



# English/Literacy policy

The Kassia Academy

**Last reviewed on:** March 2024

**Next review due by:** Sept 2024

## Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance .....	2
3. Our vision for English and literacy .....	3
4. Our guiding principles for teaching English and literacy.....	3
5. Roles and responsibilities .....	4
6. Curriculum .....	4
7. Reading.....	
8. Marking and feedback.....	7
9. Monitoring, assessment and moderation.....	7
10. Learning environment .....	8
11. Resources .....	9
12. Review .....	10
13. Links with other policies.....	10

---

### 1. Aims

At The Kassia Academy we firmly believe that literacy is an essential skill to enable students to read, write and communicate confidently in every subject across the curriculum. These skills are vital in helping our learners make sense of the world around us. As such, the better we are at these skills the more successful we can expect to be in life. At The Kassia Academy we recognise that improving literacy will have a positive impact on students' self-esteem, motivation, behaviour and attainment.

Furthermore, reading, particularly reading for pleasure, has a direct impact on cognitive and social communicative development. Reading has been shown to improve health and wellbeing, as well as improving compassion and empathy for others. Our aim is to develop each student's potential to the point where they are reading at, or above, their chronological age. Baseline data informs us of which individual intervention is required.

At The Kassia Academy we:

- ✓ Celebrate reading for enjoyment
- ✓ Explicitly teach vocabulary appropriate to each subject area
- ✓ Use effective strategies to support comprehension and vocabulary acquisition
- ✓ Promote classroom talk to enable quality written work

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements and expectations set out in:

- The [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice 2014](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The [National Curriculum programmes of study for English](#)

## 3. Our vision for English and literacy

At The Kassia Academy our vision is reflected in our English curriculum. The vision is to equip students with a desire to express their views; develop working relationships between students and teachers which share high expectations; to feel valued and to be excited about life and actively encouraged to pursue their ambitions beyond the school environment. We recognise the role of literacy as being instrumental in students achieving their very best at The Kassia Academy and the English focus takes an active role in enabling all students to access the full benefits of our tailored curriculum. We believe in delivering an accessible English curriculum that engages students by breaking down learning and providing clear direction in structured steps. Flexibility and freedom for staff and students within this framework ensures that learning is personalised, enjoyable, sequenced throughout KS3 and KS4 and progressive.

We ingrain at least one the *eight Golden Threads* of learning into our curriculum:

- **Writers Craft**
- **Symbolism**
- **Cultural Perspective**
- **Literary Canon**
- **War and Conflict**
- **Expression**
- **Critical Thinking**
- **Ambition**

Kassia's *Golden Threads* are core concepts that we believe are so important that they transcend individual units, ensuring that all students receive a broad and balanced curriculum, regardless of which part of the year they join our school.

## 4. Our guiding principles for teaching English and literacy

We teach English and literacy best when:

- There's a joyful culture around reading in the school, with learners confident to express their opinion
- All staff feel they have the knowledge, skills, understanding and professional support they need to teach English and literacy effectively
- There's sufficiently detailed and frequent ongoing assessment of pupil progress (summative and formative)
- We introduce pupils to different types of reading material, such as through stimulating, high-

quality and curiosity-inspiring classroom texts within reading corners

- The English curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced
- We identify where pupils have learning gaps (through on entry testing) and make sure interventions target these
- Teaching resources are available, up to date, varied and diverse, and match pupil and curriculum needs
- We engage pupils in high-quality back-and-forth interactions across the curriculum to support a rich thread of vocabulary
- We model new language and accurate grammar to pupils
- We support pupils with speech, language and communication needs, for example with intervention activities
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills via activities such as small-group work, emotional literacy interventions, guided reads and 1:1 reading with learning mentors and the school therapy dog.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

### **5.1 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Building a team of expert teachers who know and understand the processes that underpin learning to read and write fluently and effectively
- Providing teachers with the appropriate training and resources so that they can competently deliver the English curriculum
- Creating a stimulating school environment where pupils are exposed to different types of reading material, such as through displays, books, reading areas, magazine subscriptions and other reading and literacy resources

### **5.2 Head of department**

Our head of the English/literacy department is Jessica Holmes. Jessica is responsible for providing leadership and management for English and literacy to ensure:

- High-quality teaching and subject knowledge of staff
- A coherently planned and sequenced English curriculum
- Consistent assessment and accurate teacher judgements within English and literacy
- A whole school approach to literacy and reading
- Effective use of resources

### **5.3 Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for:

- Planning and delivering effective and engaging English and literacy lessons
- Providing opportunities for pupils to apply their English and literacy skills in a variety of ways
- Completing the relevant marking, assessment and feedback
- Making sure that support staff have:
  - Access to planning materials and resources
  - The knowledge and skills they need to support and challenge pupils

## 6. Curriculum

The aim of the curriculum policy at The Kassia Academy is to provide **bespoke, high quality and engaging education** using trauma informed approaches, which inspires pupils to re-engage with education, has a positive impact on all young people and results in fostering **empathy, resilience** and strategies to cope with their **emotional responses**. We believe this prepares our students for the future.

