



Avonbourne Boys' & Girls' Academies
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Literacy Policy

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Statement of Intent:

At Avonbourne Academies, we want our students to be excellent communicators. It is essential that students are taught the skills of effective reading, writing and oracy in order for them to achieve their full potential as well as to support them as they communicate with, and make sense of, the world around them.

Literacy is fundamental for success in school and later life. Students who cannot read, write and communicate effectively are highly unlikely to access the challenging academic curriculum in secondary school and are more likely to have poor educational outcomes across all subjects.¹

The skills of literacy are used in every subject and activity in school and as such are a priority for all areas of school life. With good levels of literacy, we unlock the curriculum and provide a foundation for excellence in all subjects, giving our students the experiences and opportunities to be the best they can be.

Overall Aims:

The Academies seek to develop an effective literacy skillset among students of all year groups, which includes speaking, listening, reading and writing. We recognise that these skills are fundamental to students' motivation, self-esteem, engagement, and behaviour - both within the classroom and beyond. The curriculum at Avonbourne Academies has been developed alongside the core aims of the literacy framework, which includes:

- Ensure that **all** students are supported to become **fluent readers**.
- Ensure that students are taught how to read and write academic texts in **different subjects**.
- Develop students' **vocabulary**, ensuring that they learn both subject specific terminology as well as academic vocabulary.
- Provide opportunities for students to **explore and celebrate a variety of texts and perspectives**, providing a wider cultural experience.
- Support the **development of writing** in all subjects.
- Teach students how to develop their **spoken language** skills.

Implementation

We will support all students in their skills of communication by:

- Ensuring all staff are 'teachers of reading' through ongoing CPD opportunities, supporting all students to comprehend the academic texts through which the curriculum is delivered;
- Ensuring that challenging, academic texts are available and familiar to students;
- Explicitly instructing key Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary in all subjects, implicitly instructing a breadth of vocabulary;
- Explicitly teaching writing skills to break down extended academic writing;
- Expecting high-quality presentation in written work;

¹ Ricketts, J., Sperring, R and Nation, K. (2014). Educational attainment in poor comprehenders. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5. P. 445

- Recognising and referring students who require additional support to make expected progress;
- Modelling and practicing what effective talk sounds like in each subject;

Reading

At Avonbourne Academies, we believe that a love of reading is fundamental to students' academic success and personal development. Reading enables students to explore the world, engage with complex ideas, and encounter a wide range of voices, perspectives, and experiences. Through reading, students are encouraged to question the thinking of others, understand bias and context, and develop insight into the world around them. We believe there is a moral imperative to ensure that this opportunity is accessible to all students.

To achieve this, we prioritise students' ability to decode, comprehend, and enjoy texts. Closing the reading gap is a key strategic focus, and we are committed to ensuring that students make strong progress in reading, with the aim of improving reading ages year on year.

Reading Curriculum and Daily Practice

The academies' reading curriculum exposes all students to rich academic texts and ambitious vocabulary on a daily basis. Reading is embedded throughout the school day through:

- subject-specific booklets,
- the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) programme,
- library lessons,
- and weekly reading homework via Sparx Reader.

This ensures that reading is a consistent and visible priority across the curriculum.

Whole-school reading routines support all students to access texts successfully. Strategies such as the use of reading rulers, reinforced through equipment checks, help students to track text accurately and support weaker readers in chunking and sustaining reading. These routines promote focus, fluency, and comprehension for all learners.

Staff Expertise and Professional Development

We have delivered a comprehensive programme of literacy-focused CPD to ensure that all staff are confident and effective teachers of reading. This training has focused on:

- explicit instruction of reading,
- decoding and fluency,
- vocabulary instruction,
- reading comprehension,
- and the optimisation of classroom reading routines, informed by Lemov's *Reading Reconsidered*.

This whole-school approach ensures consistency and high expectations for reading in every classroom.

Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)

We are committed to providing an equitable reading offer for all students through the DEAR programme. During DEAR, students are explicitly taught effective reading strategies and are exposed to a wide range of high-quality texts, including classics, non-fiction, and fiction that stretch and challenge them. Teachers are provided with corresponding PowerPoints with comprehension questions and vocabulary acquisition targets to further their literacy development.

Students' understanding is continually checked through targeted questioning, comprehension activities, and vocabulary tasks supported by accompanying slides. In addition, the school library - open every lunchtime - acts as a calm and thriving hub, supporting students to access, explore, and enjoy a diverse range of texts.

Assessment and Identification of Need

All students in Years 7 and 8 complete NGRT assessments at the start and end of each academic year. Students identified as underperforming are re-tested in February to enable closer monitoring of progress. NGRT results are published to Arbor marksheets, ensuring that all teaching staff are aware of students who may require additional support with decoding or comprehension in lessons.

Students scoring below a Standard Age Score (SAS) of 95 are considered for targeted reading intervention from Years 7 to 10. Identification is informed by NGRT data and SEN assessments, with each intervention supported by rigorous diagnostic testing to identify specific reading needs.

