



EDClass Literacy Policy

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Introduction and Purpose

The EDClass literacy policy outlines the principles, strategies, and practices that guide literacy instruction and development within our online alternative provision. Recognising the crucial role of literacy in academic success, emotional regulation, and lifelong learning, this policy provides a comprehensive, operational framework for fostering literacy skills amongst our learners in the online learning environment.

Many students accessing EDClass arrive with significant gaps in their prior schooling, lower-than-chronological reading ages, negative experiences of traditional literacy tasks, or identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), such as dyslexia, Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN), or Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) challenges. This policy establishes a systematic, whole-school approach that dismantles barriers to literacy by explicitly connecting three foundational curricular pillars:

- ✓ **English Language:** The systematic development of reading strategies (decoding, retrieval, structural analysis, purpose, and evaluation) and writing mastery (purpose, audience, cohesion, grammar, punctuation, and spelling).
- ✓ **English Literature:** Deep engagement with the literary canon, diverse contemporary texts, Shakespeare, and poetry to expand cultural capital, analytical vocabulary, and critical thinking.
- ✓ **Reading Beyond Words:** An innovative, low-barrier visual-to-text gateway that utilises images, videos, and guided oracy to develop observation, inference, and narrative writing without blank-page anxiety.

Definition of Disciplinary and Digital Literacy

Literacy in education extends far beyond the traditional understanding of simply being able to read and write. It encompasses a complex set of skills that empower individuals, not just in their academic pursuits, but throughout their lives.

Within EDClass, literacy is defined as the ability to:

- ✓ Access, decode, comprehend, process, synthesise, and communicate information effectively across a variety of disciplines and real-world contexts.
- ✓ Interpret both traditional written texts and multimodal digital media (including moving images, infographics, and graphical interfaces).
- ✓ Acquire and deploy Tier 2 academic vocabulary and Tier 3 subject-specific terminology with precision.
- ✓ Engage in structured oracy, articulating thoughts clearly, listening actively, and evaluating diverse viewpoints.
- ✓ Communicate ideas purposefully in writing with grammatical accuracy, coherence, and appropriate tone.

Aims of the Whole-School Literacy Strategy

Our vision is to empower all learners with the literacy skills necessary to succeed academically, socially, and personally in an increasingly digital world. We aspire to cultivate a love for reading, writing, and communication, enabling learners to become confident, critical thinkers and effective communicators.

Specific Objectives:

- ✓ To close reading age deficits and rebuild literacy stamina for students learning away from mainstream classrooms.
- ✓ To eliminate the fear of the blank page through stepped visual scaffolding and structured verbal rehearsal.
- ✓ To equip every learner with the functional reading and writing skills required to access the wider curriculum (Science, Humanities, Mathematics, PSHE) and successfully transition into post-16 education, employment, or training.
- ✓ To provide robust preparation for GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature qualifications.
- ✓ To deliver targeted, evidence-based literacy interventions through our live instructional services: **EDLive**, **EDTeach**, **Live Timetabled**, and **EDInclude**.

Guiding Principles

Our literacy policy is governed by four core principles:

- ✓ **Equity:** We believe in providing equitable access to high-quality literacy instruction and resources for all learners, regardless of their background, abilities, or learning needs. Through our whole-school seat model, students accessing inclusion bases, internal isolation, Individual Alternative Provision (IAP), or off-site learning receive identical, high-standard literacy instruction.
- ✓ **Differentiation:** We recognise the diverse literacy needs of our learners and strive to differentiate instruction to meet individual learning styles and abilities. Lessons provide customisable digital interfaces (font size, contrast overlays, text-to-speech) and graduated writing scaffolding.
- ✓ **Engagement:** We promote active engagement in literacy activities through meaningful, relevant, culturally responsive, and multimedia-rich learning experiences that connect with contemporary real-world issues.
- ✓ **Collaboration:** We encourage collaboration among learners, educators, commissioning schools, and pastoral stakeholders to support literacy development both within and beyond the online classroom.

The Core Literacy Framework

Reading Beyond Words: The Visual Literacy and Oracy Gateway

Traditional literacy instruction often creates cognitive friction for reluctant or anxious readers when they are presented with dense written extracts. **Reading Beyond Words** serves as an accessible visual-to-text bridge:

- ✓ **The "Notice, Infer, Explain" Protocol:** Students begin by observing high-interest visual prompts, cinematic sequences, or artwork. They record fine physical details (*Notice*), deduce underlying motives and atmosphere (*Infer*), and justify their reasoning with concrete visual evidence (*Explain*).
- ✓ **Eliminating Writing Paralysis:** By replacing the blank page with narrative image catalysts, learners discuss what happened prior to a scene and predict future developments. They rehearse descriptive vocabulary verbally before composing structured paragraphs.
- ✓ **Developing Emotional Literacy:** Students analyse body language, facial expressions, and environmental lighting to interpret character emotions and viewpoints in a safe, trauma-informed setting.
- ✓ **Cross-Curricular Bridge:** Visual interpretation skills directly reinforce source analysis in History, map interpretation in Geography, and empirical observation in Science.

