ST MICHAEL'S
Church of England High School

Literacy Policy

OUR SCHOOL PRAYER:

What does the Lord ask of you?
To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6vs.8

ST MICHAEL'S
Church of England High School

MERCY • INTEGRITY • CARE AND COMPASSION • HUMILITY • ACHIEVEMENT • EQUALITY • LEADERSHIP • SERVICE

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Statement of intent

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do. All members of the school community are committed to upholding the St Michael's Church of England Christian values:

- to show love, care, and kindness to all in our community
- to value what we have and to share with others
- to enable everyone to achieve their full potential

Literacy at St Michael's is underpinned by the belief that to be literate is to learn. Literacy sits at the heart of our curriculum, functioning as not just a school priority, but a fundamental right for all of our students. Across both KS3 and 4, students are exposed to a focused set of literacy initiatives, with the central aim of providing each student with the requisite skills to function and thrive in the outside world. James Murphy states that 'Written language has become the foundation on which the information revolution is built. Without access to this foundation, full participation in our society is impossible'. At St Michael's, we strive to provide all students with this foundational literacy understanding.

Our curriculum will:

- place literacy at the centre of school life by embedding core skills throughout each subject, making them present in all lessons.
- provide opportunities to cultivate a love of reading and storytelling, viewing reading as a treasured pastime in addition to an academic necessity.
- create an understanding of the multimodality of literacy in the modern era.
- enhance students' use of ambitious vocabulary, both in written and oral forms.
- develop students' knowledge of command words and exam-specific language, encouraging them to consider the schematic links/connections between the demands and challenges of different subjects.
- provide opportunities for additional support through rigorous and bespoke intervention programmes.
- promote regular and consistent use of the school's library resources to supplement and strengthen reading across the curriculum.
- embed a consistent approach to marking literacy across subjects through easily understandable marking symbols.

All teachers are teachers of literacy. As such, the staff of St Michael's Church of England High School are committed to developing literacy skills in all of our students, in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum, because:

- students need vocabulary, expression, and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects
- reading helps us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience
- language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do, and on the things, others have said, written or done
- responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry
- improving literacy and learning can have an impact on students' self-esteem, motivation, and behaviour. It allows them to learn independently. It is empowering

Signed by:

	Headteacher	Date: 07.07.2022
	Co-Chair of Governors	Date: 07.07.2022
K Thornton	Co-Chair of Governors	Date: 07.07.2022

Date adopted:	13th July 2017
Date reviewed:	7th July 2022
Review date:	July 2024

1. Implementation:

1.1 Across our curriculum, we adopt a multifaceted approach to literacy that incorporates learning in individual, group, online and in-person settings. This aims to mirror the interactive, often dynamic means through which young people engage with reading and literacy in the modern age. Students are provided with a diverse curriculum that weaves together skills relating to reading, writing, comprehension, vocabulary, and oracy. Its spiralised structure sees these topics returned to and developed at multiple junctures throughout KS3.

1.2 Key Pedagogical Initiatives:

- Form time interventions
- English form tutors in Year 7
- Fresh Start
- Bedrock Vocabulary
- Power of Words
- Vocabulary continuum
- Etymology grids
- Command word infographics
- Vocabulary and Inference Programme
- Standardised literacy marking

1.3 Such initiatives are placed within a framework wherein literacy is given priority across all departments. To support this school-wide culture, literacy is promoted via tailored CPDL training that seeks to reiterate the need for literacy to be included in all subjects and curriculum areas. See Appendix 1 our 'Literacy Roadmap'.

2. Key roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Board has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Literacy Policy and procedures of St Michael's Church of England High School.

2.2 The Governing Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Literacy Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

2.3 The Governing Board has overall responsibility for reviewing the Literacy Policy every two years.

2.4 The Headteacher has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.

2.5 The Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Literacy Policy of St Michael's Church of England High School.

2.6 The Deputy Headteacher: Curriculum, Teaching & Learning will be responsible for liaising with teachers across all of the departments to facilitate the delivery of cross-curricular literacy skills.

2.7 The English department will be responsible for teaching basic literacy skills.

2.8 Teachers will be responsible for developing literacy skills across their subjects with the support of the Deputy Headteacher: Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, and the English Department.

