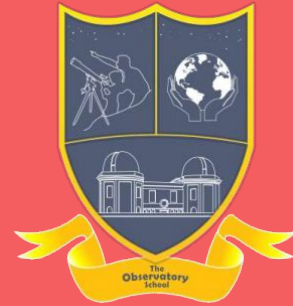


Literacy Handbook

2023 - 2024



Head of Literacy

Claire Quatermass

Oversight of the whole-school literacy provision, delivery, and data.

Communication TA3

Vacancy

Delivers reading interventions, as well as supporting the LLM

Literacy Learning Mentor

Vacancy

Delivers phonics interventions and runs the LAC reading group

Class and 1:1 TAs

Class and 1:1 TAs will be trained in all the programmes.
They will share the delivery of interventions to their pupils



**Literacy
Staff**

Literacy Curriculum Intent

The Observatory School's values of enjoyment, responsibility and perseverance are at the core of our literacy teaching and learning. Our intention is that our pupils will enjoy their learning, because we use rigorous and on-going assessment to ensure that they are accessing the curriculum at the right level. Through individual target setting, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own progress and a comprehensive reward system teaches the value of perseverance.

We recognise that developing an effective literacy skill set (speaking, listening, reading, writing, and ICT skills) is fundamental to achieving a rich and fulfilling life. These skills are used every day to make sense of, and communicate with, the world around us. Therefore, at The Observatory School, we are committed to ensuring that our learners experience joined up, first-class literacy support across all subject areas and key stages.



Literacy Curriculum Intent: SEMH

As an SEMH school, we recognise that our students can have a range of barriers to their literacy learning. To understand the nature of each individual pupil's literacy profile, there is a robust assessment system in place. On arrival at The Observatory School, students will undertake a range of baseline assessments, including the New Group Reading Test (NGRT), New Group Spelling Test (NGST), Star Reading Assessment (Renaissance Place) and a levelled writing piece (using APP levels modified to fit with the new curriculum). Pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 7, as well as those identified as having significant gaps in literacy learning, will also undertake the KS1 phonics screener, to identify any gaps in their phonemic awareness. These baseline assessments will provide individualised targets that are shared in a pupil-friendly way and used across all curriculum subjects.



Literacy Curriculum Intent: Reading

At The Observatory School, we believe that reading, particularly reading for pleasure, has a direct impact on cognitive and social communicative development. With this in mind, reading for pleasure is promoted across the school. The Observatory School library is at the heart of the school and is stocked with a wide range of books, including a large selection of Hi-Lo fiction for struggling readers. All pupils have two library lessons a week and use Accelerated Reader to encourage reading for pleasure and ensure all students are reading at the right level to drive optimal progress; prizes are given out for achieving reading targets; and we offer opportunities to visit the theatre and take part in workshops by visiting children's authors. We aim to improve the reading capacity of all our pupils; to this end, the literacy lead offers regular parent workshops to explain how to read with young people at home and use Accelerated Reader. Pupils also have the opportunity to become library monitors and take on responsibility for maintaining the school's library and reading systems.

Our intention is to develop each students' potential, by having our most able students reading at or above their chronological age and by closing the gap for students who have barriers to their learning. We define 'closing the gap' as students making age-related progress that is greater than the amount of time between assessments.



Literacy Curriculum Intent: Writing

To fully prepare pupils for a successful future, writing skills are also fundamentally important. As such, pupils at The Observatory School will be taught to write in a variety of fiction and non-fiction styles. They will be supported to communicate clearly and imaginatively, as well as to adapt their form and language for different audiences and purposes. We understand that some pupils may have gaps in their learning with writing also and, to support these pupils, we utilise a 'Talk for Writing' model where pupils are provided with excellent examples of each writing style and encouraged to internalise the structures through repetition, talk, and learning writing frames.



