Literacy Across The Curriculum

2018 to 19

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Strategic Direction

2018 to 19 Literacy Across The Curriculum - led by S Porter

Context

2016 to 17

In 2016 to 17, Literacy Across The Curriculum was made a high profile whole school priority.

The strategic direction was condensed into three key priorities which addressed the main areas of need form the 2015 to 16 review:
1. Marking policy
2. Modelling
3. Students speaking and listening together – extending their responses.

2017 to 18
Outcomes and findings from 2016 to 17 led to three priorities being established for the academic year 2017 to 18:
1. Literacy marking
2. Extended writing
3. Reading

Evaluation 2017 to 18

Literacy Marking
Quality assurance took place during the year through book scrutinies, lesson drop-ins and lesson observations. It was evident that literacy marking was variable across subject areas. An Assessment And Marking Working Party was set up to ensure a system was devised to make marking more targeted and specific. The outcome of this was to ensure that students took more ownership of their feedback and acted upon it.

Performance in GCSE English in 2018 was particularly encouraging with 84% of students achieving a grade 4 or above in the "best of both" measure and 68% of students achieving a grade 5 and above. However, student performance was not matched in all other literacy based subjects. It is consequently difficult to determine if the teaching of literacy had an impact on exam results. English results clearly show that students had the skills to access literacy elements of the curriculum. The question is therefore if these were sufficiently addressed and extended by other subject areas or if it was the challenges of the new GCSEs and delivering subject content which resulted in lower than expected results.

Literacy Prompts
These continued to be published throughout 2017 to 18. It became evident that, while these were initially used a great deal by teachers, the quick turn around every fortnight meant that they were not referenced as much as they should have been. They did

provide a useful way to remind both staff and students of key literacy expectations so it was decided they should be kept as a literacy strategy.

Grammar Bites
Whilst this seemed like a useful initiative, the uptake from staff indicated it was not something to continue. It is evident that staff literacy does pose a barrier to students' performance, particularly in the area of apostrophe use. This will therefore have to be addressed more directly with staff through line managers.

Extended Writing
A review on extended writing was undertaken in December 2017. Departments conducted this themselves on members of their teams so DOLs were aware of the amount of extended writing in their subject areas and all set actions to be carried out by teachers. CPD was run on how to teach extended writing. Evidence of extended writing in curriculum areas was looked at during book scrutinies. This evidence was variable and it was felt that more department areas could incorporate this.

Reading
The promotion of reading was carried out through events such as the Save Willingdon Library Campaign, Drop Everything and Read events and Read For Good, Book Buzz and BBC News day, specifically for Disadvantaged students. The Staff CPD was not undertaken.

Strategy For 2018 to 19

In light of findings in 2017 to 18, it was decided to make the approach to literacy more targeted.

The priorities for 2018 to 19 are:

1. Teaching of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary
2. Literacy marking

Priority One: Teaching of Tier Two And Tier Three Vocabulary - The Rationale
Extensive research indicates that a key way to secure improvement for students who require additional literacy support is through the teaching of vocabulary. The Education Endowment Foundation list Oral Language Interventions as having the capacity to add 5 months to leaners' academic progress and 6 months for disadvantaged learners.

In his book, Building Background Knowledge For Academic Achievement, (Marzano, 2004) Robert Marzano indicates that students' background knowledge is key to developing their understanding:
"…what students already know about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information relative to the content". (Marzano, 2004, p1)

He believes that our ability to gain background knowledge is dependent on 2 factors:
1. A child's ability to retain and process information – their "fluid intelligence".
2. The number of "academically orientated experiences" a child has.

A child who has high fluid intelligence will have an enhanced ability to store background knowledge. A child with low fluid intelligence will have a reduced ability to store and process background knowledge.

Marzano's work suggests the more exposure a child has to academically orientated experiences, the more opportunities they will have to store these as background knowledge.

His research looked at the difference between welfare families, working class families and professional families. He found that children who were from pooper families had equal or better experience of loving parents but their access to resources was vastly different. He found children of welfare families experienced a significant reduction in the language range the other children benefitted from.

Marzano cites Hart and Risley who looked at the development of language in children from 10 to 36 months. They found that children in welfare families had about 70% of the vocabulary of those in working class families and 45% of the vocabulary of those in professional families.

His suggestion is that background knowledge manifests itself as vocabulary knowledge. Consequently, a way to challenge the gap is the use of direct vocabulary instruction. He also indicates both reading and talking and listening to others are also useful ways for students to generate background knowledge.

In their book, Bringing Words To Life, (Beck, McKeown, Lucan 2013), Beck, McKeown and Lucan identify limitations to purely learning words from texts. They believe that oral language is key to securing sound vocabulary knowledge. They identify the tiers of vocabulary to be as follows:

Tier One – basic words which feature in oral conversations. Children are exposed to these at a young age.
Tier Two – High utility for mature language users and are found across a variety of domains. They are characteristic of written text and are found only infrequently in conversation which means students are less likely to learn these words independently.
Tier Three subject related vocabulary.

