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At St Mark’s Academy, we believe that all students are entitled to a transformational education that will enable them to realise their God-given potential and ensure they have the ambition, confidence, cultural capital and employability skills to be successful in their future university and professional career.

## What is literacy?

To be literate in its most basic form is to have the ability to read, write, communicate and react to ideas in text and language. Literacy skills provide strong foundations which students build on across subject disciplines. The SMA literacy policy however runs much deeper than our ability to read, write and communicate. National statistics show a concerning downward spiral with regards to the literacy of the nation. National Literacy Trust statistics suggest that:

- 1 in 8 disadvantaged children in the UK say that they don’t have a book of their own.
- The longer children maintain an enjoyment of reading, the greater the benefits are in the classroom.
- Children born into communities with the most serious literacy challenges have some of the lowest life expectancies in England.
- Only half of children in the UK enjoy writing.
- Children who enjoy reading and writing are happier in their lives.
- 1 in 6 adults in the England (16.4%/7.1 million people) have very poor literacy skills.

Social disadvantage and deprivation play an undeniable part not only then in the national picture, but also in the local community that our academy serves.

[What is literacy? | National Literacy Trust](#)

## Rationale

SMA’s literacy policy has been informed by the following publications:

- **‘Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools’** guidance report (2019) [EEF Literacy in Secondary Schools 2019](#)
- **‘How Schools are Closing the Word Gap’** Oxford Language Report 2021-22 [How Schools are Closing the Word Gap - OUP 2021-2022](#)
- **‘Now the whole school is reading’**: supporting struggling readers in secondary school OFSTED Guidance Report October 2022 [Now the Whole School is Reading](#)

The objectives of the SMA literacy policy are to ensure that:

- **All students will be regularly tested so that:**
  - We can accurately assess their reading ages.
  - Gaps can be identified in pupils' reading knowledge.
  - Their reading progress can be assessed as they move through the school.
  
- **Teachers have access to excellent literacy-based CDP to support:**
  - Struggling readers by provide targeted intervention for students identified as needing support via a graduated approach until students become confident readers.
  - Have the strategies to support reading in all subject areas and encourage a love of reading...
  
- **All students will:**
  - Become fluent readers. Every student will have the skills to access a minimum of age-related reading materials by the time they leave the Academy.
  - Develop their academic writing and reading skills through the delivery of disciplinary literacy within each subject area.
  - Have opportunities to celebrate literacy through extracurricular clubs, academics, National competitions and other bespoke opportunities
  - Develop strong cultural and current affairs knowledge through reading opportunities at the Academy.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Literacy Team at SMA:**

- Mrs. A Fleck Assistance Vice Principal - Overall Strategy Lead
- Ms. K Poulton - HOD English and Accelerated Reader Lead
- Mrs. E Kingcome - Literacy Coordinator and English Teacher
- Mrs. A Wignal - SENCO and English Teacher– Reading intervention lead
- Miss. K Taylor Assistant SENCO - Literacy intervention KS4
- Ms. M Taylor - LRC Manager
- Mrs. N Ahmad -Director of EAL

**The Literacy Teams responsibilities are to:**

- Ensure all students are tested on their reading using a Star Reader – KS3 three times a year and KS4 and KS5, twice a year
- Provide literacy activities in coaching time to support vocabulary acquisition and comprehension.
- Identify struggling readers (those well below their chronological age) so that all student identified as needing intervention are given a further diagnostic test, Lucid Lass, to identify their specific reading needs.
- Provide targeted interventions including phonics and reading fluency interventions to support reading for all students and monitor their progress.

- Provide and coordinate the delivery of dedicated reading lessons to all KS3 students.
- Ensure all EAL learners are regularly tested and supported to improve in their reading of English.
- Ensure that all students have access to a wide range of age appropriate books and that KS3 students have access to Accelerated Reader to enhance their literacy.
- Provide a range of events to support literacy in the library and across the school.
- Provide whole school CPD to support whole school literacy and literacy in subjects across the school including Direct Vocabulary Instruction (DVI) and the reading fluency strategies – Choral Reading and Echo Reading.
- Communicate with parents and provide guidance on supporting their child with literacy at home.
- Ensure that all teachers have access to up to date reading ages.

### **The subject leader's responsibilities include:**

- Ensuring there is a clear and shared understanding of what good literacy provision looks like in their subjects.
- Ensuring that all students have access to suitable reading materials.
- Ensuring that the curriculum and SOW provide appropriate literacy provision in their subject to include DVI and fluency strategies.

### **Teaching and support staff responsibilities include:**

- All teaching and support staff should be aware of the school's policy for literacy and know the reading ages of all the students they teach.
- Understand the importance of high-quality literacy provision for all students.
- Be equipped and supported to deliver high-quality provision for literacy to include DVI and fluency strategies.

### **Monitoring and Review:**

Half termly reviews by the literacy lead will take place to monitor progress rates against expectations. In addition, there will be a termly review of the reading intervention register through consultation with the literacy and SEND team. The review will include feedback from parents and students, as well as regular classroom observations of teaching and learning and termly evaluations of reading progress.