



St Ivo School

Literacy strategy

November 2004

Literacy across the curriculum.

The staff at St Ivo, in all departments, support the Literacy Strategy and are keen to contribute to its ongoing success. It is important to us to ensure that developments in literacy achieved in KS1 and KS2 are continued and built upon at St Ivo. We seek to exploit the new competences and skills that students bring from their literacy hour work. Each department has chosen specific aspects of their provision at KS3 to develop in order to achieve this. These aspects of work have been chosen because they are specific and achievable and relate to the guidelines and advice offered at the Cambridgeshire Literacy Conference in 1999. This policy was first produced at the end of 1999 and had a full review at the end of 2004.

The range of approaches and activities adopted by departments and described in this booklet include some of the following:

DARTS – or “Directed Activities Relating to Texts”. These include cloze procedures where passages are offered to students with key words blanked out. Students show their understanding and grasp of context by supplying suitable words to fill the blanks. Sequencing is another such activity to develop students’ understanding of writing where a passage is offered to students in a muddled order and students have to restore the passage to a logical sequence.



Vocabulary extension activities – such as the use of dictionaries to support spelling, the use of Thesauruses to extend and develop vocabulary, the systematic teaching of subject-specific technical terms, the use of etymology or word-derivation when breaking down words and establishing their meaning. Classroom posters and displays and regular testing of spelling and comprehension of vocabulary often support this work.

Writing frames – these are used widely across the curriculum. Students are offered topic sentences of paragraphs and are asked to use their grasp of detail to complete the paragraph. This is used to support the structure and direction of students’ writing. They also help to guide students in the style, voice and tense needed for a particular kind of writing.

Modelling – this is the use of models of writing to guide students. Often this will be other responses by students to the same activity. Models can be positive, negative and mixed. They help students’ to identify strengths and weaknesses in the writing of others and therefore in their own writing.

Drafting – this is an important tool in the development of literacy at St Ivo. Students are guided in the gathering of ideas, the writing and revising of a first draft and the completion of a final draft. Drafting encourages students to become critically aware of their own writing and encourages them to become methodical in their checking procedures. This approach also helps to increase student autonomy by offering self-checking approaches.

Grammar teaching – the encouragement of students in their recognition of parts of speech and the correct construction of sentences is an important part of our work. This can be systematically taught, in modern languages for example, or taught as part of giving students a critical vocabulary for discussing their own writing when correcting or re-drafting work.

Assessment – departments realise that many kinds of assignment make demands on students' literacy skills. When outlining such assignments it is good practice to emphasise precisely the literacy objectives – the style, structure, detail, vocabulary etc. required to succeed in a written task. When marking or correcting such tasks emphasis can be placed on how well students have fulfilled these literacy objectives. Many syllabuses across the curriculum state the importance of correct use of English and allocate extra credit in external exams to encourage this. It is good practice for departmental assessment policies to make clear statements of assessment in relation to literacy.



History

In the History Department we have always given literacy a high profile. Three years ago we decided to make extended writing one of our priorities. We use sequencing exercises and writing frames in Year 7, 8 and 9. We have been delighted with the work the students have subsequently produced. We have also targeted vocabulary and have produced booklets containing key words for each year group. Students learn the spelling and meanings of the key words. Regular spelling tests are given, which the students enjoy. We also correct common grammatical errors. We especially emphasise the use of capital letters for proper names and the use of sentences. We regularly use cloze exercises and sequencing in our teaching.

Geography

In response to the National Literacy Strategy the Geography Department is focusing on developing students' literacy skills at KS3. As geography contains rich and varied vocabulary, students will be made aware of key terms for each topic studied. Key terms and their meaning will be displayed in geography rooms and students can learn these by completing glossaries and regular spelling tests.

As part of any KS3 geography lesson, literacy is developed through class reading and discussion of relevant topic material. Each student participates in fieldwork activities and is expected to complete a written assessment task in Years 7, 8 and 9. Fieldwork and assessment tasks encourage students to develop varied styles of extended writing. As part of the extended writing, students are required to plan their work. They also learn note-taking skills and information retrieval.



To allow ALL students access to lesson activities and to develop their literacy skills, writing frames and differentiated materials are used where appropriate.

Mathematics

In mathematics we have decided to focus on Years 7 and 8 in our response to the literacy strategy. We will introduce, at an appropriate time, specified key words relating to number, algebra, shapes and measures and also handling data. We will explain the meaning of the words and ensure that students have recorded these words with explanations in their exercise books. We will be using the terms listed in the KS3 National Strategy during the course of teaching Years 7 and 8. The list of terms will be issued through the Year 7 and 8 schemes of work. Students will be encouraged to learn and spell these words correctly. We will aim to have a poster for each classroom, detailing the listed words, their meaning and "aide memoirs".

Physical Education

The Physical Education Department will prepare a Year 7 worksheet on key terms in the subject, specifically for use in cover lessons. In addition, we will focus on the student comments for the Records of Progress to encourage the use of correct terminology. We will also introduce and use writing frames to support the students' writing of these statements. We will be making reference to the QCA document "Terminology in PE" to ensure coverage of key terms.



Modern Languages

The nature of teaching Modern Foreign Languages ensures that literacy and the use of grammatical terms, as well as an awareness of how language works, is firmly embedded into teaching at all Key Stages.

As stated in the MFL Literacy Policy at KS3, we build on the students' knowledge of grammatical terms and concepts by relating them to the new foreign language they are learning. All classrooms have displays of grammatical terms in the foreign language. Our schemes of work make clear which points of grammar are taught and there is an emphasis on reinforcement and extension according to the ability of the class.

