



Literacy Policy

Literacy is a very important subject within The Annex School. It features as an additional sphere of English within the school timetable. At the Annex School we understand that literacy is the foundation block for all subjects. Nationally it is recognised that students leave with a reading age of 13 years. The Annex School aims to push our students beyond this via a 'literacy rich' approach. This is as follows:

- 1) Tea & Papers, Assemblies.
- 2) Literacy Morning.
- 3) End of day School/House Meetings.

1) Tea & Papers, Assemblies

Every morning in period 1 we discuss all aspects of the news via a 'Tea & Paper's session. Here we address different topical stories throughout the nation and world which students select and deliver vocally through various articles from a daily newspaper.

This has proved to be a very effective means of learning. According to recent research in the journal 'Memory' 2018, reading and speaking text has been proven to be by far the most effective way to encode word understanding. We encourage students to read to the whole class. There is a great sense of comradeship as students help each other understand the articles. Words that students have had difficulty reading are logged and placed into students English Folders for further work.

The start of this lesson begins with a reciprocal good morning welcome and by furnishing the day's date and temperature through the paper. The initial read begins by reading the headline article, then articles are selected appropriate to the students reading ability and interest. For instance:

- An advanced reader acts as our Sports Correspondent reading long complex sporting pieces, including the reading of league tables.
- A Dyslexic student who is an avid TV viewer acts as a TV Critic and reads out short descriptions and reviews about the evening's television programmes.
- A student who suffers with speech impediments and low self-esteem started by reading short ads and has now progressed to looking at small paragraph features.

Students are allocated points for their individual daily read. Each student is graded 1-10 with biscuits allocated with their morning beverage accordingly, as an extra incentive. The ethos behind this particular reward system is gleaned along the lines of Pavlovian stimulus theory). We have found that these lessons have been a very effective means of students gaining confidence in non-fictional reading (for further info see PSHE & Citizenship Policy).

2) Literacy Morning

Friday morning is utilised for literacy in the following ways:

Period 1: Tea & Papers- reflection of weeks' news

Period 2: Whole class 'Word-wheel' group spelling challenge

Periods 3 & 4: individual rota of personalized lessons

(Word-shark/Reading/Worksheet work & Testing, handwriting/tutorial progress)

Period 1

Friday is a natural end to the week, so we try to inject further aspects of reflection on this day. Pupils have to fill in a 'Reflections Sheet' outlining their feelings and progress during the week and also highlight main aspects of the news. An 'End of Week Quiz' is also completed with regards to different learning which has been imparted throughout the week.

Period 2

Students are given a weekly warm up puzzle in the form of either a topical wordsearch, maze puzzle, spot-the-difference, dot-to-dot or 'Where's Wally' sheet. Students then do a weekly 'word-wheel puzzle' taken from the daily paper. This is organised as a whole class spelling activity/competition involving bonus points. This is intended as a fun activity to test students expanded vocabulary.

Periods 3 & 4

These periods involve a rota of personalised activities. Fundamentally the literacy component is taught in line with the 'Alpha to Omega' phonetic programme of study. This system is sympathetic to the needs of students who suffer with dyslexic difficulties which is commonplace in SEN schools. The system is taught within clear stages of phonetics learning. Students are tested for specific learning stages and are expected to work carefully with support. All students are logged on to the 'Word-Shark' computer programme and errors are extrapolated by the L.S.A. This clearly outlines specific word blend problems for each individual and additional work and testing is set accordingly.

In these periods all students are expected to read individual books through 'shared reading'. Appropriate reading books are selected in line with pupils stretched abilities and interests. We encourage the reading of books in relation to pupils' interests and specific personalised projects they are working on in other subjects. For example, we have students who are pursuing specific sports credits in ASDAN and Art lessons who are reading Football and Boxing material. For students with alternative interests, online web-fiction offers another reading option. This would be monitored and evidenced.

Handwriting is important within literacy, we use 'Nelson' handwriting books which are particularly good for students who may have Dyspraxia/motor coordination difficulties. All students have personal pens; fountain pens or ergonomic writing pens to aid their

writing. We can offer coloured filters and specialised writing pads to aid eye stresses and Dyslexic traits. Sometimes students are expected to write out plans and reviews of past challenges for their ASDAN Awards and this is used as an opportunity to challenge students to produce their very best handwriting for extra points.

The SENCO will regularly utilise pockets of time to test reading ages, spelling ages, learning styles and other relevant testing proformas.

Reading books are calculated for individual reading ages. We follow a ‘reciprocal’ approach involving ‘questioning’, ‘decoding’, ‘summarising’ and prediction’ work. The main learning skills are as follows:

- Improving own learning.
- Problem Solving.
- Communication’.
- Reflective Thinking.
- Self-Management.
- Motivation.
- Enjoyment & Achievement.

Once at the end of each term all the students enter a collective ‘Scrabble Championship’ for the School Scrabble Trophy.

The Alpha to Omega programme has three stages divided into separate groups where students overcome simple word blends. (please refer to appendix 1).

The literacy method used at the Annex School acts as a launchpad for repetitive work that is essential for the English Functional Skills programme.

3) House Meetings

The Annex School conducts a House Meeting at the end of the school day. These are held in the adjoining residential house. These are usually conducted by the House Manager who utilises his particular skills in enabling students to respond to the day in an appropriate and articulate fashion.

Both Teaching staff and L.S.A’s (who also act as Care Workers) attend. At this meeting the school day/week is examined, and any outstanding incidents and feelings are discussed. All attendees are given space to respond which forms part of a general therapeutic approach. It is a good way for difficulties to be resolved as well as for positive moments to be celebrated. This benefits Emotional Literacy, and it is interesting to note that all of our pupils perform extremely well in English Functional Skills ‘Speaking, Listening & Communication’ exams.

Appendix 1.

Literacy Programme- Alpha to Omega	
Stage 1 / Groups 1-5 SA: 8yrs	Alphabet Days of the week Months of the Year Numbers 1-20 Colours CVC Plurals Double Blends/Triple Blends End blends Prefixs Suffixes Past tense Word sums Diagraph blends Flossy words Apostrophe Positive/negative Silent letters Magic e / r rule Combinations Letter sounds Soft g Triple end blends
Stage 2 / Groups 6-7 RA: 12 years	Long Vowels Homophones suffixes
Stage 3 /Group 8-10 RA/SA: 15 years	Syllables-open/closed Complex end blends Complex suffixes Sounding blends i before e prefixes Punctuation Verbs Nouns