Aspris Children's Services

Kingsbrook School

'A unique service for unique young people'

Literacy Procedure

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Introduction

In this policy statement we address literacy in its widest sense, i.e. including speech, language and communication. For many of the children and young people these aspects of learning represent the most significant barriers to learning. Some have learning difficulties, some have lost ground through having missed education, and many react negatively to lessons in which reading and writing play a part.

For all of them, progress in literacy is essential, in that it plays a part in all aspects of the curriculum and is closely allied to thinking and learning skills. Because of this it is the highest of priorities within the curriculum

Rationale

We aim to provide a supportive, stimulating, secure and supportive environment where children and young people are encouraged to express themselves and where their contributions are valued. We will provide for the language development of pupils and will develop their ability to use language to think, to explore and to recognise and communicate their ideas. We will at the same time take into account how we support literacy difficulties when planning, so that we can provide access to learning experiences across the curriculum that are matched to ability and interest, whatever the language level of the pupil

Principles

1. Literacy is a right for all students and a central part of preparation for adult life.
2. There is a responsibility upon all teachers and support staff to develop literacy, and to approach its development consistently.
3. We will prioritise the development of literacy across all areas of the curriculum
4. We will consider the literacy demands of all lessons, tasks, and resources; ensure that they are matched to pupils' attainment.
5. We will make literacy support a key feature of differentiation in all subjects.
6. We will carry out baseline testing on entry to the school and subsequently to ensure accurate assessment of need.
7. We will ensure that all staff have accurate information about the literacy levels of pupils they teach, about how best to support them, and about their targets for development.
8. We recognise that language is central to students' sense of identity, belonging and growth; and in turn to raising students' own expectations of achievement, improving students' confidence and self-expression.

Aims

1. To raise the standard of literacy.
2. To enable pupils to express and communicate meaning in spoken language, listening to and interpreting what others say and matching style and response to audience, context and purpose.
3. To provide pupils with a range of relevant and purposeful opportunities to develop their ability to read, understand and engage with various types of text for enjoyment and learning.
4. To enable learners to communicate using written language effectively, making and shaping text appropriately, according to context, purpose, reader, or audience.
5. To 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.
6. To develop a shared understanding between all staff of the role of language in students' learning and how work in different subjects can contribute to and benefit from the development of students' ability to communicate effectively.

Roles and responsibilities:

All staff should:

- Model and promote good use of language, and positive attitudes towards literacy.
- Be aware of their own contribution to language development for young people.
- Be aware of the needs of and targets for individual learners and how best to address them.

Teachers should:

- Provide a supportive and stimulating environment, planning for purposeful activities within which learners develop literacy skills.
- Provide a variety of resources and opportunities for a wide range of balanced activities to encourage the development of skills in talking, listening, reading and writing.
- Monitor the development of skills in literacy.
- Evaluate and assess the development of skills in literacy.
- Consider literacy difficulties when planning their lessons, targeting learning support accordingly, and using a range of strategies to ensure that literacy difficulties do not prevent progress elsewhere in the curriculum.

Learning Support Assistance should:

- Recognise what their own role is in supporting individual learners in the classroom.
- Contribute to one-to-one interventions as planned.
- Contribute to assessments of progress.

Literacy Assessment and Intervention

Upon admission as soon as possible a student is provided with a WRAT 4 Assessment to ascertain their functioning ages for reading, spelling, and sentence comprehension. From these outcomes, students can be placed onto literacy interventions to improve their functioning age for reading, spelling, and sentence comprehension. Interventions form part of the student's English lessons and it is recommended that three times a week per intervention at approximately ten minutes long is required. WRAT 4 Assessments are repeated at the start of each term and the effectiveness of the intervention is reviewed based upon progress made.

The challenges for literacy development: Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening are fundamental skills upon which the educational development of our children and young people depend. Through the development of oral skills, they learn about language, and this equips them to demonstrate and refine their learning. Literacy and thinking are closely associated.

