

# MARISH

## ACADEMY TRUST



# Literacy Policy

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# Literacy Policy at Marish Academy Trust

## 1. Introduction

Literacy at Marish Academy Trust promotes the key life skills of effective communication, passion for learning, resilience, critical self-appraisal and analysis in a way that reflects our desire to increase the opportunities for all our pupils. We seek to embed Literacy throughout the curriculum in a way that promotes a positive attitude to reading and writing, rooted in the objectives set out in the 2014 National Curriculum.

Children will develop the skills of:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking and listening (see Speaking and Listening Policy for further details)
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar

Literacy also seeks to aid and support our 4D curriculum approach, using Literacy to make intra-curricular links; strengthening connections between new content and what the pupil has already learnt. Children are taught in a way that skills are learnt, developed and revisited as children progress on their academic journey. By following this approach, it will lead to the children being able to make deeper links between concepts and apply their learning in wider contexts. Here at Marish Academy Trust, we also seek to ensure that our Literacy reflects our curricular drivers: Cultural Capital, Raising Aspiration and Developing Resilience.

## 2. The Reading Journey at Marish Academy Trust

Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 we teach literacy through the **Power of Reading** programme. In fact, this initiative has now even begun to inform our practice in EYFS. We seek to blur the lines between reading and writing and focus on creating passionate, engaged and creative learning of Literacy. Our focus is on giving all children the opportunity to immerse themselves in 'real' books in an exciting and engaging way, empowering them to be life-long readers. This will enable us to develop our curriculum drivers further, with children immersed in a wide range of reading materials providing a greater spectrum of cultural capital.

Significantly, this world renowned tool has been implemented in over 2500 schools across England and internationally. Children engage with high quality picture books, novels, poetry and non-fiction through an extensive range of teaching approaches. Opportunities are provided to be immersed into the text through music, art, drama, discussion and role-play encouraging their imagination. Other methods include responding to illustrations, 'Book Talk', story mapping and book making.

The reading experience at Marish Academy Trust is one that is immersive and seen to be an aspect of all parts of the curriculum. Each classroom will have a dedicated reading area, enabling children to self select appropriate reading materials. Libraries across the Trust are exciting and interactive areas, with a celebration of the written word a key component of pupil's daily lives. This is further supported by the celebration of reading achievements (in terms of completion of books, number of

words read and improvements in reading skills) on a weekly basis. This all contributes to children developing a positive, passionate and long-lasting relationship with reading.

Children gain greater independence through our Renaissance Reading scheme. This programme monitors and challenges children, enabling them to review their understanding via online quizzes related to books they have read, as well as ensure they are constantly reviewed and appropriately challenged.

There are daily opportunities for quiet, independent reading and access to a variety of books within the classroom. Regular phonics lessons support the teaching of early reading. Pupils have access to the school library. Teachers read to their class on a daily basis to enable pupils to experience a wider range of books that they may not yet be able to read themselves, have fluency modelled to them and expose themselves to a richer range of cultural capital.

### **Phonics:**

Phonics is taught through the programme Letters and Sounds in EYFS and Year 1. Letters and Sounds develops a child's phonics knowledge and skills, in order to help them learn to read. The programme commences in nursery and by the age of seven, the aim is for children to become fluent readers. It is taught in five phases, the first of which supports children developing their speaking and listening skills, as well as linking sounds and letters. Activities are divided into seven groups:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting

Phase two introduces simple letter-sound correspondences. Children are taught to sound out and blend, in order to read words for example, s-a-t to make sat. In phase three, children build on this knowledge and are taught consonant digraphs (sounds made up of two letters e.g. 'ch') and long vowel sounds e.g. 'igh'. Children consolidate their knowledge during phase four and learn to read and spell words containing adjacent consonants for example, trap, strong and crept. In phase five, children learn new graphemes and alternative pronunciations for known graphemes. For example, in phase three children are taught -ow as in c-ow and in phase five they learn -ow as in bl-ow.

Staff teaching phonics wear pinnies to reinforce sounds taught and the application of these in words throughout the day. Teachers also help children 'keep up' through interventions, whereby sounds are reinforced within words by sounding out and blending. Whilst learning to read words, children are encouraged to spot the 'special friends' e.g. digraphs and trigraphs before sounding out and blending.

