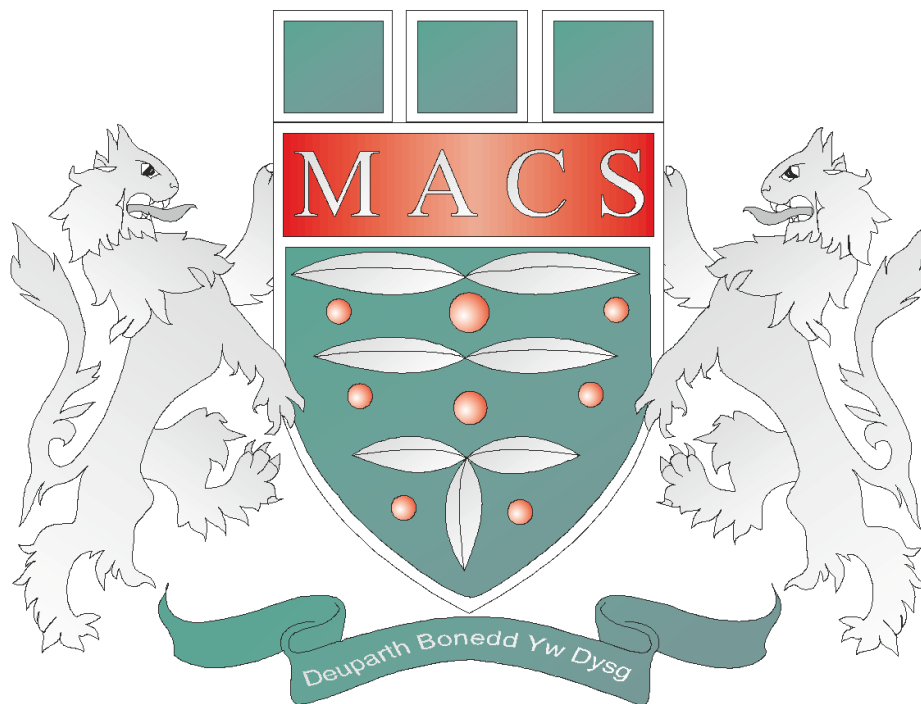


MOUNTAIN ASH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL



Whole School Literacy Policy

Signed _____ *G Themma* _____ (Chair of Governors)

Date _____ 09.07.25 _____

Reviewed: July 2025
Next review date: July 2028

Introduction

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Section 1: VISION and RATIONALE

Literacy generates the development of effective skills in communication. To be literate is to be able to listen, speak, read and write at a level necessary to function in education, at work and in society. By addressing literacy needs across the curriculum we are assisting learners to become;

- ambitious, capable learners
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the wider world
- enterprising, creative contributors
- healthy, confident individuals in alignment with the Curriculum

for Wales.

Literacy at MACS should be promoted and taught consistently across the curriculum. Literacy strategies at MACS are underpinned by the Education Endowment Fund's (EEF) *Recommendations for Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools* (Appendix A). There is a focus on disciplinary literacy, ensuring that the development of literacy skills is not solely the responsibility of the Languages, Literacy and Communication faculty.

There are literacy '3 year plans' for reading, writing and oracy which may be found under Appendix B of this policy.

Section 2: MONITORING and EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation of literacy across the curriculum will be conducted through means of testing and whole-school Teaching & Learning processes such as work scrutiny, lessons observations, pupil voice and 'bright spots' walks. In quality assurance processes, faculties are required to self-evaluate strengths and areas for improvement in literacy by using whole-school literacy criteria and the Central South Consortium Literacy Rubrics.

The Whole School Literacy Lead is responsible for evaluating the results of testing and whole-school Teaching & Learning processes in order to establish and address literacy priorities on a termly or half-termly basis as appropriate.

Testing (STAR and NRTs)

STAR Reading Tests should be completed 3 times a year during library lessons by the English class teacher with the assistance of the Literacy Support LSA once at the start of October, once at the start of January and once in May in alignment with tracking periods. National Reading Tests will replace STAR testing for tracking 4.

Once STAR testing is complete each term, the Whole School Literacy Lead will analyse the data and provide all staff with one-page summaries & class reports, including relevant data and recommendations. Staff will need to use these summary sheets and recommendations to adapt their teaching to target areas of development for their classes. A summary report of NRTs will also be completed by the end of the academic year. NRT reports will be shared with parents and results will inform literacy priorities for the next academic year.

