

At Ercall Wood Academy, we are acutely aware of the need for students to possess effective literacy and oracy skills. As a result, we maintain a relentless focus on improving these skills to ensure every student is supported to achieve the highest possible outcomes, regardless of their socio-economic background. The ability to listen actively, speak clearly, and communicate articulately is a fundamental part of the learning process and essential for accessing the curriculum. At Ercall Wood Academy, we strive to develop students' literacy and oracy skills to the highest standard through our culture and curriculum, both as an integrated pedagogy and as a discrete entity, thereby supporting our academy's vision to have a transformational impact on our students' lives.

Our literacy and oracy strategy seeks to empower students to communicate using academic language. Our goal is to ensure that our learners leave us fully literate. We define a literate person as someone able to control their language by making informed choices about the type of language they use in a variety of contexts; be it reading, writing, speaking, or listening.

We believe that through hard work and resilience, supported by our framework and culture of high aspirations, students can achieve whatever they set their minds to, including breaking down the barriers of literacy and oracy.

We are committed to developing both literacy (the ability to read, write, speak, and listen) and oracy (the ability to communicate confidently and effectively in speech) across the entire curriculum. We view these as essential tools that empower our students to express themselves, access learning, and achieve their fullest potential.

Defining Literacy and Oracy

We define literacy as the ability to control language by making informed choices about the type of language used in a variety of contexts: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Similarly, we define oracy as the ability to communicate effectively through speech, to articulate ideas clearly, and to listen attentively and responsively.

To be literate and articulate is to gain a voice in the world, to participate meaningfully in conversations, to assert oneself, and to engage with the broader community. Literacy and oracy empower students to take ownership of their learning and their future.

Rationale

'Teachers should develop students' spoken language, reading, writing, and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for students, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (National Curriculum Framework in England, KS1-4).

The duty that we have to ensure our students are literate and articulate is detailed in the **DfE Teachers' Standards**, which state that all teachers must demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy, and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject.

All staff are therefore responsible for the promotion of literacy and oracy through high expectations of the written and spoken word. All subject teachers have a crucial role to play in developing students' academic and formal language, whether through modelling in conversations with each other, facilitating class discussions, or through explicit teaching of tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary in lessons. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure clarity of whole-academy systems and strategies to support the literacy and oracy development of all students.

The framework also sets out to support teachers in developing the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social and emotional aspects of students' oracy. Our literacy and oracy focus for 2025-26 aligns with our strategic focus to ensure that we have a coherent approach that will have maximum impact.

All strategies and initiatives are embedded in our Teaching Framework so that nothing is an add-on, but an integral part of students' daily curriculum. Key reading that has guided this strategy includes, Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools – Guidance Report (EEF), Voice 21, Oracy Cambridge.org, The Vocabulary Gap (Alex Quigley), The Reading Gap (Alex Quigley), Bringing Words to Life (Isabel L Beck), and Reading Reconsidered (Lemov).

Strategic Focus Areas

At Ercall Wood Academy, we embed literacy and oracy strategies in a holistic way across all subjects. We ensure that these key skills are not only developed in English lessons but also in every classroom, with teachers in all subject areas taking responsibility for fostering students' language skills.

'Language is the prime medium through which students learn and express themselves across the curriculum, and all teachers have a stake in effective literacy.' (QCA)

- Literacy supports learning. Students need vocabulary, expression, and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of all subjects.
- Writing helps us to sustain and order thought.
- Better literacy leads to improved self-esteem, motivation, and behaviour. It allows students to learn independently. It is empowering.
- Better literacy raises students' attainment in all subjects.

Aims

- To expose students to a wide range of challenging texts to increase cultural capital and support curriculum learning.
- To improve students' literacy skills – speaking, listening, reading, writing – and expand their vocabulary repertoire.
- To ensure students can access the curriculum in all subject areas and improve life chances.
- To foster engagement with reading and promote reading for pleasure.
- To develop students' self-confidence and metacognitive abilities through the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social and emotional aspects of the oracy framework.
- For all students to leave the academy as literate, confident communicators, ready for their next steps.

