

Literacy Strategy

Introduction:

In an era defined by artificial intelligence and digital technologies, the very nature of how we read, write and speak is undergoing a profound transformation. While these tools offer incredible opportunities, they also present a challenge to our cognitive patience and capacity for deep and meaningful engagement with text. As our students navigate a world of short-form content and instant gratification, the ability to focus, comprehend, and articulate complex ideas is more crucial than ever. We know that literacy is the cornerstone of all learning and a vital skill for success in adult life, yet we must confront a concerning national trend: a significant decline in reading for pleasure among teenagers. As a selective school, our students have strong writing skills and our IDSR shows that our students enter the School with 'above national' prior attainment in both reading and writing. However, considering the wider national context, we believe action is necessary to ensure this continues. This strategy is our commitment to ensuring that every student leaves our school as a confident and articulate communicator, empowering our students to become lifelong learners equipped with the skills they need to walk tall.

Specific Aims:

This document works in conjunction with the T&L Strategy and Building a Thinking Culture Strategy and is in line with the Ofsted [School Inspection Handbook](#), updated September 2024 and is in response to the DfE's Reading Framework 2023 and the National Literacy Trust's 'Children & Young People's Reading in 2025' report. This strategy aims to ensure AHS fulfils the following requirements:

- *The quality of education provided is exceptional*
- *Pupils' work across the curriculum is consistently of a high quality*
- *Pupils consistently achieve highly, particularly the most disadvantaged. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well*
- *Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer*
- *A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading*
- *Teachers ensure that their own speaking, listening, writing and reading of English support pupils in developing their language and vocabulary well.*

We aim to support AHS 5 Year School Development Plan, specifically Objective 1:

- To deliver an ambitious education for all that stimulates creative and critical thinking by further developing Quality of Education as the first core pillar of the School, with consideration for Covid challenges

- To further facilitate dynamic personal development as our second core pillar, by strengthening our wealth of opportunities for all, enabling the development of independence, strength and confidence; both academic and co-curricular.

And specifically these points from the SIP:

1.1 To further embed The AHS Classroom across the School in line with the new vision, mission and values, ensuring High Quality T&L for all students (with specific approaches through the T&L, ROW and Critical Thinking strategies and ArtsMark)

1.2 To improve communication relating to Quality of Education to all stakeholders. To link to effective retention and recruitment of KS5 students.

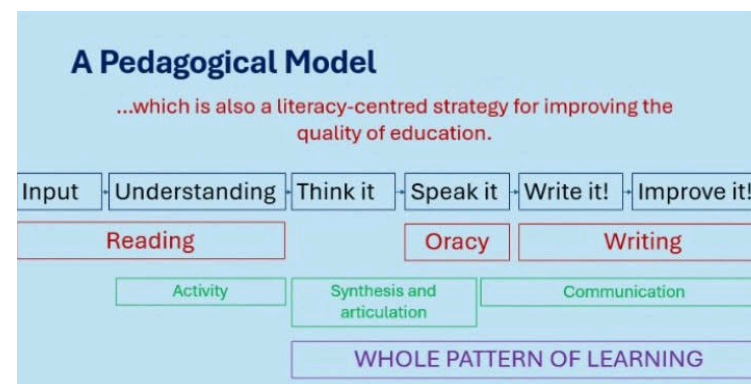
1.3 To appraise the immediate opportunities and risks associated with technology, specifically AI and Google, to ensure the AHS community adapts its Teaching and Learning Strategy and curriculum with confidence.

1.5 To plan for fluidity of curriculum through KS3 and KS4 and to further review the Extension Studies on offer to KS5, embedding critical thinking throughout

2.2 The creation of an ambitious, coherent and joined-up L4L and personal development programme through KS4 into KS5 to extend student development as well as meet external statutory requirements, supported by weekly PD focus in tutor time, including Pulse check in.

Strategy:

We will move from a ROW strategy with three distinct threads (reading, writing and oracy) to a literacy strategy that aims to streamline all of those areas into a cohesive whole. In response to the alarming 2024 National Literacy Trust report, we will prioritise increasing reading for pleasure in our students. A lot of excellent work has taken place in different areas of the School as part of the previous ROW Strategy. Mindful of workload and capacity of staff, the Literacy Lead will pull together the work different departments have already done and work with curriculum representatives to coordinate and streamline this to develop a whole-school disciplinary literacy approach. Much progress has been made since the 2012 OFSTED inspection which suggested the School “encourage all students to speak clearly, audibly and confidently when they answer questions, contribute to discussions or make presentations”. Think, Pair, Share (part of our Core Expectations) has contributed to this progress and oracy is further addressed via the questioning part of the AHS Think Tank, however the Literacy Lead will further explore how to develop oracy further.



