning are evaluated and lessons are observed through learning walks, work scrutiny and literacy meetings.

The accuracy of the literacy policy will be monitored by the Literacy Manager and Senior Management Team.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Phonics rationale

We provide an inclusive educational environment, but we recognise that individuals require strategies that best suit their learning needs.

In each Key Stage students will be taught phonics through their timetabled literacy lessons. A variety of teaching resources are used including *Letters & Sounds* and *Read, Write Inc.* For some pupils, teaching will necessarily focus on key words, signs or symbols.

Each literacy group's approach to phonics teaching is recorded annually by the Literacy Manager. In general, phonics is taught in three key ways:

- **Daily:** specific and systematised phonics input is planned for as part of each literacy lesson.
- **Discretely:** dedicated phonics lessons are planned for weekly as part of the delivery of literacy.
- **Embedded:** functional phonics teaching is included to support pupils as they engage in reading and writing.

Appendix B: Role of the Literacy Manager

- to co-ordinate and lead literacy throughout the school;
- to monitor that students are making progress in literacy;
- to ensure that appropriate support to develop student's literacy skills is available;
- to support the development of the School Library as an effective resource for the enhancement of literacy skills;
- to support the provision of appropriate resources for staff and students; □□to support, and when appropriate, to provide appropriate training for teachers and teaching assistants;
- to monitor all aspects of Literacy teaching and assessment across the whole school;
- to review and support all aspects of short, medium and long term planning; □□to moderate the assessment of literacy teaching and learning with other special schools;
- to support parents in their understanding of the literacy curriculum and provide them with the knowledge to support their child at home.

Appendix C: ASC Learners

In Literacy students with ASC demonstrate the following characteristic learning and thinking styles:

- A relative strength in concrete thinking, for example, following clear grammatical rules, following instructions and lists.
- A preference for visually as opposed to orally presented materials, for example, modelling a process rather than simply describing it.

- A relatively slow speed of processing of orally presented materials leading to partial or incomplete understanding of a spoken instruction.
- A relative strength in rote memory, for example, recalling past learning for developing skills.
- Difficulties in abstract thinking, for example, understanding why a character in a story may do something.
- Difficulties in social cognition, for example, turn taking, sharing and listening to the creative ideas of others.
- Difficulties in communicating ideas – PECS and symbols used to support.
- Unusual patterns of attention, for example, total absorption in a favourite activity and fleeting attention to something that is not preferred.

Students with ASC are often helped by:

- Structured teaching boxes
- First / then structures
- Use of routines
- Personalised symbol folders
- Attention building structures

Appendix D: Values

Listening

- to take notice of and act upon what another says

Moral Purpose

- to achieve a positive outcome in the lives of other, by means which are just and fair

Trust and Respect

- trust is to place complete confidence in another; respect is to value the opinions of another

Supporting Innovation

- to look at new and better ways of doing, thinking or organising

Integrity

- to be honest, truthful and consistent in one's actions

Communication

- to engage in a clear, mutual exchange of information

Building Confidence

- to develop trust and resilience in one's self

Empathy

- to understand and share the feelings of another

Collaboration

- to work with another to produce something

Appendix E: Levels of Mastery

Emerging (Em): Used infrequently, with little or no evidence of progress. A high level of prompt or support to initiate is required.

Developing (Dev): Used occasionally, with sporadic evidence of progress. A low level of prompt or support to initiate is required, but may be spontaneous.

Established (Est): Used frequently and maintained over time in one context. Mostly independent / spontaneous, only occasional reminders.

Consolidated (Con): Used consistently and maintained over time in a range of settings/contexts and with a range of people. Independent and unprompted.

Philip Johnson, Literacy Manager
Spring Common Academy.

Policy agreed on: JUNE 2020

Signed on behalf of the Trustees _____

Committee: _____

Author: PHILIP JOHNSON

Review date (optional): _____

Website Y/N