Some learners will require access to a range of vocational qualifications alongside their core qualifications of English, Maths and Science. Our broad and balanced curriculum offer is one of our key strengths and gives our learners opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications giving them the skills they need to succeed in post 16 life.

	Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3	Pathway 4
<b>Centre</b>	Key stage 3 Willows	Key stage 3 Oaks	Key stage 4 Willows	Key stage 4 Redwood
<b>Core Subjects</b>	English Maths Science	English Maths Science	English Language English Literature Maths Statistics Science (offered at GCSE, functional skills and entry level) Religious Studies	English Language Maths Science (offered at GCSE, functional skills and entry level)
<b>Foundation subjects delivered through Project Based Learning</b>	Art, Computing, Religious Education, History, Geography, PE, Technology, Music, Languages	Art, Computing, Religious Education, History, Geography, PE, Technology, Music, Languages	N/A	N/A
<b>Option Qualifications</b>			Travel and Tourism, Sports Science, Sport and Coaching, Exercise studies (Independent study can be facilitated for additional option subjects).	Travel and Tourism, Sports Science, Sport and Coaching, Exercise studies, Catering
<b>Vocational Qualifications</b>			Construction, Hair and Beauty, Motor Vehicle Studies	Construction, Hair and Beauty, Motor Vehicle Studies
<b>Personal Development</b>	PSHE (including CEIAG), SMSC, Forrest Schools, Commando Joes, <u>Qarsome</u> Project (rowing), Accent Music, Enrichment	PSHE (including CEIAG), SMSC, Forrest Schools, Commando Joes, <u>Qarsome</u> Project, Accent Music, Enrichment	CEIAG, SMSC, PSHE, Duke of Edinburgh, Sport, Enrichment	CEIAG, SMSC, PSHE, Duke of Edinburgh, Sport, Enrichment

Our vision and purpose for our Teaching and Learning and curriculum stems from Biesta (2009) who states these key components for success for learners:

- Qualification – this can be work, citizenship or further study
- Socialisation – learners become a part of society, learning norms, knowledge and values
- Subjectification – making sense of themselves, others and their place in the world

Learners are ALL expected to leave with an English/Literacy qualification starting with entry level/functional skills leading on to a full GCSE through AQA and/or Edexcel. The curriculum policy can be accessed on our school website under Curriculum and in Key policies.

## 6.1 Timetabling

- ✓ In KS3 learners will access English/Literacy 5 lessons a week with one lesson being a Literacy intervention and one lesson being a comprehension lesson
- ✓ In KS4 learners will access a minimum of 4 English/Literacy lessons a week dependent on pathway
- ✓ All learners will access a 1:1 session with a learning mentor once weekly focusing on emotional literacy
- ✓ In KS3 learners will access speaking and listening sessions as part of the reflection at the end of the day with an adult reading an appropriate or topical text
- ✓ Across both sites (Longbarn and Orford), learners will have weekly access to a library.

## 6.2 Cross-curricular links

We facilitate cross-curricular learning of English and literacy skills, making sure the links with other curriculums are natural and not forced. This is achieved through careful planning and sequencing of topics and activities in other subjects, such as:

- ✓ Annotating sources
- ✓ Group discussions
- ✓ Comprehension
- ✓ Topic-based research
- ✓ Project Based Learning aligns very closely to our English/Literacy curriculum

## 6.3 Differentiation

We provide suitable differentiation and adaptations to ensure all learners make maximum progress in English and literacy by:

- ✓ Recognising where some learners need specific help with their English skills, e.g. if they are dyslexic
- ✓ Providing resources such as writing frames to scaffold pupils' learning
- ✓ Identifying learners who would benefit from more support in an area of their English learning, and running small intervention groups for targeted support to aid their progress and attainment. We will monitor these closely to move learners in and out of these groups as needed
- ✓ Making sure learners who need it are extended through the use of additional, more-demanding and open-ended tasks and planned challenges within each lesson
- ✓ Ensuring that tasks are created to meet ability and not ARE
- ✓ Our Schemes of Learning include a 'Differentiated Outcomes' resource, which specifically focuses on the outcomes set for each student depending on year group, ability, etc.

