

Eastern Learning Alliance

Trust Literacy Policy

2026–27

Approved by	[Insert headteacher name]
Review cycle	Annual
Policy owner	Trust Literacy Lead
In consultation with	Trust and school leaders

Eastern Learning Alliance

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Document Control

Version	1.0
Academic year	2026–27
Key changes	Trust-wide policy updated to reflect the literacy strategy developed during 2025–26, including screening, diagnostic assessment, intervention, oracy and quality assurance.
Next review	2027

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1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out Eastern Learning Alliance's Trust-wide approach to literacy. It applies across schools, subjects and phases and explains how the Trust develops vocabulary, oracy, reading and writing; identifies barriers; provides additional support; and evaluates impact.

It establishes common principles and expectations while recognising that individual schools will adapt implementation to their phase, curriculum and context. It should be read alongside each school's curriculum, SEND, teaching and learning, assessment, homework or preparation, and equality policies.

2. Strategic aims

- Embed high expectations for spoken and written language in every subject.
- Develop pupils' and students' academic and subject-specific vocabulary so that they can access an ambitious curriculum.
- Strengthen reading fluency, comprehension and confidence while fostering reading for pleasure.
- Teach pupils and students to write accurately, coherently and independently in forms appropriate to each discipline.
- Identify reading and literacy needs early and provide support matched to need.
- Reduce barriers for pupils and students with SEND, those who are disadvantaged and those who use English as an additional language, without lowering curriculum ambition.
- Use assessment and quality assurance to evaluate implementation and improve provision.

3. Trust literacy framework

The Trust literacy framework is organised through five connected strands. These establish consistent Trust expectations while allowing schools, phases and subjects to teach the language, reading and writing demands of their own curricula explicitly.

3.1. Building academic vocabulary

Pupils and students need a secure understanding of both general academic vocabulary and the specialist language of individual subjects. Vocabulary is selected deliberately, taught explicitly, revisited and applied in context.

- Curriculum areas identify and teach essential vocabulary within schemes of learning.
- Teachers explain meaning, pronunciation, spelling, morphology and usage where these support understanding.
- Key vocabulary is revisited through classroom talk, reading, writing, preparation work and assessment.
- Pupils and students are expected to use precise terminology rather than rely on vague or everyday alternatives.

3.2. Developing oracy

High-quality talk supports thinking, vocabulary development, reading comprehension and writing. Oracy is planned as a purposeful part of learning rather than an additional activity.

- Staff model clear, grammatically accurate and subject-appropriate spoken language.
- Lessons provide structured opportunities to explain, question, discuss, present and debate.
- Speaking frames and sentence stems support pupils and students when needed, with increasing independence over time.
- Pupils and students are taught to listen actively, build on others' contributions and justify ideas with evidence.

3.3. Refining writing

Writing expectations vary by phase and subject. Pupils and students are explicitly taught how successful writing works within each discipline and are given opportunities to develop accuracy, coherence, stamina and independence.

- Teachers model the planning and construction of effective responses.
- Pupils and students are taught relevant spelling, punctuation, grammar and text conventions.
- Models, scaffolds and writing frames are used responsively and reduced when pupils and students are ready.
- Extended writing is planned across the curriculum, with opportunities to edit, improve and respond to feedback.
- Teachers reinforce high standards of presentation and written accuracy while recognising individual needs.

3.4. Fostering a reading culture

Trust schools promote reading both as an essential route to curriculum access and as a source of knowledge, empathy and enjoyment.

- In primary schools, a validated systematic synthetic phonics programme provides the foundation for early reading.
- Pupils and students encounter appropriately challenging fiction, non-fiction and subject-specific texts.
- Teachers make reading processes visible by modelling how expert readers approach demanding material.
- Schools provide access to age-appropriate reading material through libraries, classrooms and digital resources where available.
- Reading recommendations, enrichment and pupil or student leadership promote wider reading and participation.

3.5. Identifying need and targeting intervention

Universal screening provides a consistent starting point for identifying pupils and students who may require closer review. It does not replace teacher knowledge, classroom evidence or diagnostic assessment.