### **EYFS:**

The Early years experience of reading is one that seeks to promote a love and passion for reading. Children are exposed to a wide range of stories that expose them to traditional themes and story patterns. They have the opportunity to further develop their understanding through role play and various interactive activities.

The curriculum set out in the Foundation Stage Guidance provides a firm basis for the development of reading. The provision of a wide range of materials, encouraging good home-school links and creating an environment in which books are regularly enjoyed, provides a sound basis for children embarking on the development of reading skills as set out under the requirements of the National Curriculum. To further promote this love of reading, a self-selected book corner is readily accessible and picture books, as well as word cards which are sent home to engage whole families in the reading journey.

### **KS1:**

The key skills that underpin reading are a focus, whilst placing these in the broader context of the purpose of written texts. Children experience an extensive range of genres and styles of texts, with exposure to classic texts afforded to them. In this stage, a heavy focus is placed on applying and embedding phonics, visual cues, and reading for meaning- whilst introducing fluency through the strands of: Expression and Volume; Phrasing, Smoothness and Pace a focus.

Skills of retrieval and basic inference are also key aspects to the development of reading skills and an important aspect of this journey. The links between reading and writing are established, with texts being explored for their purpose and impact on the reader.

### **KS2:**

During the KS2 reading experience, the fundamental reading skills of KS1 are built upon but are now extended. Fluency is developed further and mastered, alongside the ability to infer becoming a stronger focus. Children are encouraged to explore genre-specific features as well as look at the unique writing styles of celebrated writers. The Power Of Reading holds a strong focus on enabling children to explore a book in its entirety, supporting the understanding of how characters develop and evolved and how writers structure, organise and develop their work. The cultural, social and historical contexts of works are explored, with links and comparisons between written styles a focus.

The links between reading and writing are further enhanced, with a greater flow from the discussion of reading and the application of these discussions into children's own writing. Children develop their understanding of the craft of writing through reading, discussion, role-play and other similar activities.

### **Reading Support:**

Targeted support and provision ensures that children, at all stages of their reading journey, are developed as readers. The bottom 20% of readers in each class is closely tracked, reviewed on a half-termly basis, with a wide range of support put in place to accelerate progress and develop their skills as a reader. A Better Reading Partner program is well established to support nascent readers; a team of Reading Recovery teachers and support staff work across KS1 and KS2; and a 'book club' for more able readers (as well as challenging provision within lessons) encourages our more able readers.

Further to this, the Accelerated Reader programme has been established across the Trust. All year groups, from 1-6, implement this as their reading system. Year 1 children and more able readers from Reception take the Star Reader test once they have completed stage 7 of our reading scheme. Accelerated Reader allows children to read a book and take a quiz related to the book, thus helping with the child's comprehension levels. Teachers are aware of all the children's results and can access data at any time for analysis, tracking the time spent reading, words read, books completed and (more importantly) the level of understanding of what has been read. The system automatically adjusts to their performance and supports them in self managing their reading habits. This system is supplemented by the MyOn system, which links to Accelerated Reader and provides an online link between home and school.

### **3. The Writing Journey at Marish Academy Trust**

Writing is an aspect of Literacy that is evident in all areas of the curriculum. We have a dedicated team of experts who look to promote enjoyment, excellence and accuracy in writing. Children are explicitly taught spelling patterns, linked to phonics, each week. This is often linked with handwriting skills, which has a high profile in our Trust. They also regularly learn and apply grammatical features and structures, in line with the National Curriculum.

Writing for pleasure is a key goal, we seek to ensure that every child develops an enjoyment for expressing themselves through their written work. To enable this, we engage in 'Big Writing' lessons with regular opportunities for children to re-visit, edit and 'up level' their work- to better simulate the 'real' writing process. We seek to empower all children to see themselves as 'writers' who understand the process of writing is never over.

Power of Reading is an internationally successful programme that creates exciting, challenging and effective writing experiences for children. They learn to apply their writing skills in different contexts, develop their 'writers voice' and participate in a full and rounded writing process; planning, drafting and up-leveling work over a period of time. Children are presented with many unique and exciting experiences to stimulate learning and create a 'buzz' around the whole process of writing.

Writing, across the Trust, is well supported by a wide range of writing champions, including a large number of Lead Moderators, who support the understanding of writing assessment across the borough, as well as provide training and expertise across Slough.