English Language: Procedural Reading and Writing Mastery

The English Language curriculum builds systematically upon the inferential skills developed in *Reading Beyond Words*, translating them into formal textual analysis and written accuracy:

- ✓ **Reading Strategies (AF1–AF6):**
 - ✓ *AF1 and AF2 (Decoding, Retrieval and Referencing):* Strategies to break down complex texts, identify explicit details, and select precise quotations.
 - ✓ *AF3 and AF4 (Inference and Structure):* Deducing implied meanings, analysing shifts in narrative focus, and evaluating organisational features.
 - ✓ *AF5 and AF6 (Language Analysis and Purpose):* Evaluating writers' methods, figurative language, tone, and overall authorial intent across unseen fiction and non-fiction.
- ✓ **Writing Architecture (AO5 and AO6):**
 - ✓ *Content and Organisation (AO5):* Adapting form, tone, and register to task, audience, and purpose; crafting cohesive paragraphs using logical connectors.
 - ✓ *Technical Accuracy (AO6):* Explicit instruction in syntax, sentence variation (simple, compound, complex), accurate punctuation, and spelling accuracy.
- ✓ **GCSE Exam Alignment:** Direct, structured preparation for the requirements of GCSE English Language Paper 1 (creative reading and descriptive/narrative writing) and Paper 2 (writers' viewpoints, non-fiction comparison, and transactional writing).

English Literature: Textual Depth and Disciplinary Discourse

The English Literature curriculum enriches learners' cultural capital and develops extended analytical writing:

- ✓ **Canonical and Contemporary Exposure:** Engaging with pre-19th century prose (*Oliver Twist*, *Sherlock Holmes*), Shakespeare (*Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*), modern drama (*An Inspector Calls*, *Blood Brothers*), 19th-century novels (*A*

Christmas Carol, Jekyll and Hyde), and diverse poetry anthologies (AQA, Edexcel, OCR, WJEC Eduqas).

- ✓ **Analytical Architecture:** Moving beyond basic plot recall to analyse the five core dimensions of literature: **Character, Plot, Genre, Writer's Techniques, and Key Quotations.**
- ✓ **Context and Thematic Critique:** Interrogating how historical, social, and political contexts shape authorial intent, exploring themes such as power, justice, conflict, poverty, and individual liberty.
- ✓ **Interleaving with Language Skills:** Literary texts provide high-quality mentor models. Deconstructing Dickens' descriptive techniques directly improves students' descriptive writing in English Language; analysing Shakespearean dramatic tension reinforces their understanding of structural pacing.

Instructional Delivery and Provision Models

Literacy instruction is embedded across all four EDClass delivery models:

EDLive (Synchronous Group Teaching)

- ✓ Scheduled live lessons led by qualified English and literacy specialists.
- ✓ Utilises live digital modelling, shared reciprocal reading, live text annotation, and structured group debate.
- ✓ Recreates the collaborative oracy of a mainstream classroom, allowing students to verbally test interpretations and refine vocabulary before completing independent tasks.

EDTeach (Targeted On-Demand Intervention)

- ✓ Live, responsive, one-to-one and small-group coaching triggered whenever a student struggles with a literacy checkpoint or flags for support.
- ✓ Qualified teachers use live think-aloud, co-constructed writing, sentence starters, and decoding prompts to help students overcome specific literacy hurdles.
- ✓ Provides immediate feedback on grammar, sentence structure, and reading comprehension.

Live Timetabled Provision (Structured Daily Literacy Routines)

- ✓ Full-time timetabled provision (9:00 AM to 4:00 PM) incorporates dedicated daily reading intervals and structured literacy blocks.
- ✓ Ensures regular, monitored exposure to reading and writing, establishing the academic stamina required for successful mainstream reintegration.

EDInclude (Inclusion, AP and Reintegration Model)

- ✓ Supports students in internal exclusion, inclusion bases, or off-site alternative provision with targeted literacy pathways.

- ✓ Integrates our *Behaviour Repair Curriculum*, utilising literacy tasks (reflective reading, guided comprehension, consequential written responses) to turn disciplinary sanctions into constructive learning experiences.

The Reciprocal Reading Model ("Read to Learn")

To ensure students read to learn effectively across all subjects, teachers implement the four reciprocal reading strategies:

- ✓ **Predict:** Formulating hypotheses about text content based on headings, visual clues, and prior knowledge.
- ✓ **Clarify:** Identifying and unpicking unfamiliar vocabulary, figurative devices, or complex sentence structures.
- ✓ **Question:** Generating and answering literal, inferential, and evaluative questions to probe deeper meaning.
- ✓ **Summarise:** Synthesising main ideas into concise oral or written statements, extracting key evidence.

