



LITERACY POLICY

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At a glance

OCL is part of the wider Oasis family with a shared vision for community, a place where everyone is included, making a contribution and reaching their God given potential. In all aspects of our approach to literacy we draw upon, make reference to and reflect on the Oasis 9 Habits knowing that being able to do these things grows confidence in oracy, develops wider vocabulary and also supports the development of the 9 Habits in students' personal development and character formation.

This policy ensures consistent application of literacy strategies across all secondary academies within the Trust, thereby facilitating equal life chances and opportunities afforded through functional literacy skills. OCL believes passionately in every child's right to have access to appropriate and challenging reading material. We believe that literacy is a core skill that must be developed in all our young people to ensure that they can reach their God given potential and make a difference in both their local and global community.

Checklist

- Our approach to literacy draws upon, makes reference to and reflects the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits. The shared vision of our academies being communities where everyone is included, contributes and achieves their God given potential, underpins our work.
- We will be open and supportive of our colleagues as we implement this policy across our academies, utilising NLP support to develop literacy practice and embed the policy.
- We will provide CPD for literacy leads via our strategy and community groups to ensure the intent, implementation and impact of the policy are robust across academies
- We will work with Academy leaders to ensure they have clarity of understanding of the literacy policy and its wider import for school improvement.
- We will review the policy after one year of implementation to refine and enhance our approach, as required, acting on the feedback from key stakeholders



In brief

This aim of this policy is to establish a shared approach to literacy development across all secondary academies and clarify the fundamental principles which underpin this.

In more detail

The OCL literacy policy is underpinned by five key areas:

1. **Disciplinary literacy**
2. **Reading fluency**
3. **Intervention**
4. **Vocabulary**
5. **Exploration through literacy**

These areas form the foundation of each element of literacy provision and academies will produce a localised policy which focuses on the development of each area in their local context.

As part of the OCL literacy policy, all students will:

- Become fluent readers. Every student will have the skills to access a minimum of age-related reading materials by the time they leave their academy.
- Develop their academic writing and reading skills through the delivery of disciplinary literacy within each subject area.
- Learn to develop and adapt their spoken language to specific situations while celebrating their own heritage, accent and community.
- Benefit from their academy Reading Pledge which promises access to a range of appropriate and challenging longer texts including Shakespeare, 19th century literature and a wide range of modern and young adult reading for pleasure texts
- Have opportunities to celebrate literacy through extracurricular clubs, academy and trust wide competitions and other bespoke opportunities
- Develop strong cultural and current affairs knowledge through our Oasis core literacy offer.



Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to leaders, teachers and support staff in all secondary academies.

Policy Statement

This Trust wide policy has been developed with the support of colleagues in secondary academies as well as those national leaders responsible for governance, delegated from the Trust Board. This document gives clear guidance to each academy.

What is literacy?

To be literate in its most basic form is to have the ability to read, write, communicate and react to ideas in text and language. Literacy skills provide strong foundations which students build on across subject disciplines. The OCL literacy policy however runs much deeper than our ability to read, write and communicate. National statistics show a concerning downward spiral with regards to the literacy of the nation. National Literacy Trust statistics¹ suggest that:

- 1 in 8 disadvantaged children in the UK say that they don't have a book of their own.
- The longer children maintain an enjoyment of reading, the greater the benefits are in the classroom.
- Children born into communities with the most serious literacy challenges have some of the lowest life expectancies in England.
- Only half of children in the UK enjoy writing.
- Children who enjoy reading and writing are happier in their lives.
- 1 in 6 adults in the England (16.4%/7.1 million people) have very poor literacy skills.

Social disadvantage and deprivation play an undeniable part not only then in the national picture, but also in the local communities that Oasis academies serve.

¹ 'What is literacy?', National Literacy Trust <https://literacytrust.org.uk/information/what-is-literacy/>



From these statistics, it is clear that an increased level of literacy leads to a longer and happier life, which must be a priority for all Oasis Academies. Therefore, the vision of the OCL literacy policy is simple: for no child to be left behind. Shared literacy and language are important in the ways in which we communicate and also the ways in which we understand and respect each other.

