



Bulletin

Welcome to your Powys Literacy Bulletin!

Welcome to Powys' spring term Literacy bulletin. If you would like to make a contribution to future issues, please contact me directly via: laura.evans1@powys.gov.uk

Spotlight share - Brecon High School- literacy progression

This term's spotlight share is from Mrs Lisa Buttle (Deputy Head teacher and skills lead) at Brecon High School, who has kindly summarised the intent, implementation and impact linked to how the school, who has recently been removed from Special Measures, has, and continues to, tackle their recommendation focused on strengthening the provision of literacy skills development across the curriculum.

Intent:

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we recognised the importance of renewing our focus on literacy and establishing a shared understanding of progression across the curriculum. In October 2024, internal QA aligned closely with Estyn's findings that

- In general, pupils respond briefly to teachers' questions with relevant information and that verbal responses are often underdeveloped because teachers' expectations are not high enough
- That higher-order reading largely confined to English. Across the school, it became clear that pupils' literacy required a refreshed whole-school focus.

Our intent, therefore, was simple but urgent—to impact positively on our pupils' oracy, reading, and writing skills, with a clear focus on the progressive development of literacy skills across the curriculum.

Our Aims

1. Ensured that literacy provision sat at the heart of all quality-assurance and self-evaluation activities

We placed literacy centrally within all quality-assurance and self-evaluation processes so that the issues identified—brief and underdeveloped oral responses, limited reading beyond English, a reliance on lower-order reading skills, and over-scaffolded writing—were consistently monitored, evaluated and addressed across all subjects.

2. Improved the explicit teaching of literacy

We aimed to ensure that all pupils, in all subjects, read regularly and purposefully, with structured opportunities to develop the foundational skills that many lacked, as well as the higher-order reading skills that had previously been largely confined to English.

3. Established a shared, school-wide understanding of literacy progression

Staff required a common language and progression framework to underpin planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation. This was essential because reading was not taking place consistently across the curriculum, and practice needed to move from isolated approaches to a coherent, whole-school model.

4. Prioritised pupils' progressive development above provision alone

Improvement work needed to shift from focusing on what teachers did to what pupils could do, ensuring that learners moved beyond brief oral responses, limited lower-order reading, and over-scaffolded writing, and instead developed the skills required to access increasingly complex texts across all subjects.

5. Ensured all subjects played an active role in developing literacy skills

Because reading is the foundation for learning, we aimed to secure disciplinary reading across all AoLEs so that literacy strengthened—rather than competed with—subject knowledge and understanding.

This vision continues to drive every action we take.



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Implementation:

1. Skills as a priority in every aspect of QA:

From October 2024, we began to shift from a provision-based QA system to a learner-centred model that focused on pupil attainment in oracy, reading and writing. This shift was deliberately phased: it began in the classroom, moved to pupil voice, and then strengthened through half-termly book samples, giving us progressively richer insight into learners' literacy development.

At each stage, our work was guided by four questions that now underpin every aspect of QA:

1. How many pupils?
2. Do What (which literacy skill are they applying)?
3. How well are they doing it?
4.And so what are their next steps?

These questions are now embedded in all QA activities — lesson observations, book samples and pupil voice — ensuring a consistent and learner-centred evaluation process. They are also built into the half-termly literacy report produced by each AOLE, which strengthens leadership oversight and ensures a clear picture of standards and next steps in every subject.

2. Sharpening Provision:

As QA evidence highlighted variation in literacy provision, we strengthened classroom practice through the introduction of explicit teaching strategies and shared and rehearsed whole-school routines. For reading, for example, we introduced pre-, in- and post-reading routines, alongside explicit teaching of lower-order skills (skim, scan, highlight, annotate etc) and modelling of higher-order skills (infer, deduce, summary, compare, synthesise etc) using shared and dual-coded success criteria. Weekly Form Time tasks provided pupils with structured opportunities to rehearse and apply these routines before using them in their AOLE lessons, enabling disciplinary literacy to strengthen naturally.

We also introduced a whole-school Literacy Toolkit, giving staff ready-made, research-informed resources to support modelling, scaffolding and independent practice. This provided consistent access to routines, exemplars, planning frames and adaptable models, enabling staff to implement whole-school approaches with confidence.