Literacy and Oracy Across the Curriculum

At Ercall Wood Academy, we see literacy and oracy as integral to all areas of learning, and our approach ensures that both the written and spoken word are central to every subject's delivery. We empower teachers to recognise and respond to learners' literacy needs, applying strong pedagogical principles that make reading, writing, and speaking visible across the curriculum. Through quality-first teaching that provides clear modelling and purposeful scaffolding, we create the conditions for every student to succeed. Alongside this, we make responsive adaptations that remove barriers and enable vulnerable learners to thrive with confidence and independence. Key strategies include:

Reading Strategies:

- **Decoding:** Teaching students how to break down words.
- **Fluency:** Encouraging smooth and accurate reading.
- **Comprehension:** Helping students understand what they read.

Oracy Strategies: Think-Write-Pair-Share, Say it Again Better, Talk Like a Specialist

Writing Strategies:

- **Tier 2 Command Words:** Encouraging the use of higher-level vocabulary.
- **Pre-Writing Tasks:** Supporting students with planning and structuring their writing.
- **Sentence Starters:** Giving students the tools to start their written responses.

Subject-Specific Terminology: Explicitly taught and used across subjects

Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar (SPAG):

- SPAG is embedded across the curriculum to ensure students' use of language is accurate and effective. It is not isolated to English lessons but integrated throughout the student's academic experience.

Literacy Marking Symbols: Applied across all subjects to reinforce accurate application of literacy skills.

Oracy Strategies

Oracy is central to our curriculum, and we actively focus on developing verbal communication skills alongside literacy. Our oracy framework is based on three main strategies to ensure that students can express themselves clearly and confidently:

1. **Talk like a Specialist:** Students are encouraged to elaborate on their ideas, expanding their thoughts with reasoning, examples, and connections to other concepts. This supports deeper engagement and the development of academic or technical language.
2. **Think-Write-Pair-Share (TWPS):** This strategy encourages students to first think individually recording ideas, pair up to discuss, before sharing with the whole class. TWPS promotes active listening, peer-to-peer learning, and builds confidence in speaking.
3. **Say It Again Better:** This strategy prompts students to reframe their initial answers with greater depth, accuracy, and sophistication.

Promoting a Love of Reading and Oracy

All staff at Ercall Wood Academy actively promote both literacy and oracy. Our main approaches are:

1. **Books and British Values** – All KS3 students participate in regular reading sessions during tutor time to promote reading as a habit and source of enjoyment. Reading Logs support tutors to track reading progression and inform reading focused discussions.
2. **Reading for Pleasure** – Students are encouraged to read books of their choice utilising the school library. We also promote reading at home through homework and book recommendations.
3. **Extra-Curricular Activities** – a range of literacy focused extra-curricular activities including Debate and Book Club are offered.
4. **Literacy Competitions** – Students are supported to enter local and national literacy competitions i.e. Poetry by Heart, The Rotary Club Writing Competition, Future Writers.
5. **Literacy Ambassadors** – Student ambassadors promote whole school literacy facilitating access to resources, activities and opportunities.

Supporting Vulnerable Learners

All students are tested using GL NGRT on joining the academy. This data is then used to identify students to undertake our reading intervention programmes.

Students who have a reading age more than one year below their chronological reading age will undertake an intervention programme using Lexia, Direct Instruction or Phonics. Students will be re-tested and if needed, complete a further intervention programme to support the development of their reading ages.

Students who have a reading age within one year of their chronological reading age will be supported through our whole academy reading strategies.

By recognising individual needs, delivering quality-first teaching, and adapting responsively, we create a literacy environment where every vulnerable learner can thrive.

Impact

Our aim is for our students to have a reading age within one year of their chronological age. Additionally, we aim for our students to demonstrate strong oracy skills through their active participation in spoken language tasks meeting all Voice 21 benchmarks. This will enable our students to access the demands of our challenging curriculum and go on to be successful in our local, national, and global community.