Consequently, the OCL literacy policy is underpinned by 5 key areas:

1. **Disciplinary literacy**
2. **Reading fluency**
3. **Intervention**
4. **Vocabulary**
5. **Exploration through literacy**



OCL DRIVE up Literacy standards

Disciplinary Literacy	Reading Fluency	Intervention	Vocabulary	Exploration through literacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The approach to reading, writing and oracy across distinct subject areas.• This emphasises all teachers are teachers of literacy.• This focuses on the elements of literacy evident in all subjects and how subject leads and subject teachers can best be supported in their subject area to deliver this effectively.• The development of academic reading and writing within the classroom, as well as the development of oracy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school culture and ethos with regards to reading.• A core part of the One Plan, reading fluency focuses on the proficiency of students' reading ability as well as their engagement with reading for pleasure.• A strong focus is placed on reading aloud (by both teachers and students), discussion and engaging with both fiction and non-fiction texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data informed interventions are selected through nationally approved intervention models.• These will include those focused on the development of phonics as well as those which support decoding and comprehension.• Each Academy will create a bespoke plan, according to need and utilise Trust support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct instruction of vocabulary is a key part of all subject teaching.• Vocabulary lists for Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary are utilised in all subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A shared reading list appropriate for all students is in place. This provides insight into the wider world around students whilst also ensuring that the texts chosen are engaging, age appropriate and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.• The Reading Pledge each Academy makes guarantees the types of literature all students will be exposed to during their time in education.

DRIVE Area 1: Disciplinary Literacy

Disciplinary literacy covers the academic reading, writing, spoken and multi-modal skills used within each subject area. Understanding disciplinary literacy essentially means mapping, understanding and supporting the individual needs for literacy within each curriculum area. Unlike primary study, secondary education is delivered by a range of teachers with different subject specialisms, many of which are not experts in reading or literacy. Disciplinary literacy seeks to help Literacy Leaders understand the needs within each subject area, the crossover between subject areas and how literacy can best be supported across the curriculum. In order to fully understand the disciplinary literacy needs in each academy within the trust, it is essential Literacy Leaders prioritise the mapping of literacy needs across the academy to ensure that:

- The literacy offering is consistent across the academy and meets OCL's expectations in line with the Trust Literacy Policy.
- Literacy Leaders develop teachers' understanding of literacy teaching, and support with the planning, resourcing and delivery of different reading and writing elements within subject areas.
- The cognitive load of students is managed effectively by avoiding the teaching of contradictory or repetitive methods of writing across different subject areas. Instead, this is streamlined and simplified to ensure consistent methods are used.
- All staff feel secure enough to ask for literacy support, offer guidance to students and feel confident when stating that they are a teacher of literacy.
- Reading for pleasure, academic reading and reading aloud are all explicitly used across the curriculum.
- Students are given opportunities to develop their oracy skills; discussion and structured speech are established practice and students adapt their speech to suit different contexts and audiences.

OCL Expectations

Literacy leaders will undertake the 'Literacy mapping' exercise (see Appendices 1a and 1b) to fully understand:

- What literacy needs exist within each subject (e.g. reading and responding to questions, structuring long form answers, academic writing or comprehension of subject specific material)
- What actions can be taken by the literacy leader and curriculum leader to support these needs
- What resources are likely to be needed as part of a larger disciplinary literacy action plan

DRIVE Area 2: Reading Fluency

Reading Fluency refers to the importance of having designated reading, comprehension and vocabulary practice as a part of both subject curriculum and whole academy planning. As such, reading fluency is a core part of the Oasis One Plan and OCL curriculum statement of intent and is therefore a priority for development across Oasis Academies. All academies must:

- Develop a positive ethos and culture of reading, including the utilisation of the library (where appropriate), reading for pleasure and access to challenging and appropriate texts which meet the standards set by Oasis within DRIVE area 5.
- Use data to measure the proficiency of students' reading ability. Data may be gathered from NGRT tests, phonics assessments and scaled scores gathered from SATs exams at KS2 or other forms of assessment.
- Develop a culture of and opportunities to read aloud across all academies which must be delivered via a clear reading strategy e.g. Control the Game.