Assessment played a crucial role in improving the quality of provision because it ensured we continuously checked whether the strategies we introduced were actually working for learners. We know that a focus on provision alone is pointless and therefore explored how it improved pupil outcomes. Literacy focused assessment allowed us to review, refine and strengthen practice at every stage. Every pupil now completes at least one higher-order reading or extended-writing task each half term in at least one AOLE. These assessments are jointly planned, jointly resourced and jointly moderated by Skills Leads and AOLE Leads, ensuring consistency of provision, fairness in expectations and a shared responsibility for teaching literacy well. This approach has significantly deepened staff understanding of both quality and progression and has secured genuine buy-in across subjects. Our regular collaboration with Powys literacy leads - Laura Evans and Fiona Thomas - has strengthened this further, ensuring consistent use of the Toolkit, shared approaches to progression and alignment with wider regional practice.



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Implementation:

3. **Strengthening Leadership Oversight:**

The progressive development of literacy skills was strengthened through coherent leadership at every level, with SLT securing whole-school consistency in understanding progression and tools, AOLE Leads ensuring the same clarity and expectations within their subjects, and practitioners leading this in their classrooms; together, these aligned systems tightened approaches, expectations and judgements about impact.

As our systems matured, pupils were also expected to become leaders of their own development, using pupil-friendly versions of the Literacy Pathways during focused improvement time so they could identify their stage and next steps accurately; across the school, pupils did this in at least one AOLE at any given point.

The introduction of our Literacy Pathways further strengthened this consistency. The Pathways provide clear, shared descriptors for progression across oracy, reading and writing. They give staff the knowledge, clarity and shared language required to understand what developing, secure and advanced literacy looks like. Over time, the Pathways have become a core reference point across planning, teaching, feedback, assessment and leadership discussions — embedding a strong, shared understanding of progression across the school.

Strengthened leadership of assessment meant that every pupil completed at least one oracy, higher-order reading or extended-writing task each half term in one of their AOLE subjects, ensuring that across the school all pupils were developing these skills progressively at any given point. For example, progressing from a summary to a synthesis in a Science task about energy. This made literacy relevant and authentic, enabling it to support disciplinary knowledge — for example, comparing different experiences of fast fashion in Geography, or writing the life story of a jam sandwich as it travels through the digestive system.

These assessments were jointly planned, jointly resourced and jointly moderated by Skills Leads and AOLE Leads, with the DHT as the constant to maintain consistency of expectations and judgements. AOLE Leads also held responsibility for evaluating skill development through their half-termly QA cycles, accurately quantifying the impact of literacy skills using triangulated evidence — lesson visits, book samples and pupil voice — and setting next steps alongside wider assessment information such as PA results, AWRT reading ages and CATs data.

Robust assessment intelligence — including Group Skills Reports, Personalised Assessments, AWRT reading ages and the Literacy Pathways — provided leaders with precise insight into strengths, gaps and next steps. These evidence sources informed curriculum planning, intervention, QA reporting and leadership discussions, ensuring literacy improvement remained closely aligned with learners' actual progress rather than provision alone.

Together, these actions ensured leadership at all levels — whole-school, subject, classroom and learner — worked cohesively to secure a deeply embedded, shared and consistent understanding of literacy progression across the school.



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Impact:

When we evaluated the impact of our work on pupils, we found clear and significant shifts in impact Estyn aligned quantifiers compared with our starting point. Where, at the time of our Intent, only a few pupils demonstrated secure oracy, reading and writing behaviours, we now see many doing so, and the majority applying literacy skills with increasing accuracy and confidence. These improvements were not only evident through our internal QA, triangulated evidence and assessment outcomes, but were also confirmed externally by Estyn, who recognised the strengthened consistency, increased challenge and improved pupil outcomes across the school.

Oracy:

- Many pupils now engage well in paired discussions and are comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas.
- The high majority now use a suitably broad vocabulary confidently and a further few pupils speak articulately and with subject-specific precisions.
- More teachers now address vocabulary explicitly and use supportive strategies such as turn and talk, strengthening the quality of verbal responses.

Writing:

- Most pupils now produce extended writing that is technically secure and logically structured across the AOLES — e.g.,
 - o explaining photosynthesis
 - o discussing why Wales took so long to be conquered
 - o producing extended evaluative responses in humanities
- Many pupils benefit from purposeful opportunities to write at length.
- A minority still make basic errors in punctuation, sentence construction and spelling, including topic-specific vocabulary — but these are now identified and addressed more systematically as marking for literacy is more consistent and robust as a result of the Pathways.

Reading:

- Most pupils spend considerable time reading for information across subjects.
- Many pupils now apply higher-order reading skills — inference, summary, evaluation — with growing accuracy.
- At Key Stage 4 and sixth form, pupils benefit from frequently challenging reading experiences that develop their inference, summary and evaluation skills in meaningful disciplinary contexts.
- There is clear evidence of greater challenge in a broader range of subjects compared with the position in October 2024.

