



SECONDARY 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 demonstrate these habits grows confidence in oracy, develops wider vocabulary and also supports the development of students' character.

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

- We ensure that our approach to literacy is in line with the Oasis ethos and values of inclusion, equality, healthy relationships, hope and perseverance.
- We ensure that literacy is prioritised in our secondary academies as an avenue to inclusion, so that all students are able to make progress in reading, writing and oracy in line with age-related expectations, regardless of their starting points.
- We ensure that every secondary academy has a Localised Literacy Plan that articulates how literacy is delivered in the academy.
- We embed all five DRIVE levers in our academies to provide a well-rounded literacy education for all students.
- We support all students to develop the skills they need to read age-appropriate texts, widely and with enjoyment.
- We support all students to develop the skills they need to articulate themselves eloquently in writing, supporting them to understand the grammatical, syntactical and rhetorical building blocks that make writing effective.
- We support all students to develop the skills they need to speak and listen thoughtfully, fully understanding the points of view of others even if they disagree and communicating their own views with clarity and confidence.
- We use data effectively to assess, monitor and secure the progress of all students' reading ages.
- We take a graduated approach to literacy interventions, carefully tracking the progress of all students in reading ages, in order to provide the right support at the right time for every student.

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.

The OCL literacy policy is underpinned by five key levers:

- **Disciplinary literacy.**
- **Reading fluency.**
- **Intervention.**
- **Vocabulary.**
- **Enjoyment and exploration through literacy.**

These levers form the foundation of each element of literacy provision and academy Literacy Leads will produce a localised plan which focuses on the development of each lever in their local context.

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

- Become fluent readers. Every student will develop the skills to access a minimum of age-related reading materials by the time they leave their academy.
- Develop their academic reading, writing, and oracy 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.
- Develop a love of reading for pleasure and understand the importance of reading in their lives within and beyond the curriculum.

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

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. However, the OCL literacy policy 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 make clear that:

- Children who enjoy reading and writing are **happier** in their lives. The longer children maintain an enjoyment of reading, the greater the benefits are in the classroom.
- However, **1 in 8 disadvantaged children** in the UK say that they do not even have a book of their own.
- As a result, **1 in 6 adults** in England (7.1 million people) have a reading age below 11 years old and struggle as a result to access the jobs, healthcare and other services they need.
- Low literacy levels lead to educational and social exclusion, with **more than 50%** of teenagers in youth custody having reading ages below 11 years old.
- Finally, and most shockingly, children born into communities with the most serious literacy challenges have some of the **lowest life expectancies** in England, dying on average 7 years earlier than their most affluent peers.

As the statistics suggest, social disadvantage and deprivation play an undeniable part not only in literacy inequalities in the national picture, but also in the local communities served by Oasis academies. This inequality is further enhanced by what has come to be termed by researchers as 'The Matthew Effect'.² According to research, by the age of three, there are already vast differences in the literacy of students from different socio-economic backgrounds. While the children of affluent, university-educated parents are likely to have heard upwards of 33 million words and 1700 hours of stories, the children of poor and uneducated parents are likely to have heard 9 million words and 25 hours of stories.

Children with higher starting points love reading because they can read. The more they read, the more they learn. Children with lower starting points tend to hate reading because they cannot understand much of what they read. The less they read, the less they learn; so, over the years, the gap gets wider.

By the age of 9, children with higher starting points will have read 8 million words. By the same age, children with lower starting points have read only 32,000, the majority

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

² Keith E Stanovich, 'Matthew Effects in Reading: Some Consequences of Individual Differences in the Acquisition of Literacy', *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21(4): 360-407

of which will be single syllable. Perhaps even more interestingly, the words understood by children with higher starting points will usually be those rarely found in everyday speech. This means that they will be able to express themselves better in writing. They will also be likely to have a better grasp of the conventions of stories, language use and grammar. This means that they will continue to learn more as they go through the school.

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. It is also clear that children whose literacy skills are underdeveloped when they join secondary school require additional support and attention to help them to close gaps with their peers and achieve the outcomes they deserve.

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.

The OCL literacy policy is rooted in academic research about how to improve literacy in secondary schools and is heavily influenced by the EEF's guidance report on 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools'.³

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

- **D**isciplin**a**ry literacy.
- **R**eading fluency.
- **I**ntervention.
- **V**ocabulary.
- **E**njoyment and exploration through literacy.

³ Education Endowment Fund, '[Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools: Guidance Report](#)'

OCL DRIVE up Literacy standards

Disciplinary Literacy	Reading Fluency	Intervention	Vocabulary	Enjoyment and exploration through literacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Oasis approach to developing reading, writing and oracy across all subject areas. •All Oasis teachers are teachers of literacy and recognise that literacy is key to learning across all subjects. •All teachers are supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects. •Teachers use a variety of approaches to teach the features, aims and conventions of good writing in each subject. •Subject and academy leaders ensure that training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity across all aspects of the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Oasis approach to developing students' ability to read complex academic texts with fluency. •A core part of the One Plan, reading fluency focuses on universal strategies employed to develop the proficiency of students' reading fluency across the curriculum. •A strong focus is placed on reading aloud (by both teachers and students), discussion and engaging with both fiction and non-fiction texts. •Reading strategies such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning are introduced through modelling and group work to improve comprehension before support is gradually removed to promote independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Oasis approach to high quality interventions to close the gaps for struggling readers. •Data-informed interventions are selected through nationally-approved intervention models. •A tiered model of support will increase in intensity in line with need, including the development of phonics, decoding and comprehension. •Assessment will be used to match students to appropriate interventions and monitor progress. •Each Academy will create a bespoke plan, according to need and utilise Trust support, to ensure all struggling readers make accelerated progress and catch up with peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Oasis approach to providing targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject. •Teachers in every subject provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language. •Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words. •Vocabulary lists for Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech, are utilised in all subjects to secure progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Oasis approach to developing a strong culture and ethos with regards to reading for pleasure and enrichment. •A shared reading list appropriate for all students provides insight into the wider world around students while 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. •Opportunities to encourage engagement and enjoyment in reading are embedded in school culture to promote reading for pleasure to every child.

DRIVE Lever 1: Disciplinary Literacy

When students join secondary school, they must adjust to being taught by a range of teachers using a range of new types of texts, often dense and more technical than those encountered in primary school. Such experiences can create a ‘literacy gap’, meaning that many students making the transition from primary to secondary school struggle to access the secondary school curriculum.

Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject-specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers of every subject to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively. As they progress through an increasingly specialised secondary school curriculum, there is a growing need to ensure that students are trained to access the academic language and conventions of different subjects. Strategies grounded in disciplinary literacy aim to meet this need, building on the premise that each subject has its own unique language, ways of knowing, doing, and communicating.

In contrast with the traditional view of literacy, which holds that progress in literacy will have the strongest correlation with success in subjects such as English Literature, recent research from GL has exposed that the correlation between weaker literacy skills and poor exam performance is stronger in Science and Maths, due to the requirement placed on students to understand a range of complex word problems that test retrieval of a wide range of factual information⁴:

GCSE Subject	Correlation between weak literacy skills and poor exam performance
English language	0.65
Geography	0.65
Maths	0.63
History	0.61
Science combined	0.61
English literature	0.60
Drama	0.57
MFL	0.55

⁴ GL Assessment, [Read all about it: why reading is key to GCSE success](#) (2020)

This data evidences the need for disciplinary literacy as a core focus of academy literacy planning, to ensure that students have the best opportunity of securing the outcomes they deserve across the curriculum.

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.

OCL Expectations

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 curriculum to ensure that:

- The literacy offering is **consistent in all subjects** across the academy and meets OCL's expectations in line with the Trust Literacy Policy.
- **Subject/Curriculum Leaders develop teachers' understanding** of disciplinary literacy, and support with the planning, resourcing and delivery of subject-specific reading, writing and communication elements within subject areas.
- In each subject area, there are **clear subject-specific literacy plans**, rooted in the discipline and contextualised from the OCL curriculum literacy plans, that address students' barriers to accessing the curriculum related to:
 - fluently being able to read complex subject-specific academic texts, aloud, with peers and independently to establish meaning and develop disciplinary knowledge and skills;
 - developing a clear understanding of subject-specific academic writing within each discipline, including how to plan, monitor and evaluate their writing effectively to demonstrate disciplinary knowledge and skills;
 - developing the subject-specific tier 2 and 3 vocabulary required to understand and demonstrate disciplinary knowledge and skills; and
 - having regular structured opportunities to practise high-quality subject-specific talk to adapt their speech to suit different contexts and audiences, rehearse key vocabulary and aid metacognitive reflection.
- **Methods to teach writing across different subject areas are streamlined and simplified** in a consistent order to manage students' cognitive load by avoiding the teaching of contradictory or repetitive methods.
- All staff feel secure enough to **ask for literacy support, offer guidance** to students and **confidently state** that they are teachers of literacy.

Literacy leaders will work with subject/curriculum leaders to undertake the '**Literacy mapping**' exercise (see **Appendix 1**) to fully understand:

- What aspects of disciplinary literacy must be taught 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 each subject-specific literacy action plan in each curriculum area.
- What resources are likely to be needed as part of a larger disciplinary literacy action plan for the academy as a whole.

DRIVE Level 2: Reading Fluency

While there are elements of literacy that are subject-specific, there are also key components of literacy instruction that can be used across the curriculum to secure a culture of reading and drive progress in reading for all students.

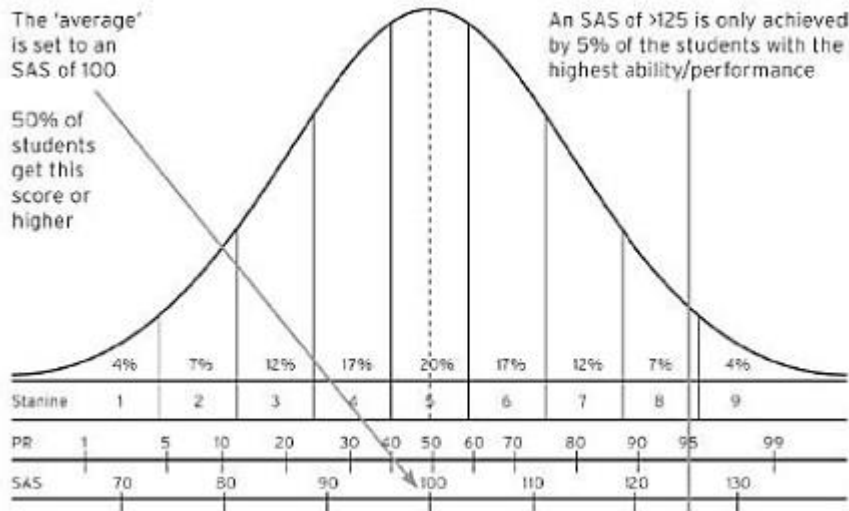
Reading Fluency refers to the importance of having designated reading, comprehension and vocabulary practice as a part of both subject curriculum and whole academy planning. As such, reading fluency is a core part of the Oasis 2030 Strategy and OCL curriculum statement of intent and is therefore a priority for development across Oasis academies.

NGRT Assessments

NGRT assessments are completed for all students in Year 7 to 10 in every academy in Autumn 1 and Summer 2 to assess the reading age of each student. This data is vital to ensure that teachers have all the information they need to deliver the adaptive planning and responsive teaching required to meet the needs of all students. Data from NGRT assessments is also the first step in identifying students who have fallen behind age-related expectations in their reading, and who need high-quality literacy interventions to close gaps with their peers (see DRIVE level 3: Intervention).

NGRT assessments provide each student with a standardised age score that takes into account the student's precise age and also how other children nationally have performed on the same test. It can be represented in a bell curve⁵:

⁵ From Kathrine Mortimore, Disciplinary Literacy and Explicit Vocabulary Teaching: a whole-school approach to closing the attainment gap (2020), p.15



The bell curve is organised into 'stanines'. Students in stanine 1 are those who are most likely to need very personalised interventions. Students in stanines 2-4 are those who will not necessarily need one-to-one intervention, but who will benefit most from a school culture of reading fluency (alongside the other DRIVE levers).

Whole class guided reading strategies

It is possible to provide personalised support for children in classrooms that adopt the most effective teaching strategies. Academies that adopt these approaches will benefit disadvantaged children disproportionately while not disadvantaging those who are already achieving well. When designing a lesson activity to promote reading fluency, teachers should consider how to develop the five core skills of accuracy, comprehension, expression, resilience and vocabulary.