OCL Expectations

Teachers have a responsibility to help students to become confident, skilled, critical and reflective readers of all kinds of texts, therefore:

- Teachers frequently read to students in order to model best practice and high quality spoken language

- Students are encouraged to read collaboratively as well as on their own; this may be aloud or in small groups or pairs
- Teachers make use of NGRT/SATs and/or other reading data available on Bromcom to support their planning
- Students are encouraged to use specific reading strategies (skimming, scanning, annotation, highlighting) and become used to making their own choice of the most appropriate strategy
- Teachers pre-read materials before delivery, making annotations to show best practice and ensuring key word definitions are precise as per the dictionary definition
- Reading for pleasure is promoted throughout the academy and there is engagement with fiction, non-fiction and shared reading

DRIVE Area 3: Intervention

While intervention is only a small part of a whole academy literacy strategy, this area of DRIVE focuses on the use of appropriate, meaningful and measurable intervention to improve literacy skills, vocabulary, comprehension and decoding skills. In order for all students to achieve their potential, intervention strategies must be used to improve literacy skills and ensure that all students can make significant progress, regardless of their entry point to the secondary phase. Students must be identified for interventions using data (e.g. reading age data) and appropriate academy assessments.

OCL Expectations

Interventions for the following must be put in place, according to Academy need:

1. Phonics intervention
 - For those students with a reading age below 9, academies need to consider, on a child by child basis, the need for a phonics intervention package.
 - Fresh Start Phonics by Ruth Miskin is a highly respected and celebrated phonics programme. Fresh Start Phonics is designed for those students



with significant gaps in their literacy and reading ability. It is advised that the SENDCO

and teaching assistants are trained and timetabled to deliver and disseminate this programme for maximum impact.

- Other possible programmes which academies may seek to use include Butterfly Phonics, Jolly Phonics or Read Write Inc. (this list is not exhaustive)

2. Decoding and Comprehension

- For those students below their chronological reading age but with a reading age of 9+, decoding and comprehension support is needed.
- Reading Plus features an assessment placement test which gives granular data to help understand pupil literacy needs and the most suitable strand of the intervention package. Students are measured on engagement with reading, vocabulary and comprehension to give an overall reading proficiency score.
- Reading Plus will need to be monitored by Literacy Leads or a designated member of staff. Students select extracts or texts to read based on their own interests and work their way through the course. The choice of reading material makes the programme appealing as students have more ownership over the order in which they complete the course.
- Reading Plus includes texts of varying difficulty levels up to the academic reading ability of a KS5 student.
- Other suitable programmes include ReadingWise, Accelerated Reader and Lexia (this list is not exhaustive).

DRIVE Area 4: Vocabulary

Research suggests that students need to understand 95% or more of the words on a page to have a strong comprehension of a text. Even students with comprehension as high as 90% can struggle to decipher or ascertain the meaning of the unknown 10% of words on a page.

Why is vocabulary important?

- Becker (1977) identified poor vocabulary knowledge as the primary cause of academic failure of disadvantaged students.
- Children from a low socioeconomic background typically have a smaller vocabulary than children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, and that gap widens as children get older, Beals (1997), (Sutton Trust Report 2010)
- Disadvantaged students show declining reading comprehension as their limited vocabulary constrains what they can understand from texts, Chall et al. (1990)

While the teaching of subject specific vocabulary is important, it is of equal importance to develop students' spoken or written vocabulary to include more complex but still common words. This ensures that students will have a proficient understanding of most exam questions, 'articles, documents and other types of media. Vocabulary is a broad topic that can be broken down into the following categories:

