



**MARICOURT**  
CATHOLIC  
HIGH SCHOOL  
& SIXTH FORM CENTRE

# LITERACY POLICY

## Mission Statement

Our Maricourt family, with Christ at the centre, is a community of welcome, compassion and respect in which we are encouraged to discover our true purpose and empowered to achieve the extraordinary so as to be the change we want to see in our world.

**INSPIRE**  
WITH  
MARICOURT

POLICY REVIEWED: Feb 2022  
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## Lost for words

“Literacy lays the foundation for a future of greater individual resilience and increased social mobility. . . . Through literacy development, people can better engage both socially and economically . . . it is not literacy on its own that makes a difference, but what it enables people to do in order to ameliorate the experience of living in poverty and therefore increase the likelihood of breaking the poverty cycle”

**Lost for words, Emily McCoy (2013)**

## Teaching standards

“All teachers will promote high standards of literacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher’s specialist subject.”

**New Teaching Standards (2011)**

All teachers are teachers of literacy. Maricourt High School is committed to developing literacy skills in all of its pupils, in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum, because:

- pupils need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects;
- reading helps us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience;
- writing helps us to sustain and order thought;
- language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do, and on the things others have said, written or done;
- responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry;
- improving literacy and learning can have an impact on pupils’ self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. It allows them to learn independently and is empowering.

Specific literacy objectives will be incorporated into all schemes of work. Where appropriate, they will feature in lesson plans. Literacy should also form part of lesson plenaries when it is appropriate to the focus of the lesson.

## Implementation at whole-school level

Language is the prime medium through which pupils learn and express themselves across the curriculum, and all teachers have a stake in effective literacy.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governors:** monitor that policy is in practice;
- **Senior managers:** lead, monitor, evaluate and give a high profile to literacy;
- **English department:** provide pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively;

- **Teachers across the curriculum:** contribute to pupils' development of language, since reading, writing, speaking and listening are, to varying degrees, integral to all lessons;
- **Literacy co-ordinator:** supports departments in the implementation of strategies; encourages departments to learn from each other's practice by sharing ideas; liaises with the Catch Up Literacy co-ordinator and engages with parents;
- **Parents:** encourage their children to use the range of strategies they have learnt to improve their levels of literacy;
- **Pupils:** take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements.

### **Across the school we shall:**

1. Prioritise disciplinary literacy across the curriculum
2. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject
3. Develop reading and writing skills through explicit teaching
4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' work, using a cross-curricular form of annotation.
5. Provide interventions for students struggling with literacy
6. Strive to develop a love of reading for pleasure
7. Review this literacy policy annually.

### **Use of Language Across the Curriculum**

Pupils should be taught in all subjects to express themselves correctly and appropriately and to read accurately and with understanding. Since standard English, spoken and written, is the predominant language in which knowledge and skills are taught and learnt, pupils should be taught to recognise and use standard English.

### **Developing reading skills**

Reading is a gateway skill and is crucial for student's success throughout the curriculum. Students need to be able to read with fluency in order to understand, process and respond. This skill expands beyond the academic curriculum and into every day life.

Pupils with a lower reading skill face significant challenges accessing information. This can lead to a widening academic gap as we move through their school career, limiting both academic and life outcomes.

### **High quality Reading intervention**

Year 7 pupils sit a Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) during term 1. Students with a reading age below that expected in Year 7 will receive intervention

- Level 1 – Reading at or above Chronological age
- Level 2 – Reading age 10-11 – Support reading through Quality First Teaching
- Level 3 – Reading age 9 ½ - 10 years – IDL breakfast programme
- Level 4 – Reading age below 9 years 6 months – Freshstart Phonic programme

Diagnostic reading tests provide important information to identify students who may need support with reading. However, one test is not a reliable indicator of poor reading skill. Students identified for Level 3 & 4 intervention will be tested further to ensure a robust dataset for baseline.

### **Intervention beyond year 7**

Students still requiring intervention on Level 3 or 4, will continue to receive support to narrow the reading gap. Students will continue to be assessed for their reading age so that high quality intervention can be put in place. This can include

- IDL sessions
- Reciprocal reading projects
- 1:1 support
- SEND specific support
- External support through SEND

## **Supporting reading through quality first teaching**

Teachers have access to reading age data and to SEND support plans where appropriate. These are used, alongside subject specific assessment, to inform and guide quality first teaching, including support for reading.

Students will receive opportunities to read within lessons to develop their wider reading skills, subject specific reading skills and to access new skills and knowledge. While texts need to be challenging, students will be unable to access information and will therefore struggle to make progress if written text is substantially beyond their reading ability. Teachers at Maricourt consider the level of written text in passages, questions, powerpoints and all other mediums in class. This may mean providing different texts for different classes or students. Support can also be offered to focus specifically on the facets of reading: decoding and comprehension

### **Decoding**

Introducing key words – key vocabulary should be introduced throughout the curriculum so that words that may be challenging to decode are easily recognisable to readers. Key words can be highlighted directly before reading and may form part of an activate.

Pre-reading – Reading aloud with the class, with partners or as individuals can support decoding if the emphasis is not on comprehension. This can be used to identify barriers to decoding and should reduce cognitive load for comprehension.

