



# Isca Academy

## Literacy Policy

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# Literacy at Isca Academy



## What is literacy?

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world.

## Why is literacy important?

Lacking vital literacy skills holds a person back at every stage of their life. As a child they won't be able to succeed at school, as a young adult they will be locked out of the job market, and as a parent they won't be able to support their own child's learning. This intergenerational cycle makes social mobility and a fairer society more difficult.

People with low literacy skills may not be able to read a book or newspaper, understand road signs or price labels, make sense of a bus or train timetable, fill out a form, read instructions on medicines or use the internet.

Low levels of literacy undermine the UK's economic competitiveness, costing the taxpayer £2.5 billion every year (KPMG, 2009). A third of businesses are not satisfied with young people's literacy skills when they enter the workforce and a similar number have organised remedial training for young recruits to improve their basic skills, including literacy and communication.

**1 in 8 disadvantaged children in the UK say that they don't have a book of their own.**

**The longer children keep an enjoyment of reading going, the greater the benefits are in the classroom.**

**Children born into communities with the most serious literacy challenges have some of the lowest life expectancies in England**

**Children who enjoy reading and writing are happier with their lives**

**Only half of children in the UK enjoy writing**

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/information/what-is-literacy/>

- Literacy at Isca Academy supports learning. Students need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of all subjects.
- Writing helps students to sustain and order thought.
- Better literacy leads to improved self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. It allows students to learn independently. It is empowering.
- Better literacy raises students' attainment in all subjects.

### **Knowing The Cohort**

- A spreadsheet is collated with information from our primary schools – designed to highlight any particular areas for concern. This is shared with all staff prior to the students starting with us.
- Isca Academy Lead Literacy Teacher undertakes a series of Learning Walks in the first 2 weeks of term to observe Year 7 students in a range of subjects to ensure they are all able to meet the literacy demands of their subjects. A 'watch list' is created if necessary. The Lead Literacy Teacher also gains staff voice on the needs of the students – this is an opportunity for staff to raise any concerns early on.
- The Lead Literacy Teacher uses this information (and AR / Lexia) to create the first intervention group.





## what does Literacy look like at Isca Academy?

### Reading

**Support students to develop fluent reading capabilities.**

Accelerated Reader is in place for every Year 7 and Year 8 student.

Accelerated Reader gives teachers the information they need to monitor students' reading practice and make informed decisions to guide their future learning.

A comprehensive set of reports reveals how much a student has been reading, at what level of complexity, and how well they've understood what they have read.

Vocabulary growth and literacy skills are also measured. These reports are monitored by English teachers, Isca's librarian, the SEN team and our Literacy Lead Practitioner and are used to inform interventions.

**Students are exposed to texts beyond their current reading ability.**

The English curriculum has been recently updated to include challenging, engaging and inspiring texts, which stretch and challenged all our learners. Opportunities are built in for students to read wider. A recommended reading list is shared with all parents.

In year 9, English teachers read to their students from a book of the teacher's choosing, which exposes the students to texts outside of their current reading ability. This means students are learning new vocabulary, learning about new topics, developing their empathy skills and their imagination and creativity, as well as a thirst for knowledge and a love of reading.

**Isca is a reading school.**

This work is currently being developed.



### Writing

**Writing composition strategies are taught through modelling and supported practice**

The 5 ingredients for effective writing are taught consistently across the English department.

Live modelling, scaffolding and WAGOLLs (what a good one looks like) are common features of English lessons.

Weekly writing challenges are a part of KS4 – and frequent writing opportunities are built into KS3 Schemes of Work so that extensive practice is encouraged.

**Students are taught tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary.**

To address the vocabulary gap, students are explicitly taught tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary in their lessons.

In all subjects, this is built into robust Schemes of Learning and is repeated at different points in the year – and across their time at Isca.

A comprehensive vocabulary list is shared with parents.

## Speaking and Listening

**Students' speaking and listening skills are developed.**

Purposeful speaking and listening activities support the development of students' language capability and provides a foundation for thinking and communication.

Purposeful activities include:

- Reading aloud.
- Collaborative learning activities where students share thought processes.
- Structured questioning.
- Student-led presentations.
- Debate teams.
- Public speaking opportunities.

## Intervention

**High-quality structured interventions support students to accelerate their progress.**

A dedicated Lead Literacy Teacher analyses data from Lexia and Accelerated Reader to intervene precisely and with impact.

Impact Reports are written termly and shared with all relevant parties: teachers, parents, Team Leaders.

The Lead Literacy Teacher works closely with our feeder primary schools to identify students not making expected progress. The Key Stage Two data is used to inform early interventions to ensure literacy does not become a barrier to GCSE success.

**High-quality structured interventions support students to accelerate their progress.**

The nature of the interventions is personalised to suit students' needs. It may include working on Lexia programmes, work with specialist TA's, support with Accelerated Reader, small group work focusing on phonics.

**High-quality structured interventions support students to accelerate their progress.**

The second in English has an overview of KS3 performance and is able to identify patterns of low performance and tackles these with timely interventions (deploying our Lead Literacy Teacher and by providing small group work).