



'Working together to safeguard children'
"RESPECT, BELIEVE, ACHIEVE."

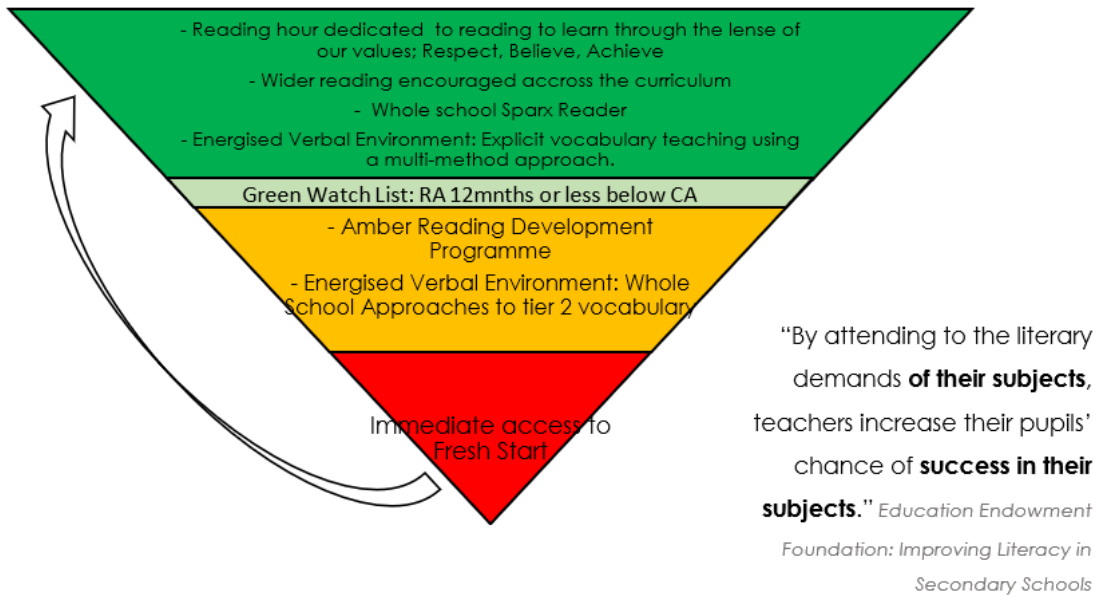
Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Literacy Policy

Key staff:	N McDiarmid
Last reviewed:	October 2025
Approved by Governing Body: Date:	
Due for renewal:	October 2026



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‘Help us to achieve our full potential in everything we do’

Literacy definition: The skills and knowledge required for effective speaking, listening, reading, and writing, enabling pupils to communicate, learn, and think critically across the curriculum.

Literacy at Cardinal Heenan

- An **energised verbal environment** is the foundation of every pupil’s literacy experience.
- A **clear, systematic, and ambitious pathway** to becoming an **accurate and fluent reader** is the entitlement of every pupil.
- We prioritise the development of **automaticity** in reading, enabling pupils to access complex texts and sustain stamina in independent reading.
- **High-quality talk**, vocabulary development and reading are embedded across the curriculum.

Rationale

We know that strong literacy skills underpin academic success and life chances. Literacy development is the shared responsibility of all staff, across every subject and development opportunity. We are particularly alert to pupils who arrive at secondary school without having secured age-related expectations in reading, ensuring they receive intensive, evidence-based support from the outset.

For pupils who have not yet secured decoding skills, a systematic synthetic phonics programme (Fresh Start) is delivered as an intervention with absolute fidelity. It is our non-



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negotiable priority that every pupil receives the teaching that they need to master the skill of reading. No pupil will leave our school unable to read fluently and accurately.

Alongside this, **all pupils — regardless of their starting point — engage with ambitious texts, taught advanced vocabulary, and challenged to read, write and speak with precision and sophistication.**

We are resolute in ensuring that:

- **Gaps in foundational literacy knowledge are identified and closed quickly.**
- **The quality of teaching** in reading, writing, speaking and listening is **systematic, sequenced, and responsive** to need.
- Assessment informs provision intelligently to ensure **rapid** and **sustained** progress, particularly for those not yet meeting age-related expectations.

We are committed to fostering a reading culture that celebrates the joy, purpose, and lifelong value of reading. Reading is visible, valued, and woven into the fabric of school life.