Tiered Vocabulary Development

To build academic literacy and close language gaps, teachers explicitly teach and assess vocabulary across three tiers:

- ✓ **Tier 1 (Everyday Language):** Basic conversational words that rarely require explicit instruction.
- ✓ **Tier 2 (High-Utility Academic Words):** Cross-curricular terms crucial for comprehension and exam success (e.g., *analyse, evaluate, deduce, convey, chronological, establish, consequence*). These are embedded into exam practice questions, direct teacher instruction, and model answers.
- ✓ **Tier 3 (Disciplinary Terminology):** Subject-specific terms essential to individual fields (e.g., *iambic pentameter, pathetic fallacy, oxymoron, photosynthesis, hyperinflation*). Lessons explicitly define, spell, and contextually model these words.

Oracy as a Stepping Stone to Writing

Talk is recognised as a vital precursor to writing:

- ✓ Teachers model high-quality talk during video interactions and live lessons.
- ✓ Students are encouraged to articulate their ideas in full sentences using academic vocabulary before committing them to paper.
- ✓ Secure chat channels and interactive polling allow anxious or non-verbal learners to rehearse vocabulary and participate in discussions safely.

Writing Architecture and Scaffolding

- ✓ **Graduated Release Model ("I do, we do, you do"):** Teachers model the writing process in real time, demonstrating planning, drafting, and editing.

- ✓ **Scaffolding Tools:** Visual organisers, paragraph frames (PEEL, PETAL), sentence stems, and connective banks support learners who struggle with working memory or narrative sequencing.
- ✓ **Model Answers:** Every written task is supported by annotated model answers demonstrating high-level vocabulary, structural cohesion, and technical accuracy.

Progress Assessment, Diagnostic Screening and Monitoring

- ✓ **Baseline Diagnostics:** Upon enrolment, reading ages and literacy profiles are established using school-provided baseline data or EDClass reading diagnostic assessments.
- ✓ **Formative Tracking:** Every digital lesson contains low-stakes comprehension checks, drag-and-drop structural exercises, and short-answer questions to monitor understanding in real time.
- ✓ **Summative Assessment:** Extended writing tasks (1 to 9 marks) and practice exam papers are marked against national assessment criteria by UK-qualified teachers, generating written and verbal feedback.
- ✓ **Data-Led Intervention:** Progress data is monitored continuously to identify literacy deficits, trigger EDTeach live support, and adjust individual learning pathways.

Inclusion and Meeting Diverse Literacy Needs

- ✓ **SEND and Neurodiversity:** Digital tools allow students to independently adjust font styles, font sizes, line spacing, and contrast overlays to support visual stress and dyslexia.
- ✓ **English as an Additional Language (EAL):** Lessons integrate dual-coded visual anchors, multilingual glossaries, and simplified syntax instruction, with EDTeach staff adapting language pace to match student fluency.
- ✓ **SEMH and Trauma-Informed Delivery:** Lessons avoid high-pressure reading scenarios. Students choose between text chat, private messaging, and audio-visual streaming, engaging with literacy at a pace that reduces anxiety.

Roles and Responsibilities

Every teacher plays a shared role in breaking down barriers to learning in order to fulfil the aims of our alternative provision. Below is a breakdown of our expectations of staff across the business:

The Role of Teachers

To remove barriers to learning and develop a language-rich environment in our online classroom, teachers will:

- ✓ Provide opportunities to read high-quality, challenging, subject-specific texts during lessons.
- ✓ Apply the principles of our reciprocal reading model when reading a piece of text so learners can "read to learn" effectively.

- ✓ Embed strategies from our vocabulary toolkit to explicitly teach and assess Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary.
- ✓ Identify weak readers through formative checks and plan accordingly to meet their needs.
- ✓ Model high-quality talk, academic articulacy, and standard English through video interactions and live lessons.
- ✓ Utilise *Reading Beyond Words* methodology to scaffold descriptive writing and inference for reluctant writers.

The Role of Senior Leaders with Responsibility for Literacy

To maintain high standards and develop a language-rich environment throughout our provision, senior leaders will:

- ✓ Review the latest academic research on online literacy instruction, reading science, and oracy to inform practice.
- ✓ Deliver research-led Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for all staff to ensure a consistent, whole-school approach.
- ✓ Ensure literacy maintains a high profile within the provision and across all subject curricula.
- ✓ Quality assure the teaching of literacy across the platform via learning walks, lesson observations, and marking audits.
- ✓ Identify and disseminate good literacy practice across the teaching team.
- ✓ Offer bespoke CPD and coaching to teachers as required.
- ✓ Share assessment data with staff to raise awareness of which learners require targeted reading and writing support.

Review and Quality Assurance

This literacy policy is reviewed annually by the senior leadership team in collaboration with subject leaders, teaching staff, and external educational partners. Policy updates incorporate internal monitoring data, student progress outcomes, inspection recommendations, and emerging research in digital literacy pedagogy.

The implementation of this policy is continually evaluated through:

- ✓ Regular audits of marked written work across English Language, English Literature, and foundation subjects.
- ✓ Observations of live teaching across EDLive and intervention coaching on EDTeach.
- ✓ Termly reviews of reading age progression data and student engagement with the *Reading Beyond Words* scheme.
- ✓ Feedback gathered from partner schools, parents, carers, and learners regarding literacy confidence and reintegration success.