



Introduction

Young people face enormous challenges and opportunities as they move through their secondary school. Strong literacy skills will help them achieve their full potential.

This booklet is designed to:

- Explain the term ‘Literacy’
- Offer good advice about how parents can support us at Llanishen High School to help your children to achieve their potential.



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What is Literacy?

We hear it in the news. People talk about raising standards but what do they mean? Defining literacy can be a long-winded process but the explanations below may be a useful starting point:

‘Literacy is important because it enables pupils to gain access to the subjects studied in school, to read for information and pleasure, and to communicate effectively. Poor levels of literacy limit what pupils can do and how they see themselves.’

‘Literacy is communication. It cannot be separated entirely from speaking/listening on which it builds. It is obviously concerned with the ability to read and write and is an essential part of the learning process.’

‘Literacy is, or ought to be, a shared responsibility.’

(All three quotations from Secondary Literacy: A Survey HMI by John Hertrich, HMI)

Improving literacy raises achievement in all children!



Literacy means...

Your child needs to develop literacy skills in every subject at school. Literacy gives them access to every part of our curriculum.

SPEAKING: eg taking part in class/group discussions; volunteering to answer questions; giving formal presentations; sharing ideas and supporting peers.



LISTENING: eg listening to instructions so that you can carry them out successfully; concentrating on what is being said to you; responding to the ideas of others in class.

READING: eg improving your reading skills by reading a variety of literature and non fiction texts; developing understanding of language, style and form; building vocabulary and understanding – using a dictionary and/or a thesaurus.



WRITING: eg choosing the best form, style and language for the audience, purpose and form; presentation and layout; using ICT appropriately to communicate effectively; spellings and ways to learn them; grammar and punctuation - how they too can shape meaning.

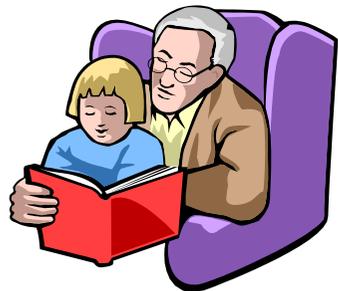


Reading

The more your child reads, the more confident and skilful s/he will become. Reading is the key to success in English and is therefore important to achievement across the curriculum. Good reading helps to improve a child's ability in speaking and listening and writing. It is therefore vital to a child's achievement. **We recommend that you encourage your child to read for at least 20 minutes a night.**

To help your child achieve this, try some of the following:

- Set a good example and let your child see **you** reading.
- Talk to your child about what **you** have read. This could include books, newspapers and magazines.
- Read to your child.
- Listen to your child read aloud as often as possible, preferably every day.



Encourage your child to try out new books by borrowing from friends, visiting the LRC, local library or buying texts recommended by friends, family or school.

Books are great! Reading is fun!

- Encourage your child to use the LRC and/or a library regularly.
- Your child's English teacher can help to recommend texts.
- Discuss stories they have read; ask questions about the plot and the characters and whether they enjoyed the story.
- Help your child to build their vocabulary by encouraging them to look up words in a dictionary.
- Develop your child's fluency by reading with them, helping them to tackle words with which they have difficulty.
- If your child finds reading a chore, encourage them by to try magazines, comics, short stories, poetry or information about an interest or hobby. Favourite films and TV programmes may also provide a way-in.



Writing

Children need to learn to express themselves in many different forms from stories to poems to newspapers to reports. Their understanding of what they need to do to complete these tasks will be helped if they read regularly.



There are, however, ways that you can help us to support your child's learning.



- Talk about written work with your child. By explaining it to you, they will understand it better themselves.



- Try to get your child to think about the audience, purpose and form of every writing task. This will help them to improve their understanding of writing in different forms and help them to make links between the skills they need for different subjects.
- Encourage your child to take pride in the quality and presentation of their work by asking to see it and praising success.
- Help your child to check their work carefully. You could help them recognise ways to improve their work and point out any errors you spot.



Spelling

Spelling is a key skill in children's written work. Their vocabulary improves as they read and they should try out new words in their own writing. There are different strategies that you can encourage your child to use to help them become confident:



Use a dictionary

Come up with silly sayings to help

Look Say Cover Write Check

- Look at the word and see how it is spelt
- Say the word
- Cover the word
- Write the word
- Check the spelling is correct

Split words up into parts to make learning the whole word easier eg in to syllables – re-mem-ber

Look for words within words eg since and rely together make sincerely

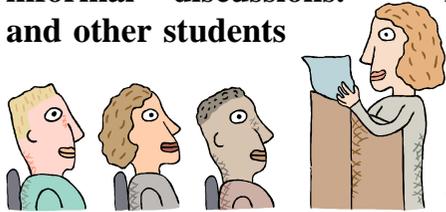
Use computer spell checkers.

Congratulate your child on their efforts and success! Even if they still make mistakes as this will encourage them to try still harder. Let your child use the strategies that they find most helpful.



Speaking and Listening

Children need to develop skills to contribute to formal and informal discussions. How they interact with teachers and other students is not just important for their social development but will also improve their access to the Curriculum. 20% of your child's English GCSE will be assessed on their speaking and listening skills.



Reading helps children to develop the vocabulary they need to contribute well. It also helps improve their confidence. There are other ways, however, that you can support your child's development in this area:



- Discuss your child's work with them. As they explain work to you, their own understanding will also improve along with their oral skills.
- Encourage children to recognise that we all speak in different ways for different purposes so they develop a repertoire of different speaking skills. This will give them confidence in all kinds of situations from interviews to socialising.
- Encourage children to respond positively to the ideas of others so they continue to learn to respect their feelings and ideas.



Homework



Homework is a vital part of the learning process as it encourages students to become independent and take responsibility for their own learning. It gives them time to practise and allows them time to reflect on their own work. Encouraging your child to value their work and praising successes will help them to achieve their potential. Your child's planner is crucial as not only is this where homework is recorded but it is the first link between parents and teachers.

Here are a few tips which focus on the literacy skills involved in homework:

- Reading may be set for homework, so helping your child to read accurately and with understanding will be useful for their following lesson.
- You could help children recognise good revision skills by discussing with them what helps them learn and testing them where appropriate.
- One way to improve accuracy in written work is by proof reading so encouraging your child to check their written homework is promoting a very useful habit. Even pointing out mistakes which they miss is helpful.
- Even a speaking homework is set sometimes! For example your child may be asked to prepare a talk to give to the class. Being an audience offering advice can really build your child's confidence.



Llanishen High School

We hope this leaflet has given you ideas about how you can help your child succeed.

If you do have any further queries or would like further information, please contact your child's English teacher or:

*Mrs M Early (Literacy Coordinator) or
Mrs A Bagshaw (LRC Manager).*



*"We believe that all can succeed"
Rydym yn credu y gall pawb lwyddo*



Literacy



and your child

The key to success!

*By Mrs S James. Please email suggestions for improvement or addition to
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