#### **EYFS:**

A variety of resources are used to encourage the development of gross and fine motor control, which are essential for good handwriting. These include play-dough, cutting, threading and tracing. In addition, a variety of software is used as a versatile resource to promote these motor skills and the correct pencil grip and formation of letters.

Fine motor skills are also a focus within support groups targeted at specific children.

Gross motor skills are also developed through a variety of physical development activities and opportunities, including PE, as upper body strength is recognised as being vital to good fine motor skills.

Initially, adults will scribe sentences the children say to accompany their drawings, so that they make the vital connection between speech and writing. Next, children are encouraged to attempt their own emergent writing and their efforts are valued and praised. As their phonic knowledge increases, this will be reflected in their writing. At the same time, their knowledge of key words is supported through reading and writing activities, including shared reading and writing. Colourful Semantics is introduced to children and used to support and develop sentence building, teaching children about sentence structure. This approach helps to encourage wider vocabulary; develop the use of nouns, verbs, prepositions and adjectives and support those children who need stimulus when structuring their sentences.

Through engaging in these activities, children become aware that writing is used for a range of purposes. They distinguish it from drawing, and learn the left to right convention of writing in English.

### **KS1:**

Children will be given frequent opportunities to write independently so that the skills demonstrated during shared writing and supported during guided writing, will be transferred into their own writing.

The Big Talk session continues through the autumn term of year 1, to be replaced with a Big Writing session from the Spring Term of Year 1. This provides each child with an opportunity to write an extended piece each week and continues through the Primary Phase and beyond.

As in the Foundation Stage, software is used to promote correctly formed and increasingly fluent handwriting, including joining from Year 1, as appropriate. (Year 1 are not expected to join but are encouraged if ready for it). Spelling is taught regularly, based on systematic phonics teaching and the Collins Connect programme. In order to develop this essential skill of effective writing, basic punctuation is a particular focus. Motor skills continue to be developed through support groups for those children who are slow to progress.

Through shared writing, the teacher will demonstrate specific writing skills, sometimes acting as scribe. The basics of how to form a letter, spell a word, leave a space or put in a full stop are demonstrated, followed later by the more sophisticated strategies of modelling the planning, drafting or proof-reading of writing, engaging in the 'real' process of writing. Children will explore differences in genres and styles of writing, relating their work to real life experiences.

As they progress through the Key Stage, the exploration of different sentence types (with the impact of that on the readers experience of their work) as well as extending their understanding of literary skills such as figurative language becomes a focus. Through close examination of other writers' work, they will look to broaden their own style of writing for different purposes. The use of Colourful Semantics will enable children to independently structure grammatically coherent sentences and give them skills to become more independent writers.

During this stage of writing, all pupils will have access to an array of resources and support materials which they can choose to use. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Word Mats
- Examples discussed/ explored previously
- Dictionaries/ thesauruses
- Writing frames
- Working wall/displays

### **KS2:**

Building on what they have learnt in KS1, children will be given the opportunity to examine different authors' works in greater detail, pulling out the grammatical and language features that have created a unique style. Through this, they are encouraged to apply these new skills to their own work, combining styles and skills of different authors, as well as making decisions over what specific skills to apply to which specific contexts, within their own writing. This includes making decisions over different levels of formality, with more able children being encouraged to skilfully weave levels of formality together.

Alongside 'real life' examples from published texts, children will also experience modelled work and shared writing, where class and personalised targets will be a focus. Children will still have the

support of Colourful Semantics, where appropriate, enabling them to extend their vocabulary and structures, whilst maintaining sound sentence structures. Through role-play, art and other related activities they will deepen their understanding of the creative process and develop a passion of the written form.

As in KS1, the 'journey' of writing is a central aspect, with ample opportunity for children to plan, write and revisit their work. Across the key stage, children will explicitly be shown different aspects of editing and redrafting, working independently and collaboratively to improve and 'publish' their own work. Support materials used in KS1 will still be available to children during their writing experiences in KS2.

Grammatical features of writing are extended further, with a greater focus on the impact of these different features on the reader. Writers are encouraged to consider how different features can be skilfully woven together to make their meaning clearer for the reader and improve the experience of their work. The continuation of Collins Connect to support spellings continues to be a feature as well as explicitly taught handwriting skills (often linked to spellings, to reinforce these skills).