Targeted Reading Interventions

We offer a range of evidence-informed interventions to support rapid reading catch-up:

- **Direct Instruction**
Small-group sessions delivered during morning and afternoon tutor periods, targeted primarily at Year 7 students. The programme focuses on phonics, decoding, and reading fluency. Since January 2022, decoding gains have ranged from 0.3 to 5.6 years.
- **Thinking Reading**
An intensive one-to-one intervention delivered three times per week during tutor time or DEAR, aimed at students with significant reading difficulties (2–3 years below chronological age). The programme focuses on phonological knowledge, decoding, and fluency. Students completing the programme have made an average of 4.6 years' progress in reading age.
- **Lexonik Leap**
An intervention targeting students with significant reading difficulties, focusing on phonological knowledge, decoding, and fluency. Delivered twice weekly during DEAR, this programme expands provision for our weakest readers, including those within SEN literacy support.
- **Lexonik Advance**
A small-group intervention for Years 8 and 9 students requiring additional reading support. Delivered for one hour weekly over six weeks during lesson time, with a focus on decoding, fluency, and vocabulary development.
- **Abigail Steel Programme**
A structured booklet-based programme enabling tutors to deliver phoneme and grapheme decoding to Year 7 students. This supports transition from primary school and provides additional literacy support without the need for withdrawal into small-group interventions.

Writing

Extended writing is essential for academic success across most disciplines and is closely linked to strong reading ability. We aim to develop these skills so that all students feel confident when approaching examinations and coursework. While reading enables students to explore the world, writing allows them to take an active role within it. Through writing, students can articulate their ideas, share perspectives, and influence others. We want every student to develop both the confidence and motivation to write, and we actively encourage them to express themselves clearly, accurately, and effectively.

Our whole-school approach to writing is explicit, structured, and research-informed. Writing is taught across the curriculum using carefully sequenced techniques drawn from *The Writing Revolution* (Hochman & Wexler), *Closing the Writing Gap* (Quigley), and a national reading and writing programme led by Daisy Christodoulou. These approaches prioritise sentence-level accuracy, clarity of expression, and the gradual development of extended writing.

Teachers explicitly model high-quality writing, making the thinking process visible through shared writing, worked examples, and annotated models. Students are guided to practise sentence construction, paragraph organisation, and extended responses through scaffolded activities before writing independently. Writing tasks are deliberately linked to curriculum content, ensuring students learn how to write *within* disciplines as well as across them.

Vocabulary development is central to our writing strategy. Students are taught to use tier 2 (academic) and tier 3 (subject-specific) vocabulary accurately in their writing, with opportunities to rehearse language orally before writing. Sentence structures, connectives, and disciplinary conventions are explicitly taught to support coherence and precision.

Feedback and redrafting are integral to improving writing. Students are given clear, focused feedback aligned to agreed success criteria and are expected to act upon this feedback to refine and improve their work. This culture of drafting reinforces the understanding that high-quality writing is developed through deliberate practice.

Writing is a shared responsibility across the school. All subjects explicitly teach the writing conventions, vocabulary, and structures required for success in their discipline, ensuring a coherent and consistent approach to writing for all students.

Oracy

Oracy is a core component of our whole-school literacy strategy and underpins students' success in reading, writing, and learning across all subjects. We recognise that structured, high-quality talk supports cognitive development, deepens understanding, and enables students to articulate ideas with clarity and confidence.

Across the curriculum, students are routinely exposed to high-quality academic talk, explicitly modelled by teaching staff. Teachers demonstrate how to speak in full sentences, use precise subject-specific vocabulary, and structure responses clearly and coherently. This consistent modelling establishes shared expectations for academic language in every classroom.

Students are provided with frequent, purposeful, and structured opportunities to develop their spoken language. Strategies such as Think–Pair–Share, aligned with the EEF Oracy Framework, are embedded across subjects to ensure all students participate in academic discussion. These routines allow students time to:

- think independently and organise ideas,
- rehearse responses through paired discussion,
- share refined contributions with the wider class.

Classroom talk is deliberately scaffolded to support inclusion and high expectations for all learners, including SEND and EAL students. Teachers use reciprocal questioning strategies to encourage

students to ask, clarify, justify, and extend ideas, promoting deeper comprehension and disciplinary thinking. Structured talk is used to rehearse vocabulary, arguments, and explanations, providing a bridge between reading and writing.

We draw on Teach Like a Champion (TLAC) techniques to ensure spoken responses are accurate, ambitious, and precise. Through Right Is Right, teachers insist on fully correct answers, reinforcing the importance of accuracy and clarity. Say It Again (Better) is used to support students in refining their spoken responses by improving vocabulary choice, syntax, and formality. This emphasis on spoken precision directly supports improvements in written outcomes.

Through consistent modelling, structured routines, and high expectations, oracy is embedded as a shared whole-school practice. This ensures that all students develop the confidence, fluency, and academic language necessary to communicate effectively, think critically, and succeed across the curriculum.

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