



Literacy Policy

1. Mission Statement

The King's Hospital School recognises the intrinsic value of literacy in all areas of learning, life and work. We believe that it is the responsibility of all educational partners to promote and enhance the literacy skills of all students in our care so as to foster their intellectual growth in all areas of life. We are committed to creating a supportive, stimulating and secure environment where developing literacy skills is encouraged and appreciated, where all opinions are valued.

2. Definition of Literacy

Literacy is "the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication, including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media and digital media."

(Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020)

3. Aims

- To raise awareness of the value of literacy.
- To adopt a whole school approach to literacy that involves staff, students and parents.
- To foster an enjoyment of reading amongst young people.
- To target reluctant readers and highlight the importance of literacy as a valuable life skill.
- To promote consistency of educational practice.
- To encourage cross-curricular collaboration.
- To evaluate teaching and learning in literacy.

4. Objectives

Through the implementation of this policy we in The King's Hospital School shall endeavour to have students:

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding.
- Use their skills in speaking and listening to explore and voice their understanding of texts.
- Acquire an interest in words and their meanings.
- Aspire to expand their vocabulary.
- Know the value of reading and writing for pleasure.
- Develop their powers of imagination and critical thinking.
- Be able to research independently.



5. Whole School Strategies*

Literacy is an integral part of all teaching and learning. Every effort is made to implement a whole school approach.

Established:

- Whole school and Inter-school initiatives such as Spelling Bee, ReAd Wall, Well Read Flag, Accelerated Reader, Word Millionaire competitions, DEAR, Book Clubs, Creative Writing Club, author visits, key terms wall, keyword boards, exam keyword competitions monthly with grammar points, Literacy Week, Countdown, Scrabble Club, and the Transition Year Literary Quiz run annually or throughout the school year.
- The Harden Library caters for both Junior and Senior Cycle students holding a vast and vibrant range of items including fiction, reference material, CDs and DVDs as well as periodicals, magazines and daily newspapers. The library catalogue (OPAC) is accessible online.
- Information Skills classes are run by the librarian for Form 1 and Form 4 to equip students as independent learners and researchers. These are adapted for Senior Research Topics as required.
- Literacy as a key element in subject department plans.
- Accelerated Reader is used with all incoming Form 1 students and a selection of Form 4 students.
- Reading material is provided and monitored in the Mahony Room.
- Reading classes and classroom based reading activities such as Shadowing Book Awards are made available for various year groups and classes.
- All Form 1 students have one reading class in the library per week. Form 4 students have a rotational reading class in the library weekly. Other years have occasional dedicated reading classes as time permits.

On-going:

- To provide of CPD for all staff.
- To make our Recreation rooms print rich with the placement of reading pods.
- To establish a Student Literacy team annually to help with the promotion of literacy.
- To insist on good grammar and spelling on posters and school noticeboards throughout the school.
- To increase the frequency of DEAR.
- To promote a reading culture amongst staff and students.

*English Department Inspector in January 2020 noted that a strong reading culture was evident in school.



6. Role of Parents

The King's Hospital recognises that parents have a pivotal role in improving the literacy standards of their children. Parents are encouraged to:

- Use the school journal to review their child's work.
- Attend Parent-Teacher meetings.
- Support the literacy policy by providing suitable reading material-at home and actively encourage reading for pleasure at home.
- When appropriate, parental support /participation is invited for reading related events, e.g. during World Book Day celebrations.

PISA (2009) findings show that non-academic parent-child activities such as 'discussing books, films, or television programmes', 'discussing how well children are doing at school' and 'spending time just talking to one's children' are associated with better reading performance in school.

7. Special Needs

Appropriate resources and learning strategies are already in place in response to the findings of the diagnostic tests, which include WRATS, CATS and the NGRT, carried out by the SEN department on SEN students and the wider student body where relevant:

- Audio CDs of Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate texts are available in the library.
- Digital versions of texts and audio books are available and catered for through the public library system with whom we collaborate.
- Full support and extra English classes are allocated for struggling students on an ongoing basis.

8. International Students

The King's Hospital School prides itself on the inclusion of its international students. We strive to help them develop their competency in English in a supportive environment.

- TEFL classes are provided for international students.
- International students are actively encouraged to speak English with their teachers, fellow students and students who share their first language.
- Dictionaries are available in a wide variety of languages in the library and in the Mahony Room.



9. Accelerated Reader Programme

The Accelerated Reader Programme is a progress monitoring system offering reading practice in a fun, motivational and easy manner. The pilot programme was a success and it is now used with all incoming Form 1 students.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

We aim to use all data at our disposal effectively to assist in our self-evaluation of teaching and learning. The data will also allow us to monitor our students' attainments and how they are progressing in literacy:

- To use the data afforded to us by WRATS, CATS and the NGRT to assess and provide the relevant support to our students.
- To include the review of literacy strategies at all subject department meetings on a regular basis.
- To track the results of the State Examinations and reading ages.
- To use the Accelerated Reader Programme to track progression rates.
- To regularly include literacy issues at staff and other relevant meetings.
- To review and update the literacy policy on a bi-annual basis going forward.

Reviewed on: 23 April 2020

Review date: September 2021