

St Bede's Catholic School & Byron Sixth Form

SOAR (Literacy) Policy



Policy Title:	SOAR (Literacy) Policy
Policy Code:	STB - 004
Date Ratified by SLT:	12th October 2022
Date for Review (by):	September 2023 (MTA)

1. Policy Background & Context

SOAR (Spelling, Oracy And Reading) at St Bede's & Byron is the Year 7 to Year 13 initiative that seeks to drive and further improve the embedding of communication and explicit literacy skills across the curriculum.

At St Bede's and Byron, we are acutely aware of the importance of effective communication skills, and their ever growing importance in the world outside of the classroom. With the emerging reliance on technology, emphasis on efficiency and increased career mobility, our young people will need to articulate themselves accurately, efficiently and appropriately.

In 2020, only 47.8% of young people said they enjoy reading; a shocking statistic that is the lowest ever recorded. This deterioration leads to an estimated £2.5 billion to the UK economy each year, undermining competitiveness and placing unnecessary barriers in millions of people's day to day lives (KPMG, 2009).

We wish to use our SOAR policy to not only improve the quality of reading and writing of every single one of our students, but to fundamentally instil a love for and curiosity in reading, writing and speaking effectively.



2. Policy Intent

SOAR aims to expose all learners to the richness of English language so that pupils can access the pleasure of reading, the excitement of writing, the satisfaction of good speech in order to unlock the potential to learn and grow as individuals.

- a) Spelling & Vocabulary
 - a. To improve students' accurate retrieval of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary
 - b. To develop students' ability to include complex vocabulary in pieces of extended writing and verbal articulation
- b) Reading
 - a. To develop a love of reading, including independent reading
 - b. To drive subject progress, through the inclusion of Scholarly Reading texts, explicitly linked by expert subject teachers
 - c. To close the 'reading gap' through targeted intervention of students with low reading ages
- c) Writing
 - a. To embed accurate word formation (2a) and develop students' ability to write in a subject specific, precise and well applied manner
 - b. To ensure that writing is a skill embedded throughout the curriculum offer, through mandatory Key Task extended writing assessments in every cycle
- d) Oracy
 - a. To provide a 'linking vehicle' for students to apply their improved reading and writing ability in a verbal context
 - b. To develop students' confidence, critical reasoning, non-verbal articulation and persuasion skills

3. Policy Implementation

- a) Spelling & Vocabulary

'Of course words are magic. That's why they call it spelling.' Brian Holguin

- a. Words of the Week

Every week, each subject shall introduce one piece (two or three pieces for Key Stage 5) of Tier 2 (frequent) or Tier 3 (subject specific) vocabulary, linked to that week's learning. This shall be introduced to students using a Frayer Model (emphasising the word's definition, characteristics, etymology, morphology, examples and non-examples) and noted down by students in a glossary at the back of their subject notebooks. These words shall be explicitly mentioned throughout the week's content, utilising spaced retrieval practice to drive strong student retention. Every 5 weeks, there shall be a 'recall week', testing students' ability to retrieve one of the previous 4 words.



At the end of the week, every student shall be assessed on their ability to recall each word's spelling, with their results recorded via a centralised system, allowing for data analysis and impact monitoring.

At the end of each cycle, successful students shall be rewarded for their effort and accuracy in the SOAR Awards.

b. Sounds-Write

A large group of staff within St Bede's and Byron have attended, and been accredited through, Sounds-Write training. This is a DfE approved phonics programme, omnipresent in primary schools, which allows staff to explicitly teach new pieces of vocabulary to students who may still struggle with understanding the connection between sounds and letters, and the grouping of letters together (i.e. digraphs and trigraphs). This will allow them to manipulate the phonemes in their own writing.

Anticipated through the timetable, staff have been deliberately placed within particular classes so that they can employ their training and skills to break down barriers for the students of weakest reading and writing backgrounds.

c. Staff planning

Throughout sequences of learning, expert subject teachers are expected to note any key vocabulary and complex terms within medium term plans in order to anticipate their introduction, scaffold their learning and embed their application.

b) Reading

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Dr Seuss

a. Tutor Reading – reading for **pleasure**

Every morning, each tutor group (Year 7 to Year 13) shall have twenty minutes of dedicated communal reading time. Their texts are determined by the school reading canon (see Appendix 1.), allowing students to read at least 15 texts by the end of Key Stage 4 (21 texts by Key Stage 5). Exposing pupils to a culture where storytelling is valued and rich, aids all of the school community: it enables older pupils to look to anecdotes to help them understand new concepts; it helps younger pupils assimilate ideas; and it encourages us all to think about our curriculum as a collection of great stories of world culture. The range of books have been picked for their interest and challenge, introducing pupils to new vocabulary and developing pupils' confidence and strength in reading. The books that make up the prescribed Canon come from a range of cultures, timelines and genres, with the intention of promoting inclusivity and diversity, allowing our pupils to become citizens of the world. Research suggests that pupils who read more frequently tend to have more academic success, more regulated emotional wellbeing, and go on to have better career prospects after they leave school, than those who read less frequently.