- Secondary schools use NGRT, or an agreed equivalent where appropriate, as an annual universal screening measure. Primary schools use relevant statutory and school assessment information. Age-standardised outcomes are considered in relation to national benchmarks.
- Results are analysed alongside curriculum performance, SEND information, attendance and teacher observations.
- Where screening indicates a significant or specific concern, further diagnostic assessment may be used to understand fluency, accuracy, comprehension or underlying reading processes.
- Support is matched to identified need and may include phonics, fluency or comprehension work, structured one-to-one or small-group intervention, bespoke literacy teaching or examination-literacy support at KS4.
- Pupils and students receiving intervention are reassessed at appropriate points. Provision is continued, adapted or concluded in response to evidence of progress.

No single test score is used in isolation to define a pupil or student or determine provision. Assessment informs professional judgement and is considered alongside the wider evidence available.

4. Consistent classroom practice

Across the Trust, teachers are expected to:

- identify the literacy demands of planned learning and remove avoidable barriers to access;
- teach important vocabulary and support pupils and students to use it accurately;
- model fluent reading, effective discussion and successful subject-specific writing;
- select texts that are ambitious, purposeful and accessible with appropriate support;
- check understanding through questioning, talk, reading and written work;
- provide scaffolding responsively while maintaining high expectations;
- reinforce accuracy and give feedback that helps pupils and students improve; and
- share concerns promptly where additional assessment or support may be required.

5. Inclusion and access

Literacy provision is designed to enable all pupils and students to participate in an ambitious curriculum. Teachers use appropriate adaptations, including explicit instruction, careful modelling, vocabulary support, chunking, guided practice and assistive technology where relevant. Support is tailored to need and does not reduce the intellectual ambition of the curriculum.

6. Identification, assessment and intervention process

School literacy leaders, SEND teams, English teams and curriculum or phase leaders work together where needs are complex, persistent or subject-specific. Each school translates the Trust policy into a literacy action plan responsive to its phase and context.

Screen	Use agreed universal or statutory assessment information to identify pupils and students who may require closer review.
Understand	Consider results alongside classroom evidence and use diagnostic assessment where necessary to identify the nature of need.
Support	Match intervention to need, with clear entry information, intended outcomes and responsible staff.
Review	Reassess at appropriate intervals and continue, adapt or conclude provision in response to evidence of progress.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1. Trust leaders

- Set the shared strategic direction and Trust expectations for literacy.
- Support collaboration, professional development and appropriate assessment across schools.
- Review implementation and impact through Trust quality-assurance processes.

7.2. Trust literacy lead

- Coordinate the Trust literacy strategy and provide guidance and professional development.
- Support consistent screening, analysis, diagnostic pathways and evaluation of intervention.
- Work with school leaders to strengthen vocabulary, oracy, reading and writing.
- Report Trust-wide patterns, progress and priorities to Trust leaders.

7.3. School senior leaders and literacy leads

- Translate the Trust policy into a school literacy action plan responsive to phase and context.
- Ensure appropriate staffing, training, assessment and intervention capacity.
- Monitor implementation and report progress, impact and emerging needs.

7.4. Curriculum leaders

- Define the disciplinary literacy demands of their subjects or phases and embed them in curriculum planning.
- Ensure key vocabulary, reading and writing expectations are consistently taught.
- Monitor implementation through curriculum review, work scrutiny and professional dialogue.

7.5. Teachers and support staff

- Apply the expectations in this policy in daily practice.
- Use assessment and observation to identify barriers and respond appropriately.
- Communicate concerns and contribute to agreed support plans.

8. Monitoring, evaluation and impact

The Trust and its schools evaluate literacy through a combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence. This enables leaders to consider not only whether provision is in place, but whether it is improving pupils' and students' access, confidence and outcomes.

- screening, diagnostic and reassessment information;
- progress and attendance within targeted intervention;
- curriculum assessment and examination outcomes;
- learning visits, pupil or student work and curriculum review;
- pupil and student voice and engagement with reading; and
- evaluation of staff development and agreed improvement actions.

Findings inform school literacy action plans, Trust priorities, professional development and decisions about curriculum or intervention. Trust leaders review the policy annually and revise it sooner if evidence or statutory guidance requires this.

9. Partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers support literacy by encouraging regular reading, discussing learning, helping pupils and students explore unfamiliar vocabulary and reinforcing the importance of preparation work. Families should contact their school if they have concerns about reading, writing or spoken communication. Schools will communicate where additional assessment or targeted support is planned.