Progress and Assessment Evidence:

- All-Wales Reading Test outcomes show accelerated progress, with pupils gaining an average of 9.6 months in five months and 70.1% now at or within six months of chronological age — a 17% improvement in pupils meeting or approaching age-related expectations.
- Pupils complete at least one oracy, higher-order reading, or extended-writing task each half term in one of their AOLE subjects, ensuring that across the school all pupils develop key literacy skills at any given point.
- Leaders use triangulated QA evidence — lesson visits, book samples and pupil voice — alongside PA outcomes, AWRT reading ages and CATs to accurately quantify skills development each half term and identify precise next steps.

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Spotlight share - Brecon High School- literacy progression

Impact:

1.Literacy Leads Overview

*NB this is a live document and will grow as we develop!

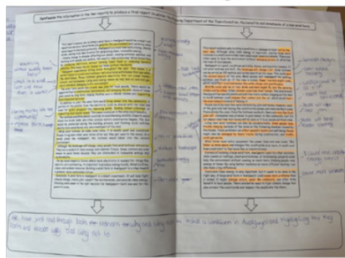
LITERACY LEADS OUR LESSONS...			
	ORACY OPPORTUNITIES	READING ROUTINES	WHEN WE WRITE
1	Oracy Rules: SLANT	Pre-reading Routines: C P V... Connect/ Predict/ Vocabulary	Spelling Strategies: Syllabification/Etymology/Morphology/ Freya Model/ Spelling Tiles
2	Pedagogies: Turn & Talk/No-Opt-Out/Right is Right	Active Reading Routines: Read Alouds	The Writing Process: Follow the plan!
3	Vocabulary Tier 2 & 3	Post-Reading Routines: Retrieval/Summary/ Reading Purpose/ Reflect & Question	Text Types What's the type and its Purpose? PAFT?

Work and resource sharing:

Tool-kit Success: Higher Order Reading Across the Curriculum: Synthesis in Science

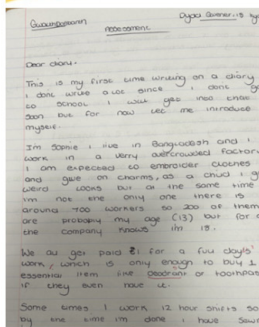
Synthesising

- Synthesising Success List**
- Make an equal number of points for each text
 - Write about the first text
 - Write about the second text
 - Write about the third text
 - Write about the fourth text
 - Write about the fifth text
 - Write about the sixth text
 - Write about the seventh text
 - Write about the eighth text
 - Write about the ninth text
 - Write about the tenth text



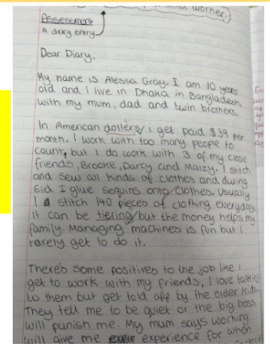
Be the best you can be

Be the best you can be



- Extended diary writing in Geography, Y7:**
- Tier 2 & 3 vocabulary evident
 - Structured response
 - Descriptive detail

Be the best you can be



Reassessment Question - Are the Olympic games a global sports event?

Today I am going to be writing about the Olympic games and if they are a global event. The first Olympics took place in 776 BC by the Ancient Greeks. It was brought back in 1896. In 1896 only 14 countries competed and many sports were water, cycling, running and wrestling. In 2008 nations competed in Basketball, Swimming and Shotput.

The Olympics is a competition where nations compete to win medals they can be gold, silver or bronze. The Olympics were stop when the Greek empire collapsed. The Olympics has every four years since which it is a quadrennial event.

In 1991 the IOC (International Olympic Committee) was created. The leader of the Olympics is a British man called Sebastian Coe. The Olympic rings created a symbol to show that continents are all connected.

- Extended exposition writing in Geography, Y9:**
- Tier 2 & 3 vocabulary evident
 - Structured response
 - Factual tone
 - Literacy marking reinforced through FIT response

Which factor do you think was most important in making London the capital of the UK?

The main reason for London being the capital of the UK is its location. It is situated on a river, which makes it easy to transport goods and people. This was important for the medieval and early modern periods. Another reason is its strategic location. It is a natural harbor, which made it a good place for a port. This was important for the maritime trade routes. A third reason is its political and administrative importance. It was the seat of power for the monarchy and the government. This made it a natural choice for the capital. Finally, its cultural and intellectual life was also a factor. It was a center of learning and innovation, which attracted people from all over the world. This made it a desirable place to live and work. Overall, the combination of these factors made London the capital of the UK.