Literacy Curriculum Intent: Intervention

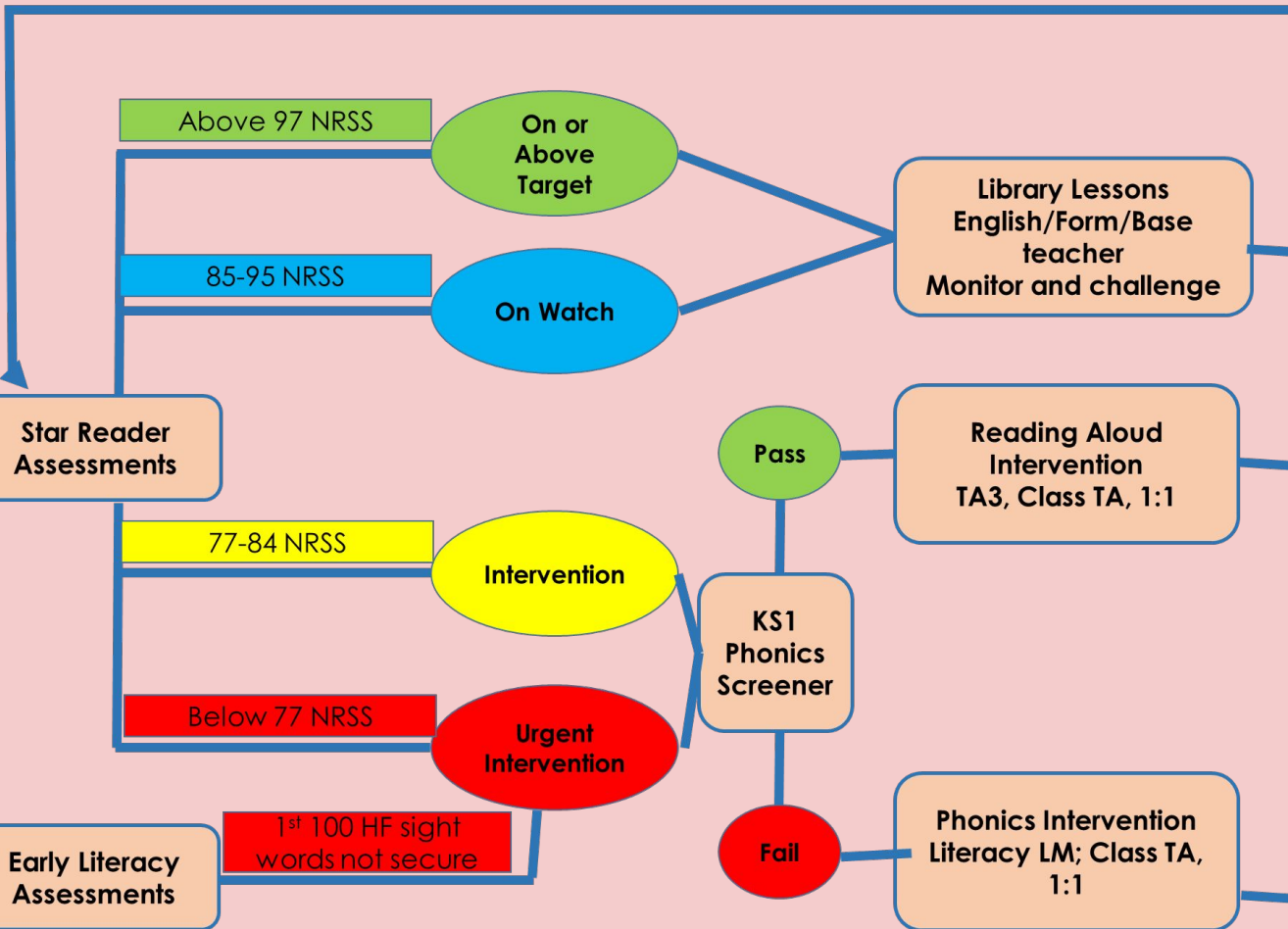
For pupils working at significantly lower than age-related expectations, The Observatory School has a specialist literacy intervention teacher. Each of these students will have an individualised Literacy Education Plan that is shared with all staff. Depending upon the level of need, students will have access to age appropriate phonics systems and books at their interest and ability level. Every intervention session aims to be tailor made for each student. A visiting Speech and Language Therapist is also available to assess students, identify their specific needs, and advise about targeted interventions. Both of these services inform Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and targets, ensuring that all staff are aware of the needs and best strategies for these pupils.



Retest 6 times per year (beginning and end of term)



Reading monitoring and intervention pathways



Literacy Curriculum Intent: Other Skills

At The Observatory School we have high expectations for our students and this includes encouraging them to develop softer literacy skills, such as oracy, listening and ICT skills. These are taught explicitly in English and computing lessons; however, they are also embedded into other curriculum subjects. Pupils are supported to: develop excellent debating and presenting skills; become confident using the range of Office software; navigate the internet safely and competently; and listen for meaning in a range of circumstances. Additionally, we offer the National Literacy Trust's Represent programme. This is a new, research-driven literacy programme designed for girls aged 11 to 14 in alternative provision that uses engaging texts to support communication skills, resilience and wellbeing.



Literacy Curriculum Implementation: Accelerated Reader

Our Accelerated Reader programme is designed to encourage a love of reading across the school. All pupils have access to The Observatory School library, which is stocked with a large selection of Hi-Lo books, in fiction and non-fiction. This means that all pupils can find books that are suitable to their age, interests and abilities. Every class is assigned two library lessons a week - where pupils read and take their quizzes on Accelerated Reader.