Tutors will lead the reading with students strongly encouraged to also lead communal reading. Tutors may record students' articulation, speed, comprehension and tone levels so the impact of tutor reading can be annually reviewed. Students shall complete a survey at the end of each cycle, assessing their enjoyment of reading as well as offering the opportunity to evaluate and summarise their texts. Students who demonstrate strong improvements in their confidence level or verbal reading ability shall be nominated by their tutors for the SOAR Awards.

b. Accelerated Reader – reading for **progress**

Each Key Stage 3 (KS3) class shall have a dedicated lesson every fortnight (within their timetabled English curriculum) where they shall independently read texts that have been selected in a bespoke manner according to their reading level and age. Every KS3 class shall complete a deep reading test (STAR Reading Test) at the beginning and end of each cycle, which shall determine their reading level range. All books in our library are labelled/coded with their bespoke reading level ranges. Reading ages are available to all staff via SIMS.

Students will be allowed to bring their AR texts home in order to facilitate independent reading. Between each text read in the cycle, students shall do a 'reading quiz' through the Accelerated Reader software, which will provide a surface level indication of their comprehension and information retention. Students who demonstrate rapid progress in reading levels shall be recognised in the SOAR Awards.

c. SOAR Reading Groups – reading for **confidence**

Students who have the lowest reading ages in Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9, are challenged by an additional barrier to learning; accessing questions and interpreting them correctly. These students shall be provided small group intervention every morning. This shall be instead of tutor reading, and led by our dedicated, specialist Learning Support Assistants, as well as a group of Sixth Form volunteers. These smaller groups shall facilitate students to gain more confidence, discuss their reading more readily and anticipate complex vocabulary or concepts, through pre-discussion and pre-teaching. Group facilitators shall use techniques such as prediction and directed questioning to develop students' comprehension and competence. Again, students who flourish within paired reading shall be nominated for SOAR Awards. Groups shall be evaluated and changed accordingly every cycle.

d. Scholarly Reading – reading for **knowledge**

Within every sequence of learning, each department has selected a range of texts that will allow students to delve deeper into their learning outside of the classroom. These texts will allow students to observe taught concepts, their words of the week within context and how subject experts discuss, articulate and argue pioneering, specific and/or complex topics.



e. Book Clubs – reading for **fun**

Our School Librarian has a variety of timetabled Book Clubs throughout the week, allowing like-minded students to discuss books, their reading and different relevant topics. Book Clubs are a vital way for students who have ignited their love of books and reading to be challenged, perhaps through recommendations of different genres, more complex texts or juxtaposed concepts in order to develop their opinions, arguments and reasoning.

c) Writing

'Writing is challenging and pupils in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.' Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)

Writing tasks, including high stake questions in exams, can require pupils to recall and marshal large quantities of information, communicate with accuracy and group ideas in structured ways.

We recognise that all too often writing is not embedded throughout the curriculum offer, instead 'literacy based' subjects are often the only fields in which students can develop their extended writing techniques and capabilities. This is a deliberate and targeted focus within our school.

Every single subject, in every cycle, has a formal assessment, which shall be 'deep marked' according to our Marking Policy for literacy, that tests students ability to write in an extended manner. Pupils must be provided with regular opportunities within every subject's curriculum to transcribe, that is, physically write or type and compose, generating ideas and translating them into words, sentences and structured texts. Specifically, in 'Write Like A...', students will be given a stimulus, an audience, a purpose and a genre as well as a variety of scaffolds, so they can apply their Words of the Week, embed their learning of core, threshold concepts as well as their general writing skills. These tasks are deliberately designed to allow students to foster and refine their original ideas, recap knowledge, fostering their classroom learning and Scholarly Reading; coupling this with curiosity and risk, in order to develop authentic ideas and arguments.

Pieces of extended writing assessment must be triangulated between subject teachers and across departments in order to ensure a coherent, consistent approach to improving students' writing. Students with SEND may receive adapted forms of assessment, such as the opportunity to use a word processor, or a more advanced writing frame.

d) Oracy

At St Bede's and Byron, we understand that spelling, reading and writing shall only take our students so far. Oracy, that is verbal, discussion and critical skills are necessary in order to



unite these other literacy foci, elevating our students to become young people and British citizens who can talk respectfully, discuss holistically and reason critically.

More detailed implementation plans shall be included in Cycle 2, in preparation for whole school oracy rollout in Cycle 3 (2022-23).

