

Policy/Procedure Name:	SMT088		
Policy/Procedure Number:	School Literacy Policy		
Date of Approval:	7 th May 2023		
Effective Date:	September 2022		
Revised Date:	January 2024		
Review by Date:	January 2025		
Policy/Procedure Author:	Head of School		
Policy/Procedure Owner:	Principal		
Management Committee Approved By:	SMT		
Governor /Trustee Committee Approved By (where appropriate):	NA		
For Action By:	All School Staff		
For Information to:	All Staff Parents		
Approval requested to upload on the Treloar's Website:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (tick if requested)		
Who is carrying out EIA? (see details of EIA in appendix)	Jo Cox	Date of EIA?	7 th May 2023

Contents

- 1. Wider curriculum**
- 2. Treloar's Students**
- 3. Aims**
- 4. Research and Development**
- 5. English Overview**
- 6. Organisation**
- 7. Picture Communication Symbols**
- 8. English strands linked to National Curriculum**
 - 8.1 Speaking & Listening**
 - 8.2 Reading - Phonics, How we teach and develop reading, Text selection**
 - 8.3 Writing**
- 9. Assessment**

1. Wider curriculum

Literacy is essential for the development of young people as individuals to enable them to function with independence as members of society, both now and in the future. Literacy is a tool and medium for effective learning in other curriculum areas taught within the school.

At Treloar School we do not accept commonly recognised limitations. We break down barriers through our exemplary multi-disciplinary holistic approach to education and develop personalised and bespoke curriculums, which enables students to achieve their best and meet their full capabilities.

Our multidisciplinary holistic approach ensures that students develop literacy skills at their own level. This includes for some developing functional communication strategies through bespoke interventions.

At Treloar School we strive for excellence in Literacy achievement throughout the school. We recognise the necessity to develop students' literacy within a cross curricular and integrated programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Across all classes, students are given opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and use of language, within a balanced and exciting curriculum. We recognise the broad range of abilities and value all modes of communication, reading and recording.

2. Treloar's students

Learning to read and spell is part of a wider language learning process. In order to become fluent at reading and writing, student need experience, knowledge and ability to understand and use spoken language, together with involvement and knowledge of the world around them. This language and experience base is underpinned by the student's own physical, cognitive, sensory and communication skills.

Many of the students at Treloar's have significant difficulties in one or more of these areas, and this may have a considerable impact on the way they learn. Acquiring literacy skills is a much more complex and problematic process than for many typically developing student.

Damage to the brain that has affected physical skills may only be limited to areas associated with movement and there may be no other impairments. However damage to the brain can be more widespread; e.g. about half of all student with Cerebral Palsy have some communication difficulties. These may be due to the effects of the damage on the language areas of the brain, or due to poor control over speech organs or muscles.

Student with speech difficulties are at a disadvantage when learning literacy skills because it is through continuous use and practice that awareness develops. Research demonstrates the strong link between a student's difficulties in spoken language and their difficulties in learning to read and write. Listening to other people, particularly proficient speakers of the English language, is an important part of the language learning process, but it is not considered enough. Being able to imitate what they see and hear, becoming experienced and confident in using language, together with thinking and talking about aspects of language is crucial to literacy learning in order to understand how a written code (i.e. the printed word) is devised from the spoken language.

The extent and nature of the difficulties that students at Treloar's may experience in learning to become efficient readers vary; no two students have the same pattern of problems and difficulties may arise at any stage of the processes involved. Many of the prerequisite skills (visuo-motor, auditory, motor, phonological and language) may be significantly delayed, deficient or disordered, and students will require structured, individual teaching programmes to maximise and further develop the abilities they have.

There is also a need to accept that for some students it is unrealistic to expect significant progress in the development of some of these skills and to know when it becomes counterproductive to continue. Our highly

specialist staff continue to monitor students' progress and demonstrate sensitivity to limitations and ensure that student self-esteem and dignity is maintained.

