



Hidelow Grange School

Literacy Framework

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CareTech's children's education services provide a safe and stimulating learning environment in which young people are always offered a fresh start, and empowered to achieve and fulfil their unique potential

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- A Extended Writing Checklist**
- B Whole School Marking Code / D.I.R.T.**
- C Literacy Book Scrutiny evaluation sheet**

Description and Ethos of Hidelow Grange School

Hidelow Grange is an Independent School operating within the Branas Isaf Company, a subsidiary of CareTech Community Services Ltd., who are the proprietors.

Hidelow Grange is an independent school providing specialist education to boys aged 11 to 18 years with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, and who are Looked After Children. The school specifically caters for boys who present with a range of complex interpersonal, emotional and behavioural issues.

For a more detailed description of what the school offers see “Statement of Independence” and School Prospectus.

OUR PUPILS

All young people at Hidelow Grange School have a history of harmful behaviours, including harmful sexualised behaviours and social, emotional and mental health needs often accompanied by a range of additional learning needs.

Most of the pupils have had interrupted histories in education and care. There are a wide variety of attainments on admission. All have fragile self-esteem and demonstrate difficulties with authority and a lack of trust in adults. Many have experienced loss and trauma, leading to attachment difficulties. As a result, many experience difficulties in forming and maintaining appropriate, positive relationships with others and have a limited ability to work cooperatively.

Pupils are:

- aged 11 to 18;
- boys only;
- placed within the residential setting of Branas Isaf;
- residents from placing authorities throughout the United Kingdom;
- all present a range of harmful behaviours;
- most are in receipt of an EHC plan.

THE VISION

Our school aspires to become a centre of excellence renowned for making outstanding educational provision for the very special pupils we teach.

This vision drives everything we do and will be achieved through...

- A rich, deep and personalised education designed to meet the needs of each pupil;
- A pupil centred, skills focused curriculum that is relevant to the 21st century and inclusive of all;
- Encouraging all members of the school community to strive beyond expectations and develop a lifelong love of learning;

- Offering a broad range of learning experiences within a curriculum that values academic attainment as well as social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of education;
- Providing personalised careers education and guidance, with aspirational next steps planning, preparing pupils for their future;
- Recognising that time is precious: working quickly to turn around pupils' attitudes towards education so they enjoy their time at school and make the most of the opportunities on offer;
- Working collaboratively with our professional partners to support the needs of each individual pupil.

Pupils will:

1. Be challenged to engage in learning and achieve meaningful qualifications that will enable them to take their next steps in education, employment or training;
2. Develop into healthy, resilient and confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society;
3. Create, nurture and maintain healthy positive relationships with others;
4. Experience success, whatever form it takes;
5. Become enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work;
6. Celebrate diversity and develop into ethical, informed young people who are ready to be citizens of the world.

OUR MISSION

Our mission statement is:

We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment that nurtures mutual respect and encourages reflection so that our pupils develop the knowledge skills and confidence to enable them to achieve their potential in all aspects of their lives.

OUR VALUES AND INTENT

Our values

- **Aspiration** : We encourage each other to be the best we can be
- **Curiosity**: We never stop learning and wondering about the world
- **Independence**: We think for ourselves and determine our own future
- **Innovation**: We look for new and creative solutions to problems
- **Reflection**: We learn from our experiences
- **Tolerance**: We value difference and respect other people's opinions
- **Trust**: We believe in the honesty and reliability of others

Our Curriculum Intent

For our staff: Everyone at Hidelow supports and challenges pupils to invest in education as a priority for a successful placement

For all learners:

- To undergo an initial 6-week assessment so we fully understand their needs for effective learning;
- To achieve at least 95% attendance in school;
- To engage in creative learning experiences appropriate to their needs, supported by an accurate individual learning plan;
- To achieve nationally recognised academic awards in core subjects;
- To achieve accreditation in a wide range of subject areas;
- To become independent learners;
- To learn how to keep themselves safe, and build positive relationships with those around them;
- To take part in decisions that shape their lives, the school and the community in which they live;
- To demonstrate the behaviours needed to stretch themselves and cope with the challenges of learning;
- To attend and participate in regular therapy sessions;
- To learn strategies to manage their feelings and know where to go for help when things are difficult;
- To have the opportunity to participate in work experience and work-related learning opportunities;
- To develop the Literacy skills they need for adult life;
- To learn the skills to apply mathematical concepts;
- To learn the skills to use digital technologies creatively and safely in preparation for the world in which they will live;
- To lead healthy, active lifestyles;
- To develop as social, moral, spiritual and culturally aware individuals who are ready to make a positive contribution to society as adults.