## 7. Reading

Our aim for reading is to improve fluency, accuracy and contextual understanding, building on student's comprehension skills, including empathy and emotional literacy which is a huge barrier to our learner. Learners are given as much opportunity as possible to access texts relevant to learning and improving their oracy. Whilst many of our students face barriers in the process of learning to read, it is our duty to support learners to overcome those barriers and to learn to decode and understand the written word. We also see it as our duty to inspire our learners to see the value in

reading. Many learners will need to support in finding a genre, author or style of writing from which they can derive pleasure and it is our job to do just that, whilst broadening their interests and exposing them to new literature. To ensure we have a comprehensive coverage of reading opportunities we have the following strategies and learning interventions:

- ✓ Learners having a 1:1 weekly reading session with a learning mentor, including directed questioning based around decoding, literal comprehension and reorganisation.
- ✓ Access to a school library
- ✓ Weekly shared reading activities throughout the curriculum
- ✓ An adult reading to the class within Tutor Time
- ✓ A computer based English literacy intervention weekly (Bedrock Intervention)
- ✓ Opportunities to access and read topic related texts in English and PBL
- ✓ Weekly Accelerated Reader sessions. Students are guided, while engaging quizzes and activities help hone students' reading skills with authentic practice—encouraging growth and creating a culture of reading through choice.
- ✓ 'Reading for Pleasure' areas are provided in each unit for students to utilise in their free-time, interventions or as a timeout option
- ✓ Monthly newspaper and magazine subscriptions allow our students to keep up to date with the local area/ hobbies and interests
- ✓ The Literacy Leader board '*A Book for a Book*'- an incentive for our students to achieve success by reading a range of texts reading age suitable
- ✓ The Annual Cheshire Book Awards- a pupil-led competition where the students can vote for and have their say on their favourite book
- ✓ The annual celebration of World Book Day across the whole of school

## 7.1 Phonics

We frequently welcome students who require improvement in their literacy skills. Learners with reading ages significantly below age related expectations undergo specifically tailored interventions through our phonics programme 'Fresh Start'. This is a systematic, synthetic phonics programme for struggling readers aged 9 –13+. Learners are taught at their challenge point, so they learn to read accurately and fluently. Learners gain an understanding of new letter-sounds and review previous sounds and words. They apply what they've been taught by reading words containing the sounds they know in lively, age-appropriate stories and non-fiction texts closely matched to their phonic knowledge. By the end of the programme, they are able to read these accurately and fluently.

Additionally, specific, decoding publications are utilised such as; 'Toe by Toe' to encourage and motivate our dyslexic readers, or those who find decoding challenging.

## 7.2 The Woodlands Centre

This separate annex is intended for all students to visit on a weekly basis, both in and out of the structured timetable. The Woodlands Centre is a quiet space where children can complete academic reading and research and have further access to genres for reading for pleasure. We have library monitors in place, so that those with a particular love of reading get the opportunity to put this love into practice in a way that gives them responsibility. The Cheshire Educational Library Service provides a variety of fiction and non-fiction books as well as support with all aspects of the library.

## 7.3 The Literacy Leaderboard '*A book for a book*'



A tailor-made program has been created to specifically incentivise reading, whilst making sure that learners are reading books of a range of different genres and authors suitable to their reading ability. Within our learner's 1:1 reading intervention they will be offered a variety of books to choose from. During each intervention learning mentors set/ discuss their specific reading SMART targets, listen to each learner read aloud, use effective questioning and decoding techniques and make an account of the intervention in reading records. Once a learner has completed a book, they are rewarded with a book voucher so that they can receive the opportunity to select and take home a book of their own. Hence the title 'A book, for a book'.

#### **7.4 Bedrock Learning**

This online platform equips learners with the language they need to thrive in school and beyond. The core curriculum of Bedrock explicitly teaches vocabulary and grammar, making it an excellent tool for dedicated literacy interventions. Bedrock uses carefully selected, original and engaging prose with the intent of drawing the learners in, whilst expanding cultural capital as they learn. Bedrock's AI driven, re-teaching algorithm ensures that each learner individually revisits specific vocabulary so that knowledge is retained long-term.

#### **7.4 Accelerate Reader**

Accelerated Reader is an online learning system which, through regular assessment, allows students to access reading fiction and non-fiction texts within their appropriate ZPD grade, resulting in more confident readers due to the fact students are reading at a level appropriate to them. **To** build a progressive pathway to success, we have created a 3-phase breakdown:

##### **Phase 1:**

Learners complete STAR testing as soon as they join school to determine ZPD.

