



DURANTS SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT

Literacy

January 2026

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Introduction

Literacy is at the heart of all children’s learning. Literacy enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others’ experiences, feelings and ideas, giving these order and meaning. Because literacy is central to children’s intellectual, emotional and social development, it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils’ learning.

Durants School considers the definition of literacy to be all three components of effective language use - speaking and listening, reading and writing. The aim of this policy is to recognise that all teachers are facilitators of literacy. By applying a consistent literacy policy throughout Durants School, we aim to raise literacy attainment at every level of ability, in all subject areas, in order to maximise the potential of every student, and to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to become as effective readers, writers and communicators as possible.

Scope

This policy applies equally to all students and pupils in the school, with full consideration being given to each individuals specific needs in relation to the learning of literacy.

As part of that process, advice and guidance is sought when appropriate from other professionals working in the school in a peripatetic capacity including Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Educational Psychologists.

Rationale

This school recognises that the teaching of literacy to as high a level as can be achieved by each pupil is crucial to their overall development, socially, morally, cognitively and emotionally.

Requirements/Expectations

At Durants we believe that communication is a key life skill. Through the literacy curriculum, we will help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken, written language, Makaton, Communication with Symbols, augmented communication devices, In Print resources; and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners. We want children to enjoy communication with peers and indeed everyone involved in their lives throughout their time in Durants.

Each area of the literacy curriculum is taught throughout the school within levels dictated by the needs and abilities of individual pupils, and with regard to the age appropriateness of content and/or style. Teachers are expected to deliver literacy lessons, as well as embedding literacy across the curriculum. This will take the form of whole class teaching, some small groups, working on a 1:1 basis and independent work. Where appropriate, teachers will liaise with other professionals in developing effective and appropriate teaching/learning situations and monitoring individual progress.

It is the intention of the school to provide the resources and opportunities for training necessary for teaching and non-teaching staff to put the policy into practise.

Entitlement

All pupils and students at Durants are entitled to a literacy curriculum, which offers opportunities for the development of:

Speaking and Listening

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In the broadest interpretation, Speaking and Listening will encompass all forms of communicative responses. Communication is crucial in allowing our pupils to access all areas of the curriculum, as well as helping them to develop social skills and to operate effectively within their own community. Many of our pupils find communication and social situations difficult. Because of this, we strive to find alternative and augmentative means of communication to support them. These means may include:

- The use of Communication with Symbols
- TEACCH systems.
- Communication computers (Proloquo 2).
- Communication books.
- Makaton.
- Colourful semantics.
- Intensive Interaction.

As well as these means of communication, all pupils also benefit from:

- Simplistic and consistent language tailored to each pupil's key word level of understanding.
- Allowing children sufficient time to process what is being said to them and to plan and deliver a response.
- Using visual back-up to spoken language written in In Print.
- Turn-taking strategies.
- Opportunities to talk about a range of topics.

Reading

Reading may be interpreted as any activity that leads to the derivation of meaning from visual or tactile representation.

Due to the nature of our pupils' diverse reading abilities, there is a broad range of reading strategies implemented across school. Currently the use of the Lexia Reading Core 5 - a highly personalised reading skills development programme designed for all abilities – is being implemented across the whole school. Pupils who are at pre-phonics stage are able to access phonics through the exploration of sound during music sessions and sensory activities.

All pupils have access to their own reading book, to suit their individual learning style. These may include Project X Origins (Oxford), and Rhino Readers. Books are also accessed daily by pupils in the form of shared reading with an adult and guided or independent choice.

Writing

Writing may be interpreted as any activity that communicates and records events, experiences, thoughts and feelings. Activities can range from early mark making in a range of mediums, e.g. sand, shaving foam and so on to handwriting in its classical form.

A lot of our pupils find physical writing very challenging. Their fine motor skills may be poor, and many activities are needed in order to help improve these skills. The strengthening of these skills lays the foundation for enabling children to write. Pupils are given opportunities in a wide range of contexts to explore and develop their fine motor skills such as exploring and using a range of writing implements and material and exploring sensory stimuli.

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Although many of our pupils struggle with physically writing letters, words or sentences most are able to build up sentences using Communication with Symbols, Colourful semantics and/or using computers or laptops to type with varying degrees of support.

Assessment and Recording

Class teachers in Lower and Middle departments (Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) use ongoing classroom-based assessment as well as termly assessment using Evidence for Learning and Durants Learning Ladders to develop effective and appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

Class teachers in the Upper Department (Years 12, 13 and 14) use ongoing classroom assessment, as well as termly assessment using Evidence for Learning and units of work from the AQA Unit Award.

Conclusion

This school believes that the teaching of literacy is important to the whole of the curriculum for our pupils and students. We are committed to providing full opportunities for each individual to achieve to the maximum of their potential.

Please read this policy in conjunction with

Reading Policy

Intensive Interaction Policy

Communication Policy

Autism Policy

Curriculum schemes of work