

Literacy strategy

2018-2019

Intent

At Walton, the development of Literacy skills for all our students is of paramount importance. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are integral to students' success in the curriculum but also, in forming well-rounded individuals who can feel confident in the world around them. Communication, in any form, holds the key to success in life and it is for this reason Walton proudly gives all students ample opportunities to practise these important skills in all lessons. Improving Literacy skills opens the door to independent working allowing students to take responsibility for their own learning and education. This ownership automatically gives students a sense of purpose and has a great impact on self-esteem, motivation, behaviour and attainment. It is empowering.

Reading helps students to learn from an array of sources about the world around them and can inspire the acquiring of knowledge. It has been proven that reading for pleasure has a direct correlation to cognitive ability, increased empathy, improved relationships as well as academic attainment. It is for these reasons that our aim, at Walton, is for students to reach their potential and read at or above their chronological reading age by Year 11.

Walton's curriculum is underpinned with developing students' skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. We have developed a whole school approach to ensure students can practise and be successful in clearly expressing their ideas and opinions, through development of vocabulary, both orally and in writing. This will enhance and enrich teaching and learning in all lessons and will prepare students for life after school.

Our intent is to:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the students' standards of achievement and assessment in literacy across the curriculum, and the identification of any areas of strength and weakness
- Develop students' confidence and ability to express themselves.
- Support the staff team to implement effective literacy development and wider achievement across the school

Implementation

We quantify the development of all students' progress in their literacy skills through a robust program of assessment, intervention and data analysis. A baseline measure when students join the academy informs intervention and planning with progress and development mapped against two further assessment points throughout the year, alongside monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Students joining Walton sit an assessment through the programme Star Reader which enables teachers, students and parents to see clearly the ability of each student. This ensures transparency of communication between the academy and parents/carers to enable students to have as much support as possible. It advises students how to improve their reading ability from home and clearly state what level of books students should read in order to enhance their reading pleasure and progression. Quizzes accompany students' reading throughout the year helping the teacher, student and parent gauge the progress the student is making. At three times throughout the year, students are assessed to determine growth in their Reading Age. Students will follow this programme throughout Key Stage 3.

In addition, the academy participates in the scheme BookBuzz to ensure all Year 7 begin Walton with a reading book that they have chosen. The National Literacy Trust found “that children who own a book are 15 times more likely to read above the level expected for their age than their bookless peers” proving this scheme essential in our aim of aiding each student to reach their potential and read at or above their chronological reading age by Year 11.

Students in Years 7-10 at Walton are given a variety of opportunities to read. Each English lesson starts with 10 minutes of reading ensuring students have the time to practise this skill and the support of their teachers if they are finding it difficult to locate a book appropriate for them. Additionally, Walton’s English faculty works very closely with the Learning Resource Centre and students of all years of Key Stage 3 become involved in library lessons where the Learning Resource manager will introduce new books, play games to help students navigate around the Centre and offer advice as to how to find an enjoyable book. For students in Key Stages 4 and 5 these sessions are held to provide students coaching in how to research topics thoroughly both with and without the internet.

During Key Stage 3, students can expect that one of their English lessons is a literacy based class, the importance of Literacy being seen as a whole school initiative. This allows students to focus on improving the accuracy of the writing, reading, speaking and listening skills as much as possible during their first year at Walton.

Literacy remains a focus for students in Key Stage 4 through the use of writing competitions. Students are encouraged to write for enjoyment as an extra-curricular activity and their work is submitted to different competitions. Often, students’ work is then published having a positive impact on students’ self-esteem and motivation for independent work.

Key Stage 5 students have the opportunity to be trained in leading a dialogue with younger students and becoming Accelerated Reader ambassadors who aid the running of the project. This impacts their communication skills in speaking to peers in a professional manner.

Students with Particular Literacy Needs

Whilst all students benefit from a consistent, coherent and comprehensive approach to literacy, some groups of students will require specific attention and targeted support. These might include most able students, those with specific learning difficulties and EAL students. Students are assessed by analysing their performance through the use of Key Stage 2 results and Star Reader assessment. Following this students may be invited to intervention sessions with subject specified teaching assessments usually on a 6-10 week programme to help improve their reading or writing skills in this time.

Students in Key Stage 4 may also be identified through teacher assessment, end of topic assessments and mock examinations. Where possible, students are given a subject specific mentor to aid their literacy skills to help them access the curriculum and the GCSE papers which often have reading ages of 14 years and over.

Impact 2017-2018

- 16% of Year 7s are reading above their chronological age
- 22% of Year 7 students are reading at or above their chronological reading age
- 100% of Year 7, 8 and 9 students own their own book
- Four Year 11s became published poets
- Five Year 7 students read one million words in 5 months
- 2017/18 1086 books were loaned to Year 7 students
- 2016/17 993 books were loaned to Year 7 students