4. Policy Impact & Monitoring

The results of this policy should it be effective are:

1. Development of reading, writing and communication in relation to starting points.
2. The acquisition of powerful knowledge that exposure to reading brings.
3. Reading fluency so that all can access the richest of curriculums.
4. Pupils' love of reading and writing for pleasure.
5. Academic excellence in writing in all subjects and ready to succeed in their next phase of learning.
6. Outcomes such as creativity, empathy and pupils understanding more about themselves and others.
7. Relationships: pupils sharing their enjoyment of reading with family and friends.
8. Communication skills; pupils' drawing on their knowledge of texts, vocabulary and information gained through reading, in their verbal explanations and written communication.
9. Pupils having the skills to confidently express themselves to a range of audiences.
10. Social outcomes such as eliminating the impact of early life literacy disadvantage and ultimately closing the reading gap between the 'word poor' and the 'word rich'.

Methods to monitor and assess this policy's impact against intent are:

1. 4/5 Stand Quality Assurance (pupil voice, book scrutiny, teacher voice, lesson observations)
2. Accelerated Reader baseline/end of cycle assessment
3. Key Assessment tasks, including Write Like A (both results and design)
4. Increased participation in class discussion or assembly, or extra curricular activities
5. Word of the Week Records (data sheets)
6. Pupil voice and attendance at book clubs
7. Use of the library as a space to read
8. Tutor reading records



Appendices

Appendix 1. Our Reading Canon



Curriculum Links										
ENG	English	Science	Geography	DT	MFL	MFL	PE	RE		
+	Maths	History	ICT	Music	Art	Art	Careers	PHSE		

Protected Characteristics							
AGE	Age	Race	Religion / Belief	Gender Reassignment	Gender	Pregnancy and Maternity	
+	Gender	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Marriage and Civil Partnership			

British Values	
Blue circle	Democracy
Yellow circle	Individual Liberty
Green circle	Rule of Law
Purple circle	Mutual Respect
Pink circle	Tolerance

Appendix 2. Change Action Plan (MTA/RBL)

Cycle 1 (2022-23)

Week:	Spelling:	Reading:	Writing:	Oracy:
1	Rollout WotW (Glossaries back of book)	STAR Tests (Y7-9)		Staggered implementation to facilitate thorough embedding of other initiatives
2		Distribute Tutor Reading records		
3				
4			Collect WLA WAGOLLS	
5		Create Reading Groups		
6	SGP (Vol CPD) SOAR Focus	Reading Groups start		
7			WLA CPD	
8		Book Clubs start/Library launch	Floodlighting – WLA design	
9		Sixth Form Paired Reading set up		
10				
11	Collect Cycle 2 WotW			
12		STAR Tests (Y7-9)		
13	Archive Cycle 1 Records & clear for Cycle 2	Reading Survey, Prepare Cycle 2 Reading Groups	Secure WLA CPD date for Cycle 2/3	
Cycle 1 SOAR Awards (assembly)				

Cycle 2 (2022-23)

Week:	Spelling:	Reading:	Writing:	Oracy:
1		STAR Tests (Y7-9)	Explore school wide writing frame	Formulate Oracy Intent and Implementation
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				Secure SLT approval
7				
8			Spotlighting – WLA feedback	Prepare oracy initiatives for Cycle 3.
9				
10				
11	Collect Cycle 3 (Y11-13) WotW			



12		STAR Tests (Y7-9)		
13	Archive Cycle 2 Records & clear for Cycle 3	Reading Survey, Prepare Cycle 2 Reading Groups		
Cycle 2 SOAR Awards (assembly)				

Cycle 3 (2022-23)

Week:	Spelling:	Reading:	Writing:	Oracy:
1		STAR Tests (Y7-9)		
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12		STAR Tests (Y7-9)		
13	Archive Cycle 3 Records & clear for Cycle 1	Reading Survey, Prepare Y7/8 Cycle 1 reading groups		
Cycle 3 SOAR Awards (assembly)				



Appendix 3. Strategies for staff.

- Aim to hear a minimum of five students read every lesson (even a sentence)
- Provide a writing frame or sentence starters to students embarking on a piece of extended writing
- Employ a reading pen (SEND students) to allow increased accessibility for some students
- Provide word-level, sentence-level and whole text level instruction
- Ensure that pupils understand the subject specific connotations of Tier 2 vocabulary used in writing questions
- Help pupils monitor and review their writing, for example by providing a checklist of features included in high quality answers or using it as a self or peer-assessment tool
- Recap key ideas before beginning a writing task which will help pupils use them in writing more successfully

Over time, it is recommended that modelling and scaffolding strategies from the teacher is gradually removed, supporting pupils to become increasingly independent.(EEF)