##### **Phase 2:**

Utilising appropriate books from The Woodlands Centre, ensuring learners receive dedicated Accelerated reader sessions ingrained within the curriculum on a weekly basis.

##### **Phase 3:**

With the reports and data provided by AR, we are able to begin to order books from the ELS which will continue to appropriately challenge our students and build the love of reading.

##### **Phase 4:**

Repeat process. Overall, there shows an increase of our learner's ZPDs, meeting national average demographics and an increased exposure to words per student.

### **8. Writing**

Everyone is unique and we embrace this at Kassia, this is why we cover a range of text-types focusing on the analysis of *Purpose Audience and Form*. A success criteria and checklists are provided to learners, to help them build an understanding in these specific areas, enabling them to write with ease and ensuring they are fulfilling relevant requirements. Learners are exposed to a range of different text-types including transactional writing, narrative writing and poetry.

There is a continuous focus on handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation throughout our curriculum. These basic skills are built up over time, once learners develop a key understanding in all areas, they become more confident in expressing themselves through writing.

## 8.1 Lesson Structure

- ✓ **DO NOW** *Activates students learning, creating a clear understanding of what is expected of them.*
- ✓ **Vocabulary task** *Addresses misconceptions of key terminology used within the lesson, allowing students to feel confident when using specific wording inside and outside of the classroom.*
- ✓ **Retrieval Task** *The act of recalling previously learned information—improves long-term learning and memory.*
- ✓ **Chunking Information** *Allowing learners to engage with information in smaller sections, avoiding cognitive overload.*
- ✓ **Hinge Questions** *A technique of formative assessment which, at this point in the lesson, enables the teacher to address misconceptions and highlights any learners that require additional support.*
- ✓ **Modelling** *This minimises the uncertainty around an outcome. Students are able to effectively form their practice around the teacher's examples.*
- ✓ **Shared Write/ Differentiation** *with the implementation of the 'I do, we do, you do' approach, learners observe and collaborate ideas, allowing them to apply richer vocabulary within their writing.*
- ✓ **Practice** *Learners have dedicated, independent writing time to apply their knowledge.*
- ✓ **Exit Ticket** *This allows the teacher to, again, address any misconceptions and plan for next lesson.*

## 9.Oracy

At Kassia Academy we believe that communication is the currency of success, as we exchange words more than we exchange money. This is why we are driven to prepare our learners with the correct language skills to aid them moving forward in the future.

### Implementation:

- ✓ **Empower Student Voice:** We foster a culture where students feel empowered to express themselves confidently and articulately.
- ✓ **Your Voice Matters:** We know that our students feel that they have not always been listened to. We want them to know that they matter - they deserve to have a platform on which to express themselves.
- ✓ **Time and Place:** Oral communication will look different depending upon where you are and who you are communicating with. We will equip students with the skills to communicate effectively in a range of different scenarios.
- ✓ **Develop Communication Skills:** Provide opportunities for students to develop their speaking and listening skills across all curriculum areas.
- ✓ **Promote Active Listening:** Encourage active listening skills among students, fostering respect for diverse viewpoints and promoting effective communication.
- ✓ **Enhance Critical Thinking:** Use oracy activities to stimulate critical thinking and promote deeper understanding of subject matter.
- ✓ **Prepare for Life Beyond School:** We will equip students with the communication skills necessary for success in further education, careers, and everyday life.
- ✓ **Dealing with disagreement:** We don't always agree with everyone, we will teach students that different opinions are a part of different life, we will model and practice effective and respectful ways of managing disagreement.

## 9.1 Listening skills

To listen, our students need to make a conscious effort not to just hear what people are saying but to take it in, digest it and understand. Not only does listening enhance their ability to understand better and make them a better communicator, it also makes the experience of speaking more enjoyable. We promote listening skills within the classroom by using the 'thinking aloud' technique which involves modelling the teacher's cognitive processes, and their logic and reasoning, by making visible the invisible act of thinking. Additionally, within the classroom, teachers model the kind of language that we expect students to use in group discussions and answers, continuously building up a bank of vocabulary for our students.

## 10. Marking and feedback

At The Kassia Academy we have effective marking as it is essential in enabling teachers to monitor the progress of students. This is Formative Assessment completed after and during tasks.

Teachers should aim to mark books/folders on a daily basis (where applicable) basis for all classes. Live marking is encouraged to promote quick addressing of misconceptions and concepts.

In English the teachers follow the marking code as set out in the teaching and learning policy (available on our website). At the end of term all learners access formative assessment from their written work. At Key Stage 4 formative assessment is utilized when completing exam practice questions, every time they are set and marked. This enables teachers to assess progress, identify gaps, strengths and weaknesses and for learners to reflect on what they need to do to improve.