1. Framework for Literacy

Rationale

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world around us. The mastery of literacy skills is a cornerstone to success in adult life. Being literate is essential not only in that it opens up opportunities in terms of employment, but also enables people to negotiate everyday life for themselves and for their families. People with low literacy skills may not be able to read a book or newspaper, understand road signs or price labels, make sense of a bus or train timetable, fill out a form, read instructions on medicines or use the internet. Literacy is also about being able to speak articulately: to present yourself as you would like to be seen, to get a point of view across or share your emotions and to make your voice heard.

In addition to the other disadvantages they have had in their lives prior to coming to Hidelow, many of our learners have had a disrupted education with periods out of lessons and away from school for a variety of different reasons. As a consequence, many of them come to us with poor literacy skills and a lack of attainment in this important area. This compounds the low opinion they may have of themselves as learners and may have served to switch them off education all together.

Our primary goal at Hidelow Grange School is to give our learners the education they need and deserve to give them the best chance of success in the future. Literacy is a crucial part of the curriculum we offer. We teach it through formal English lessons, across the curriculum in other subject areas and we reinforce core communication skills during social time, tutor time and whole school meetings. It is our mission that every student leaves our school with a recognised qualification in English: this may be a GCSE or a Functional Skills/ Entry Level qualification depending on the individual. Focussed literacy lessons and a supported school reading culture aim to quickly increase the reading age of learners to their age equivalent.

2. English and Literacy Lessons

Teaching Literacy in English Lessons

Planning: Schemes of work are in place that cover the subject content of the KS3 and KS4 National Curriculum Programmes of Study. English lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.

Spelling, punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) are integrated into the English planning as many of our learners are weak in at least one (or all) and write in a 'stream of conscious' style sometimes making their writing incoherent and confusing. Furthermore, students have a SPaG worksheet to do for homework each week – there are two tasks to complete, usually including a piece of writing to practise their skills.

Literacy Intervention

A Literacy Intervention Program is in place to help learners make rapid-catch up to age expectations. These interventions are given over two lessons per week (1 x 45 minutes and 1 x 20 minutes) and, if appropriate, on a one-to-one basis.

Fresh Start: For less able learners, intervention is given through the Fresh Start programme. Read Write Inc. Fresh Start is a successful intervention programme developed by Ruth Miskin to rescue learners age 9 and above who are below age-related expectations. It uses a proven phonics-based approach, with training, planning support and student workbooks. The learners are first assessed so that they start the programme at the right level.

Catapult: For learners, who are still below expected literacy levels and/or who have completed the Fresh Start programme, the Catapult resources are used to develop their SPaG, comprehension, vocabulary and writing skills. Catapult was created to take learners on from this level to prepare them for KS4 and get them reading the type of texts they are likely to encounter at GCSE. The programme is also suitable for more able KS3 learners who need to develop their English language skills.

Using both programmes give our learners the opportunity to fill any gaps they may have in their knowledge of the English language and help them to progress quickly and effectively.

Homework

Weekly SPaG worksheets: learners practise their skills weekly with these homework activities, which are marked and feedback given.

Spelling: learners have spellings to complete each week. They also spend time doing word level tasks to help them to practise the spellings and use them in con