2.9 The Literacy team will promote and lead literacy across the curriculum.

3. Reading guidelines

3.1 Students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will read during form time via our reading for pleasure strategy, "Book club".

3.2 Key stage 3 students should always have an appropriate reading book. If staff members have concerns as to the suitability of any book, they should liaise either with the English Department or with the Library Manager.

3.3 All students have access to books from the school library. Students should also be encouraged to join their local public libraries.

3.4 All students have free access to a bank of online reading resources on the SORA platform.

3.5 All staff should be aware of the specific requirements of their subject and should prepare students where necessary. This could mean, for example, producing a glossary of specific terms used in a particular examination, topic, or textbook, as many staff already do. Staff should also, where appropriate, reinforce reading/study skills techniques taught in English such as skim-reading, scanning, note-taking, underlining keywords etc.

3.6 Staff will take account of the literacy demands made by students in their lessons and plan support strategies to assist students, e.g., active reading strategies.

3.7 Staff should plan opportunities for students to show they understand information conveyed in different forms of text and from different sources.

3.8 Students identified as having a reading age below 9.8 will follow the Fresh Start programme.

4. Writing guidelines

4.1 Staff will encourage accuracy in writing by following the school's marking policy.

4.2 Throughout the year, staff will reinforce skills with students whenever they are engaged in writing tasks.

4.3 Staff will encourage students to use a neat, cursive handwriting style and insist on a neat presentation. Students with poor handwriting should be referred to the SENCO who will liaise with the appropriate staff to implement support. In some cases, students may be given an ILD to be used in lessons. It is envisaged that these students will be referred for concessions concerning this, at the appropriate time.

4.4 Staff will assist students in the organisation of their writing and will provide effective models and writing frames where appropriate to support students with their writing.

4.5 Staff will help students to select appropriate expression in writing, according to the task and type of writing required, by teaching the appropriate conventions.

4.6 Departments will identify subject specific vocabulary that has to be learned each half term together with complementary academic/challenging vocabulary.

4.7 Staff will promote academic vocabulary by using the language continuum integrating this into their planning where appropriate.

4.8 Staff will reinforce basic skills in writing, reminding students of the importance of basic punctuation and paragraphing in the context of their work.

4.9 Staff will access the literacy toolkit to support their understanding of correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

4.10 Students will be encouraged to plan and check their work. Staff should plan opportunities for students to convey meaning in a range of forms for different readers/audiences.

4.11 Departments will liaise with the English Department when including literacy tasks such as newspaper articles, letters etc.in order to reinforce writing conventions.

4.12 Staff will address the half-termly literacy focus on their planning and marking.

4.13 Staff will ensure that the school guidelines on presentation are displayed in their teaching rooms.

5. Speaking and listening guidelines

5.1 Staff will encourage the development of speaking and listening through activities within each unit of work.

5.2 Staff are to plan opportunities for students to speak articulately in a range of contexts and for different purposes.

5.3 Systems such as collaborative group work structures are to be used to ensure active participation in group and class discussions.

5.4 Staff will speak in standard English when interacting with students and correct grammatical errors in students' talk.

5.5 Students will be encouraged to use standard English in formal settings.

6. Use of data

6.1 Reading data for Key Stage 3 students will be available for all staff on Go 4 Schools. Staff can then plan appropriately.

6.2 Reading data will be collated three-times a year. Students identified as behind their chronological age will be referred for intervention.

6.4 The English Department is responsible for assessing literacy formatively.

6.5 Departments should refer literacy issues to the literacy team.

6.6 Progress in literacy will be measured by interim data together with progress in reading and spelling ages.

7. Key stage 3

7.1 Students at Key Stage 3 will be taught the following literacy skills across the curriculum:

- to spell and use an extensive and challenging vocabulary
- word grammar
- sentence grammar
- reading and comprehension

7.2 Literacy Intervention

7.2.1 Literacy intervention aims at supporting the development of literacy skills in year 7 students. These students are selected from reading age data, following each round of reading tests; targeted students are those who have scored a reading age that falls below their actual age, at the time of testing. Over the course of the academic year, a range of students participate within the intervention programme as part of separate cohorts. The programme is delivered by members of the Literacy Team, who each have their own small group of students to work with. Intervention sessions occur during afternoon form-time, three times per week, which also permits students to remain as part of their form's Book Club on the other two afternoons. Thus, the intervention offers one hour of additional literacy per week.