- Tier 1 vocabulary
 - The most basic every day words, most notably simple nouns, connectives, sight words, adjectives and early reading words such as 'girl', 'dog', 'and', 'it' and 'good'.
 - Where students struggle with tier 1 vocabulary, they will need phonics intervention (as covered in DRIVE area 3: Intervention)
- Tier 2 vocabulary
 - Vocabulary used by more mature and proficient readers/writers. These words are commonly known and understood by native speakers of a language but are complex enough to require explicit instruction e.g. required, beneficial, maintain and approximate.
 - Tier 2 vocabulary will be most commonly 'taught' within English lessons, but will improve pupil comprehension and expression across all subject disciplines. This comprehension and understanding can be accelerated if the strategies used and vocabulary used are consistently taught across all subjects.
- Tier 3 vocabulary



- The subject specific vocabulary taught within a specific discipline. These words are complex and, outside of an academic environment, rarely utilised, therefore these words need to be explicitly taught within subjects. Tier 3 vocabulary can include words such as 'trigonometry', 'iambic pentameter', 'osmosis' and 'omniscient'.

OCL Expectations

In order for all Oasis Academies to have a consistent and effective approach to the teaching of vocabulary, all academies will:

- Create their own vocabulary lists for tiers 2 and 3 which should be explicitly taught across all subjects
- Consider using Versatile Vocabulary: a strategy and tier 2 word list already created by OCL using the strategies developed by the English NLP team.

Versatile Vocabulary

Versatile Vocabulary focuses on the teaching of Tier 2 words to help develop student vocabulary as well as comprehension and quality of written work. Versatile Vocabulary involves the teaching of Tier 2 vocabulary through pairs of binary opposites, e.g. pairs of opposite words such as 'inevitable' and 'avoidable', alongside a simple definition. Versatile Vocabulary appropriate for all subjects can be delivered as two separate lists for KS3 and

KS4 or, alternatively, can be delivered using a bespoke list per year group. Versatile Vocabulary words appropriate to individual lessons would then be included in the lesson and supported by a short definition and activity where the vocabulary is implemented by the student. This consistency of approach and use of transferable skills will help to aid pupil understanding and development of their tier 2 vocabulary.

An example of a whole academy Versatile Vocabulary list for KS3 and KS4 has been included in Appendix 3. If adopting this model, academies should consult curriculum leaders across all subjects in order to check the suitability of the word list and whether different words need to be added or taken away.

DRIVE Area 5: Exploration through literacy

Exploration through literacy is the opportunity to see the world through literature. It is a focus not just on the number of books in our libraries or classrooms, but the variety, how appropriate these choices are, how engaging they are and how much they open the eyes of our students to the world around them.

Oasis Academies serve diverse communities in terms of local culture and heritage. We believe that all students should have the opportunity to see themselves represented in the books that they read, and all students should feel that they can recognise themselves within the characters and stories they love. Lafferty points out that “Researchers have examined how literature that reflects students’ lives can promote engagement and address the achievement gap” (Lafferty, 2014). She goes on to discuss the importance of multicultural literature for students of White British heritage ‘with one interviewee stating, “I cannot fully understand what it must be like to have a dominant culture being portrayed everywhere I looked, however, I can only imagine the stifling effect it would impose on someone”’ (Lafferty, 2014). Consequently, it is clear that there is value in all students studying diverse literature.

Furthermore, Annie Murphy Paul² has made the case that ‘the brain, it seems, does not make much of a distinction between reading about an experience and encountering it in real life; in

each case the same neurological regions are stimulated.’ The direct benefit to all students of reading often, widely and as diversely as possible is therefore clear; reading can act as a window into many worlds and offer the kind of opportunity and inclusivity at the heart of the OCL ethos.

OCL Expectations

Through DRIVE area 5, Oasis academies will be provided with a reading list appropriate for all students across the Trust. This will provide insight into the wider world around our students whilst also ensuring that the texts chosen are engaging, age appropriate and promote equality, diversity and inclusion. Academies will then be able to make impactful text choices, ensuring students have access to a wide range

² www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-neuroscience-of-your-brain-on-fiction.html



of texts via libraries/e-platforms as part of the Horizons initiative, across the curriculum and during academy/tutor time reading.

