



## **Literacy and Reading Strategies**

*For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand,  
and I hope you will understand until the end; 2 Corinthians 1:13*

At Saint John Wall Catholic School we ensure that disciplinary literacy is at the centre of our curriculum. To deliver an ambitious, knowledge rich curriculum for our pupils, we strive to provide access to a wide and varied vocabulary. We aim to develop both pupils' reading for understanding, and the joy of reading for pleasure. Research indicates that there is a clear link between vocabulary and deprivation. According to Hart and Risley: "The Early Catastrophe" (2003), the average child in a professional family will accumulate 30 million words more than a socially deprived family. To address the word gap, we teach good literacy skills to improve pupils' ability to access the curriculum, so that their life chances will be significantly enhanced.

### **What we do at Saint John Wall Catholic School**

#### **Curriculum design**

Our schemes of work identify 'Tier Three' vocabulary for explicit teaching in every subject with the aim that pupils develop their knowledge, fluency, and quality of written communication. Teachers use a variety of graphic organisers to deepen pupils' understanding of technical vocabulary i.e., the Frayer Model, for targeted vocabulary instruction.

#### **Developing Academic Reading**

##### **ERIC (Everybody Reads in Class)**

Each subject provides subject specific reading opportunities over a series of lessons. Teachers can use academic news articles, high-quality information texts, such as the National Geographic, or an extract from a subject textbook. The aim is to develop pupils' resilience in reading and to provide opportunities to read for an extended period, promote a love of learning, as well as deepening pupils' knowledge and understanding of a subject.

##### **Wider Reading in Development Homework**

Development homework activities encourage pupils to develop independent reading habits and provide further exposure/access to a variety of literature, such as recommended books, magazines/articles/KS5 reading materials.

##### **Reading Club**

Year 7 and 8 pupils are invited to attend our Reading Club which runs weekly in the Learning Resource Centre. Pupils are encouraged to read and enjoy a wide range of literature together, while engaging in new texts. Pupils who participate also have the opportunity to be involved in the selection process of procuring new books for others to enjoy.

## **Word of the Week**

Promoting 'Tier Two' vocabulary develops pupils' cross-curricular thinking, application of knowledge across subject disciplines, as well as strengthening pupils' academic ability for examinations. Each week, a 'Word of the Week' is shared in both tutor time and across all lessons. It is displayed on form noticeboards across the school. The range of vocabulary is selected as 'Tier Two' - the vocabulary we do not often use in speech but find in academic texts of study and exam related materials such as exam questions. It is tier two vocabulary that is not explicitly taught yet is a key component to pupils' success in their written work and understanding of texts. Pupils are encouraged to use the Word of the Week in both their speech and written work. As well as using the Frayer Model to help pupils understand the meaning of the word and related vocabulary, pupils are also given a short passage during form so they can read the word in context, to fully understand its meaning. This short text provides another opportunity to read together as a group, as well as strengthening understanding of new vocabulary.

## **Combining Reading & Writing in every subject**

### **Writing**

The reading and writing demands from our subject disciplines, require higher order thinking skills such as interpretative and analytical skills. Teachers skilfully break down complex writing tasks to support pupils with developing their ability to produce good, quality written communication. For our pupils, several subjects will provide writing scaffolds to build motivation and confidence for extended writing. In English teachers use PEEZ (Point, Evidence, Explanation and Zoom); in Science – IDEA (Identify, Describe, Explain & Apply); in RE – KFCS (Key words, Faith Facts, Change of behaviour & Source of authority); in History – BEAK (Bias, Evidence, Analysis and Knowledge) and in Maths – 'Line at a Time'.

### **GOSSIP**

Teachers improve pupils' written communication when providing feedback on a piece of work, and we expect our pupils to be actively engaged in proofreading their own work, using the acronym GOSSIP. This provides a whole school approach to improving pupils' **g**rammar, **o**rganisation, **s**entences, **s**pellings, **i**nteresting vocabulary, and **p**unctuation.

