

How can I help my child improve his/her literacy?

Literacy covers the three key areas of Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening

Reading

One of the main ways to help your child to improve his/her literacy skills is to encourage them to read. Reading anything from magazines, newspapers, short stories, novels, poetry, plays, non-fiction texts, letters, autobiographies and so on will really help your child.

Encourage them to visit the school library or to borrow books from your local library. Make reading a part of everyday routine. There are reading lists available in the literacy section of the school's website or speak to the librarian.

Talk about what your child is reading and why they like or dislike it. Encourage them to swap books with friends and to recommend books to each other. If your child has enjoyed a book and wants to know what to read next, use the following website:

www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk

For GCSE students keep charity letters and adverts that come through the door and ask them to think about how the text is trying to persuade the reader. A weekend newspaper is great practice for the language exam as this will be based on non-fiction texts. Most newspapers are also available online – encourage them to look at the websites.

Writing

Encourage your child to check their written work carefully. It should be checked for accuracy and for use of interesting language and devices. A piece of written work is not finished until it has been proofread!

The key to good writing is VARIETY: variety in punctuation; variety in sentence structure and variety in vocabulary.

Encourage your child to use both a thesaurus and a dictionary. They will need both, especially if they use an online thesaurus as the new word might not make sense in the context they are using it.

The use of a full range of punctuation is essential to get higher grades at KS3 and GCSE. There is a powerpoint available in the literacy section of our website or encourage your child to use the following websites for games and tasks to practise spelling, punctuation and grammar.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/>

Speaking and Listening

This area can be very challenging for some students and yet other students find it gives them opportunities for great results.

Encourage your child to talk to you and others in your family about challenging topics. Use items in the news, on television or from their reading to talk about controversial issues. Encourage them to think about other ways of looking at things and consider other viewpoints.

When your child has a Speaking and Listening assessment encourage them to prepare thoroughly and practise what they want to say. If they are confident enough they could practise in front of you as an audience.

Encourage them to think about how they speak in different situations and to use an appropriate language in assessed situations. They should practise speaking in a more formal tone without using slang, 'like' or too many 'ers' and 'ums'.

