

Roehampton Gate School

Reading and Literacy Local Policy

The following document outlines our local procedure, organised as follows:

- I. Whole School Literacy Profile
- II. Rationale
- III. Approach
- IV. Monitoring
- V. Impact

Roehampton Gate School Literacy Profile:

Of particular interest for this document are those impairments that influence the literacy profile (reading, written and oral language) of our students. Whilst one might typically associate conditions such as dyslexia with being a barrier to literacy, there is ample research showing that autism spectrum condition presents its own difficulties in the area of literacy owing to the concomitant traits of the condition such as sensory processing disorder (SPD), speech, language and communication needs (SCLN), struggles with executive functioning and difficulties with understanding social contexts (Theory of Mind).

Each student will have a unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses, and these should be identified and addressed based on their specific needs, however, it is also important to recognise difficulties the condition can present as this informs best practice when working with autistic children.

Our literacy and reading strategy aims to ensure that all staff understand barriers to literacy specific to autism, are able to identify the specific profile of each student's strengths and weaknesses in the area of literacy, can deploy evidenced based interventions based on those needs, and improve the literacy of every student. Alongside progress in individual literacy, we also foster a love of reading that will allow students to continue to grow in their literacy beyond school.

Rationale:

. Our rationale for this procedure is based on the following evidence.

1. Literacy is a crucial factor in the quality and duration of life of our students.
 - a. "People with poor literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed, have low incomes and poor health behaviours, which in turn can be linked to lower life expectancy. People with poor literacy skills earn 12% less than those with good literacy skills (National Literacy Trust)." Low health literacy is associated with a 75% increased risk of dying earlier than people who have high literacy levels."²
2. Reading for pleasure equips students to be "global citizens."
3. "Studies ... indicate that through reading recreationally, young people develop a wider general knowledge and understanding of the world (Cunningham and Stanovich 1998; Mol and Bus 2011). Volitional reading, it is argued, affords a distinct cognitive advantage and the development of 'information capital' essential for successful learning in every curriculum subject (Neuman Susan & Celano 2012). Comprehension skills are essential for students to understand how to safeguard themselves.
 - a. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting issues increases their vulnerability. Students with deficits in cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between

fact and fiction in online content may not understand the consequences of repeating beliefs/behaviours they have seen online.³

Approach:

Informed

On induction to school all children are baselined using NGRT and NGST to ascertain proficiency in Phonics, decoding, fluence, comprehension and reading age. These assessments are delivered 1:1 with trained members of staff to ensure that assessment data is accurate.

Where this highlights a reading age of below 8yrs or a weakness in decoding students are then tested using the Reading Assessment Programme (RAP) developed by the organisation, FFT, details of which can be found here: <https://fft.org.uk/literacy/reading-assessment-programme/>.

This precisely identifies the gaps and then generates a heat map of the GPCs (Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences) that need to be developed within the intervention programme.

Targeted

Based on outcomes from the assessment, students are supported in one of three intervention categories based on their level of need.

- **Universal Intervention:** All students take part in 5 Literacy block session (20 minutes each) per week. These are delivered by their Form Tutor who is trained to deliver three elements of our reading comprehension programme:
 - Reciprocal Reading (provided by FFT)- Targeted intervention to improve comprehension. This program is a way of improving reading comprehension through a structured conversation about a text. The strategies modelling and practised are: Predict, Clarify, Question and summarize. This will develop the skills of inference and deduction for all of our students. This is an enjoyable way of talking about texts to aid understanding.
 - News Literacy- Developing greater contextual understanding of their world and developing global citizens.
 - Safeguarding Literacy- Improving students understanding of context with regard to safety risks.
 - Where appropriate, children are supported in reading out loud to an adult.

Additionally Medium Term Plans for all subjects highlight keywords alongside any cross-curricular literacy developed. Students are supported to write using these keywords and academic language.

- **Targeted Intervention:** Students who are identified as having gaps in decoding and fluency (based on RAP assessment) have two 30-minute sessions per week with a small group of

peers and a staff member trained to delivery the Reading Quest programme. This programme uses Systematic Synthetic Phonics. Students are grouped according to their profile of need. *“Each Quest includes linked teaching of the phonic code, common exception words, and key reading skills. Students then immediately apply their skills through reading engaging texts and targeted writing or spelling activities.”*

- Intensive Intervention: Students in this category are given three sessions per week where each has 1:1 instruction that targets deficits in phonetic awareness and decoding ability based on the RAP assessment. The intervention, Reading Quest, is sourced from FFT who have ensured that intervention materials are appropriate in style and presentation for older pupils.

Whole-school:

- All staff involved in teaching and learning are trained to incorporate and support literacy and reading.
- Subject specialists identify 2 subject specific vocabulary words each week and incorporate contextualising this vocabulary in every lesson.

Monitoring:

Students participating in Group and Intensive interventions are assessed using the RAP (Reading Assessment Programme) every half-term to monitor their progress. In addition, staff delivering the programme meet every half-term to audit the effectiveness of its delivery. Based on assessment results and staff feedback, the Literacy Lead and Senior Leadership meet to review the efficacy of programme delivery and make alterations if necessary.

Monitoring of our Universal Literacy programme, Reciprocal Reading, involves two different assessments. Bi-annually, students are given the NGRT which quantitatively measures comprehension skills.

Impact:

Universal Comprehension Intervention (Reciprocal Reading): An independent evaluation of this programme by the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) found that pupils engaged in the intervention made an average of +2 months' more progress in terms of reading comprehension and overall reading compared to an equivalent comparison group.⁴

Intensive and Targeted Interventions (Reading Quest): Students with deficits in phonics, decoding and fluency can be reluctant to engage in learning as these skills are necessary for accessing learning. With systematic and targeted intervention to address these deficiencies, students grow in confidence and engagement.