T&L processes

The Whole School Literacy Lead is involved in whole-school quality assurance activities including work scrutiny, pupil voice, learning walks and lesson observations. The information gathered from these activities will inform literacy priorities and allow the Whole School Literacy Lead to tailor support for each faculty as necessary. Sharing good practice of literacy focused activities is conducted through the Teaching and Learning shared Google Drive.

Section 3: LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

3a. Form Time Literacy

It is the form tutor's responsibility to undertake literacy activities set for their year group on the relevant day in accordance with the school's pastoral calendar. At least two of the following activities should be covered on a weekly basis by form tutors:

- Word of the Week,
- Chapter One, - Virtual Classroom.

The Whole School Literacy Lead is responsible for monitoring and supporting these activities.

3b. Vocabulary Acquisition

Staff should explicitly teach tier 2 and 3 vocabulary where appropriate using the whole-school vocabulary keys (Appendix C) and Teach Like A Champion/Reading Reconsidered strategies. Just Read and Word of the Week will link to tier 2 and 3 vocabulary across the curriculum to ensure consistent exposure to subject-level vocabulary.

Vocabulary strategies and guidance is underpinned by research from:

Recommendations for Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools, EEF, 2021

Closing the Word Gap, Oxford Language Report, 2021

The Effects of Vocabulary Instruction: A Model-Based Meta-Analysis, Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction in Reading Reconsidered, Lemov et al., 2021

3c. Reading

Just Read should be carried out with Key Stage 3 (Year 7 in 2024, Year 7 & 8 in 2025 and Years 7-9 in 2026) in every subject as per the frequency agreed with the Whole School Literacy Lead.

Staff should scaffold reading activities appropriately using the whole-school reading keys (Appendix D) and MACS Differentiation Toolkit.

Just Read training outlined the following strategies to staff:

- Pre-reading the text you are going to teach and identifying those words that your group are likely to struggle with.
- Of those words, if there are a large number, identify those that are the highest leverage for understanding the key points within the text.
- Pre-teach those words *before* reading the text. Avoid lengthy discussions in which students guess at word meanings. More fruitful discussions can be held relating to the key ideas in the text once the overall meaning has been grasped.
- Using the dictionaries (where possible) to support the pre-teaching of vocabulary to access prior knowledge and support children in developing their 'situation model' for the text.
- It is vital that challenging text are read aloud as a shared reading experience will all students following with rulers. Teachers should prepare which students they will call upon to read sections aloud as appropriate.

3d. Writing

Staff should scaffold writing activities appropriately using the whole-school writing keys (Appendix E) and use *The Writing Revolution* (Hochman & Wexler, 2017) strategies such as Single Paragraph Outlines and Multiple Paragraph Outlines (Appendix F) where appropriate. Further strategies may be found in the *MACS Differentiation Toolkit*.

Staff should also encourage sentence-level accuracy through the use of Silent Solo in lessons in alignment with whole-school Teaching & Learning initiatives.

Strategies adopted:

- Use of visualisers to model writing process
- Pre-written model answers with discussion on what the example did well
- Narration of thought process
- Writing frames including sentence starters, connectives, key vocabulary etc.

- Focusing on elements within writing to elicit high quality responses such as the 'Slow Writing' method
- Use of Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) and self/peer assessment to enable students to monitor and evaluate their writing
- Annotating key features of the writing
- Creating checklists/success
- Anticipating common misconceptions or errors made by previous students and using these to support teaching

3e. Oracy

Staff should encourage regular discussion through the use of Turn & Talk in class in alignment with whole-school Teaching & Learning initiatives. Staff should use Habits of Discussion (*Teach Like a Champion 3.0*, Lemov, 2021) to frame group and whole-class discussions. Where appropriate, staff should use the 'Say it Again, Better' (Sherrington, 2018) strategy, providing vocabulary and sentence starters to learners as necessary.

Strategies

- Provide opportunities for structured talk
- Use of 'Voice 21' talk tactics such as Student Talk Tactics and Teacher Talk Tactics
- Encourage clarification in responses
- Clear structures to support thinking and organisation of language
- Use of oracy mats to support structured talk which include success criterion, sentence starters, connectives etc.