We recognise that our work in the classroom and provision of academically orientated experiences cannot change students' vocabulary and eradicate the gap which is likely to have been established before students even started at school. However, we can target our literacy strategy to give all students the academic tools to be successful. Our first literacy priority is therefore to ensure all staff explicitly teach both tier two and three vocabulary.

Implementation
Whilst the teaching of tier 3 vocabulary has always been a part of classroom teaching, the focus on explicit vocabulary teaching this academic year does require an adjustment in classroom practice.

The expectation is that all lessons should draw out **at least three words**. These do not need to be new words, as research indicates students require multiple exposure to a

word before they will use them or associate them with packets of background knowledge.

Where new vocabulary is taught, it is an expectation that teachers will use activities to secure knowledge of these words. Strategies for doing this will be shared with staff as a quick checklist of approaches.

All classrooms will feature a vocabulary wall – labelled as "The Literacy Place". It is expected that staff will add words to these walls as they are encountered, both tier 2 and tier 3. These should then be referenced in lessons.

All students should have glossaries in their books or folders. These should be used as a starting point for paired or group discussion, as oral language is a key way to drive development of language usage.

All year 7 students will be given Vocabulary Builder books. In here, students will write new tier 2 and 3 words and their meanings. These will be monitored through tutor times with activities to share new words and keep the strategy prominent with students.

Literacy Heroes will be relaunched with students nominating teachers who are effectively driving forward the teaching of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary. This was highly successful initiative in 2016 to 17 to raise the profile of literacy prompts.

Reading will be used as a tool to secure vocabulary knowledge. There will be termly calendared Reading Days for year 7. On this day, it is an expectation that all lessons will have a 10 minute reading focus, which is followed by a reading activity. This could be comprehension, drawing out of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary or it could be used to secure the use of the reading toolkit, with activities such as writing questions or drawing images to secure reading knowledge. Staff will be given direction about how reading can be used and activities which can follow.

In order to maintain a prominence for Reading For Pleasure, Drop Everything And Read events will be timetabled into the calendar. These will provide students with incentives to independently engage with texts and develop their vocabulary accordingly.

Priority Two: Literacy Marking
Following the work of the Assessment And Marking Working party, departments have now prioritised key responses for assessment and marking, The focus is on students responding to the marking and taking ownership of their targets.

It is an expectation that, in key responses which are being quality teacher marked, there will be corrections based on spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The new policy also requires that teachers check books for Book Basics. When this is done, it is expected that teachers correct spelling mistakes, particularly those of key vocabulary which has been taught.

Literacy Prompts

As a way to secure precise and focussed literacy teaching, the literacy prompts will continue in 2018 to 19. These are to be changed on a termly basis and will cover the key literacy errors which can easily be addressed across the curriculum.

It is an expectation that teachers focus their literacy marking on the key areas from the literacy prompts when quality teacher marking responses.

Below are the literacy prompts for the year.

Term One	Term Two	Term Three
Check your writing for full stops and capital letters. Remember, you must use capital letters for all proper nouns -ie the name of a person, place or month.	Check that you use the correct verbs in your writing for the present tense and for the past tense.	Remember to check your sentences are grammatically correct.
Term Four	Term Five	Term Six
Remember to use an apostrophe when you are shortening two words into one.	Remember to use apostrophes to show when something belongs.	To make your writing more sophisticated, try turning verbs into nouns in some of your sentences.

Extended Writing

While this remains of significant importance, it has not been directly introduced as a key literacy priority. The reason for this is to ensure there is maximum staff engagement with the two priorities for 2018 to 19. Extended writing will be picked up by staff in drop-ins and addressed at curriculum level for staff whose subject areas require extended writing. CPD is being offered, as detailed in the overview below.

Priority	Action	Staff	Time	Impact	Evaluations
1	Overview of tiers of vocabulary in Friday staff briefing.	SPO	Term 6 2017 to 18	This made staff aware of the key terms and the strategic direction of literacy.	Action Completed
1 and 2	Launch the key literacy priorities with staff.	SPO	3rd September	This made new staff aware of the direction of literacy and reminded existing staff of the focus on tiers of vocabulary.	Action Completed
1 and 2	Training on tiers of vocabulary in staff briefing.	SPO	Term one	This expanded on the explanation from inset day and reminded staff about the importance of literacy prompts.	Action Completed
2	Literacy book look and lesson drop-ins.	SPO / FRO	Term one	English. Maths and science lessons and books were looked at. This showed that literacy marking was not consistently taking place and that aside from English, there was limited evidence of extended writing. In response to this, SPO led a combined department meeting for English, maths and science, for staff who did not have additional responsibility. During this, expectations for literacy marking were re-established.	Action Completed