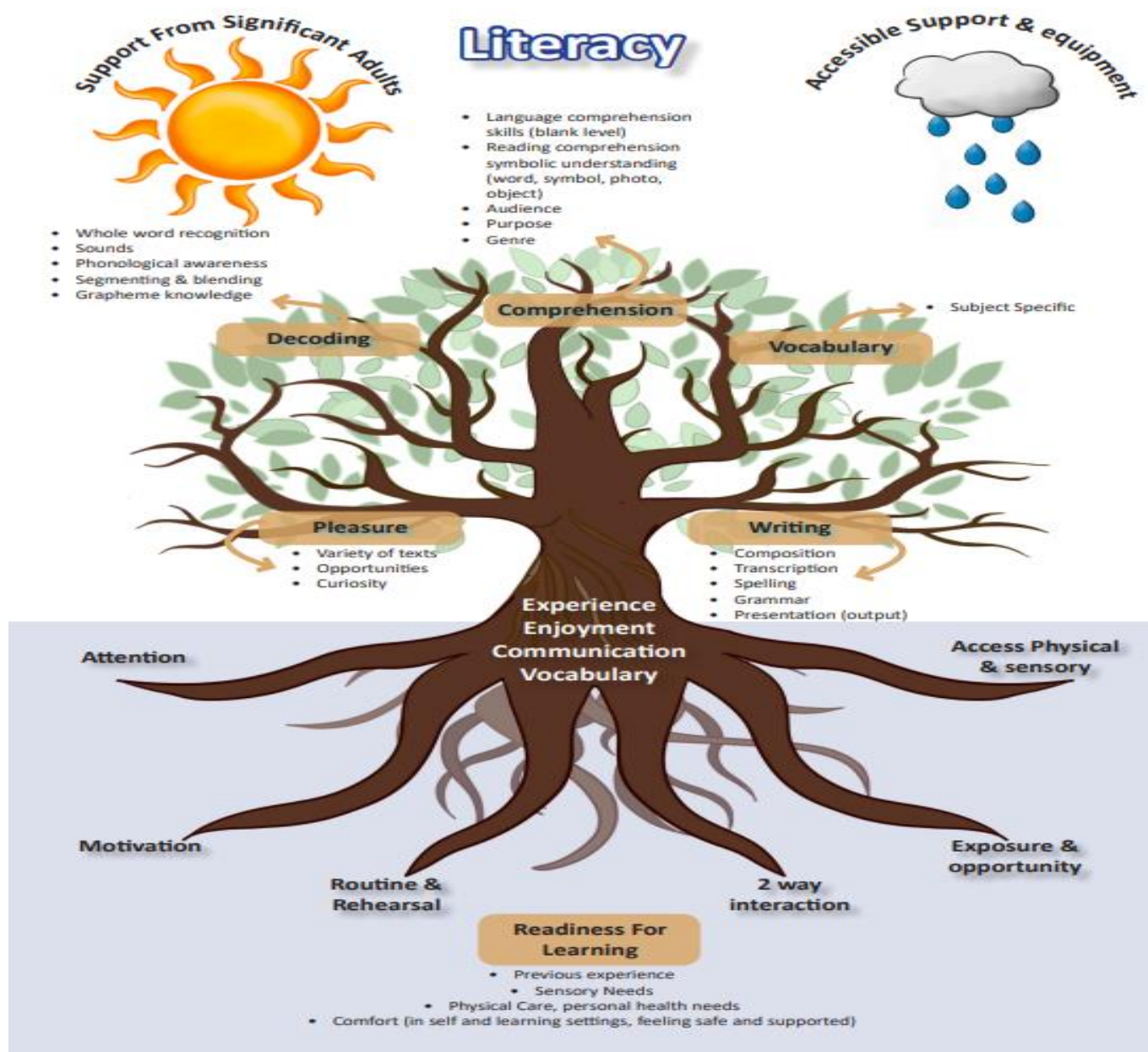
3. Aims

Treloar School aims for students to:

- develop strategies to communicate effectively
- develop the ability to read, understand and respond to all types of written communications through carefully planned, personalised and meaningful learning opportunities across the curriculum
- communicate, read and write with increasing confidence, fluency and understanding
- make use of these skills and be empowered to communicate and develop their thoughts, ideas, feelings and identity and connect themselves with the world they live in
- develop their ever-growing vocabulary, through an interest in words and their meaning
- Be equipped with a command of their AACs or verbally to acquire a wide vocabulary.
- Be encouraged to develop a love of reading and to read for enjoyment
- Experience a range of text/media types and genres, across a range of contexts, to develop their understanding
- Learn to write and respond to a variety of styles and genres and be able to apply characteristic features of texts in their own work
- be able to use a full range of reading cues, to monitor their reading and correct their mistakes
- have the opportunity to develop their creativity and imagination

4. Research and Development

Our Literacy policy is grounded in the extensive work undertaken on the development of our Treloar's Literacy Tree in identifying the ingredients for a strong dynamic, broad and knowledge based curriculum whilst celebrating the importance of multi-disciplinary working with Speech and Language Therapists who shape and inform interventions and Communication and interaction aids for our students. The framework has been designed and continues to be reviewed by our own English working party alongside an English specialist from the University of Sussex.



The support that the school provides to student to maximise their independence and reduce barriers to communication and the work undertaken by staff to promote their mobility is exemplary. (Ofsted Social Care 2022)

5. English Overview

The English overview is a 'vehicle' to develop the knowledge and skills of each branch of our Literacy Tree. The overview is based upon national frameworks and specialised curriculum models (IMPACTS, Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum). Due to many (over 70%) of our students working below Pre-key stage 2 standards - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) the school has broken down the primary curriculum into smaller steps against each of the branches. **(See English Overview)** This has been created to ensure continuity and progression and ensures provision is related to attainment, not age.

The structure of the Treloar's English overview also has a second focus. It enables students to develop knowledge of the language they need to meet their needs and keep them safe in life beyond Treloar's. For the rest of their lives students who attend Treloar School will rely on the physical support of others. Student need to offer information, explain, instruct, persuade and recount events to ensure their needs are met.

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Information	Narrative	Instruction	Recount	Explanation	Persuasion
To classify and / or describe	To entertain, amuse or instruct	To instruct someone on how to do something	To retell a series of events / steps in a simple procedure	To explain how or why something occurs	To persuade by arguing one side of an issue To discuss one or more sides to an issue

6. Organisation

Priority is given to developing a clear communication method and developing increasing independence and knowledge in the use of language. For some groups, Literacy is taught separately and in addition to English lessons(see English overview), and although all staff recognise that there are areas of overlap, For some of these groups the emphasis is very much on word or sentence level work, although every attempt is made to embed that knowledge within text level work where possible and not to over isolate these developing skills. Close cooperation between staff ensure that these lessons complement each other and provide the practice, over learning and the generalisation that many of the students need.

Decisions about individual programmes and appropriate ways to support students are frequently reviewed and recommendations from an Educational Psychologist may be sought. For most students, staff utilise a wide range of specialist materials and resources and implement a range of assistive technology devices to deliver the teaching programme. Teaching is diagnostic and flexible, taking into account the individual difficulties and abilities of each student. Teaching often takes a multi-sensory approach with frequent opportunities for revision and overlearning. At all stages of learning it is important that the students' age, ability, interests and maturity are taken into account.

At Treloar School 'Real-World Learning' is embedded within termly topics, promoting a balance between new experiences, increased student choice and exposure to vocabulary and a wide range of opportunities which hold value for 'Life Beyond Treloar's'. A topic based approach combines subjects allowing students the opportunity to explore their specific needs and interests building on a foundation of motivating activities, whilst making make better connections between different areas of learning.