3f. Marking

It is teaching staff's responsibility to ensure that spelling, grammar and punctuation are corrected in alignment with the school's feedback policy and using the following marking codes:

SP – Spelling error - Correctly spell this word three times in the margin or in an appropriate space.

P - Punctuation error – Correct errors identified.

C - Capitals - Capital letters where appropriate.

EXP – Expression - Clear sentences with the sentence rewritten in the DIRT time. //

- Paragraph error – New paragraph required

3g. Interventions

STAR testing will inform which learners are selected for group interventions at Key Stage 3. However, ALN one-to-one or small group interventions will be arranged for

learners by the ALNCo. Selected learners will participate in reading and writing interventions in groups no more than 8 learners. The Literacy Support LSA will carry

out these interventions as part of library lessons. Interventions will take place for 6 sessions before learners are re-tested to see if they have improved. If learners have made sufficient improvement, they will be removed from the intervention group but will continue to be monitored to see if they need extra reading or writing support. If learners make insufficient progress, they will remain in the group for further intervention.

3g. Extracurricular Literacy Activities

The Whole-School Literacy lead and Literacy Support LSA are responsible for organising extracurricular activities to enhance literacy skills such as running competitions, trips and clubs. (See Appendix B for further details).

APPENDIX A APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

TEACHING VOCABULARY AT MACS

5 KEYS TO VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

1. Define the word and give its part of speech (eg. noun, adjective, verb).
2. Say the word out loud with your class (drilling).
3. Give a familiar example or show a picture or motion.
4. Describe parameters of use (eg. common use, related words, synonyms).
5. Engage in active practice (6-8 questions which require students to use the word both verbally and in writing).









APPENDIX D

Literacy at MACS

TEACHING WRITING AT MACS

8 KEYS TO READING

Literacy at MACS

ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE	UNLOCK TEXTS	QUESTION	CONNECT	VISUALISE	INFER	SUMMARISE	EVALUATE
 <p>What do you already know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know... • I think I know... • I would like to find out... 	 <p>Do you need to skim/ scan/ close read?</p> <p>Have you:</p> <p>Highlighted key words?</p> <p>Used verbal reasoning to unpick new words?</p> <p>Annotated with synonyms?</p>	 <p>Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? Is? Did? Can? Would? Will? Might?</p>	 <p><u>Text to text</u> Does it remind you of any other texts you have seen, heard or read?</p> <p><u>Text to Self</u> How does it link to your own life?</p> <p><u>Text to World</u> How do these ideas connect with the wider world?</p>	 <p>Sketch the words or sounds it as an image.</p> <p>Explain the reasons behind your drawings</p>	 <p>Use the clues to explain what you think</p> <p><u>Key Verbs:</u> Suggests Informs Reveals Implies Explores Signifies Connotes Symbolises Indicates Reflects Represents Establishes</p>	 <p>Have you:</p> <p>Selected the key points?</p> <p>Removed unnecessary details?</p> <p>Rewritten the key points in fewer words?</p>	 <p>How would you feel if...?</p> <p>Assess the effectiveness of ...?</p> <p>To what extent do you agree...?</p> <p>Justify the decision to...?</p>

APPENDIX E

TEACHING WRITING AT MACS

8 KEYS TO WRITING



PAFT - Define the Purpose, Audience, Format or Tone of writing



Gather - Research the topic area, using a variety of texts



Plan - Use essay outlines, mindmapping, SPO/MPO, etc. to plan out work



Build - Use keywords, sentence starters, KOs, wordbanks and structure strips



Model - Use WAGOLLS or write an example with the class



Write - Learners use everything to create a draft answer



Reflect - Learners peer/self-assess according to success criteria



Redraft - Using feedback, learners write their final answer

APPENDIX F

Extended Writing Planning – Single Paragraph Outline

T.S.

1.

2.

3.

4.

C.S.

Extended Writing Planning - Multiple Paragraph Outline

Topic:

Thesis Statement (overall viewpoint):

Paragraph:	Details to be discussed (bullet point main ideas)
Paragraph 1 – Introduction (Introduce the topic and make viewpoint clear)	
Paragraph 2 – Main idea discussed in detail.	
Paragraph 3 – Main idea discussed in detail.	
Paragraph 4 – Main idea discussed in detail.	
Paragraph 5 – Main idea discussed in detail.	
Conclusion – Summarise your main points and viewpoint. No new points to be made here.	