Reading: learners are to read each night for a minimum of 15 minutes and complete a reading log/diary that is signed by their care staff. Less able readers read to aloud to their care staff member to support decoding words and fluency. Fifteen minutes of guided reading or reading for pleasure is timetabled into the school day. There is also a library in the English classroom, where learners are involved in choosing new books and regularly borrow books to read. Furthermore, once every half term, learners go to the Hive library in Worcester to choose a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts to read at home. **We also run a school reading challenge that encourages students try books outside of their usual reading preferences at an appropriate, but stretching, reading level.**

pupils read widely and often with fluency and comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaps in reading ability are picked up on entry and all students who need support complete KS3 Phonics with Victoria Cooper. Victoria has completed Abigail Steel phonics training in order to deliver this.• Every pupil participates in the Hidelow Reading Challenge which promotes reading a variety of reading material for them to complete out of school• Every pupil goes to the public library once a half term where they are encouraged to choose books from different genres• All students make progress with their reading• Every student is encouraged to select books to add to the school library• Reading for Pleasure is on the school timetable• Every student is encouraged to read aloud in every lesson	Pupil progress tracker; reading challenge records; Homework Guide
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Feedback and Marking

Feedback to learners about their work is an essential part of the learning process. Feedback can take different forms, such as: verbal discussion with a student or constructive written feedback in their exercise book. The feedback recognises learner achievement, highlights strengths and shortcomings, and provides clear guidance for improvements to be made and follows the Hidelow Grange School 'Whole School Literacy Marking Code' (see Annex B).

Teachers share the learning objectives with learners during every lesson. These are referred to during the lesson and plenary to gauge understanding and evidence progress made. This forms part of the feedback process.

Developing a Love of Reading

We believe that we can all have a positive impact on learners' reading habits. Therefore, all staff support, celebrate and promote reading for pleasure across the school. The learners are encouraged to read widely and are steered towards appropriate texts for their age and ability.

Strategies used in school include:

- Public library visits take place once a half term
- School library – learners involved in choosing books for the library and organising it
- Reading for pleasure or guided reading is timetabled into every school day
- Across the curriculum – reading aloud with a focus on fluency and comprehension
- Book Day – learners and staff across school community are involved in sharing their love of reading
- Studying novels, plays and poetry as part of the English curriculum
- Use of Reciprocal teaching, an instructional activity in which students become the teacher in small group reading sessions. Teachers model, and then help students learn to guide group discussions using four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting. Once students have learned the strategies, they take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading a dialogue about what has been read. The method encourages the development of student's comprehension reading skills by asking them to think about the thought processes they use whilst reading.

Assessment Framework

Assessment is used to match learners to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.

Diagnostic tools are routinely used to identify the best next step for teaching. These are:

- Reading
- Spelling
- Phonics
- Writing

In addition, baseline and end of unit assessments are scheduled in the long term plan. The assessment date is used to identify gaps in learning and inform planning and teaching

Clear pathways have been planned, so appropriate and meaningful recognised qualifications are achieved, which take into account prior learning and ability for each student.

3. Literacy across the Curriculum

Good literacy is the key to learning across all subjects taught in the school, and is prioritised as a whole school matter. The development of learners' reading, writing, vocabulary and spoken communication is fundamental within all subject areas, thus, all staff are expected to promote (and model) good literacy as part of their teaching practice. Therefore, **all teachers, across the school, are teachers of literacy** and help to develop learners' language skills.

Our aim is to develop consistent approaches to teaching and learning in literacy across the different departments of the school.

The Role of the Tutor

During tutor time, there are opportunities to help support students with literacy. For example, reading, handwriting practice and/or developing touch-typing skills.

Literacy Targets

Each term individual literacy targets are set and reviewed as part of the IEP for every student. All subject teachers support the learners in meeting these targets in their lessons and should refer to them in their instructions and marking.

Specialised Vocabulary and Spelling

Teachers in every subject provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help learners access the academic language for that subject. Academic studies show that improved vocabulary helps them to access the curriculum and communicate their thoughts more effectively, therefore, helps them to learn.

Vocabulary: In lessons, we encourage learners to use the dictionary / thesaurus that has been provided for each classroom, so they can look up spellings, synonyms and meanings of words and, therefore, strengthen their vocabulary. Before exposing learners to a more complex class text, we should introduce them to the more challenging words that they are about to encounter. Discussion on how they can come across the words in different contexts also helps with understanding, so does word games, crosswords, etc.

Spelling: Many of our learners struggle with spellings, therefore teachers encourage the correct spellings of key vocabulary used in each unit. This is done through displaying keywords in the classroom (Word Wall), spelling tests, creation of glossaries and feedback.