Our overall aim is for our pupils to become efficient language users. This will be achieved by devoting time, energy and resources to the development of oral communication. Through purposeful interaction with teachers, pupils will be provided with experiences that develop their skills and their thinking.

Classroom environment

All classrooms will be an environment to learn and will have a focus on literacy. There will be the students work on display in every subject.
Speaking and listening is at the heart of all lessons taught. All students are encouraged to talk and be part of discussions.
Students will understand that joining in with discussions around topics is learning.

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

We need to take account of:

- the need for planning for talk in all areas of the curriculum
- the provision of experiences and activities to promote a wide range of types of talk
- the value placed on talking and listening for social, communicative and cognitive purposes
- classroom organisation and management eg use of pairs and groups; varying composition of groups; varying roles in groups
- the teacher's role in modelling oral language
- use of resources and display eg 'talk board', interest tables, book displays,
- television and radio, computer software
- speaking and listening as a preparation for reading and writing.

Challenges for literacy development: Reading

Our aims are that our children and young people will learn to read, will enjoy a wide variety of texts and will become independent, critical, life-long readers and learners. Reading, with appropriate support and encouragement will in turn provide access to learning right across the curriculum.

Developing Early Reading Skills

For students who attend Kingsbrook School who are in the early stages of or have no prior reading skills we have a reading strategy in place to develop early readers.

These students would be assessed upon their phonic knowledge as a whole and also as part of the WRAT 4 Assessment. If further development of phonic knowledge is required then the student would be placed onto a phonic intervention programme. A functioning age for reading would be identified using the WRAT 4 Reading Assessment.

A variety of games and resources are utilised to develop phonic knowledge within our students.

Once phonic knowledge skills have been acquired; we have a reading scheme in place for early readers that increases in reading difficulty as the student progresses in their reading skills.

The reading scheme is 'High Interest' which means it is aimed towards the 'older' non-reader and therefore does not appear 'childlike', therefore, it is more likely to engage the older non-reader. The reading scheme used at Kingsbrook is 'Rising Stars' Reading Planet. The scheme has six stages to enable students to build upon their phonic knowledge. The 'Lilac' stage (phonics phase 1-2) teaches students to blend letter sounds, the 'Pink' stage (phonics phase 2) is where students can practise key sounds; s, a, t, l, p, n, m, d, o, and c. The 'Red' stage (phonics phase 3), students can practise sound blends such as: sh, th, ng, ee, oa and oo. The 'Yellow' stage (phonics phase 2-3), students can practise additional sound blends such as; ar, or, ur, air and er. The 'Green' stage (phonics phase 5), students can practise more complex sound blends such as; ew/ue/u-e/u, oul, ir/ear/or, oy and ore/au/al. The final stage, (phonics phase 5-6), students can practise complex sound blends such as ch (as in headaches), ch (as in brochure), ci/cy, ge/dge/gi, le, mb (as in thumb), wr, tch (as in watching), cian/tion (w)a (as in swan) and si (as in vision).

The early reader will remain on their intervention reading programme to enable rapid progress. A student would also be reassessed using the WRAT 4 every term thereafter, to ascertain progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions utilised.

It is recognised that reading for 30 minutes a day significantly improves the standard of reading for students. This can be a challenge for some students as they either struggle to focus and concentrate for that length of time, they lack confidence and are therefore resistant to read, particularly out loud even on a 1-1 basis.

Given the above we need to think creatively about reading and provide as many reading opportunities as possible throughout the school day to maximise on the recommended 30 minutes in addition to reading books and reading interventions if required. Further reading opportunities are provided through a variety of means such as:

- Classes having a 'Word of the Day'
- Video clips with subtitles
- Word quizzes and games
- Worded maths questions
- Shared/paired reading
- Comic Club

- Researching on the internet
- Encourage students to read their own learning targets and Progress Profile Grid targets for the week
- Encourage students to read their 'Want Went Well' comments on marked pieces of work

Classroom environment

Due to the safety aspect of some of our students, items, to include certain books, cannot always be left in the classroom. However, every effort is made to encourage reading and being read to, as part of the education day. Depending upon a student's risk assessment, they can 'borrow' books from school to read during their own time.