There are 5 common styles of guided reading that teachers can use to promote reading fluency in lessons (*ordered by suitability from least to most challenging*):

- **Active listening:** Teacher reads to students, modelling fluency and pausing regularly to question for understanding.
- **Echoing:** Teacher reads majority of the text, asking students to echo powerful words or phrases to emphasise emotional power of the language. This can be done individually or in chorus.
- **Choral reading:** All students and teacher read together to build confidence and model fluency.
- **Control the Game:** Students take turns to read short sections of the text in an unpredictable order (teacher cold-calling to maintain engagement), while the rest of the class follows the text.
- **Script Reading:** Teacher reads the narrative while students read character voices. Readers should be rotated every few pages to maintain whole-class engagement.

During all types of guided reading, teachers should pause regularly to question for plot and vocabulary comprehension. Teachers should also plan carefully to account for appropriate levels of difficulty and reading duration for each student, depending on their reading ages.

When setting up guided reading, there are five key expectations that can ensure greater engagement and progress. Teachers should support all students to:

- track the text with a reading ruler, pencil or finger at all times.
- use a loud, clear voice that is audible by the whole class.
- use fluency, expression and an appropriate pace to demonstrate full comprehension.
- respond appropriately to teacher correction, attempting to correct their mistakes and challenge themselves to develop the skills of outstanding readers.

See **Appendix 2a: Teacher Correction Guidance**, and **2b: Blooms questions to support reading fluency**, for more on how to support students during guided reading.

OCL Expectations

All academies must:

- **Assess the reading ages of all students** at the start and end of each academic year to understand the proficiency of each child, monitor their progress and ensure all students achieve in line with age-related expectations. Data should be gathered from NGRT tests, alongside additional phonics assessments and scaled scores gathered from SATs exams at KS2 or other forms of assessment where appropriate.
- Ensure **all staff understand the significance of reading ages** and use reading age data to support **adaptive planning and responsive teaching** to meet the needs of all students in every lesson, every day.
- 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.

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

- **Frequently read to and with students** in order to model best practice and high-quality spoken language.
- Encourage students to **read collaboratively** as well as on their own; this may be aloud or in small groups or pairs.

- **Make use of reading data** available on Bromcom to support their adaptive planning and responsive teaching to meet the needs of all students in every lesson, every day.
- **Teach specific reading strategies** (skimming, scanning, annotation, highlighting) and support students to become used to making their own choice of the most appropriate strategy.
- **Pre-read materials before delivery, making annotations** to show best practice and ensuring key word definitions are precise as per the dictionary definition.

DRIVE Lever 3: Intervention

While whole-school approaches to literacy are essential in driving progress for the majority of students and will reduce the need for additional literacy support, high-quality, structured interventions are an important aspect of the whole academy literacy strategy to ensure that accelerated progress is secured for students whose reading ages fall in the lowest stanines. These students need targeted support to catch up with their peers and meet age-related expectations.

All Oasis academies take a graduated approach to intervention, moving from whole class teaching through small group tuition to one-to-one support, to ensure that appropriate, meaningful and measurable interventions are targeted at the right students to drive accelerated progress in literacy and ensure that all students can make significant progress, regardless of their entry point to the secondary phase.

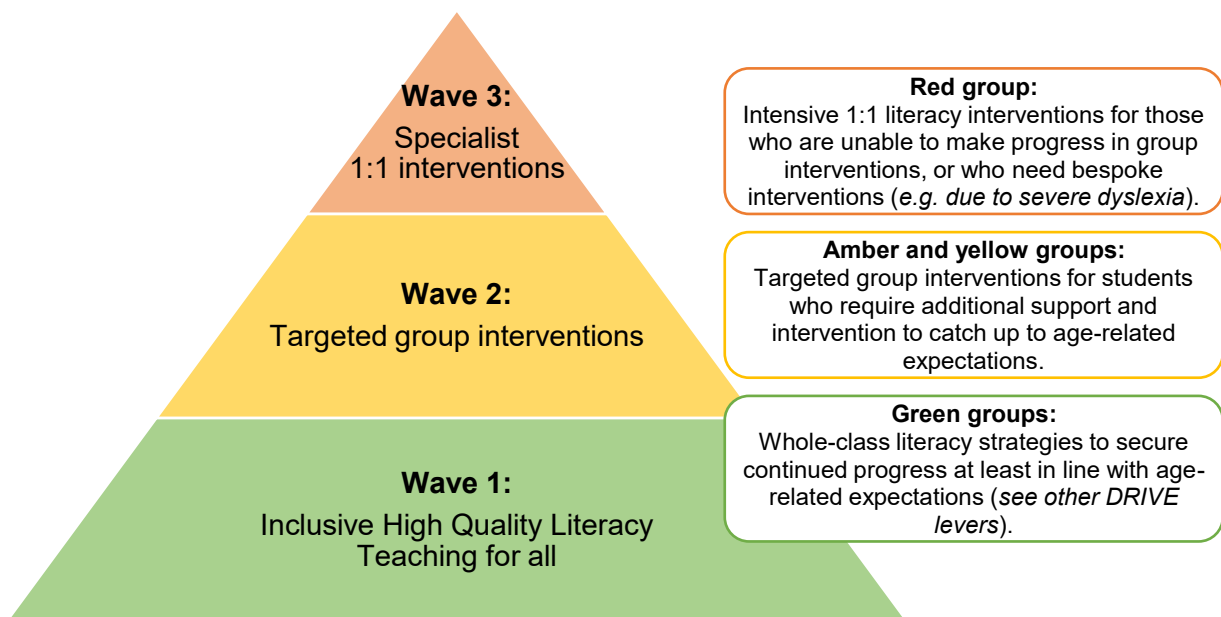
The Graduated Response

A graduated response approach is one in which levels of support and intervention increase in intensity matched to need:

- **Wave 1** is the universal, whole-school approach, that will meet the needs of the majority of students.
- **Wave 2** provides targeted intervention for students working below age-related expectations, who need additional, structured group interventions to catch up with their peers.
- **Wave 3** provides specialist and more intensive intervention for a very small group of students working significantly below age-related expectations, for whom group interventions would not be bespoke enough to meet their complex literacy needs.