7.2.2 At the commencement of each new intervention programme, students sit a mini reading assessment; this assesses a student's comprehension of a short extract, in addition to their inference and summary skills. The assessment highlights areas requiring improvement, which informs the following weeks' intervention sessions. During the final week, students resit the reading assessment. To swiftly assess students' abilities with particular literacy skills, a RAG-rating marking scheme is employed. To better illustrate the progress students, make from the start to end assessments, a scoring system is consequently utilised to give each RAG component a mark, which allows for clearer comparison.

7.3 Literacy Lessons

7.3.1 As part of the school's curriculum, years 7 and 9 have dedicated literacy lessons as part of their timetable each fortnight. Within these lessons, students have the opportunity to access the school's library in order to borrow books to take home. In the classroom, these lessons focus on key literacy elements – such as reading comprehension, inference, oracy, and writing. Year 7 students have a double literacy lesson, in an effort to effectively promote and foster literacy in students' inaugural year at St. Michael's; year 9 students have a single period, for which the aim is to cover prevalent literacy knowledge gaps, prior to students starting their GCSE courses.

7.3.2 Year 7 literacy lessons incorporate both library sessions and the utilisation of the Bedrock program. Each lesson will follow a three-part structure, better affording students with a range of literacy activities to develop their skills. Of a full literacy double lesson, 50 minutes of the lesson will be teacher-taught literacy; 20 minutes will be given for the library session; and 30 minutes given to Bedrock.

7.4 Bedrock Vocabulary

7.4.1 Improving the literacy skills of all students is central to the curriculum at St Michael's. Bedrock Vocabulary is an online learning platform that aims to enhance the reading and literacy skills of its users. It creates bespoke learning schemes, offering regular assessment and progress checks. The programme has been used at St Michael's over

the past three years, and all new Year 7 students have free access. This will form part of Year 7 homework and bi-weekly literacy lessons. The programme is accessible through any browsing device, and live updates relating to engagement and progress are sent directly to teachers.

7.5 Fresh Start

7.5.1 Fresh Start is a simple, well-structured literacy programme. It is proven to raise standards in literacy rapidly when taught with commitment. My role is to test pupils, organise pupil cohorts as well as deliver and track pupil progress. The aim is to ensure that students are taught to read and write accurately with good comprehension. There are over 150 graphemes, 44 speech sounds – in three sets of speed sound lessons. The reading elements focus on accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. The writing elements focus on spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The overall aim is to improve literacy by removing the barriers and stigma associated with poor attainment in primary school.

7.6 Book club:

7.6.1 The purpose of the book club is to encourage pupils to read for pleasure. Book club is important due to the correlation between reading engagement and reading attainment as well as developed vocabulary, grammar, mathematical skills, and general knowledge.

7.6.2 Book club is scheduled 2-3 form time slots per week.

7.6.3 The aim of the book club is to ensure that St Michael's readers:

- explore the school's values
- challenge: themes & vocabulary
- culture: Develop general knowledge and empathy

7.6.4 In order to achieve this, texts cover the following categories:

- classic
- culture & history
- debate & conversation

7.7 In English, students at Key Stage 3 will be taught to:

- develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material independently
- understand increasingly challenging texts
- read critically
- write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length
- plan, draft, edit and proof-read
- speak confidently and effectively

8. Key stage 4

8.1 Students will be taught to:

- read critically with a high level of comprehension

- summarise and synthesise information
- evaluate a writer's choice of vocabulary, form, grammatical and structural features
- compare texts
- produce clear and coherent text and write effectively for a range of purposes
- write for impact
- present information and ideas vocally
- respond to spoken language
- use standard English whenever and wherever is appropriate
- use a wide and varied academic vocabulary
- use subject specific terminology appropriately
- use a wide and varied vocabulary in imaginative and transactional writing

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 This policy will be monitored every year.

9.2 The policy will be reviewed by the Governing Board every two years.

Appendix i: Literacy Roadmap

St Michael's Church of England High School Literacy Roadmap

Year 7: A multi-faceted approach to literacy in Year 7 enables staff to **INSTIL** key literacy skills.

Year 8: Students are provided with the opportunity to **EMBED** skills from Year 7, by utilising them within a range of subjects.