Success at Key Stages 4 and 5 is linked to the ability to manipulate language and this is achieved by the building up of vocabulary, the acquisition of grammatical knowledge and strategies to alter language according to the topic or context. We have looked at writing during our key stage review and at producing writing frames, which will act as a starting point and provide support for extended pieces of writing.

We recognise that opportunities for reading in the foreign language are limited by time but we include reading as a homework task. We are working at building up reading materials available in the Resource Centre for KS3 languages and have made a successful Beacon bid to compliment the resources available for sixth form students.

Special Needs

In Special Needs we have decided to focus on Years 7 and 8 in our response to the Literacy Strategy. The emphasis will fall on improving our provision for reading support in Year 7. To achieve this, the lunchtime reading club is to be moved to the tutorial slots on a Tuesday and Thursday lesson 3. Learning support staff who do not have a support commitment at this time will staff these sessions (3 staff per tutor period). The work will take place in main block, the year base of Year 7 students. It is hoped that more regular attendance can be achieved by this re-organisation. We have also introduced a writing frame as a basic working tool for both special needs teaching and support staff. In reading development and support work it is seen as a method of helping students to structure their work.

This academic year we have focused on improving spelling standards in Years 7 and 8. The Starspell Program has been installed on the Intranet in addition to stand-alone copies. A spelling club now runs two lunchtimes per week.

The catch-up classes for Year 7 students have been successfully returned. Students receive intensive input for three lessons per week for a four week block of time. They are tested at the outset as well as on completion of the course. The results have been most encouraging.

Drama

The Drama Department is focusing on our Key Stage 3 syllabus in implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Attainment targets for Drama within English will be incorporated into schemes of work. Key words and definitions will be displayed in the teaching areas and referred to as part of the lessons. These will also be included in the Drama Department Learning Zone, allowing for extension work outside lesson time. Students will be expected and encouraged to use this terminology when they are evaluating their own and others' work and cards have been introduced to provide a frame for such oral responses.

Art

In Art the emphasis is to be on the expansion of vocabulary through the use of key words. The lists of words will alter to be appropriate for the Key Stage involved. When first introduced through the schemes of work, these key words will be emphasised by the teacher. The design of the new Year 7 planner should allow for a full set of key words to be recorded. This can be built upon during the year.



English

All aspects of our work are focussed on developing students' literacy. In response to the Literacy Strategy we will focus specifically on extending the range of reading materials used in Year 8 during the reading support scheme. This will include non-literary writing, journalism and reading and evaluation of web sites. We will continue to focus on spelling in Year 7, displaying key words in classrooms and working on etymology and spelling rules. We will broaden our use of writing frames to support students' writing and we will extend our use of modelling so that most assignments will be supported with the use of students' writing models.

Religious Education

In RE we have decided to focus on Years 7-9 in our response to the literacy strategy. We have produced lists of key words for each of the six major world religions. These are technical words that we want students to be able to understand, use and spell correctly. To achieve this we aim to have printed a list of each set of words that students keep in their exercise books, one for each term. We aim to use a variety of writing styles for different audiences and use textbooks which are aimed at both foundation level students and above.

Design and Technology

Within our curriculum framework we include:

Long term plan:	<i>Overview of all areas of study undertaken by students</i>
Medium term plans:	<i>Schemes of work outlining the structure and content of each module. These outline the methods used for teaching literacy and numeracy.</i>
Lesson plans:	<i>A week by week plan of the work that students should be covering during that module.</i>

The department is committed to developing accessible work books for students for each of the modules of work studied. The presentation and layout of those resources has been based upon the work we have carried out during the KS3 review.

Documentation is evaluated each year and up-dated where necessary. The student booklets include a glossary of new terminology, including the meanings of technical vocabulary. These words are tested during the module. We include writing frames to assist the process of evaluation and also offer students key words to enable them to label diagrams, or write design specifications. The booklets are designed to guide the students through the module task including, research, design ideas and recording information about methods of making. This can be either after watching a demonstration or a video. We expect students to produce flow diagrams to demonstrate their knowledge of a process or series of events.

The criteria-based assessment in the front of each booklet is written in a student friendly format. It is there to assist the student to determine what they need to do to achieve a particular national curriculum level. This allows students to differentiate their own work level. Students are encouraged to read the assessment criteria and set themselves a target for each project.

We have produced a range of resources both visual and physical, to support the students' learning, e.g. if a student is not able to carry out research to assist them with design ideas, then we can provide some to enable them to move on to the next level of work.

We have an on-going commitment and aim to provide more pictures and words around the department, labels on tool racks etc. to reinforce specialist terminology, as well as to improve spelling.

Science

The Science Department has decided to focus on Year 7 in its response to the literacy strategy. In our development plan we have decided to identify four pieces of work over the year which will contribute to students' literacy understanding in Science. In the first two pieces of work the department has decided to use writing frames in the Y7 scheme of work to help students when they are writing up two identified practicals. The department will review the progress of writing frames then decide on the next two pieces of work in the spring term.

Music

The Music Department have discussed and agreed the following strategies in an attempt to raise the standards of literacy at St Ivo School.

Key words clearly displayed on boards around the room.

Topic words frequently written up on the board and referred to during lessons.

Key words highlighted when written work is being done.

Occasional spelling homework set.

Writing frames developed and provided with decreasing detail throughout KS3.



Supporting writing

For many students it is necessary to provide a scaffold for their work to support them in presenting ideas. Writing frames are one way of providing this scaffold. If they are introduced in KS3 students learn to use the model and usually by KS4 the majority can write without them, or with only the help of bullet points. Some students on the other hand, still need this support into GCSE to encourage them to present ideas in an appropriately organised format.