In addition to this, all Oasis Academies will create their own Reading Pledge, a promise as to the types of literature that all students will be exposed to during their time in education.

Responsibilities

The author of the policy is responsible for the communication and review of the policy. The Literacy NLP and SNCL are responsible for training of appropriate staff to ensure the policy is implemented appropriately. Academy Principals and appropriate staff are responsible within their own setting for the effective implementation of the policy.

Training requirements

Academy Principals will receive training on the policy via a leadership briefing so that there is clarity of approach. The relevant staff within each Academy who have oversight of literacy will receive training via the community and strategy groups. Based on Academy need, bespoke NLP support will be provided to support academies in implementing the policy.

Statutory requirements

Various statutory requirements.



RACI matrix

Policy Element	Board	OCL CEO	Leadership			Academy				Services		Team	
			OCL COO	National Director	Regional Director	Academy Principal	Academy Leadership Team	Teachers	Support Staff	Author of Policy	Compliance, policy and legal	Literacy NLP	Senior National Curriculum Lead
Policy is on latest template				A						R	A		
Requirements of the policy met in the draft					A	A				R			
Correct approval journey followed										R	R		
Approve policies				A									
Communicate new policy						I	I	I	I	R			
Train appropriate staff						R						R	R
Policy reviewed and updated				A						R			

Appendices

Appendix 1: Mapping Disciplinary Literacy

It is essential that Literacy Leads have a strong understanding of the literacy needs across each subject area, i.e. their disciplinary literacy needs. Whilst many subjects have overt links to literacy such as English, history or R.E, other subject disciplines are less frequently considered in terms of their specific literacy needs. The purpose of the disciplinary literacy plan is to give Literacy Leads the opportunity to meet with each subject/curriculum lead and audit the provision in place.

Meetings with subject/curriculum leads should primarily be focused on the written element of the course or the reading component. In the first instance, the clearest need will be in the written component, most notably the structure that students use to answer exam questions.

The disciplinary literacy plan aims to gather and collate as much information as possible about the priority areas in each subject. Once these areas have been established and meetings concluded, actions can be decided. It is at this point that overlaps between different subjects can be identified and links made between different subjects.

Literacy leads should have an awareness of the KS4 syllabus needs for each subject so that they understand the end points students are working towards and are able to discuss, with growing confidence, the areas that need to be developed to ensure that students can be successful over their five years of study.

Appendix 2: Whole Academy Genre Mapping

Literacy Leads may include genre mapping as part of their whole academy disciplinary literacy plan. This activity can be completed as part of an academy CPD session or in a meeting with all subject/curriculum leads. The purpose of the genre mapping document is to gather information about where certain types of questions are seen across the varied KS4 exam papers and subject disciplines. At secondary, teachers may focus on the differences between subject areas, however, there are many similarities; it is therefore useful for non-specialists in literacy to be shown where the skills used in their subject area overlap with other areas. This may help to clarify why students have a different understanding of what a particular word in an exam question, for example, means as it sometimes may be used differently in another subject. On other occasions it may be that students are unaware of the overlap in skills as different terms are used for the same skill e.g. in English Language the skill of summarising information can be viewed as a similar skill to a recount activity in History. The example below from the National Literacy Trust shows one model of genre mapping.

Subject/ Purpose	Instruction	Recount	Explanation	Information	Persuasion
	<i>To instruct how a task or product is to be completed</i>	<i>To recount events (real or imagined)</i>	<i>Explain why things are as they are or how a phenomenon occurs.</i>	<i>To describe, classify and organise information</i>	<i>To present a point of view about an issue</i>
English		Plot synopsis Autobiography Newspaper report		Creative description of scene	Text of speech Charity leaflet
History		Account of Battle of Hastings	Explain the causes of first world war		

Appendix 3: Versatile Vocabulary

In order for all students to make progress, it is vital not to teach students contradictory or differing methods to achieve the same aims. The versatile vocabulary strategy created by the English team and employed as part of the OCL English curriculum is a highly effective means of explicit vocabulary teaching.

What is 'Versatile Vocabulary'?