## **Literacy Intervention**

### **Accelerated Reader**

Key Stage Three pupils take part in the Accelerated Reader programme. Participation in this programme ensures that pupils' reading age correctly identifies, and supports pupils in their choice from a range of age-appropriate texts to improve their reading skills. Pupils are assessed once per term. The results inform additional provision from Learning Support/ English Department. Pupils below the expected reading age will be part of a small group reading intervention.

Other literacy assessments to identify pupils requiring additional intervention are: Literacy Assessment Online, CAT4D and LASS Screening.

## **Reciprocal reading**

Some pupils in years 7 and 8 are identified as needing bespoke tuition to improve their reading comprehension skills and develop a passion for reading. The programme is usually 6-8 weeks and takes place during Lifestyle lessons. An example of impact: 100% of pupils in one reciprocal Reading intervention group improved their reading age by at least 1 year in 6 weeks. One pupil improved their reading age by 6 years.

## **DLP Hub**

The SEND Hub provision aims to meet the needs of pupils with complex/significant SEND through quality first teaching and SEND support in mainstream schools. Placements at each Hub are short term (usually 6 to 8 weeks) depending on term dates and individual pupil needs, with a focus on rapid intervention and rapid progress. Pupils are taught an appropriately broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum of English, Maths, Science, RE and Humanities. Pupils also have a PE lesson and Life Skills lesson each week. The curriculum is designed for rapid improvement with a focus on literacy skills as well as personal development.

## **Lesson Study**

Several staff are part of a teacher-led research group to explore reading strategies to be developed in the school. Teachers work collaboratively to research, plan, teach and observe lessons that promotes a professional discussion around reading. This leads to a dissemination of ideas, trials of new teaching and learning techniques that will help to improve Reading for Pleasure and Reading for Meaning in the classroom.

## **Celebrating Reading & Literacy**

### **Book reviews**

To further nurture a culture of reading, we have included book reviews, from both staff and pupils, as a regular feature in our school newsletter, on our school plasma screens and website. Pupils write a book review to share their experience and to promote the love of reading to the rest of the pupils in the school. Likewise, staff model the habit of reading for pleasure and foster a shared dialogue about reading.

### **Reading Relay (Autumn Term)**

Year 7 are introduced to reading for pleasure throughout several lessons in a school day. Pupils read an entire book and see all their teachers model good reading, to ensure they enjoy the stories together. Reciprocal reading strategies are used to encourage short discussions, predictions about what will happen next; their reactions to what they have read; questions which check for understanding and the opportunity to build vocabulary.

### **Literacy Week (Spring Term)**

A week of literacy activities across the curriculum, culminating in **World Book Day**. An opportunity for departments to peer review and further embed literacy ideas in their own subject areas. Pupils are given the prospect to take part in House competitions, with all events of the week culminating in a special edition of the school's newsletter; this will showcase each department's contribution to Literacy Week.



## Parents/Carers

What can you do at home to support your child's vocabulary?

- Talk to your child about the 'Word of the Week'. Can they use the word in a sentence? Can they explain origin of the word to you or give you a definition?
- Encourage your child to read for pleasure. Reading helps children to learn new words and increases their knowledge in all subjects.
- Try the [Free Rice Game challenge](#). Encourage your child to experiment with new vocabulary through the Free Rice online game. This online game is linked to 'The World Food Programme'. For each correct answer, the equivalent of 10 grains of rice is donated to the WFP who use it to save and change lives in more than 80 countries around the world, feeding people caught in conflict and disasters, and laying the foundations for a better future.

## Supporting Documents

- Literacy and Numeracy Policy
- PP Strategy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment, feedback and Homework Policy

## Further Reading

- Research Evidence on Reading for Pleasure – DfE 2012
- Education Endowment Foundation – Literacy KS3/KS4