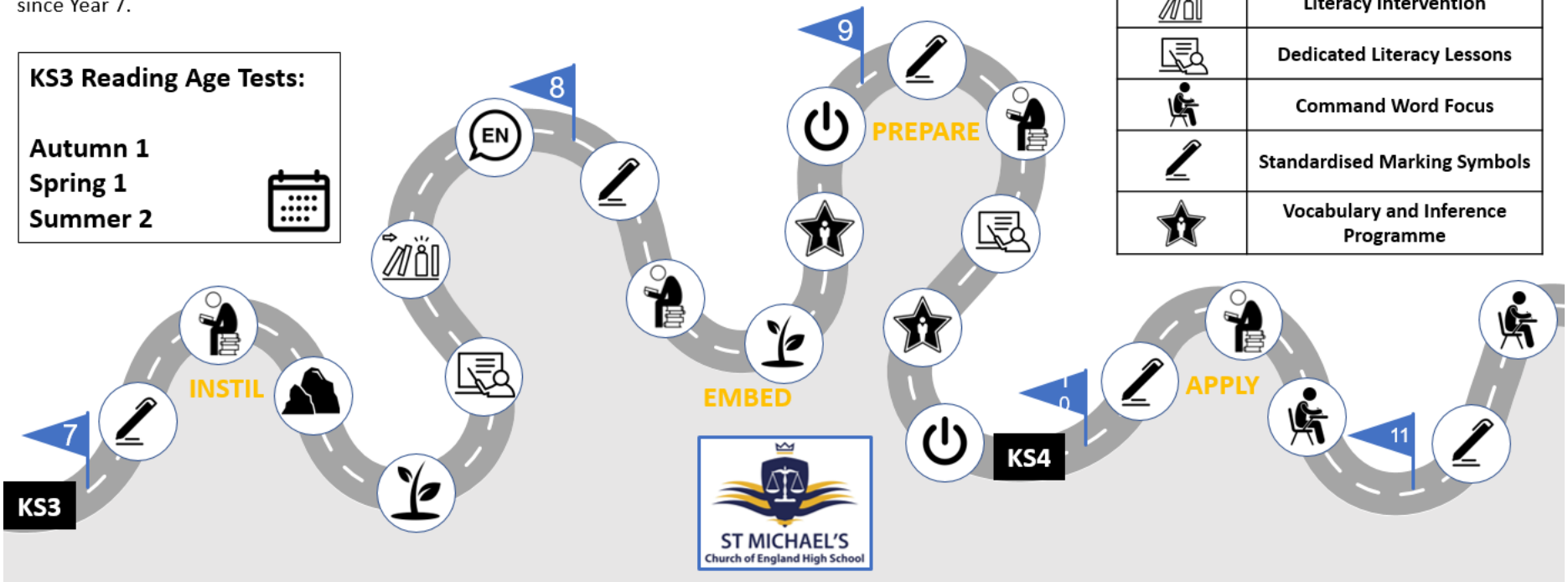
Year 9: Enabling students to **PREPARE** for the rigour of GCSEs by enhancing crucial literacy skills.

Year 10/11: Subject-specific literacy initiatives mean students can **APPLY** skills that have been honed and cultivated since Year 7.

EN	English Form Tutors
	Reading for Pleasure
	Fresh Start
	Bedrock Vocabulary
	Power of Words
	Literacy Intervention
	Dedicated Literacy Lessons
	Command Word Focus
	Standardised Marking Symbols
	Vocabulary and Inference Programme

KS3 Reading Age Tests:

Autumn 1
Spring 1
Summer 2



Appendix ii: Termly Literacy foci

Term 1: Oracy

- Speaking coherently and fluently
- Elaboration
- Subject specific vocabulary
- Avoid ambiguity (e.g., 'stuff'/'things')

Term 2: Formal Writing

- Avoid contractions
- Avoid slang/ colloquialism
- Use of standard English

Term 3: Paragraphing Effectively

- Changing paragraphs at the right time
- Inclusion of topic sentences
- Use of introductions and conclusions

Appendix iii: Literacy Marking Symbols

Marking Symbol	What it Means
Sp	spelling mistake
Gr	grammatical error
Vo	vocabulary choice
P	punctuation error
Awk	awkward wording
^	missing word
//	You need a new paragraph here
Cap	You need a capital letter here