## **4. Spelling**

At all stages, frequent teaching of spelling on a one to one basis can take place while children write. Teaching spelling patterns at the same time as practising handwriting skills, provides useful reinforcement.

In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to make their own marks as the beginning of learning to write and spell. As they progress, they may have their ideas for writing scribed by an adult and they may occasionally copy this writing. As they begin to learn initial letter sounds, they start to use this knowledge in their emergent writing. Gradually they learn to identify and record medial and final sounds.

At all times, children are encouraged to develop confidence in their increasing ability to spell independently. Displays are used across the school to provide a print rich environment which children are encouraged to incorporate in their own writing. Children are also encouraged to 'have a go' at spelling words of which they are unsure. The teacher responds by ticking a correct word or taking the opportunity to remind the child of a spelling pattern/mnemonic etc. for the particular word. Use of other strategies such as onset and rime, investigating spelling rules and learning by 'look and cover' is also implemented to aid spelling.

From Year 3, as the child's spelling competence develops, use of a dictionary will become more frequent to check spellings; although it is important that the child can use a dictionary quickly and easily, so that fluent writing is not impeded. The Collins Connect programme is used from year 1 through to year 6, with online homework given.

## **5. Handwriting**

The teaching of handwriting will follow the pen pals framework. In early stages, children are initially encouraged to mark-make and move from a simple grasping grip, to securing a pencil or pen between fingers and thumb. As correct letter formation becomes established, the teaching focuses on correct formation and character; moving onto consistency in size, shape and general clarity of



writing. As pupils' handwriting skills develop, they are given opportunities to write on narrower lined paper and develop skills in using guidelines with plain paper.

Once pupils establish a fluent, legible joined style, they are free to personalise their joined writing. Children in all years up to year 2 use pencils. Children in KS2 will be awarded a pen license, when they have proved they can write in a fluent joined style consistently with pencil, they may use roller balls or fountain pens. Ballpoint pens are not permitted and we discourage the use of rubbers.

Cross-curricular opportunities are used to provide real purposes for using handwriting skills. The motor skills necessary for handwriting will also be developed in Art, D.T. and P.E, as well as in motor skills groups. A variety of aides, such as pencil grips and tracing cards, are available to support handwriting in the early stages. Children will need guidance as to sitting position and the best way to orientate the paper on which they will be writing, particularly if they are left-handed. Left-handed children should sit on the left or beside another left-handed child when paired. In addition, they may benefit from the use of a pencil grip.

Particular attention is paid to handwriting in the final draft of a piece of written work, especially in KS2. All pupils should be using joined writing throughout KS2 and are taught to print for a purpose in the later years.

## **6. Record Keeping and Assessment**

Writing is assessed half termly using STA writing assessments sheets approved by Slough moderators and the DfE. In years where there are no National STA writing criteria, a 'bridging' criteria has been developed by Lead Writing Moderators which was designed to consolidate the end of KS1 writing skills and support the development of skills that will link to the end of KS2 writing skills.

Children's skills in writing will be assessed not just in Literacy, but across the curriculum. Pieces of assessed work are retained as evidence of attainment in assessment books. Information from assessments is used to inform our planning and to set class/group/individual writing targets. Moderation is achieved through agreements with teaching partners, comparison against exemplification material (DfE moderation or in house examples), staff across the Trust and, if necessary, following discussion with the literacy coordinators for the Trust. This is also completed in conjunction with schools outside of our Trust, to add another level of security about judgements.

Standards of achievement in writing by all our children are constantly monitored and reviewed by class teachers in conjunction with Teaching Assistants, the literacy coordinator, SENCo, phase leaders, deputies and head teacher. Additionally, they will regularly have input from relevant experts outside of our Trust.

Each child from Reception to Year 6 has a reading record book, which indicates the range of books recently read independently. Teachers, other adults and older children reading with the child, write comments in the record, and the child may comment on progress. Adults reading with groups usually complete a guided reading record sheet with individual or group comments.

Other records are often kept, for example to indicate a child's progress in reading high frequency words on sight or phonic recognition. Statutory and non-statutory SATs are taken from years 2 to 6 and we use the information from these assessments to inform future provision. This may include

booster groups in key stage 2. Through these various means of record keeping and assessment, we carefully track individual children's progress and aim to put extra support in place wherever necessary.