When planning topics teachers decide:

- What do we want students to know and think about?
- What vocabulary is associated with this knowledge and thinking?
- How can we engage the students in communication that supports their knowledge and thinking?
- What visits / visitors and events can enhance this experience?
- What photos could we take that would reinforce the vocabulary and language after an activity or visit?
- Which books could be read aloud and shared before and afterwards?

Policy/Procedure Name: School Literacy Policy

Policy/Procedure No: SMT088

Effective Date: Sept 2022 Revised Date: Jan 2024

Review by Date: Jan 2025

Page 6 of 15

- Which songs and other activities might introduce or reinforce the vocabulary?

Each term students receive their own individual termly curriculum overview capturing what they will be learning in English, Why and how will they know they have made progress. **(See individual student's termly curriculum documentation)**

7. Picture Communication Symbols

For many of our students, symbols are the way they can access information, express their thoughts, needs and opinions and make sense of the world around them. Symbol use is part of the journey with literacy and language skills development. Some students working in other benefit from the visual nature of symbols to support their literacy and understanding. Symbols can help to support students with communication, independence and participation, literacy and learning, creativity and self-expression, and access to information. Text is supported by symbols – images used to make the meaning clearer and easier to understand and provide a visual representation of the word. Concepts are often taught alongside symbols to aid comprehension, with objects and pictures/photographs adding further reinforcement. Treloar's has developed a Core Symbol Assessment which can be used to show progress and development of skills.

8. English strands linked to National Curriculum

For our students the strands of the English curriculum are interwoven. All of our students have a physical disability; most of our students have language and communication difficulties with many of those relying on AAC systems to communicate. So for many students speaking/communicating is reading and writing. It is vital that developing reading skills are a priority and are developed across phases, ages and throughout curriculum areas. The effective use of AAC systems broadens student's vocabulary, increases their ability to communicate and express themselves, and prepares them for adulthood.

Treloar School continues to review how we incorporate the strands of the English curriculum to ensure that we respond to changes in research and legislation.

8.1 Speaking & Listening

The development of a student's communication is priority at Treloar's to enable them to fully participate in the world around them. We want our learners to confidently engage with their peers, classmates and the adults who support them as appropriate to their level of need.

Students at Treloar's communicate in different ways, our highly specialist staff support students who are verbal and non-verbal, students who use their voice, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) strategies or gesture. AAC is a range of strategies and tools to help students unclear or no recognisable speech. These may be simple letter or picture boards or sophisticated computer-based systems. AAC helps students to communicate as effectively as possible, in as many situations as possible.

Learners will experience communication opportunities in a range of settings and with exposure to both formal and informal use of language (e.g. public speaking versus text speaking) and via discussion, debating, oral recitation of poetry, plays, singing and signing and exploring musicals and drama. Key texts, anthologies of poetry and plays will be identified for each year group and topic to ensure progression, interest and challenge.

All subjects use communication activities to increase student's ability to express themselves, to direct staff and express their individuality. We aim to take opportunities across all subjects to develop work which promotes communication with the support of dedicated Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) who support and develop students:

- **Expressive language** which encompasses the symbols, words, sentences and phrases to convey meaning, including tone, volume, pauses and inflections: vocabulary, structure, meaning and use of language
- **Receptive language** which is the understanding of language expressed by others. Includes literal and non-literal meaning.
- **Functional communication** which includes the methods, systems and strategies used to successfully and effectively engage in communication exchange

All staff in our school model the use of language, appropriate to the assessed level of vocabulary and understanding for each student and in line with SLT targets. Staff model speaking clearly, in full sentences using standard English. Modelling also uses the communication and language system that the student is using themselves e.g. modelling sentence construction with symbol based vocabulary grids.

Developing Communication Skills is central to the Curriculum and is embedded from EYFS throughout our school. Students are encouraged to join in with and learn nursery rhymes and short poems; to take part in role-play; to retell stories; to share ideas; to narrate their actions etc; so that they develop the fluency, confidence and vocabulary they need to be able to access and talk about their learning.

