

Our Ref: SST/HBr

Monday 1st December 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Re: The Duston School Approach to Inclusion; Our Approach to Literacy

This is the fourth letter in my series of communications detailing our approach to Inclusion as a school. The focus this time is our approach to Literacy.

At The Duston School we know that reading is the key to success for all children. When a child reads fluently, for enjoyment and purpose, a whole world of opportunities will open for them and their vocabulary, sentence structures and knowledge of the world expands. We aim to teach children to read fluently and with understanding and to promote a love of reading.

Literacy is the key to progress, so we identify any pupils where there may be literacy barriers to their progress and ensure that they are given suitable, high-quality interventions to help them catch up with their peers.

For those pupils where we identify that reading may be a barrier to accessing certain aspects of the curriculum, there is a range of interventions in place to ensure they are supported to catch up with their peers. These include:

- Identify pupils with literacy barriers during the transition process and ensure any pupils for whom literacy is identified as a concern are given Direct Instruction (DI) placement testing during the July induction to ensure appropriate groupings from the start of September.
- Direct Instruction lessons are timetabled with trained specialists in Key Stage 3.
- Two support pathways are in place for pupils who have Additional English and for the pupils who need Additional Support English. Additional aimed to target grade 4 pupils, Support pathway continues DI approach with GCSE materials.
- All Key Stage 3 pupils complete reading age tests in Term 1 to ensure appropriate support is in place. Year 7 and 8 have Post-16 reading mentors, Year 9 have one - one intervention with the school's librarian, Year 7 have small group intervention with a Teaching Assistant.
- A 'Setup to Key Stage 4' program is in place for pupils in Years 8 and 9 identified as needing further support.
- Reading ages are shared on class charts and teachers are trained in strategies to support weaker readers through an array of training opportunities.
- The progress of key pupils is monitored over time and appropriate evidence-based intervention strategies are put in place if necessary.
- Pupils exam access arrangements are assessed as required, based on evidence of need.

We recognise that literacy takes place in every lesson, through the vocabulary of every subject and in the reading and writing pupils are completing in all areas of the curriculum.

Mr S Strickland - Principal - BA (Hons), MA, NPQH
01604 460004 | office@thedustonschool.org | www.thedustonschool.org



We aim to ensure that all teachers are skilled in using a range of approaches to ensure that literacy is central to their teaching of their subject. Literacy is also a gateway to understanding the world beyond school. We aim to provide pupils with a curriculum that introduces them to cultures and concepts that will build their character through the texts that they encounter. This includes the following strategies across the curriculum:

- Modelling the reading process by reading to and with the class, discussing how what is read inspires ideas and questions, as well as linking the learning to prior knowledge.
- Encouraging 'reciprocal reading' approaches to new texts where pupils follow the four-step process of Predict, Question, Clarify, Summarise.
- Using visualisers to ensure modelling is visual as well as auditory.
- Chunking texts into smaller sections, summarising and discussing what has been read in each 'chunk'.
- Directly teaching pupils how to decode a variety of texts and forms of text specific to their disciplines.
- Ensuring that there are a range of opportunities in class for paired and collaborative reading; sharing ideas elicited from the reading, building on prior knowledge to question, make predictions and build theories and summarise issues.
- Directly teaching reading strategies to pupils (for example: skim, scan and select; annotation and highlighting), and the skills of inference and deduction required for the subject discipline.
- Monitoring the level of text provided to ensure it provides appropriate challenge.
- Planning and using questioning effectively to develop pupils' independent reading and comprehension.
- Providing reading frames that enable pupils to decode, question and develop ideas from a variety of texts with increasing independence.
- Promoting reading for pleasure in Form time reading and discussion. To promote further leaning.
- Encouraging reading for pleasure through timetabled library lessons, where pupils borrow and read their own choice of reading book, as well as tracking their own reading through the use of SPARX reader/Accelerated Reader.
- Reading as homework, where pupils read texts specifically targeted at their reading level and receive rewards for reading completed.
- Live modelling the thought processes and actions involved in drafting, writing, and re-writing various written forms and genres. All staff use visualisers to support with this.
- Whole-class feedback, which ensures literacy errors or improvements are addressed with all pupils.
- Sharing models and pupil exemplars of high-quality work, as well as discussing how other examples could be improved. These are included in workbooks and knowledge organisers.
- Supporting less developed writers where appropriate with scaffolding, sentence starters, paragraph and writing frames, key words, and teacher modelling. The use of I do, We do, You do is established as a whole school approach to modelling.
- Challenging most able writers through extension questions and extended writing opportunities and by removing scaffolds and writing frames.
- Using pre-writing activities like re-capping key ideas before beginning to write or providing sentence stems.

- Giving pupils opportunities to write clearly in a variety of forms and for different audiences, with clear shared expectations of outcomes.
- Breaking down complex writing tasks, for example by providing pupils with writing frames and structure strips to assist them in structuring their work, allowing for the growth of independence over time.
- Providing displays and regular explicit explanation on the conventions of good writing in specific subjects.
- Providing opportunities for the full writing cycle namely; – planning, drafting, and editing of work, and encouraging developing writing through supportive, formative assessment.
- Maintaining high expectations of the presentation, spelling, grammar and punctuation in written work.

We hope that by continuing to place literacy at the centre of our approach, we are giving all pupils the building blocks for success both within their school life and beyond.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr Strickland', written in a cursive style.

Mr Strickland
Principal/CEO