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

We need to take account of

- regular reading to and with pupils in all classes
- paired reading with peers or an adult
- phonics teaching
- language experience, combining writing and reading
- modelling of reading strategies
- guided reading in small groups
- Reading is encouraged throughout the school day and also students are offered to take reading books home to encourage further reading outside of school.

All books within Kingsbrook have a colour coded sticker system that represents a recommended reading age; this enables teachers to direct the students to a book that is at the correct level for their functioning reading age. Books with red circles are for reading ages between 5-7 years, a yellow sticker 8-10 years, blue sticker 11-13 years and green stickers are for readers with a reading age of 14 years to Young Adult. By placing stickers on books representing a student's functioning reading age, enables students to feel they can choose a reading book without shame or embarrassment, and therefore, preserving their levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, if their reading age is lower than their chronological age.

Challenges for literacy development: Writing

Rationale

Writing is an essential tool in the learning process. People write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions and to present evidence of research. By developing these skills we can equip our learners to use writing across the range of curricular activities in which they are involved.

Our aim is that our pupils will develop the ability to write effectively in various forms according to purpose and audience.

Developing Early Writing Skills

For students who attend Kingsbrook School who are in the early stages of or have no prior writing skills, we have a writing strategy in place to develop these skills.

These students would be assessed upon their base- knowledge of letter recognition and letter formation. Students would also complete the WRAT 4 Spelling Assessment. If further development of letter formation is required then the student would be placed onto a writing intervention programme. A functioning age for spelling would be identified using the WRAT 4 Assessment.

A variety of games and resources are utilised to develop writing and letter formation within our students.

An intervention programme called Apples and Pears, by 'Sound Foundations' will be introduced to rapidly develop letter formation and early writing skills. The Apples and Pears programme increases in difficulty as writing skills develop and the students are assessed throughout the programme to enable them to move onto the next stage. Apples and Pears is a successful reading and writing intervention, especially for students with complex learning needs as it recognises that learning to write puts a considerable load on a student's memory, for students with complex learning needs, this is often reduced, so, based upon that fact, Apples and Pears works upon the principle of providing the following:

- Carefully planned structure ensures that material is taught in a logical order
- Every task is broken down into the smallest possible steps
- Continuous reinforcement ensures that no time is wasted by teaching skills that are eventually forgotten.
- Students are trained to hear each sound in a word; this greatly reduces memory load required to spell.
- Memory load is drastically reduced by a 'morphemic' strategy; students learn interchangeable building blocks in words. Each morpheme in the word 'ec-cept-ion-al-ly' can be used in dozens, if not hundreds, of other words. Students also learn the rules for '**dropping the 'e**'' (hoping, hopeless), **doubling** (fitting, fitness) and **changing the 'y' to an 'I'** (studied, studying).
- Irregular words are introduced at a controlled rate. Students with complex learning needs find these the most difficult to master.
- Extensive dictation exercises give students an understanding of correct sentence structure and punctuation. This assists the transfer of skills to other written work.
- Multi-sensory techniques work with all students regardless of their preferred learning styles.

A student would also be reassessed using the WRAT 4 Spelling Assessment every term thereafter, to ascertain progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions utilised.

Classroom Environment

All classrooms showcase students own work.
Dictionaries and word banks are used effectively with all students.

Within the showcase of students work, there is a lot of focus on student's writing. This is in the form of photographs of students with white board work from English lessons or with descriptions of an historical event which has been displayed in a poster form.

Support from the home

We believe that parental and carer involvement in literacy is invaluable, as they provide the best of role models within a relaxed environment.

For students who wish to, homework can be set to encourage further practice upon their literacy development. Teachers may also recommend that homework is set, dependent upon need and the stage in a student's education.