Embedding key vocabulary and its association with symbols and signs and Makaton is a key focus from EYFS. SLT undertake regular formalised assessments of students. Through our Multi-Disciplinary Teams, incremental steps are agreed for each student to develop their communication skills; help them to express their own ideas as clearly and as confidently as they can in a safe and supportive environment. This approach ensures clarity in all aspects and areas of their school life and into their future.

Communication skills and personalised approaches, support students in articulating their ideas. Students have opportunities to reflect on and improve their skills through rehearsing speech with their peers and with adults. We develop these skills so that our students are capable of expressing themselves effectively and as independently as possible, regardless of their starting points.

Subject specific vocabulary is embedded across the curriculum, through teacher modelling, in context. Contextual learning helps students to understand new words and supports them in including these in their work. This model is reflected in shared reading or guided reading sessions, where students are given the chance to explore unfamiliar vocabulary and expand their knowledge of words. As appropriate, staff model the correct grammar in speech, for example using 'we were' instead of 'we was' and encourage students to reflect this in their use of spoken and written language. Students are encouraged to orally rehearse ideas for writing regularly.

All teachers and lead support staff have undertaken Literacy and Reading training as part of a whole school review of literacy. They have received training from the SLT leads in how to concept map new words for students in classes.

8.2 Reading

Every student at Treloar's is a reader. From inferring meaning from multi-sensory cues, images and symbols to reading fluently both formal and informal texts, fiction and non-fiction, poetry, plays and drama. Learners will access these materials in a variety of multisensory, visual, print and digital formats. E.g. Book creator, RNIB Reader for iPad, large print, AAC devices. Within all lessons, learners have the opportunity to communicate their responses to what they are reading through their own communication methods and systems to develop fluency. This might include use of symbols, verbally, Assisted Technology, AAC devices, Book Creator etc.

The literacy tree demonstrates how fluency is embedded within our entire literacy curriculum. This begins with the routes of our tree in particular 'Routines and rehearsal' to expose students to language that they will revisit time and

time again to develop 'automaticity' (Rasinski, 2014). We aim to create volitional readers who choose to read for pleasure or purpose.

Skills in decoding and comprehension are vital for all students to be able to communicate. The need for these skills increases for students who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. From an early stage students are supported to develop an understanding that objects and concepts can be represented by verbal or visual language form e.g. pictorial &/or word. For students with more complex AAC systems they are supported to know where and how to find a word in their device demonstrating awareness of connections between words and themes and then phonemes and their corresponding graphemes.

The skill of reading involves a multitude of factors from the domains of language development and word recognition. The development of phonics and phonological awareness is a component of this, which may require explicit teaching and direction for those student who have existing Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

At Treloar's, phonics is part of the wider and inclusive development of reading, enabling student to make use of their strengths but also allow foundation language skills to be developed and take account of non-speech development. Phonics is taught in context as well as through systematic structured teaching where suitable. Promoting phonological awareness, linking with letters and understanding print gives a comprehensive and accessible environment for the development of these skills. Treloar School follows the Letters and Sounds phonic scheme. Collaboration between specialist educators and therapists ensure students are baselined taking account of all of their holistic needs. Phonic sessions are taught daily either in 1:1 or class groups. Students receive many opportunities to apply their skills in other learning. The pace of the programme is personalised to suit the students' needs and half-termly assessment is reviewed to identify any interventions needed to support access. As a student gets older this assessment is reviewed to see if they are still progressing through learning phonics and if it is still appropriate. Our reading scheme matches the student's phonics level to enable them to successfully decode words. **Phonics** is only one of the strategies that student can use to help decode words. It is an important strategy but students should also be aware of other approaches they could use, including: recognition of whole words or chunks of words; using pictures or other contextual cues etc.

