

## **What is Literacy?**

Literacy skills are key for students' success across the curriculum. The term 'literacy' refers to the four key skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Literacy skills are therefore crucial, as they enable us to communicate, and understand and make sense of the world.

## **The Importance of Literacy**

Literacy skills are essential. Good literacy skills are not only crucial in ensuring students are able to succeed across the curriculum, but also in enabling students to understand the world around them and fulfil their individual potential.

## **Our Vision for Literacy at KAEP**

Every member of staff at King's Academy Easthampstead Park values the central role of literacy in improving students' individual potential and inspiring success. We believe that literacy skills are crucial in ensuring the best life chances for our students, underpinning not only their academic success, but also enriching their understanding of the world too. We understand that literacy extends beyond English lessons and all teachers at KAEP are committed to their role as teachers of literacy.

Students develop their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills across the curriculum. Literacy skills are embedded in lessons and the PREP programme, as well as through a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.

Our approach to the teaching of literacy is underpinned by the Education Endowment Foundation's 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools' recommendations.

**1**

**Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum**



- Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.
- Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.
- All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.
- School leaders can help teachers by ensuring training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity over general approaches.

**2**

**Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject**



- Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.
- Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words.
- Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech.
- Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning.

**3**

**Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts**



- Training focused on teaching reading is likely to help secondary school teachers teach their subject more effectively.
- To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.
- Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning can improve students' comprehension.
- Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.

**4**

**Break down complex writing tasks**



- Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.
- Teachers can break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and can support students by modelling each step.
- Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality.
- Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and paired writing, to motivate students to write.

**5**

**Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject**



- Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.
- Reading helps students gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen students' understanding of ideas.
- Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.
- Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve students' writing, particularly when focused on meaning.

**6**

**Provide opportunities for structured talk**



- Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning.
- High quality talk is typically well-structured and guided by teachers.
- Accountable talk is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality, and emphasises how talk can be subject specific.
- Teachers can support students by modelling high quality talk, for example including key vocabulary and metacognitive reflection.

**7**

**Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students**



- Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7.
- Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach.
- Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.
- Creating a co-ordinated system of support is a significant challenge requiring both specialist input and whole school leadership.