## 11. Monitoring, assessment and moderation

### 11.1 Monitoring

**The senior leadership team monitor teaching and learning in our school to make sure that all of our pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points (on entry testing).**

School leaders/the English/Literacy lead will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through:

- Termly learning walks
- Reviewing marking and feedback regularly
- Termly pupil progress meetings
- Book scrutiny's
- Lesson observations
- Performance management

### 11.2 Assessment

At The Kassia Academy we track pupils' progress through the curriculum using a combination of formative (to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning) and summative (to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark) assessment.

Learners are assessed on entry via a range of base line assessments and are tested again at the end of every full term to assess progress and ensure they are on the right pathway with predicted outcomes. In KS4 learners will use, in-school summative assessment such as termly tests/ mock exams, and formal summative assessment in the form of GCSEs past papers.

We provide regular targets for pupils which are set during termly pupil progress meetings alongside parents and dual schools. The Kassia Academy provide termly written reports at these meetings which are discussed with the child, parents and dual schools. School reports comment on Attendance, behavior, skills for learning and academic achievement (broken down incrementally to show small steps of progress) and predictions for the end of KS4.

### **11.3 Moderation**

At Kassia Academy we standardise moderation by marking in pairs of subject specialists. Where this is not possible we encourage and support staff to mark for their exam boards. Writing samples are regularly standardised to demonstrate how pupils' work meets National Curriculum attainment targets for KS3 and KS4, to help with assessment.

### **Key Stage 3**

Three lessons are delivered each week covering key criteria listed in the National Curriculum. Texts studied are broad and ambitious offering alternative formats for those of lower ability. The curriculum is sequenced to support learning offering a range of fiction and non-fiction texts that offer opportunity and education in regard to the British Values. Please see curriculum map (available on our website) for sequencing and range of texts.

Every third lesson ensures recall tasks are used to monitor learners' progress. Smart targets are used to monitor daily progress and give learners / teachers clear assessment criteria. Marking is used in accordance with the marking policy, using highlighting to identify key areas of strength and improvement. Assessment criteria for each smart target is created in accordance with national curriculum covering reading and understanding, spelling and grammar and creativity and engagement.

At the end of each unit learners are asked to complete an independent assessment that monitor progress. Support with this task is monitored using the 'WS / I' section of the smart target. This takes place within the classroom under controlled conditions.

### **Key Stage 4**

Students follow the GCSE curriculum. Learners cover a variety of text types and apply prior knowledge. Texts are made relevant by considering context along with the current social and moral issues.

Assessment involves continuous learning checks within the classroom. Furthermore, students complete GCSE style questions in order to monitor progress. These are marked in accordance to the mark scheme given. Support is given in accordance with access arrangements and noted via the smart target.

## **12. Learning environment**

Pupils will learn English and literacy in spaces that:

- Lower number of learners
- Higher level of adult support
- Are well-organised
- Contain appropriate and good-quality resources for pupils to refer to (in a space where they can find or see them easily)
- Are quiet and calm
- Adhere to trauma informed practice ie; are clean and tidy, have reduced distractions, for example not containing a distracting amount of decoration, painted neutral and calming colours, have accessible resources.

## **13. Resources**

### **13.1 Books**

As well as the core texts set out in the GCSE programmes of study, we will select and use books in our school library that:

- Engage pupils emotionally
- Cover a wide range of subjects
- Elicit a strong response, such as curiosity, anger, excitement, laughter or empathy
- Have a strong narrative that will sustain multiple readings
- Extend pupils' vocabulary
- Have illustrations that are engaging and reflect pupils from all backgrounds and cultures
- Help pupils connect with who they are
- Help pupils to understand the lives of people whose experiences and perspectives may be different from their own
- Include stories set in both the UK and around the world
- Include both modern and traditional stories
- Include fiction and non-fiction
- Books written or about the LGBTQIA+
- Topic based books for Project Based Learning linked closely to the English/Literacy topic
- In class reading area with a varied selection of books

### **13.2 Dictionaries and thesauruses**

To support with writing and spelling, we will make sure that pupils have access to dictionaries and thesauruses by:

- Ensuring all classes have access to a set of dictionaries and thesauruses in each classroom

- Allowing pupils to use ICT (where in use in lessons) during lessons to look up words meanings and synonyms

#### **14. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Headteacher and English/Literacy Lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

#### **15. Links with other policies/ documents**

This policy links with the following policies and documents all of which can be found on our website:

- Curriculum policy
- SEN/SEND policy and information report
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Maps