We value all modes of communication and methods of reading and recording. We recognise the broad range of abilities our students have and believe that our personalised curriculum supports each student to access communication and literacy to meet their needs. We are also passionate about fostering and developing a love of reading and stories for all of our students. We want our students to understand the contribution reading can have in developing their knowledge and increasing the impact on their wellbeing. Students are offered opportunities to share, explore, examine and contextualise what they have read whilst developing their potential for using reading skills in everyday life.

Text selection

When choosing texts to increase student's interest, knowledge and vocabulary teachers also review whether it will engage students emotionally.

*We know that emotional engagement is the tipping point between leaping into the reading life or remaining in a studenthood bog where reading is endured only as a means to other ends. **Maryanne Wolf***

Our work with English specialist from Sussex University has enhanced the creative approach to reading. Teachers within each department collaborate with English leads and Treloar's librarian to identify a core set of texts for the topic that meet the needs in each year group. The range of texts (both fiction and nonfiction) are reviewed regularly and adapted to each termly topic. Staff ensure that texts capture a range of settings around the world and traditions. Texts are collated and shared across key stages as well as with parents and carers. Texts play a key role in developing topics and teachers consider the follow points when choosing a text.

Does the book...

- Elicit a strong response – curiosity, anger, excitement, laughter, empathy?
- Have a strong narrative that will sustain multiple readings?
- Extend student's vocabulary?
- Have illustrations which are engaging and reflect student from all backgrounds and cultures?
- Help student connect with who they are?
- Help student to understand the lives of people whose experiences and perspectives may be different from their own?

Regular whole class or group reading sessions also develop student's visual tracking skills. Students are able to follow the flow of the words and images and develop the following skills:

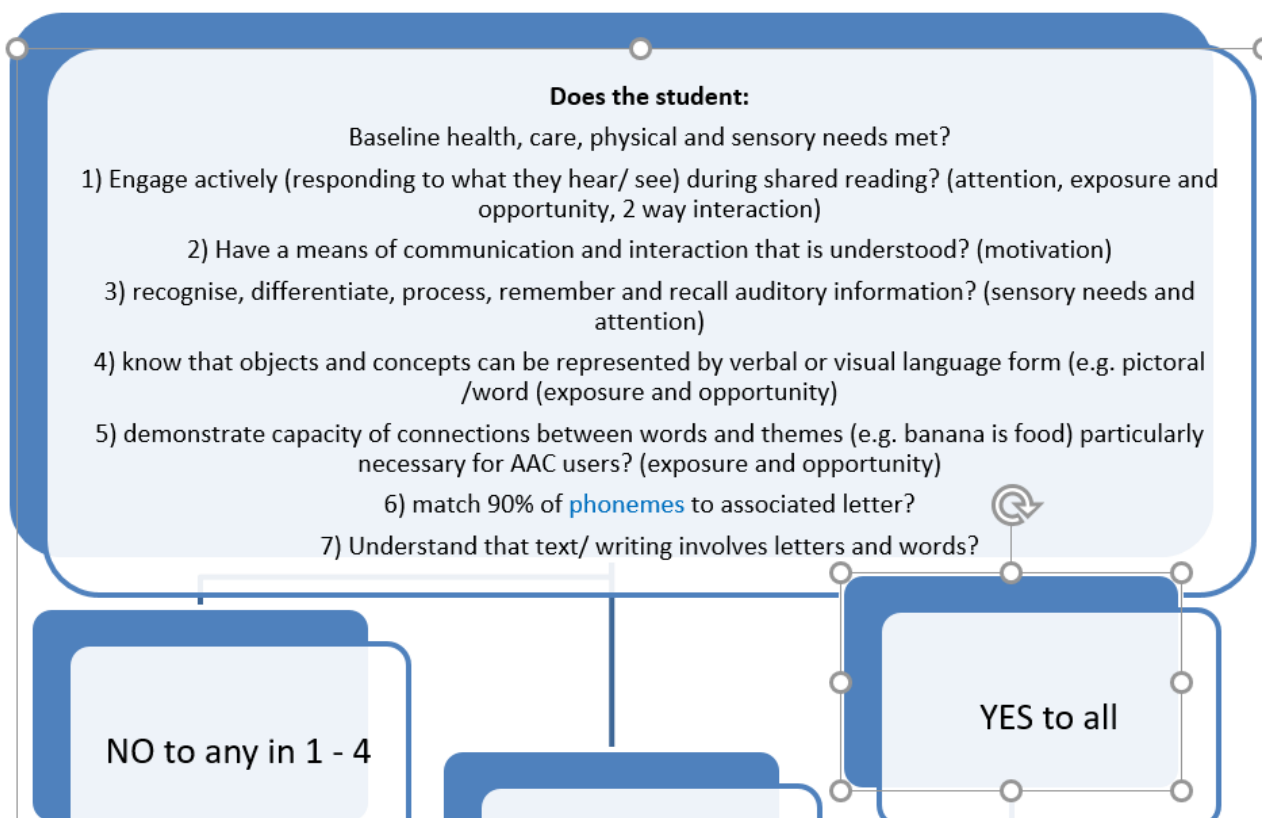
- fixation (the ability to hold eyes steady on a target)
- saccades (the ability of eyes to make accurate jumps as we change targets)
- pursuits (the ability of eyes to follow moving targets)