Reading

We will move to a volitional reading model:

- Until now, KS3 forms were allocated a set test. Feedback from students was not positive and research shows that student agency in selecting texts is key to their engagement and willingness to read in their own time. Volition reading: reading that is actively chosen and driven by the reader's own desire and purpose, rather than being assigned or forced.
- Students and parents will be issued with year group specific recommended reading lists to encourage students to read a wider range of texts that will stretch and challenge them
- The Librarian and Reading Champion will explore ways to track and monitor the texts that students are reading and ways to ensure texts are ambitious
- **Dedicated time will be allocated during the school day: 10 minutes at the start of every form time and then 5 minutes at the beginning of every English, Maths, L4L and cover lesson. Evidence shows that 20 minutes of allocated reading time during the school day is key to increasing the amount students to read independently**
- The Librarian and Reading Champion will explore ways to support form tutors in the delivery and implementation of reading, such as tips on how to encourage book talk in form, expectations (if any) surrounding monitoring book choices, recommended reading lists
- The Literacy Lead and Librarian & Reading Champion will work collaboratively with the SEND team to SEND and disadvantaged students are fully supported to access the texts and activities available
- The Librarian and Reading Champion will explore ways to reward and celebrate reading achievements
- The Librarian and Reading Champion will explore ways to encourage reading more widely, e.g. through book clubs, competitions, reading ambassadors, DofE scheme, etc
- The Librarian and Reading Champion will explore how to increase parental involvement and participation in encouraging their daughters to read more widely and regularly
- Staff will be encouraged to set reading at appropriate times, such as for the occasional cover lesson or when students are waiting after finishing a test early
- The Literacy Lead will work with departments to explore how reading can be further supported, particular for those subjects where reading is an essential 'must do' at the starts of lessons
- We will reestablish Scholarly Reading with Year 12, in the first instance having a fortnightly form time session dedicated to it. Students will be signposted to subject specific texts
- The Librarian and Reading Champion will explore ways to further develop reading and engagement with the library and available resources for Sixth Form

Disciplinary Literacy (including academic reading, writing and oracy)

- The Literacy Read will start by ascertaining the levels and quality of literacy provision across subject areas to inform a more detailed strategy
- Identify and work with literacy curriculum leads to collaborate, share good practice and streamline approaches across the school
- Agree and define a whole school disciplinary approach, with a view to gradually introducing and developing this from 2025-2027
- In the meantime, oracy will be addressed via the T&L Strategy, specifically through the continued use of Think, Pair, Share as a Core Expectation and the quality questioning section of the AHS Think Tank
- The Assistant Head T&L will further explore the role of oracy as a formative and summative assessment tool with HODs ('building an AI resilient curriculum'), including, e.g. the Harkness method
- The Literacy Lead will explore how to introduce the language of oracy as outlined by the Oracy Education Commission to the wider school, mindful of the earlier work done by the previous oracy Lead:
 - ❖ Learning **to** talk, listen and communicate
 - ❖ Learning **through** talk, listening and communication
 - ❖ learning **about** talk, listening and communication
- Update the T&L Strategy to include short-term wins - how departments and teachers can support students to increase their handwriting stamina - share with staff and remind regularly
- The Literacy Lead will provide further staff training on 'how we read now', including tips for support students to engage meaningfully with digital and printed texts
- With the support of the AH, The Literacy Read will consider a trial reading-age test with a test group of students to assess the quality of comprehension when students enter Year 12

Evaluation Strategies and Measuring Impact:

1. Reading for pleasure student surveys
2. Learning walks and observations
3. Staff surveys
4. Student and staff voice
5. GL assessment data
6. Y12 reading age data TBC

Challenges:

1. Time for staff
2. Initiative 'overload' - work closely with other T&L leads to ensure what we asking is manageable, meaningful, and doesn't conflict with each other
3. Printing costs if departments move to printed texts
4. Library budget to support Scholarly Reading and volitional reading
5. Staff reluctance towards a collective responsibility for literacy

Research:

The Reading Lives of Teens: Research and Practice, edited by Chin Ee Loh
Children and young people's reading in 2025 (National Literacy Trust Report)
PIRLS 2021: National Report for England, April 2024
How We Read Now, Naomi S. Baron, 2021
DfE The reading Framework, 2023
EEF Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Guidance Report