Students are identified for interventions using NGRT data as a starting point (see *DRIVE Lever 2, pp. 11-12, for more details*), which provides the data required to being categorising students into waves in order to coordinate a targeted response to meet their needs:

Wave	Category	NGRT score
1	Dark green	Stanines 7-9 or SAS of 110+ - significantly above expected
	Light green	Stanine 5-6 or SAS of 100-109 – reading at expected levels
2	Yellow	Stanine 3-4 or SAS of 90-99 – reading approx. 1-2 years below
	Amber	Stanine 2-3 or SAS of 80-89 – reading approx. 3-4 years below
3	Red	Stanine 1 or SAS of 69-79 – reading approx. 5+ years below



Intervention targeting can be further refined by an understanding of the building blocks of reading comprehension, which is helpfully explained in the Simple View of Reading.

The Simple View of Reading and the importance of phonics instruction in secondary schools

The Simple View of Reading was designed by psychologist Philip Gough to describe the skills required to gain full reading comprehension:



In secondary schools, we usually focus on developing students' **Language Comprehension**:

- **Comprehension and vocabulary** concerns how students decipher meaning from texts by developing an understanding of skimming, scanning, inference and tier 2 and 3 vocabulary.
- **Language concepts** include understanding of grammatical structures and figurative and structural language devices, such as understanding that metaphors are not literal, and recognising where temporal strategies such as foreshadowing and flashback can strengthen our understanding of a text.
- Finally, **communication** is concerned with the background knowledge required to understand the intended meaning of a text and the ways in which we make meaning apparent through use of strategies such as a formal or informal register, and colloquial or sophisticated turns of phrase.

We spend less time in secondary schools thinking about the skills required to develop **Word Recognition** (also known as **Decoding**) as we often assume this has already been taught in the early stages of learning to read at primary school. However, an understanding of word recognition is vital to ensure that students are able to access and learn from the texts they are exposed to across the secondary curriculum. This includes the skills of:

- **Phonological awareness** – being able to audibly decipher and distinguish between the sounds that make up words.
- **Phonics** – being able to recognise the relationship between the written graphemes of individual and groups of letters and the sounds they make.
- **Fluency** – being able to automatically blend the phonetic sounds into words and therefore decode words with ease while reading.

Nationally, 25% of students arrive at secondary school with reading ages below the expected standard of 11 years old. However, in Oasis academies the picture is even starker. More than 20% of our Year 7s arrive to us with reading ages below the age of 9, signalling difficulties not only with language comprehension, but also with the skills required for word recognition. This indicates an urgent need for all academies to identify children who require additional phonics teaching in order to close the gaps in their word recognition skills and help them catch up and keep up with their peers throughout secondary school.

The academy local literacy offer

The localised literacy plan for each Oasis academy will capture the academy's literacy offer for students at all stages of the graduated approach.

The example below presents a range of strategies and targeted interventions at all stages of the graduated approach that may be offered in each academy. This offer table must be localised by each academy to reflect the needs of each community context and make clear the interventions available in each setting:

Wave	Intervention	Entry Criteria	Description
Wave 1	Disciplinary literacy across the curriculum <i>(all academies)</i>	All students	The OCL curriculum approach to teaching reading, writing, oracy and vocabulary in every subject area. See DRIVE lever 1, 2 and 4 for more details.
	<i>Reading for pleasure curriculum</i>	<i>All students or green groups</i>	<i>E.g. Lessons delivered daily by form tutors to promote reading fluency through guided reading of age-appropriate, engaging texts.</i>
	<i>Sparx Reader homework</i>	<i>All students</i>	<i>E.g. Weekly homework for all students in KS3 monitored by English teachers, where students can practise reading fluency and language comprehension pitched to their needs through the online platform.</i>
	<i>Sparx Reader whole-school approach</i>	<i>All students</i>	<i>E.g. Daily lessons for all students in KS3 monitored by tutors, where students can practise reading fluency and language comprehension pitched to their needs through the online platform.</i>
	<i>Accelerated Reader</i>	<i>All students</i>	<i>E.g. Whole-academy use of Accelerated Reader to promote progress through reading for pleasure. Students attend library lessons each week where they select stage-appropriate books and complete quizzes to demonstrate comprehension.</i>
	<i>Bedrock Vocabulary</i>	<i>Green or yellow group</i>	<i>E.g. Whole-academy use of Bedrock Vocabulary (lessons or homework), where students can practise and develop vocabulary acquisition pitched to their needs through the online platform.</i>

	<i>DEAR (drop everything and read)</i>	<i>All students</i>	<i>E.g. Daily opportunities for independent reading during tutor time to promote resilience among all students as readers and develop a culture of reading for pleasure.</i>
Wave 2	Sparx Reader small group interventions <i>(all academies)</i>	Yellow group	Small-group interventions (3x per week) targeted at students who need additional support with aspects of language comprehension. This online intervention provides students with additional opportunities to develop reading fluency skills pitched to their needs, with support and personalised intervention provided by a trained TA who oversees the group.
	Ruth Miskin Fresh Start phonics intervention <i>(all academies)</i>	Amber group <i>(following Fresh Start diagnostic testing)</i>	Daily small-group interventions targeted at students who need additional support with aspects of word reading. This curriculum provides students with additional opportunities to develop skills in phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and spelling, delivered by a highly trained teacher, with additional support from Ruth Miskin to refine and evaluate the intervention throughout the year.
	Corrective Reading	Amber group	<i>E.g. Small-group interventions 3x per week targeted at students who have completed the Fresh Start programme but who still need additional support with Word Reading and Language Comprehension to close gaps with their peers. This intervention takes a direct instruction approach to developing skills in reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, language concepts and communication, delivered by a trained member of staff.</i>
	Boosting Reading Potential (BRP)	Amber group	<i>E.g. Small-group interventions 3x per week targeted at students who need additional support with Language Comprehension to close gaps with their peers. This intervention takes a direct instruction approach to developing skills in reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, language concepts and communication, delivered by a trained member of staff.</i>
	Lexia	Amber group	<i>E.g. Small-group interventions (3x per week) targeted at students who need additional support with aspects of word reading and language comprehension. This online intervention provides</i>

			<i>students with additional opportunities to develop skills in phonics, reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and language concepts pitched to their needs, with support and personalised intervention provided by a trained TA.</i>
	<i>Reading buddies</i>	<i>Yellow or amber group</i>	<i>E.g. Weekly peer mentoring intervention where KS4 students read with struggling KS3 readers to promote resilience among students as readers and develop a love of reading for pleasure.</i>
Wave 3	1:1 Fresh Start phonics <i>(all academies)</i>	Red group	Daily 1:1 interventions targeted at students reading significantly below age-related expectations, who are unable to make progress in a group setting, or who are new-to-English language speakers. See above for description of the curriculum.
	<i>Toe by Toe and Stareway to Spelling</i>	<i>Red group</i>	<i>E.g. 25 minute 1:1 interventions 3x per week targeted at students reading significantly below age-related expectations who demonstrate complex dyslexic traits that make other intervention programmes less accessible.</i>
	<i>Specialist teaching for dyslexia</i>	<i>Red group</i>	<i>E.g. Weekly specialist teaching delivered by a specialist teacher in dyslexia for an EHC student with complex literacy needs.</i>

OCL Expectations

Interventions for word reading and language comprehension must be put in place for all stages of the graduated approach, according to academy need:

Trust-wide interventions:

Ruth Miskin Fresh Start Phonics:

- This curriculum is designed to support accelerated progress for those students with significant gaps in their word reading and language comprehension skills. A range of staff at all Oasis academies (including the Literacy Lead, SENDCo, teachers and TAs) will receive annual training in Fresh Start phonics, alongside an academy development plan provided by Fresh Start trainers to ensure that all academies are able to offer a high-quality phonics curriculum for students who need additional support with word reading to close gaps with their peers.

- All students with a reading age below 9 should be screened to review whether a phonics approach is required using the Fresh Start diagnostic assessment at the start of each academic year.
- Student progress should be assessed using the diagnostic assessment at the end of each half term to ensure that accelerated progress is secured for every student on the programme so that they are able to close gaps with their peers and reach age-related expectations.

Sparx Reader:

- For those students with a reading age of 9+, Sparx Reader is an appropriate tool to support the development of reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary expansion in the context of age-appropriate whole-text reading. It can also be used to boost the reading progress of students at wave 1 as part of a universal, whole-school approach.
- Sparx Reader provides each student with a reading-age-related library of full, engaging texts so that leaders can ensure all students are reading books that suit their reading level, and students are given the opportunity to read whole novels and enrich their love of reading, supporting students at all levels of reading ability.
- Sparx Reader regularly pauses to **check the understanding** of each reader, using comprehension questions that are carefully designed using AI to break up the text at appropriate moments to avoid cognitive overload and secure understanding.
- Sparx also integrates **vocabulary and contextual learning**, allowing readers to easily find the definition of unfamiliar words and concepts without interrupting the reading process.
- Additionally, Sparx Reader has an **immersive reader function** that supports learners with accessibility needs, including coloured overlays, different font types and sizes to support students with dyslexia, visual impairment and other learning needs.
- Sparx Reader **motivates** students with a **points system** that ensures all students are reading an appropriate amount for their ability level, so struggling readers are not disincentivised by high word counts.
- Sparx Reader supports Literacy Leaders to easily **track and monitor reading engagement and progress** of students and see not only reading completion rates but also comprehension rates, so students who need extra support can be identified and supported easily.

Optional interventions:

- Academies may wish to introduce additional interventions to their graduated response, according to the needs of their students. A range of interventions are discussed in the example academy offer table above. This is not an exhaustive list but can support academies to develop a localised academy

literacy offer that enables students at all stages of the graduated response to make progress and close gaps with their peers.

Assessment and monitoring progress:

- Literacy leads must ensure that all interventions are **carefully tracked and monitored** to secure progress in literacy for all students.
- **NGRT assessments** should be used in Autumn 1 and Summer 2 to provide baseline and summative assessment data for literacy interventions. Academies may also consider opting to complete a mid-year NGRT assessment for students in wave 2 and 3 targeted intervention groups to track student progress.
- The trust will produce **data analysis** for NGRT assessments completed within assessment windows to support Literacy Leads to analyse trends and track progress within and across student groups.
- It is recommended that academies **track the progress of students in targeted intervention groups at least termly**, although it may be helpful to assess progress once per half term to ensure that students are benefiting from intervention and have been placed on the right programme to meet their needs. This can be done at no additional cost to academies for students receiving phonics instruction using the Fresh Start online assessment tool.
- Literacy Leads are responsible for tracking the progress of students in receipt of targeted interventions. It is recommended that **Literacy Leads co-ordinate with SENDCos** to record all assessment data in TES ProvisionMap, so that all academy provisions are tracked centrally to support analysis and evaluation of impact.

DRIVE Lever 4: Vocabulary

Why is vocabulary important?

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. The 'What is literacy?' introduction on page 6 presents research on the 'Matthew Effect,' explaining why students from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by struggles to develop age-related vocabulary acquisition. Further research supports this:

- **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)**⁶

The Oasis model for vocabulary instruction

Vocabulary is a broad topic that can be broken down into the following categories:

- **Tier 1 vocabulary:** The most basic everyday 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 lever 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 is 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 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'.

While the teaching of tier 3 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 at tier 2. This ensures that students will have a proficient understanding of most exam questions, articles, documents and other types of media.

For this reason, the OCL approach to vocabulary focuses primarily on the development of tier 2 vocabulary across the curriculum. In order to support the development of vocabulary for all students, the OCL curriculum includes curriculum-linked tier 2 vocabulary lists for all subjects in KS3 to ensure that students receive exposure to a range of vocabulary that will aid their literacy development.

⁶ Becker, W.C. (1977) 'Teaching reading and language to the disadvantaged – what we have learned from field research.' *Harvard Educational Review*, 47: 518-543

Beals, D. E. (1997). Sources of support for learning words in conversation: Evidence from mealtimes. *Journal of Child Language*, 24(3), 673–694. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000997003267>

Sutton Trust (2010), 'Low income and early cognitive development in the UK.' https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Sutton_Trust_Cognitive_Report-2.pdf

Chall, J.S., Jacobs, V.A. and Baldwin, L.E. (1990) *The reading crisis: why poor children fall behind*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

All OCL curriculum areas include well planned tier 2 vocabulary instruction, with a minimum of 4 tier 2 words taught per term in Years 7, 8 and 9.

OCL vocabulary instruction must include:

- a student-friendly definition;
- a sentence presenting the word in a student-friendly context that can be understood beyond the confines of the subject; and
- a multiple-choice question supporting teachers to check for understanding.

In addition, it is best practice for lessons to incorporate a further opportunity for students to process and embed their new learning through a turn and talk activity using the Hochman method to apply the sentence correctly in a sentence, using 'but' and 'because' to exemplify understanding of the vocabulary word in context.

Academy literacy leads should work with subject/curriculum leaders to ensure that the teaching of tier 2 vocabulary is embedded across the curriculum in line with these guidelines in order to support student acquisition.

Versatile Vocabulary

Versatile Vocabulary is embedded into the OCL English curriculum. It 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 to help develop student vocabulary as well as comprehension and quality of written work. Alongside the English curriculum, Versatile Vocabulary is appropriate for all subjects. It can be delivered as two separate lists for KS3 and KS4. Alternatively, it can be delivered using a bespoke list per year group. Versatile Vocabulary words appropriate to individual lessons are delivered 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.*

OCL Expectations

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

- Ensure that all subject areas deliver the tier 2 vocabulary listed in their OCL curriculum tier 2 vocabulary lists for KS3, following the model.

- Ensure that literacy leads and subject/curriculum leads work together to quality assure and embed the teaching of vocabulary across the curriculum.
- Develop their own vocabulary lists for tier 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.

DRIVE Lever 5: Enjoyment and exploration through literacy

Enjoyment of literacy is the benefit that comes when children learn to love reading and keep getting better at it. It is a focus on how to promote reading for pleasure in our academies, an increasing concern in a world where social uses of technological innovation often detract from rather than enhancing students' engagement with the written word.

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. According to Lafferty, 'literature that reflects students' lives can promote engagement and address the achievement gap' (Lafferty, 2014). Her essay makes clear the 'stifling effect' imposed on children from the global majority when they never see themselves represented in literature.⁷ Consequently, it is clear that there is value in all students studying diverse literature.

Annie Murphy Paul 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.'⁸ 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 Oasis ethos.

In a Booktrust report reviewing attitudes to reading and writing and their links with social mobility, the review concludes that:

- There are strong indicators of the importance of reading, writing and 'literacy' in contributing to positive social mobility.

⁷ Lafferty, "'What are you reading?': How school libraries can promote racial diversity in multi-cultural literature,' *Multicultural Perspectives*, 16:4 (2014)

⁸ www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-neuroscience-of-your-brain-on-fiction.html

- As we move further into the 21st century there is an urgent need not only to recognise the impact of digital technology, but to actively strive to understand how advancement in media and electronic text are changing constructions of literacy, text and notions of what it means to read and write today, and in the future.
- Being able to read and write puts individuals in a position where they are more likely to be included in communities and society more widely.
- The home and family are crucial in the development of reading and writing, particularly in terms of reading for pleasure.
- Whilst working to promote positive attitudes in boys towards reading for pleasure, girls' and women's reading and writing should not be neglected in the future.
- Clear links are identified between success in employment choice and reading and writing abilities, and limited ability to read and write remains a concern of employers and government to this day.

For this reason, Oasis academies prioritise opportunities to develop students' engagement with a wide range of literature beyond the curriculum. All Oasis academies seek regular opportunities to promote reading for enjoyment and exploration through our physical and digital library provision, regular whole-school competitions and activities, and the celebration of key literacy events in the school calendar, such as World Book Day.

Oasis academies are provided with a reading list appropriate for all students across the Trust. This provides insight into the wider world whilst also ensuring that the texts chosen are engaging, age-appropriate and promote equality, diversity and inclusion. This supports academies to make impactful text choices, ensuring students have access to a wide range of texts via libraries/e-platforms as part of the Horizons initiative, across the curriculum and during academy/tutor time reading.

See **Appendix 4** for the recommended reading list.

Wheelers ePlatform

At Oasis, we recognise the potential that technology has to enhance rather than hinder students' access to reading and wider learning. For this reason, all students in Oasis academies have access to Wheelers ePlatform, an instant-access online library where they are able to access thousands of eBooks and audiobooks through their iPads both in school and at home.

Wheelers eLibrary includes a range of features that students will appreciate such as the ability to customise settings, make annotations, look-up words and save bookmarks. eBooks can be easily borrowed and are returned automatically. They can also be read on any computer, laptop or mobile device. The reading app empowers students to read anywhere, anytime, even offline.

OCL Expectations

In order to promote enjoyment and exploration through literacy, 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.
- Ensure that students have regular access to a wide range of physical and digital representative literature throughout their time in the academy.
- Provide students with a reading list that provides insight into the wider world while also ensuring that the texts chosen are engaging, age-appropriate and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Track the engagement of students in reading for pleasure through monitoring data on Wheelers ePlatform and AccessIT (our physical library software).
- Provide regular opportunities for students to explore and celebrate literature through celebrations, activities and key events, such as World Book Day.

Responsibilities

We are all responsible for ensuring that all Oasis children have high-quality literacy instruction that supports them to develop secure skills in reading, writing and oracy.

Trust leaders and principals must ensure that the Oasis approach to Literacy is in line with the requirements laid out in this policy.

The Strategy and Innovation team will ensure that curriculum and intervention resources reflect the Literacy policy and promote the development of reading, writing and oracy across the curriculum. Principals and senior leaders in academies will need to ensure that resources are adapted to meet the precise and varying literacy needs of the children in each community.

Academy leadership teams will need to ensure that students are given the support that they need to make progress in literacy in line with age-related expectations.

The data team will analyse reading ages and prepare reports for Trust leaders and Trustees accordingly.

Training requirements

Academies must ensure that those colleagues with responsibility for Literacy undertake regular training. The Trust has a Subject Leader for English and Literacy who develops CPD for literacy with the support of the Learning and Development team.



Literacy Leads are required to attend termly Literacy Community Groups and additional training during INSET and National Staff Meetings. Additional optional training can be accessed in termly Literacy Strategy Group meetings.

All CPD is recorded and can be accessed through the Learning Development Zone on SharePoint.

In addition, Literacy Leads – and all staff who will be delivering phonics interventions – should attend Ruth Miskin Fresh Start phonics training to ensure high-quality delivery.

Statutory guidance

This policy and localised protocols developed in OCL Academies must follow advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- [The reading framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).