With 60% of our students, using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems these tracking activities also offer opportunities for them to practice skills to develop their use and fluency of their personal communication system. By listening and responding to more language heard in texts students will develop a greater understanding and this will increase the amount of vocabulary they have access to on their AAC.

All subjects engage learners in reading for meaning, pleasure and understanding and seek to use age appropriate and disability aware resources. Each student encounters class based regular reading sessions which focus on improving reading and comprehension skills and giving them opportunities to apply new knowledge and skills across a range of subjects.

As part of their learning students regularly visit our onsite Learning Resource Centre (LRC), to enrich and broaden their experience of books and literature and increase their independence. The LRC promotes regular Reading Challenge events throughout the school year, which are curriculum related and have a whole school focus. The success of individual students is celebrated in Literacy and Reading Assemblies across the school year.

How do we teach and develop literacy – reading and writing as partnered skills?



Does the student:

Baseline health, care, physical and sensory needs met?

- 1) Engage actively (responding to what they hear/ see) during shared reading? (attention, exposure and opportunity, 2 way interaction)
- 2) Have a means of communication and interaction that is understood? (motivation)
- 3) recognise, differentiate, process, remember and recall auditory information? (sensory needs and attention)
- 4) know that objects and concepts can be represented by verbal or visual language form (e.g. pictorial /word (exposure and opportunity)
- 5) demonstrate capacity of connections between words and themes (e.g. banana is food) particularly necessary for AAC users? (exposure and opportunity)
- 6) match 90% of the phonemes to associated letter?
- 7) Understand that text/ writing involves letters and words?

NO to any in 1 - 4

YES to all

No to any in 5 -6
Classes with both
Emergent and
Conventional level
students

Daily Emergent

Shared reading
Predictable chart writing
Alphabet & phonological awareness
Independent writing with access to full alphabet
Self-selected reading
Symbols based communication

Combined

Shared reading
Alphabet and phonological awareness during word identification and decoding
Predictable chart writing
Self-selected reading
Structured and independent writing
Guided reading (conventional only)
Writing instruction (conventional only)

Daily conventional

Guided reading
Word identification & decoding
Structured independent writing
Self-selected reading
Communication with symbols and spelling

8.3 Writing

We aim to develop student's enjoyment in communicating their thoughts, opinions, wants and needs whilst developing their writing/recording skills.

Students develop their writing (recording) skills, appropriate to individual need and explore writing in a range of formats and in the wider environment. Styles of writing are explored half-termly (See English Overview) with students revisiting and developing their knowledge and skills each year. Students develop curiosity and an understanding of the contribution writing makes to their communication, knowledge and well-being.