Reading, Writing and Spoken Communication

Writing: For some of our learners, writing can be challenging and they may benefit from explicit instruction on how to improve writing skills for that subject (e.g. giving explanations in biology). This can include teaching learners to identify and recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing and apply them in their own writing. Modelling each step and using sentence starters are also effective when developing writing skills, especially for learners who struggle to write fluently.

Each classroom has a SPaG pyramid, which is a supportive tool for helping learners to develop their writing skills. We encourage learners to use the more sophisticated connectives, punctuation, etc. further down the pyramid. Consistent use of terminology is essential; learners need verbal reminders and prompts to develop explicit literacy skills (e.g. reminders to use basic punctuation, paragraphs, extended sentences, a range of connectives).

For extended pieces of writing, having a checklist for them to proof-read their work against, before handing it in, helps the learners think about their writing style. This is also a good tool for peer-assessment. See *Appendix A* for an example.

Reading: Reading helps learners gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen learners' understanding of ideas. Individual teachers evaluate the quality and complexity of existing reading materials in their area of the curriculum so that it is accessible for all learners and differentiation measures put in place to ensure understanding.

Speaking and Listening: Speaking is another way that learners extend language and how language is developed. For example, questioning techniques should be modelled and learners should be encouraged to speak in full sentences, using standard English. The teacher should guide and encourage each learner to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently.

Planning for Literacy and Marking

Planning: Opportunities for improving literacy should be included in planning, where appropriate. Questions to ask while planning are:

1. How can the learners develop their vocabulary in the lesson?
2. How can the learners develop their speaking in the lesson?
3. How can the learners develop their comprehension in the lesson?
4. How can the learners develop their writing in the lesson?

Marking: We have adopted a whole-school approach to the marking and assessment of literacy. Marking for the learners' use of language in their work can also support the focus of communicating subject knowledge and understanding effectively.

Comments made at the point of writing are more beneficial to learners and reduce the mark load since marking work with learners facilitates dialogue about the work and encourages learners to discuss their language choices. Prompt return of work means that comments are more meaningful and likely to be acted upon. However, it is important to note that this level of marking and feedback is not expected on every piece of work.

Whole School Approach to Marking: We have an agreed literacy framework for consistent marking in all subjects, where we follow the Whole School Literacy Marking Code (*see Appendix B*). The guidelines below will:

- help us to remain consistent;
- help the students to review their literacy; and
- ensure they are not overwhelmed with the amount of green pen on their piece of work.

Yellow Box Marking approach: This is a strategy championed by Ross Morrison McGill ([see https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/05/19/yellow-box-methodology/](https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/05/19/yellow-box-methodology/)) and should be used for extended pieces of writing only. It can be done verbally. Using your judgement, choose one section of the learner's work, say a longer paragraph, section of a very long paragraph or two short ones and, using a yellow highlighter, draw a box around this section. Mark it well and in detail for literacy using the Whole School Literacy Marking Code by circling/underlining the error and writing the appropriate symbol in the margin. This is the part that the student will fix / rewrite to focus on their literacy during their D.I.R.T. time. The rest of the piece of writing can be marked for subject content, as usual. However, no more than **five** spelling errors should be identified, especially for learners who struggle with their spelling.

D.I.R.T. (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time): This is a time when learners have the opportunity to check, proof-read and improve their work so it can become the best it can be. In conjunction with the Whole School Literacy Marking Code and the Yellow Box Marking approach, it is an opportunity for learners to actively interact with your marking and think about their use of literacy as well as subject understanding, rather than a passive cursory glance. Using a purple pen, learners are expected to correct errors in punctuation, capital letters and grammar. For spelling mistakes, they should rewrite the correct spelling of the word/s three times below the piece of work. The use of purple pen signals a drafting and proof-reading focus in their books and gives a clear message that improving their work is a crucial part of their learning. *See Appendix B* for the school D.I.R.T. method of marking.

4. Supporting Staff with Literacy

Resources

Literacy is the responsibility of all staff. The aim is that all staff have good knowledge about disciplinary literacy (the shared ways of reading, writing and communicating within academic subjects). Therefore, to this helps them to become confident in sharing of the specialised vocabulary, terminology and communicating in their respective subject areas.