Breaking down words – using Phonics – Decoding can be supported by breaking down words into their phonemes. Our students have experience of using phonics at KS1&2, but may need prompting to utilise this skill in secondary school.

## Comprehension

Prior knowledge and context – comprehension is supported by students knowing the context of the phrases their reading. Prior to text, teachers can introduce key information or pictures to prepare for the text

Use of glossaries and definitions – comprehension can be limited by knowledge of key words. Students will be provided with definitions where appropriate

Before reading	Ask questions about the text/topic Activate prior knowledge Make predictions
During reading	Ask questions to monitor understanding Make connections and inferences Visualise and devise a mental model of the text Update and make new predictions
After reading	Seek coherence and summarise text Revisit and revise predictions Generate further questions about the text and your understanding Evaluate your reading and judge against your goals

## Reading for pleasure

We aim to give pupils a level of literacy that will enable them to cope with the increasing demands of subjects in terms of specific skills, knowledge and understanding. This applies particularly in the area of reading (including from the screen), as texts become more demanding.

We aim to promote reading for pleasure through planned reading time and regular library lessons in years 7 & 8. We promote wider reading across the curriculum through Year 7 research projects and other promotional events. We strive to improve access to appropriate literature through our LRCs and investments such as Book Busz, providing books for Year 7 students in their first term.

## Supporting literacy through targeted vocabulary instruction

Vocabulary is limiter in reading with students who are read to at home regularly having heard 1.4million more words than those who aren't by secondary school age.

At Maricourt, we explicitly teach vocabulary, regularly revisiting key words both generally and subject specifically.

Tier 2 words are introduced on a weekly basis through "language specificity" with students and teachers encouraged to use these throughout their lessons.

Tier 3 vocabulary is highlighted in schemes of learning as part of our approach to develop disciplinary literacy. These words are taught explicitly and revisited in a number of ways

Morphology – analysing the parts of words

Etymology – looking at the root of words

Definitions – key vocabulary and definitions will be shared and highlighted in books. These resources, along with word mats and glossaries will often be used to support reading tasks.

Retrieval practice – developing recall of words, definitions and spellings through testing. This will take place in homework quizzes and in class activities such as activates.

## **Disciplinary literacy**

Disciplinary literacy is the subject specific focus of reading, writing and speaking. Each subject has their own nuances within literacy just as they have their own vocabulary. At Maricourt, we put a focus on explicitly teaching these skills and ensuring students can read, write and communicate effectively within their subject.

At Maricourt, teachers:

- Are aware of what is unique in their subject and share this with students
- Are aware of crossovers, similarities and differences with other subjects and use this to aid student understanding
- Are aware of typical misconceptions within their subject's literacy, and address these appropriately

## **Speaking and Listening**

We will teach pupils to use language precisely and cogently. They should be able to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively.

We will develop strategies to teach pupils how to participate orally in groups and in the whole class, including: using talk to develop and clarify ideas; identifying the main points to arise from a discussion; listening for a specific purpose; discussion and evaluation.

### **Modelling spoken Literacy**

High standards of spoken literacy are expected at Maricourt in order to give our students the best opportunities in life. Staff model high standards of spoken English (in line with the staff code of conduct) and support students in development of their own speaking skills. This includes correcting grammar in a supportive manner.

## **Writing**

It is important that we provide for co-ordination across subjects to recognise and reinforce pupils' language skills, through:

- making connections between pupils' reading and writing, so that pupils have clear models for their writing;
- using the modelling process to make explicit to pupils *how* to write;
- being clear about audience and purpose;
- being taught to organise their writing in logical and coherent forms;
- providing opportunities for a range of writing including sustained writing;
- being taught to use correct spelling and punctuation and follow grammatical conventions.

This is supported throughout The Maricourt Book with our common framework for feedback on writing

## Including ALL Pupils

### Differentiation

Maricourt High School pupils are entitled to our highest expectations and support. Some will need additional support and others will need to be challenged and extended. Quality first teaching and High-quality intervention are at the heart of differentiation at Maricourt.

Reasonable adjustments to teaching must be made to ensure students can progress and develop. In addition to Literacy specific approaches set out in this policy, further strategies are set out in our SEND offer and Most able policy. These strategies ensure that, where appropriate, Maricourt staff make adjustments to

:

- questioning;
- the demands of the task;
- the use of additional support including scaffolds and frames;
- use of group structures;
- resources;
- Communication of aims and objectives;

### EAL

High quality, personalised literacy support is key for students with EAL. These students will have IEPs highlighting specific support required for their level of need. This will ensure that despite barriers to language, academic progress can still be made. Interventions may include:

- Use of language dictionaries
- Subject specific translations for terms and definitions
- Use of interpreters



- Reading and writing software

Our pupils learning EAL need to hear good examples of spoken English and also refer to their first language skills to aid new learning in all subjects of the curriculum. The use of their first language enables them to draw on existing subject knowledge and to develop English language skills in context.

## **The English Department**

In addition to the whole-school aspects of this policy, the English teachers at Maricourt High School have a leading role in providing pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively.

The English department is well-placed to offer good advice and expertise.

The role of the English department includes:

- contributing to whole-school Literacy audits;
- a key role in identifying literacy priorities, targets and objectives;
- using data to identify curricular targets;
- developing strategies and whole-school approaches.
- Support with CPD