Students are exposed to high quality writing /texts, which underpin English lessons and the wider curriculum. Students have frequent opportunities across the curriculum to write, record or dictate to a scribe. Students are encouraged to articulate their thoughts and ideas and engage in collaboration with their peers. Students have opportunities to reflect on and improve writing/recording through editing and continuous self /peer/teacher assessment appropriate to students level of need which provides clear next steps for learning.

Students develop their writing (recording) skills, appropriate to individual need and explore writing in a range of formats and in the wider environment. Styles of writing are explored half-termly with students revisiting and developing their skills each year. Students develop curiosity and an understanding of the contribution writing makes to their communication, knowledge and well-being as they are able apply these skills in everyday life.

The multidisciplinary holistic approach enables students to access writing / recording, the team completes regular assessment to review student's access and capacity to 'write', dictate and respond.

9 Assessment

Students literacy skills are regularly assessed and tracked to ensure that every opportunity has been taken to develop their knowledge and application of skills.

1. **Student Tracker** – Termly for MDT capturing the holistic curriculum at Treloar's
2. **Literacy termly targets** updated sooner if target achieved
3. **Communication targets** set alongside Speech and language therapist
4. **Early Years Profile**(Baseline & Prediction 6 weeks after starting placement and July for final scores)
5. **Annual Review** captured progress within literacy demonstrating progress and achievements since last AR
6. **Termly parent consultation**
7. **CASPA** (Feb and July) – individual and class/cohort analysis
 - Feb – midyear progress check
 - July – end of year and target for next year for core subjects (English, Maths, Science, PSHE)
 - Autumn – analysis of student progress to flag concerns
8. **Peer Review** (teacher to teacher)
9. **Small team moderation** of evidence for selected subject area (e.g. Number, Reading)
10. **Leader of Learning** Progress Review
11. **Teacher Self review** evidencing individual students Learning and progress
12. **Evidence of Learning** captured on Databridge/Tapestry(EY's) /Progress File - Ongoing
13. **Curriculum Plans**
 - At start of each term show intended progression
 - Reviewed under Progress Review
14. **Qualification Registration**
 - Each Autumn Exams Officer collects planned entries for the following summer (and indicative ones for further ahead if 2 or 3 year course)
15. **Reporting of attainment against individual target** achievements on Databridge / Tapestry
16. **Parent Portal** – launching soon
17. **Destination report**

18. Informally through **home/ school link books**

19. Informally through regular **telephone calls** and meetings between parents and class teachers

10 Implications of Policy/Procedure

10.2 Training Requirements

- Head of School will ensure all relevant staff are trained in the requirements of this policy

10.3 Communication Requirements

How will the Policy/procedure be communicated:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharepoint• Teachers Meetings• Staff Briefings	
Who will ensure the above communication is carried out::	Head of School Head of College	
Do the changes made to this policy/procedure affect any other policies/procedures? If yes, has this been communicated to the policy/procedure author/owner	NA	

10.4 Inclusive communications

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print, audio description or a colour background, please contact quality@treloar.org.uk

10.5 Other Implementation Requirements

NA

11 Monitoring and Review

- The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance)

12 Links to other related policies, procedures or documents (internal)

- Total Communication Policy
- Student Curriculum documentation

13 Revision History

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy procedure in last 4 years

Date	Page/para No.	Brief description of the change(s)	Change made by
April 23		Complete rewrite of policy	Lisa Bond involving Caroline Weighton
Oct 23		Updated flow diagram on page 11	Caroline Weighton
		Updated literacy tree on page 5	Lisa Bod

IMPORTANT NOTES:

It is essential for those with designated responsibilities to familiarise themselves with the sources of information, referred to above.

Policy documents describe mandatory minimum standards and will be subject to audit and review. Line managers are required to ensure suitable and sufficient arrangements are in place to meet policy requirements, including the provision of information and instruction to staff.