THE CEDARS
ACADEMY
Lionheart Educational Trust

LITERACY IN ACTION POLICY

November 2024 – November 2025

Contents

The Cedars Academy prioritises the explicit teaching of reading, writing, vocabulary instruction and oracy through a range of deliberate practices and strategies across the whole-school curriculum:

Reading

All Years have a tutor time reading programme over the course of the academic year; three texts are chosen per year group and there are two designated tutor-time reading sessions per week. Texts are chosen to be suitably challenging for their given age and are local-context appropriate. Tutors read the texts aloud to pupils, in order to support pupils' overall comprehension, reading fluidity and prosody; as well as promoting reading for pleasure and fostering discussion and debate.

Across the curriculum, staff draw on the four reciprocal reading strategies of Predict, Clarify, Question and Summarise so as to ensure that pupils of all abilities are able to access increasingly complex texts, as well as learning and applying the underlying principles of how to successfully decode.

Pupils' reading ages are assessed in Y7, 8 & 9 through the NGRT reading tests; these are then displayed the school's 'Beehive' for all teaching staff to access. Pupils with reading ages of standardised 80 or below are then given an additional 'decoding placement test': those with the lowest scores are then placed on the Direct Instruction programme over the course of the year (*see appendix for a more detailed overview of this provision). 'That Reading Thing' intervention is delivered our librarian to our very weakest readers, who may struggle to access the DI programme. This is also based on the NGRT standardised scores and a subsequent placement test.

Writing

Writing is explicitly taught. Teaching of writing is modelled by staff using 'live modelling' and explicit narration, as well as opportunities for co-constructed models and individual student responses (the I, We, You model). Staff ensure that there are regular extended writing opportunities across the curriculum, so as to foster writing stamina for all pupils.

For extended pieces of work, staff use methods such as WWWs and EBIs in order to ensure that pupils have specific and diagnostic feedback as to strengths and areas of development in their writing; they then have opportunities to follow up this feedback through regular DIRT tasks. Staff use a common set of literacy symbols when marking for literacy, to ensure a collective approach for all pupils. Staff are expected to 'instant mark' in lessons wherever possible, in order to ensure that teacher feedback on pupil writing is as immediate and impactful as possible.

Vocabulary

Staff explicitly teach Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary to pupils. The reciprocal reading term 'clarify' is used by staff across the school when teaching or reminding of a key term, so that a common language of learning is embedded where vocabulary acquisition is concerned.

Staff plan ahead in relation to introducing new terms - so that the etymology and or morphology of a word can be successfully explored as part of the lesson, ensuring that pupils understand the inherent meaning of the given term.

Oracy

Staff model high-quality talk to pupils and expect this in return, through STEPS ('Sir or Miss; Thank you; Excuse me; Please; Smile'). Similarly, staff help to empower pupils' oracy skills by ensuring that they never 'parrot' back an answer - but rather, get them to rephrase the answer in a full sentence, or to develop it in more detail. Staff take the register in 'the Cedars' way' – saying 'Good morning / afternoon [name] and expecting a similar response back, such as 'Good morning / afternoon Mr _ or Mrs _'. In this way, we model formality and politeness when expected in given situations.

Staff use slow cold-calling (Question - Wait - Cold-call) to ensure that all pupils are included and have the opportunity to formulate their answers; likewise, staff use 'SHAPE' ('Speak in full sentences; Hands away from your mouth; Articulate; Project 10% louder; Eye contact') to foster and embed effective oral literacy. Staff also use echoing to ensure that pupils can correctly articulate given Tier 2/3 words or phrases.

Pupils also learn a range of poems as a Form over the course of the academic year – learning line by line and chorally chanting this, until they are confident with the whole poem.