In year 1 pupils who have not started to read are assessed by a Reading Recovery teacher in the term they turn 6. The lowest achieving pupils are put on the Reading Recovery Programme to enable them accelerate their progress. All pupils causing concern throughout the school are assessed using a single word reading test to establish a Reading Age, and PM Benchmarking to select books at the correct level. They are monitored at regular intervals until they have caught up with their peers. Newly arrived pupils from year 1 onwards are also assessed within their first two weeks in school.

## **7. Equal Opportunities**

We recognise that nationally boys' achievement levels in reading and writing fall below those of girls. In order to address this imbalance, we aim to ensure that a wide range of reading material and writing opportunities are available which captures boys' interests. Through our varied approach to the teaching of reading and writing, (and by using accelerated learning techniques) we aim to motivate boys to succeed.

However, we also recognise that it is essential that all children, not just boys, are able to be inspired and captivated by their experiences in reading and writing. Therefore, our reading materials reflect the diverse nature, not only of the school community, but also of society at large. As funding permits, we endeavour to update and improve our resources that reflect the wonderful diversity of the society our children find themselves in.

Dual text books are purchased, not only to support the reading development of children speaking the relevant languages at home, but also to encourage all children's interest in language and languages, as well as in universal story themes. We recognise that newly arrived children learning English for the first time may have transferable reading skills from their previous schooling.

Our assessment systems give early indications of children who are having difficulty with learning to read. When a child has been identified as in need of extra support, s/he will have access to small group work, more one to one reading opportunities, and appropriate reading resources.

Many bilingual children bring to their writing a great depth of appreciation of language and an ability to use it flexibly and creatively. This will be encouraged, supported and celebrated. We recognise that children for whom English is an additional language may have specific and important needs that must be addressed, including access to bilingual resources. Our language support staff may focus on those children for whom writing is a particular target for development.

### **Differentiation**

We offer every child access to the English curriculum at the appropriate level, ensuring that children who experience difficulties with any aspect of writing are identified. If necessary, appropriate assessment will be put in place and personalised plans will be devised, in conjunction with relevant experts and professionals. These will be written containing specific targets. Support strategies and materials are introduced according to individual needs across the school.

More able children will be identified and enabled to progress at a level appropriate to their ability. Their success will be celebrated by, for example, submitting their work annually to be included in a published anthology of children's writing. Opportunities within the class setting and in small groups and targeted clubs will be offered to ensure an acceleration of our gifted pupils.

## **8. Parent Partnership**

Many children come to school with an understanding of some of the purposes of writing and with experience of drawing, colouring and mark-making as a precursor to legible writing. These experiences are valued by the school, and parents are encouraged to exploit their children's interest by including them in activities such as writing shopping lists and postcards. Guidance about correct letter formation is given to parents of children in reception and year 1.

Later, parents are encouraged to participate in their children's writing development through spellings project / homework tasks which require research and presentation, and parental support is encouraged with these activities. Online homework is provided on a daily / weekly basis through: REN reading, spelling and SPaG homework.

## **9. Enrichment**

Other activities take place in school to enrich the reading curriculum. Amongst these the following have recently taken place:

- A KS1 and KS2 reading club
- World Book Week celebrations
- Library visits – Links with local libraries
- Workshops for parents
- Accelerated writer clubs
- Saturday Day Club (targeting Year 6 children, including Reading and SPaG focus, during the Spring Half Term)
- Writers visit
- Reading environments and the creation of exciting Book Corners in every classroom

## **10. Conclusion**

Reading and Writing should be seen as highly linked and mutually supportive of each other. Whilst there are certainly aspects that require a focused, exclusive approach we at Marish Academy Trust seek to inspire all children to be equally passionate about both Reading and Writing.

Reading and Writing are crucial steps towards achieving success, not only in school but also to fulfil their potential (as well as ambitions) in adult life. Our aims are that children leave Marish Academy Trust with the firm foundations necessary to become life-long learners; competent in reading and writing and a passion to continue growing.

## 11. Strategic Board of Trustees' Approval

This policy is reviewed by the whole staff team Trust wide and Strategic Board on their recommendation.

Version	Approved	Next Review	Comments
1.0	September (writing) and November (Reading) 2012	January 2014 (Writing) Autumn 2014 (reading)	
2.0	December 2014 (writing and reading)	December 2016	
3.0	September 2017		