Priority	Action	Staff	Time	Impact	Evaluation
1 and 2	Share detail of the literacy priorities and classroom expectations with DOLS, for dissemination among department areas.	SPO	Term 2	All staff to be made aware of the explicit expectations for delivering direct vocabulary instructions. Resources to be shared for ease of delivery	Action Completed
1	Twilight CPD on tiers of vocabulary	SPO / HAR	15th November	All departments to have a literacy advocate in the team who cascades the training among their teams.	Action Completed 15 staff attended – including 3 from Ratton
1	Launch of year 7 Vocabulary Builder books	SPO / TCA	Term 2	All students to have a personalised way to capture new vocabulary and actively use this beyond the classrooms.	Action Completed All year 7 students were issued with vocabulary books which they use across the curriculum.
2	QA Schedule timetabled - New assessment guidelines – progress so far	FRO	29TH Oct – 2ND Nov	To gain an oversight to the full extent of literacy marking in addition to the use of the new guidelines for assessment and marking.	Action Completed

				Findings indicated more focus was needed on glossaries and extended writing	
Priority	**Action**	**Staff**	**Time**	**Impact**	**Evaluation**
1	Lesson drop-ins	SPO	Fortnightly from term 2.	To keep the focus on direct vocabulary instruction high priority among staff. To ensure Vocabulary Walls / Literacy Places are being set up in all classrooms.	
	Extended Writing Session	HMA/ KFO	21st November	To develop understanding of approaches when teaching extended writing.	Action Completed 2 staff attended. Lower numbers possibly due to another CPD session happening on the same night.
1	Year 7 Reading Day	SPO	30th November	To maintain focus on reading in all subject areas and to raise the profile of reading for a specific purpose.	Action Completed All year 7 teachers were asked to provide a curriculum text to read
1	Drop Everything And Read Event	SPO	17th December	To engage students in reading for pleasure as a way to develop background knowledge.	Action Completed All staff were given ghost stories to read.

Priority	Action	Staff	Time	Impact	Evaluation
2	QA Schedule timetabled Assessment and feedback review in all subjects	EJB/ FR and line managers	10th December	To review the full extent of literacy marking in addition to the use of the new guidelines for assessment and marking.	Action postponed
1	Year 7 Reading Day	SPO	25th January	To maintain focus on reading in all subject areas and to raise the profile of reading for a specific purpose.	Action Completed and students' feedback gathered.
	Extended Writing Follow up Session 2	HMA/ KFO	31st January	To develop understanding of approaches when teaching extended writing.	Action completed
1	Classroom Talk & Oracy Session 1	FRO/ POS	6th February	To develop a repertoire of approaches for developing classroom talk.	Postponed
1	Drop Everything And Read Event	SPO	11th February	To engage students in reading for pleasure as a way to develop background knowledge.	Actin Completed – students requested an independent reading session so this was undertaken

Priority	Action	Staff	Time	Impact	Evaluation
1	World Book Day Celebrations	SPO	7th March	To develop students engagement with novels an reading for pleasure	<mark>Action Completed</mark> There were a number of high profile reading events on the day. 1. Students brought in books for a mystery book swap. Books were wrapped and clues were given to the genre. 2. 60 students were given free books, based on teacher nominations. This was very popular. 50% were given to PP students, ensure that they had a book of their own at home. 3. KS3 students were read a short story throughout the day. This mean that reading was a feature in all of their lessons.

					The day was a great success and staff have requested that they are allowed to dress up in future. Further evaluations to follow.
1	Classroom Talk & Oracy Follow up/feedback session	FRO/ POS	21st March	To develop a repertoire of approaches for developing classroom talk.	
1	Year 7 Reading Day	SPO	22nd March	To maintain focus on reading in all subject areas and to raise the profile of reading for a specific purpose.	
1	Drop Everything And Read Event	SPO	1st April	To engage students in reading for pleasure as a way to develop background knowledge.	
1 and 2	QA Schedule timetabled Literacy standards in all subjects	SPO/ FRO	Term 4	To evaluate how far the new literacy approaches are being followed and their effectiveness.	
1	Developing Tiers of vocabulary Part 2 SPO/HAR	SPO/ HAR	9th May	To evaluate successes with direct vocabulary instruction and develop a wider repertoire of strategies.	

Priority	Action	Staff	Time	Impact	Evaluation
1	Year 7 Reading Day	SPO	10th May	To maintain focus on reading in all subject areas and to raise the profile of reading for a specific purpose.	
1	Drop Everything And Read Event	SPO	20th May	To engage students in reading for pleasure as a way to develop background knowledge.	
Priority	**Action**	**Staff**	**Time**	**Impact**	**Evaluation**
1 and 2	QA Schedule timetabled Literacy review	SPO/ FRO	Term 6	Final literacy review to determine effectiveness of priorities and focus for 2019 to 20	
1	Year 7 Reading Day	SPO	7th June	To maintain focus on reading in all subject areas and to raise the profile of reading for a specific purpose.	
1	Drop Everything And Read Event	SPO	15th July	To engage students in reading for pleasure as a way to develop background knowledge.	

References

1. Education Endowment Foundation website.
2. Marzano R, (2004) Building Background Knowledge For Academic Achievement, ASCD.
3. Beck I, McKeown M, Kucan L, (2013) Bringing Words To Life Robust Vocabulary Instruction, Guilford.