Reading for pleasure is promoted throughout school by all staff. There is an assembly every term on the benefits of reading and introducing new books to pupils. The school also hosts visiting children's authors, who are chosen based upon the most popular books being read in the library. Additionally, there is an extensive rewards system based on engagement with the Accelerated Reader programme. The system counts how many words pupils have read, over the course of a year, and how many quizzes they have taken and passed. Including both categories allows a celebration of pupils across the ability spectrum. Those pupils who are placed in the top ten for each of these competitions, get to go on a fun trip at the end of each term. The Friday Wall of Fame assembly also celebrates pupils who have achieved significant milestones.



Literacy Curriculum Implementation: English Reading Spine

The Observatory School English curriculum contains an ambitious and diverse reading spine. Pupils are introduced to a range of fiction texts from across the literary canon; they will encounter books from a range of genres and different historical and cultural contexts. They are supported to engage with books that they may not have the opportunity or ability to read otherwise. Pupils will read books from Harry Potter to Shakespeare; news articles to gothic and dystopian fiction; and be introduced to poetry in its many forms.



Literacy Curriculum Implementation: Intervention

The Observatory School recognises that many pupils will come to us with significant barriers to reading. These pupils are identified through rigorous assessment - pupils all take NGRT and Star Reading Assessments, which enables them to be split into four categories. The two intervention categories, as well as all of Key Stage 2 and Year 7 pupils, will also be tested on the KS1 phonics screener. The NGRT and Star Reading assessments will be taken at a further four points in the year, allowing pupils to move up the intervention groups and to catch any pupils who are in need of further assistance.

The Observatory School has three levels of intervention: Blue (on watch); Yellow (read aloud); and Red (extended intervention). The first group are tackled through quality-first teaching and careful monitoring of their reading habits by their form teacher. The communication department TA3 delivers oracy-based comprehension interventions to the Yellow group; and a specialist literacy HLTA delivers phonics-based interventions to those that need it.

The Observatory School uses Little Wandle systematic, synthetic phonics and matches it with a range of older-reader decodable books.



Literacy Curriculum Implementation: CLA Enrichment

The Observatory School recognises that looked-after pupils often have many gaps in and barriers to their literacy education. They may not be working at levels appropriate to their abilities, even though they do not flag up as needing intervention. To address this issue, there are several after-school enrichment groups, primarily aimed at looked-after children, but open to others also. These groups are run by the communication faculty TA3 and HLTA. They are oracy-based literacy interventions targeting secondary pupils who have been unable to have their needs met in mainstream education. One is based around representation of their voice in fiction, and the other around football. The National Literacy Trust provides these interventions and they are incredibly popular; as well as, proven to help pupils make above-average progress in their overall literacy levels.



Literacy Curriculum Implementation: Disciplinary Literacy

Our school recognises the importance of reading across the curriculum and in context; every teacher is a teacher of reading. All subjects develop disciplinary reading in their classrooms, including providing model texts and scaffolding reading, writing, and structured speaking tasks.

There has been a great drive in promoting wider reading in all subjects of the curriculum; departments have suggested subject specific books which are available in the library. Accelerated Reader provides opportunities for pupils to read books from different disciplines within each year group. This enables pupils to Read Like a Geographer, Scientist, Linguist, Historian, Mathematician.



Literacy Curriculum Implementation: Tier 2 and Tier 3 Vocabulary

Alongside promoting reading for pleasure, The Observatory School recognises the importance of developing a good vocabulary. Many pupils who join us do not have a firm understanding of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary - which are academic and subject-specialist words.

Vocabulary learning is tackled through detailed vocabulary progression plans for both Tier 2 vocabulary and within each subject specialism. All pupils will learn a 'Word of the Week', which are academic words needed to achieve more at school. They are also taught vocabulary explicitly in all of their subjects; as subject-specific words are better learned in context.



Literacy Curriculum Impact

As we establish our literacy policy with enthusiasm and conviction, we aim to secure a considerable increase in pupils' reading diet and exposure to new vocabulary. This will also help realise our ambition for all pupils to leave The Observatory School fully literate.

Pupils will:

- have access to age-appropriate books they can read independently
 - enjoy books that they may not be able to read themselves.
- be exposed to complex sentence structures and vocabulary that can help to build background knowledge.
 - become readers as writers.
 - show a passion for books and literature.



Literacy Curriculum Impact

Our intent and implementation will result in some key factors of success:

- Our pupils' progress will be reflected in the NGRT and Star Reading data
- Early readers and those at risk of not accessing the curriculum make rapid progress in their reading and as a result begin to flourish academically and pastorally across subjects.
 - There is a positive and vibrant book culture in the school.
- Reading habits are well developed and pupils regard reading as an enjoyable activity that brings happiness.
- All pupils have a personal reading book that they read for pleasure in their classroom.
 - Reading deficits are closed.
 - There is evidence of improved progress across a wide range of subjects.
 - Pupils understand the value of reading to learn.
- Pupils report positively about reading and the impact on their emotional wellbeing and happiness.
- Reading underpins the whole-school curriculum and is promoted within every subject area. This helps pupils to hone their reading skills including information retrieval.