A literacy folder can be found on the shared drive which has many useful links and documents on how subject teachers can support literacy in their planning, teaching and marking. One particularly useful resource is: 'Closing the word gap: activities for the classroom' which gives a number of ideas for working with vocabulary in English, maths, science, geography and history.

Teachers are encouraged to share their own resources by copying them into the folder.

Staff training

CPD sessions on literacy across the curriculum are scheduled as part of the **INSET** timetable to support teachers with embedding the teaching of literacy as part of their planning. The training is intended to enable staff to become more confident in teaching and assessing for literacy, as well as introducing consistent approaches to literacy across the school.

5. Review and References

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head Teacher and Literacy Coordinator. It is due for review in December 2024.

Teaching Staff	Qualifications
Sam Goodchild Headteacher; DSL; LAC; Teacher: PE	BSc (Hons) in Sports Studies; PGCE: Secondary Education
Charlotte James DDSL; SENCO; Exams Officer; Teacher: Maths, ICT, Art	BA (Hons) in Primary Education specialising in SEND
Mark Maddock 0.6 FTE Teacher: Science, DT	B.SC. (Hons): Applied Zoology (with Agriculture); PGCE in Biology and Science (Distinction in Teaching Practice) Post-Graduate Certificate of SEN
Victoria Cooper Teacher: English; Enrichment	BA (Hons) English Literature and minor Religious Studies; Dip (HE) Diploma in Community, Youth and Play Work; PGCE Secondary English
Juliet Smith Teacher: PSHE; Humanities; Art; Enrichment	BA (Hons) in Humanities with History; PGCE Secondary Geography

Roles & Responsibilities

References

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies and documents listed below:

- Curriculum Policy
- Pupil Assessment Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

APPENDIX A

Extended Writing Checklist

Vocabulary	Tick ✓
Is it appropriate for this subject?	
Are there any words that I am not sure that I have spelt correctly? If so, have I checked them using a dictionary?	
Have I used the right spelling of homophones?	
Have I used capital letters correctly?	

Sentences	Tick ✓
Do all my sentences begin with a capital letter?	
Do all my sentences make sense?	
If my sentences are long, have I made sure they have correct punctuation or should be split into more than one sentence?	
Have I used connectives to join my ideas?	

Text	Tick ✓
Is what I have written clear and appropriate to what I have been asked to do?	
Have I used paragraphs accurately?	
Does my work look neat and tidy?	
Have I underlined titles with a ruler?	
Am I proud of my work?	

D.I.R.T. Time – Track Your Progress



I need more work on this (emerging)



I'm almost there (developing)



I got it (secure)



Green is for your teacher's thoughts and comments

Purple is for your thoughts and comments

Whole School Literacy Marking Code

C = Either you need to add a capital letter or take one away

P = You either need to add a piece of punctuation or take a piece out

SP = There's a word that you have spelt incorrectly

VF= Verbal feedback given

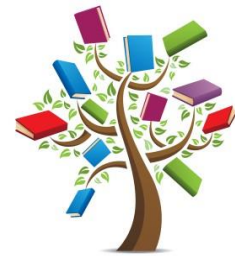
GR= Check your grammar

W/Ch= You need to change a word

MW= You are missing a word and need to add one to your sentence for it to make sense

// = You need to start a new paragraph or you've started a new paragraph unnecessarily

Spellings to be written correctly three times at the bottom of the piece of work.



Literacy Book Scrutiny



Year Group: KS3 & KS4 Date:

Completed by: Miss Cooper

Subject:

Features observed	Much Evidence	Some Evidence	Little Evidence	No Evidence	Other relevant information
The whole school Literacy marking code is evident in marked work with the appropriate symbols used					
Spelling mistakes are picked up and are written at the end of the work					
Spellings are written out 3 times at the end of the work in purple pen					
Pupils respond to grammatical and punctuation errors in purple pen					
There is evidence of improvement in Literacy in the work over time eg.					

spellings have been used correctly a second time					
The work shows evidence of pupils acquiring their Literacy targets					
Evidence that children are experiencing a balanced range of text types					
Differentiation takes account of the different needs of the children, e.g. LA children are given simpler/enlarged texts					
Opportunities for extended writing are evident					
Work is well presented eg. pupils are taking care with their handwriting					

General Comments/What can be done further to improve Literacy in lessons:

