



WROTHAM SCHOOL

LITERACY POLICY

Document Review

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Committee Responsible:	Local Governing Body
Next Review Date:	October 2026

At Wrotham School we recognise that the development of proficient reading, writing and oracy skills is an essential part of a student's education. We aspire to develop effective communicators and ready our students for life beyond school.

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Intent

- To raise attainment across all subjects
- To develop our student's confidence and proficiency in reading
- To encourage reading for pleasure
- To develop student's understanding and use of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary
- To develop our students' written communication skills
- To develop our students' oracy and discussion skills
- To close the gaps in literacy for all students

Reading

At Wrotham School we believe that reading is a vital part of developing student's confidence with writing, obtaining a wider vocabulary and also helping support their mental health. Reading helps students to relax and unwind, as well as helping them to expand their knowledge of the world around them and their passion for different subject areas. We provide opportunities for active reading in lessons and during Progress Time.

Progress Time Reading

In Key Stage 3, as part of our Progress Time curriculum students read books linked to our whole school Character Strengths. Progress Time reading sessions develop students' reading comprehension skills and draw links between our whole school character values and the characters, themes and topics covered in the novels.

Year group and character strength priorities:

- Year 7 - *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen – Creativity.
- Year 8 *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins- Confidence and Creativity.
- Year 9 *Boys don't cry* by Malorie Blackman - Compassion, communication and open-mindedness

In Year 10 we explore non-fiction texts to broaden student's knowledge of topical issues and to develop compassion, interest in their wider world and integrity. These sessions also build media and information literacy skills and empower children with the tools to navigate the world'.

In Year 11 and Key Stage Five, students primarily focus on Gratitude and Future Thinking Journals, incorporating level 2 vocabulary into writing about their own lives in a reflective session which allows them to focus on positive aspects of their lives and develop key character strengths like compassion, integrity and motivation.

World Book Day

Lower School (Years 7–9) will be **off their usual lessons** for the day **but remain on their usual timetable**. Teachers will teach their normal group(s), but for that lesson period the content will be inspired by a literary work. These lessons may draw on fiction or non-fiction that links naturally to each subject area. The aim is to **teach for joy, curiosity and literacy**, not to prioritise coverage of specific schemes of learning.

In addition, the English Department will provide a **10-minute starter** to be included in every lesson that day. This starter forms part of a whole-school short story: students will receive sections of a short story at intervals during the day so that, by the end of the day, they will have heard/experienced the whole piece.

The English Department will take this focus on reading a step further, moving into creativity with each year group in Key Stage Three completing a different imaginative piece from a range of challenges and stimuli.

Reading opportunities in lessons

As part of our whole school approach to reading, we encourage our students to read aloud or independently in lessons to build reading confidence and to address any misconceptions.

DEAR reading

In Year 7 and 8, Drop Everything and Read is delivered in English lessons. DEAR provides students with an opportunity to read for pleasure and for their enjoyment. Students are encouraged to choose books which interest them and to therefore expose themselves to different writers, genres and text types. Students may either select a book to read from our school Book Nook or they may choose to bring in a book from home.

Sparx Reader

At Wrotham School we use an educational reading platform called Sparx Reader. The platform assesses student's reading levels and provides a reading age. The software then suggests books that match a student's reading level. 'Students are offered fantastic books at their level from a wide range of texts'¹. 'As they read, students answer regular questions, helping them to stay engaged in the story'².

We utilise Sparx Reader data to inform planning, target reading interventions and reading support. Further to this, Sparx Reader is used as part of our targeted reading intervention programme and for reading support. It is used to assess student's reading ages and this is utilised to target intervention. We also use Sparx Reader in English lessons in Year 9 to develop students' reading confidence and comprehension skills.

Sparx Reader is also available for Key Stage Three English students to access in order to support reading at home. These 'tasks are personalised, so all students can experience regular success in reading'.³ This gives all children at Wrotham a chance to read interesting and engaging texts even if they do not have access to books in their home environment.

What are the benefits of Sparx Reader?

Personalised reading: The platform tailors texts and questions to a student's reading level, helping them progress at an appropriate pace. It offers a wide range of books and articles across different genres, enabling students to choose what interests them.

Comprehension: the platform provides students with comprehension questions after each section or chapter to reinforce understanding. It provides students with immediate corrections and explanations help students learn from their mistakes.