Statement of Intent

Until pupils can **read with fluency and accuracy**, they cannot fully access the curriculum or progress in their learning. The capacity to "read to learn" is essential.

Pupils who fall behind are not only disadvantaged academically, but also risk **future marginalisation** — socially, economically, and politically (*ReadingAgency.org.uk*).

Our intent is therefore clear: **“Reading is our top literacy priority.”**

All pupils, including those who arrive behind, are **quickly brought up to speed** through a combination of **high-quality teaching and targeted intervention**.

Oracy (speaking and listening) is **explicitly taught and enhanced** across subjects, helping pupils build vocabulary, articulate understanding, and engage in structured talk.

Writing is deliberately taught, practised, and refined across the curriculum, ensuring that pupils can process and express increasingly complex ideas with confidence and accuracy.

Key Roles & Responsibilities

Senior Leadership

- Literacy, and **reading in particular**, is a **whole-school priority** for 2024–25 and beyond.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive the **training, tools, and time** needed to deliver literacy consistently and effectively.
- Monitoring and evaluation secure impact in the classrooms and outcomes for pupils.

Role of Reading Lead

- Maintain the strategic focus on reading across the school.



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- Deliver planned and responsive CPD for all staff, based on **evidence-informed strategies** (e.g. EEF, Ofsted toolkit), revisiting key strategies over time and using classroom observation and feedback to inform next steps.
- Oversee the assessment of reading needs, ensuring **timely intervention** where gaps are identified.
- **Monitor fidelity** to intervention programmes (e.g. Fresh Start, Amber, Reciprocal Reading).
- Track the progress of pupils beyond intervention using internal data, Sparx Reader analytics, NGRT scores, and work sampling to ensure gains are sustained
- Champion literacy at both local and regional networks.

Role of Every Subject Teacher

- Embed literacy across the curriculum as an essential component of disciplinary knowledge.
- Explicitly teach Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary using multimethod strategies (morphology, etymology, synonym, context, dual coding).
- Use consistent whole-school reading strategies (“I Say, You Say”, choral reading, echo reading) to build fluency and comprehension.
- Model and scaffold high-quality talk in a range of academic contexts.
- Use reading age data to inform adaptive teaching.
- Adjustments to provision are made **in real-time**, ensuring that no pupil is left behind.
- Celebrate literacy achievement through Class Charts (Literacy & Oracy Awards).

Role of Reading Teachers

- Deliver **KS3 Reading** curriculum with fidelity and consistency.
- Monitor and respond to pupil progress and engagement promptly.
- Adapt instruction where needed, ensuring that **all pupils master comprehension strategies**.
- Develop knowledge of the **broader curriculum**, enabling pupils to make meaningful connections across subjects and to **build cultural capital** by linking reading content to wider themes, historical contexts, and current events.

Role of Reading Intervention Teachers

- Deliver **Fresh Start** and **Amber packages** with fidelity.
- Regularly report progress to the Reading Lead.
- Intensify support where progress is **slower than expected**, ensuring **gaps are closing quickly**.

Home-School Link

- All KS3 and KS4 pupils have access to **Sparx Reader** for structured reading at home.
- KS3 pupils are expected to complete **weekly reading homework**, including reading aloud with an adult once per week.



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- Families are kept informed via curriculum overviews, and involved in supporting reading at home.
- Pupils and families are signposted to **theme-linked enrichment activities** e.g. directed watching. These opportunities help **deepen understanding, reinforce key messages, and build cultural capital** through discussion of themes, values, and ideas beyond the text.
- Families are encouraged to engage in shared reading and dialogue to strengthen home–school partnerships and foster reading for pleasure.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Pupil voice and engagement data inform ongoing refinement of literacy provision.
- **Progress data is analysed regularly**, with particular attention to pupils who are not yet reading at age-related expectations.
- Subject leaders contribute to evaluating the **impact of whole-school literacy strategies**.
- Reading materials are reviewed regularly to ensure they align with curriculum content, reflect diverse perspectives, and build pupils’ cultural knowledge.
- Data and work sampling are triangulated with lesson visits to evaluate implementation and impact.
- Senior leaders and governors maintain oversight of literacy development, ensuring accountability and sustained improvement.