Vocabulary that can be used across the curriculum and applied to a range of contexts. The vocabulary is arranged in **binary opposites** to create robust schema and offer critical lenses. They are chosen based on:

- Utility
- Versatility
- Precision
- Specificity
- Concept unlock-ability

What are the benefits of using versatile vocabulary?

- Whole-academy shared vocabulary has power
- **Tier 2 vocabulary makes a *big* difference**
- Drawing links between subjects
- Reveals the utility of vocabulary in *life*
- Knowing, precisely, what vocabulary students know is useful
- Clarification and codification of what success looks like; vocabulary = the steps

Below are examples of KS3 and KS4 cross-curricular Versatile Vocabulary lists that can be used as a starting point for academies.

KS3 Cross-Curricular Versatile Vocabulary			
Sympathetic, caring	Compassionate	Callous	Unfeeling, heartless
Definite, proven, precise	Concrete	Abstract	Figurative, indefinite
Stubborn, unchangeable	Dogmatic	Malleable	Able to be changed, flexible
Constant, the same	Stable	Volatile	Unpredictable, uncertain
Every so often	Intermittent	Perpetual	Cyclical, repetitive, incessant
Surrender, give up	Concede	Refute	Argue against, counter
Good, pure	Virtuous	Reprehensible	Bad, evil, unforgivable
Expected, logical, usual	Normal	Abnormal	Beyond what is expected
Can be stopped or avoided	Avoidable	Inevitable	Unavoidable, certain
Expand, make bigger	Increase	Decrease	Reduce, make smaller
Make stronger, support	Reinforce	Undermine	Go against, make weaker
Right, good	Moral	Immoral	Wrong, bad
Inside	Interior	Exterior	Outside
Inside	Internal	External	Outside
Less than	Inferior to	Superior to	Better than

KS4 Cross-Curricular Versatile Vocabulary			
Respect, honour	Venerate	Malign	Abuse, disrespect
Believable, reliable	Credible	Deceptive	Misleading, not true, fake
Enormous, never-ending,	Infinite	Finite	Limited, restricted
Varied, different, mixed	Heterogeneous	Homogeneous	Uniform, the same, consistent
Useful, valuable, helpful	Beneficial	Detrimental	Harmful, unhelpful
To make stronger, support	Reinforce	Diminish	To make weaker, reduce
Follow, respect	Obey	Transgress	Go against, break, sin
Needed, important	Essential	Superfluous	Not needed, extra
Agreeable, compatible	Harmonious	Incongruous	Out of place, inappropriate
Lasting forever	Permanent	Ephemeral	Lasting for a short time, temporary
Show, communicate, tell	Convey	Conceal	Hide, keep secret, suppress
Compare, identify similarities	Relate	Differentiate	Separate, tell the difference, contrast
Expand upon, add detail	Elaborate	Simplify	Reduce to the essentials or most simple

Make more dramatic, significant	Exaggerate	Trivialise	Make something insignificant or unimportant
Modern, latest version	Contemporary	Traditional	Well-established, old-fashioned



Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Owned and Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1	02.02.22	Philip Beaumont	Principals and Literacy Leads	To ensure a consistent and high quality approach across secondary academies

Policy Tier

- Tier 1
 Tier 2
 Tier 3
 Tier 4

Owner

Mark Thompson

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Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Position	Date Approved	Version
Directors' Group	Directors' Group	4/4/22	1.0

Position with the Unions

Does the policy or changes to the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement?

- Yes
- No

If yes, the policy status is:

- Consulted with Unions and Approved
- Fully consulted (completed) but not agreed with Unions but Approved by OCL
- Currently under Consultation with Unions
- Awaiting Consultation with Unions

Date & Record of Next Union Review

Location

Tick all that apply:

- OCL website
- Academy website
- Policy portal
- Other: state

Customisation

- OCL policy
- OCL policy with an attachment for each academy to complete regarding local arrangements
- Academy policy
- Policy is included in Principals' annual compliance declaration



Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Position	Date	Version
All Secondary Principals	Principal		1.0

