

Richard Cloudesley School

Literacy Statement

Approved by C&O Committee: 12.01.17

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Introduction

"Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society." UNESCO, 2009

At Richard Cloudesley School we take a broad view of literacy which acknowledges each learner's journey in developing their awareness, comprehension and skills in using objects, printed symbols and text to build an understanding of the world around them. The intricate relationship between communication, language and literacy is at the heart of all we do, with Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) strategies penetrating deeply into all literacy learning opportunities.

Here at Richard Cloudesley, we believe that all pupils should have the opportunity to access and enjoy success with learning the skills to read and write.

We understand the power and importance of being literate, how this opens so many doors for our pupils, with regards functional life skills, access to the environment and community, communication with others, using AAC systems as well as through social media. Above all we understand the pleasure that can come from reading and writing.

We firmly believe that no student is too 'anything' to be able to learn to read and write.

Aims of the school

- To raise standards of literacy with an understanding of the continuum of development and the broad range of literacy experiences;
- To enable pupils to autonomously express and communicate meaning in spoken language, gesture, sign or through augmentative or alternative communication;
- To provide pupils with a range of relevant, age appropriate and purposeful opportunities to develop their ability to read and write.

Roles and responsibilities

Literacy skills support independence and access to the whole curriculum therefore it is the responsibility of all staff, including support and administrative staff to provide opportunities for learners to develop literacy in a means that is relevant to them.

- Senior managers: lead and give a high priority to literacy, language and communication;
- Literacy co-ordinator: supports all staff in the implementation of strategies and encourages staff to learn from each other's practice by sharing ideas;
- Teachers across the curriculum: plan literacy programs suitable to individuals' needs and contribute to pupils' development of language through access to their most suitable style of communication;

- Teaching assistants: provide meaningful opportunities to access functional literacy across the school environment, and consistently support pupils in individualised literacy and communication programs;
- Therapists: support pupils with their physical and communication needs to access communication and the curriculum. This is in addition to supporting speech and language therapy aspects of literacy.
- Parents: encourage their children to use the range of strategies they have learnt to improve their levels of literacy, helping them to generalise what they have learned in school and applying their skills and knowledge through communication focused activities or reading;
- Pupils: take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs and making improvements.

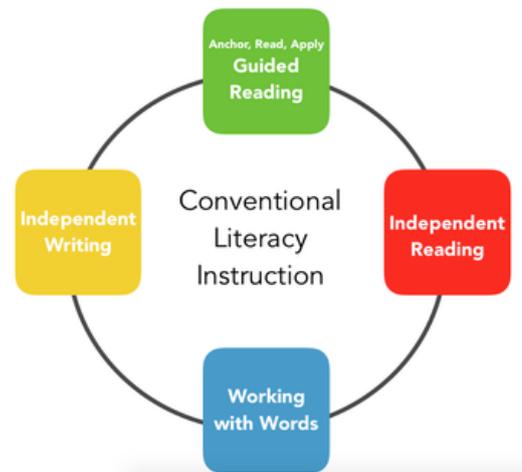
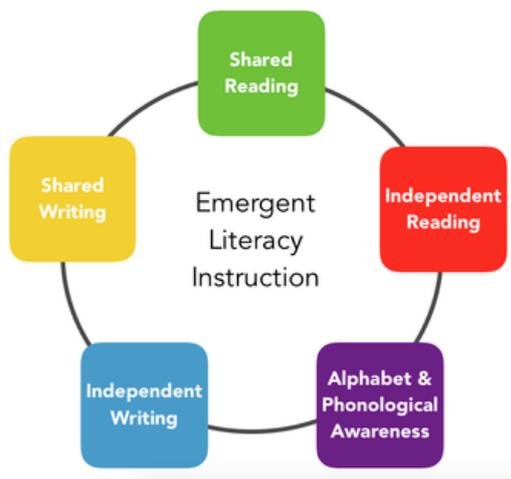
Curriculum

Here at Richard Cloudesley, we use the Balanced Literacy approach to teach the necessary skills for reading and writing.

The comprehensive, research based system was adapted to support the teaching of Literacy skills for pupils with a range of disabilities, by Karen Erickson and David Koppenhaver at the Centre for Literacy and Disability. The system is now implemented extensively across the globe, structuring the learning of literacy skills for pupils with severe and complex educational needs.

The system addresses all the necessary skills needed to read and write, providing a balanced diet allowing all pupils the opportunity

- to be read to,
- to read with others,
- to read independently,
- to have others write for them,
- to write with others,
- to write independently,
- to develop their phonological awareness
- to develop the skills to talk about reading and writing
- to develop an enjoyment for reading and writing.



The separate 'blocks', Self Selected reading, Guided Reading, Writing and Independent Writing, interact with each other, ensuring that there is an immersive environment that routinely provides a model for these skills as well as providing opportunities for individuals to practice and develop these skills in a safe and supportive way.

The system has two main pathways, that for Emergent learners and that for Conventional learners.

The balance of the diet is different for each, with a focus on Shared Reading and Shared Writing providing explicit models for Emergent learners.

The development of receptive and expressive language skills is planned for within the Balanced Literacy approach and across the curriculum. many of our learners have personalised AAC systems or devices to support communication. In addition to planning for communication opportunities across the curriculum subjects we provide opportunities for our pupils to practise and develop their skills in a wide range of contexts.

In both the primary and secondary departments, pupils have access to a library with a growing range of texts and materials that are suitable to individual pupils' needs. These are a valuable and valued resource. They are used for research, reading, group work, lunchtime and daily reading activities in addition to reading for pleasure.