RACI Matrix

Policy Element	Leadership				Academy				National Functions				
	Board	Policy owner	OCL CEO and COO	National Directors of Education	Regional Director	Academy Principal	ALT Literacy Lead	Teachers	Support Staff	Compliance, Policy and legal	Data team	Strategy and Innovation Team	Literacy NLP Team
Approach to literacy is in line with Oasis ethos		R	A	AC	R	R	RC			R		RC	RC
Literacy is prioritised in all academies as an avenue to inclusion		R	A	AC	R	R	RC	I	I			RC	RC
All five DRIVE levers embedded in our academies, including skills for reading, writing and oracy		R		AC	R	R	RC	R	R			RC	RC
Reading age data tracked to assess, monitor and secure progress		R		AC	R	R	RC	I	I		RC	RC	RC
Graduated approach to literacy interventions		R		AC	R	R	RC	I	I			RC	RC

Key: **R** = Responsible, **A** = Accountable, **C** = Consulted, **I** = Informed

Appendices

Appendix 1: Mapping Disciplinary Literacy with Subject-specific literacy maps

It is essential that Literacy Leads and Subject/Curriculum 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 subject-specific literacy map is to give Subject/Curriculum Leads the opportunity to reflect on and plan the elements of disciplinary literacy that they will need to deliver through their subject area, and to give Literacy Leads the opportunity to meet with each Subject/Curriculum lead and audit the provision in place.

Prior to the meeting, Subject/Curriculum leads should review and contextualise the subject-specific literacy action plan for their area, to map their priorities for the teaching of disciplinary reading, writing and oracy in their subject area.

The disciplinary literacy audit in the Academy Localised 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 use these meetings and the audit process to gain 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.

OCL Curriculum Subject-Specific Disciplinary Literacy Maps

English	English Disciplinary Literacy Map.docx
Maths	Maths-disciplinary-literacy-map
Science	Science disciplinary literacy map.docx
History	
Geography	Geography disciplinary literacy map.docx
MFL	MFL disciplinary literacy map .docx
RE	RE disciplinary literacy map.docx
Art	Art-disciplinary-literacy-map.docx
Music	OCL Music - Disciplinary Literacy map.docx
P.E.	OCL PE disciplinary literacy map.docx
Personal Development	Personal Development disciplinary literacy map.docx
Computing	OCL Computing Literacy Map.docx

Appendix 2a: Teacher Correction Guidance

During guided reading, it is rarely helpful to simply tell students the correct way to read a word. Instead, the following guidance should be used to support student progress.⁹

Overview	<p>Teacher correction guidance should be used to develop the following skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoding: correctly translating letter combinations into words. • Vocabulary: understanding the meaning of words/phrases. • Fluency: reading with expression and dramatic effect. • Comprehension: understanding the meaning of the text.
<p>DECODING is the foundation of comprehension. When a student struggles with decoding they might read with incorrect pronunciation, drop the endings of words (<i>E.g.</i>: dropping the ‘-s’ or ‘-ed’ off the end of a verb), or even say a different word to the one written.</p>	
1. Insist on Practice	<p>If a student pauses during reading before a difficult word, or asks, “what does that word say?”, don’t give in to temptation and tell them the answer. Instead, insist on practice to encourage students to exercise their decoding skills. If they attempt the word and still struggle, use one of the other techniques below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “What do you think it says?” ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “The best readers always attempt words they find difficult.”
2. Punch the Error	<p><u>Repeat</u> the word a student misread back to him or her, replicating and putting <u>emphasis</u> on the part where the error occurred.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “Is that word in-SPEEK-tion?” “CARE-pet?”
3. Mark the Spot	<p><u>Reread</u> the three or four words <u>immediately prior to the error</u>, to prompt the student to repeat the sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i>: When the student reads, “He ran <u>though</u> the door,” the teacher corrects with, “He ran . . .”
4. Name the Sound	<p>Name the <u>sound</u> a letter or set of letters <u>should make</u> and ask students to <u>repeat</u> and <u>apply</u> it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “[That’s a] long a. Long vowels say their name.” ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “[That’s a] soft c.” “Hard c like cat/soft c like city.” “Hard g like golf/soft g like gym.” ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “-TCH says ‘chuh’” “-EA says ‘ay.’” “-IGHT says ‘-ite’.” ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “E at the end makes the vowel says its name.” “Silent E makes that a long a.”
5. Chunk It	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students <u>chunk</u> difficult words by practising <u>familiar patterns</u> and words-within-words. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i>: If a student struggles to read the word <i>hope- less</i>: “Do you see a part of that you already know?” “The first four letters are a word you know.” “Cover the ‘-less,’ and read what you have.” • Repeat what the student <u>got right</u>, focusing him on the problem chunk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “You got <i>hope</i>, but the second part isn’t ‘-ing’.” • Ask students to read a confusing word <u>without a suffix or prefix</u> first. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “‘Re’– is a prefix. Try reading the word without it. Cover up the <i>r</i> and the <i>e</i>. Now what do you have?”
6. Speed the Exceptions	<p>When a word <u>does not conform</u> to standard rules, <u>identify</u> the correct pronunciation quickly and directly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i>: “That word is written ‘bury’ but pronounced ‘berry.’ We’ll just have to remember it.” “That word is <i>through</i>.”

⁹ Strategies from Lemov, Reading Reconsidered: A Practical Guide to Rigorous Literacy Instruction
 Secondary Literacy Policy
 V3.0
 Elizabeth Rhodes / September 2025

VOCABULARY knowledge is essential to students' ability to access and fully comprehend texts. Good vocabulary instruction starts with a *student-friendly definition* that's simple and clear. Allow students to *practise* words widely and richly *after* they know the basic meaning.

1. Define, Chant, Practise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define: Give a student-friendly definition including <i>synonyms</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "Paradise means a perfect place. It is similar to the word 'heaven', but doesn't always have religious connotations." 2. Chant: Repeat the definition clearly and ask the class to <i>chant it back</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "[Class,] Repeat after me. Paradise means..." "Jon, what does paradise mean?" "Jodie?" 3. Practise: Ask students to <i>practise</i> using the word in pairs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "How would you use it?" "When would you use it?" or "How is it different from [a similar word]?"
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FLUENCY consists of *automaticity* (the ability to read accurately at speed), *expression* (reading to reflect meaning, express tone and register) and *comprehension* (to read a text expressively, the reader has to comprehend it).

1. Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energise: <i>Begin</i> each reading session by <i>reading aloud yourself</i>, modelling strong reading with <i>expressive emphasis</i>. This <i>normalises</i> fluent reading and <i>builds interest and energy</i> for the students to copy. • Bridge: If energy and clarity flag during the lesson (which may happen after a section is read by a less-able reader) <i>pick up the reading</i> yourself and bridge the gap between students by modelling again what great reading sounds like.
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2. Ask for Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify</i> the kind of <i>expression</i> you want and ask for it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "Wilbur is upset. Can you read it again in a way that shows that?" • Call students' attention to the '<i>stage directions</i>' given in the text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "The passage says, 'Mr Malone said sharply.' Read that again so his words sound sharp." • Build enthusiasm and confidence by asking students to <i>practise</i> the expression in pairs and <i>bounce it</i> around the class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.</i> "I think we can make him sound angrier than that! Turn to your partner and say [teacher models sentence]." "Let's hear your angriest voice, Jack." "Who can do it even better?"
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3. Check the Punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers use <i>punctuation</i> to give <i>clues</i> as to how the words should be expressed. Draw students' attention to how the punctuation works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "There's a full stop there. Did you stop?" ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "Remember to pause when you see a comma." ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "That is a question mark. Can you make it sound like a question?"
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COMPREHENSION is the *ultimate aim* of reading. Teachers must ask *rigorous and challenging questions* to assess students' knowledge of a text's full meaning and relevance.

1. Don't Wait	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question <i>frequently</i> throughout the reading session, <i>pausing</i> every few sentences or paragraphs to check whether students are following and understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "Who is Thomas, again?" "What are they talking about here, can anyone remember?" "Can anyone remind me what 'demonic' means?"
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2. Ask for Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask <i>evidence-based questions</i> to test for accurate comprehension and engagement. Students can fake a response that asks for a vague description, but evidence-based questioning <i>holds students to account</i> to really stay focussed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g.:</i> "Which details in the paragraph tell you that something is going wrong here?" ○ "Put your finger on the phrase that shows us he's scared."
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3. See also...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>See also, Blooms Questions to support Reading Comprehension</i>
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Appendix 2b: Blooms questions to support reading fluency

<p style="text-align: center;">1 Remember Identifying and recalling information</p>	Define List Identify Who...? What...? Where...? When...?	Name Recall Tell How...? Describe... What is...?	Spell Point to State
<p style="text-align: center;">2 Understand Organising and selecting facts and ideas</p>	Describe Explain Retell _____ in your own words. What is the main idea of...? What is happening...? Put the events of the text in order so far.	Put in order Summarise What differences exist between...? What type of person/place is...? Describe the character of... In your own words, tell me...	Retell in your own words
<p style="text-align: center;">3 Apply Using facts, rules and ideas</p>	Give an example Find out How is _____ related to...? Where has this happened before? How do we know...?	Show Link Why is _____ significant? Could this have happened if...? How is _____ an example of...?	Connect Relate
<p style="text-align: center;">4 Analyse: Separating the text into its parts</p>	Analyse Categorise What evidence can you find to show...? What are the parts or features of...? How does _____ compare to...?	Compare Contrast How does _____ compare/ contrast with...? What do we learn about _____ when the text says this?	Examine Infer
<p style="text-align: center;">5 Synthesise: Combining ideas to form a new whole</p>	Change Combine Construct What would you predict/ infer from...? What ideas can you add to...? How would you create/design a new...?	Formulate Predict Revise What solutions would you suggest for...? What might happen if you combined _____ with ...?	Suggest Invent Write
<p style="text-align: center;">6 Evaluate: Developing opinions, judgements or decisions</p>	Choose Conclude Decide Who do you prefer...? Do you agree that...? How could you divide these characters into groups? Rank _____ in order of...	Judge Defend Give your opinion Which character is the most/least...? Defend your favourite character. Why is he/she better than...?	Justify Prioritise Rank

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

Appendix 4: Enjoyment and exploration through literacy recommended reading list

Recommended reading with links to the OCL English curriculum

Year 7		
The foundations of society: making rules, stories and patterns		
Myths + Antigone	Abrahamic Bible Stories + Beowulf	Oliver Twist
Bali Rai, Rani and Sukh Alexandra Sheppard, Oh My Gods Patrick Ness, The Knife of Never Letting Go	Zana Frailllon, Bone Sparrow Tomi Adeyemi, Children of Blood and Bone	Elizabeth Laird, Welcome to Nowhere Onjali Q. Rauf, The Boy at the Back of the Class Sue Cheung, Chinglish
Year 8		
Questioning the foundations of society: questioning rules, stories and patterns		
Romeo and Juliet	Romantic Poetry	Gothic Fiction
Malorie Blackman, Noughts and Crosses Ibi Zoboi, Pride Alex Wheatle, Liddle Bit Jason Reynolds, Long Way Down	Nicola Yoon, Everything Everything Nnedi Okorafor, Binti David Leviathan, Every Day Bali Rai, Stay a Little Longer	Angie Thomas, The Hate U Give Sarah Raughley, The Effigies Nnedi Okorafor, Akata Witch Alex Wheatle, Homeboys
Year 9		
Fighting against the foundations of society: fighting against rules, stories and patterns		
Othello	The Harlem Renaissance	Subversion and satire: The Bloody Chamber + Animal Farm
Akala, Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree Andrea Levy, Small Island	Carole Boston Weatherford, Becoming Billie Holiday Walter Dean Myers, Harlem Summer Randa Abdel-Fattah, Does My Head Look Big in This?	Marie Lu, Legend Dhonielle Clayton, The Belles Kit de Waal, Becoming Dinah Suzanne Collins, The Hunger Games

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
2	11.06.23	Elizabeth Rhodes	Principals and Literacy Leads	To refine the OCL literacy policy in response to improvements trust-wide in provision
3	29.04.25	Elizabeth Rhodes	Principals and Literacy Leads	To refine the OCL literacy policy in response to updates to literacy strategy
3	September 2025	Elizabeth Rhodes	Compliance, Policy and Legal	For upload

Policy Tier

- Tier 1
 Tier 2
 Tier 3
 Tier 4

Owner

Elizabeth Rhodes – National Lead for Student Inclusion

Contact in case of query

Elizabeth.Rhodes@oasisuk.org

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Position	Date Approved	Version
Directors' group			

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
Not applicable / Insert

Location

Tick all that apply:

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

Customisation

- OCL policy
- OCL 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
All Secondary Principals and Literacy Leads	Academy Leadership Team		2.0