Vocabulary: new words are highlighted on the platform and explained in context. Vocabulary tracking is used to allow students to review the words they've learned.

Rewards: badges and points are awarded to encourage reading.

Reading beyond the classroom: students can access their accounts from school or home, making it suitable for reading beyond the classroom.

SSP Phonics Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Rapid Catch-Up programme

Some of our students are identified to complete a Little Wandle Rapid Catch-Up programme. The programme 'mirrors the core Little Wandle phonics programme, but has a faster pace.'⁴ The Little Wandle phonics programme is delivered as part of our reading intervention programme to identified students.

The Little Wandle Rapid catch-up programme is designed to help children catch up in as little as 10–15 weeks. Targeted lessons are delivered to focus on revisiting and mastering key phonics skills and to build confidence and fluency.

¹ <https://sparxreader.com/>

² <https://sparxreader.com/>

³ <https://sparxreader.com/>

⁴ <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/whats-included/rapid-catch-up/>

Fluency support

Some students are identified to require support with their reading fluency and these students are supported through regular “reading fluency” sessions with the provisions team.

Fluency support includes: modelled fluent reading, repeated reading, echo reading and paired reading.

Vocabulary

At Wrotham School we prioritise the teaching of subject specific Tier 3 vocabulary. This vocabulary is used in lessons and students are taught to utilise Tier 3 vocabulary in their studies. Tier 2 vocabulary is taught in lessons to enable students to communicate and comprehend effectively. Key terms are explicitly taught and the vocabulary is embedded into classroom resources and learning materials. Vocabulary should be reinforced by revisiting the key terminology or vocabulary as part of curriculum design.

- Tier 1 – high frequency in spoken language (table, slowly, write, horrible)
- Tier 2 – high frequency in written texts (evaluate, beneficial, required, maintain)
- Tier 3 – subject specific, academic language (osmosis, trigonometry, onomatopoeia)⁵

Writing

At Wrotham School we promote a proficiency in written communication through ‘breaking down writing.’⁶ Where applicable, sentence starters and writing frames are used to support learners with their writing. Where appropriate, students are provided with opportunities to plan and redraft their written pieces through the process of levelling-up.

Writing is supported by the following strategies:

- Students are taught how to organise their writing by utilising different writing frameworks which are specific for different subjects e.g “what, how, why” and “point, evidence and explain”.
- Teachers encourage students to use the correct terminology in their writing.
- Where appropriate, writing frames, sentence starters or writing scaffolds are used to develop written communication skills.
- Where applicable, writing is linked to real-life contexts such as through design briefs or laboratory experiments.
- Models are used in some subjects to model writing.
- Planning is encouraged to structure extended writing.
- Levelling-up is utilised to redraft responses and to make corrections.

⁵ <https://learningspy.co.uk/literacy/closing-language-gap-building-vocabulary/>

⁶ https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4/EEF_KS3_KS4_LITERACY_GUIDANCE.pdf?v=1695044815

Oracy

At Wrotham School we develop student's verbal communication skills by encouraging students to partake in Student Voice, class discussions, group work and pair work activities. We try to avoid a hands up approach as this 'cuts down pupils' opportunities for learning and talk.'⁷

Further to this, students partake in discussions during Progress Time sessions and during Student Voice opportunities. Some examples of student voice topics include:

- Term 1: Democracy, diversity and resilience
- Term 2: Bullying and human rights
- Term 3: World religions and safer internet
- Term 4: International women's day
- Term 5: Cultural diversity and mental health
- Term 6: Freedom of speech

Reading interventions

Lower than expected Literacy skills on entry and identified through reading data testing are recognised as a barrier to general curriculum access for some students. Where appropriate, one to one testing is also utilised. Where students are identified as behind in their progress in reading we offer bespoke intervention sessions to quickly improve literacy skills.

Monitoring and evaluation

- This policy is reviewed annually
- All national guidance on changes to curriculum and assessment are reflected in our Literacy policy

Linked policies

Curriculum and Assessment, Assessment and Homework and Teaching and Learning.

END

This policy was adopted by the Governors

To be reviewed on an annual basis – September 2026

References:

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<https://literacytrust.org.uk/>

⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1168960/The_Reading_Framework_July_2023.pdf