Be the best you can be

Instructional text in Science, Y9

Before you have removed the chloroplasts from the leaf, you will need to prepare the leaf. To do this, you will need to boil the leaf in water for 5 minutes. This will kill the chloroplasts and make them easier to see. After boiling, you will need to wash the leaf in alcohol. This will remove the chlorophyll and make the leaf appear white. Finally, you will need to stain the leaf with iodine. This will highlight the starch in the leaf. Once you have completed these steps, you can observe the leaf under a microscope. You should see the chloroplasts and the starch granules. This experiment demonstrates that chloroplasts are the site of photosynthesis and that they produce starch as a by-product.

Be the best you can be

Explanation text in Y8 Science

The equator is a line of latitude that runs through the middle of the Earth. It is 0 degrees latitude. The equator is important because it divides the Earth into the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere. The equator is also the longest line of latitude. It is 40,075 kilometers long. The equator is also the only line of latitude that is a great circle. This means that it is the same distance from the North Pole to the equator as it is from the equator to the South Pole. The equator is also the only line of latitude that is perpendicular to the Earth's axis of rotation. This means that the equator is the only line of latitude that is parallel to the Earth's axis of rotation.

Be the best you can be

- Explanation text in Y8 Science**
- Tier 3 vocabulary evident
 - Suitable PAFT
 - Well Structured

- Explanation text in Y9 Science**
- Tier 3 vocabulary evident
 - Structured response
 - Complex sentences emerging

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National Year of Reading - Go All In...

As you are aware, 2026 is the National Year of Reading, which is a UK-wide campaign and in Wales the bilingual campaign will build on work already underway to support schools, learners and families, to improve literacy standards and nurture a lasting habit of enjoying reading. The campaign will encourage people to 'Go all in/ Ymgolli' and enjoy reading. Further information about the National Year of Reading is available at <https://www.gov.wales/national-year-reading-wales>, featuring resources and Wales-specific content.

Tir na n-Og Awards Reading Challenge:

The Reading Challenge is part of a jam-packed calendar of activities and events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Wales' oldest children's and young people's literature awards, the Tir na n-Og awards.

The aim of the Tir na n-Og Awards Reading Challenge is

- To celebrate 50 years of the best books for children and young people from Wales.
- Encourage reading for pleasure through a variety of fun challenges suitable for children and adults of all ages.

There are three age ranges for the challenges- younger readers, teen readers and adult readers and the link to the downloadable templates can be found here -

<https://books.wales/support/awards/tir-na-nog/reading-challenge/> This is a lovely way to strengthen your school's reading culture and get all members of the school community 'caught reading'!

Younger reader

Teen reader

Adult reader

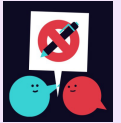


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No Pens Wednesday - 20th May 2026



No Pens Day is the sponsored show and tell that makes a difference. For one extra-special day, there is no writing allowed – it's all about talking and listening. And remember, talking includes speech, signs, symbols, tech, and so much more! Resources to support a whole-school approach to NPWD can be found here - <https://shorturl.at/Zel9Y> and for further information, visit the NPWD website - <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/get-involved/no-pens-day/>

Welsh Government updates:



At the start of March 2026, Welsh Government published two important documents relating to the principles for teaching language and literacy in Wales. These are short documents that provide clear guidance for teachers and leaders in Wales around reading and can be found here - <https://www.gov.wales/principles-teaching-language-and-literacy-wales>



PUBLICATION DOCUMENT Principles for teaching language and literacy in Wales

Fundamental elements that all schools should build into their teaching of language and literacy for learners aged 3 to 16.
First published: 3 March 2026
Last updated: 3 March 2026

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PUBLICATION DOCUMENT Statement of intent: teaching early reading

To support the implementation of high-quality, evidence-informed early reading instruction across Wales.
First published: 3 March 2026
Last updated: 3 March 2026

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Professional Reading - research-informed



**Case study:
developing a
culture of reading
for pleasure**

A National Literacy Trust resource



[Developing a culture of reading for pleasure: a school case study | National Literacy Trust](#)

Future meeting dates - Literacy Network Meetings

Summer term Literacy Network Meeting:

- **Date:** 8th July 2026
- **Venue:** MS teams.
- **Time:** 3.35pm - 4.30pm.
- **Join via:** <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3417402812419?p=RYT1cjtFgNCmhAMOHM>

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StoriPowys

Connecting people to culture, learning and heritage in Powys

StoriPowys (the library and cultural services in the Local Authority) offer a wide range of reading opportunities and support for pupils across the 3-19 continuum and will now make a termly contribution to the Powys Literacy Bulletin.

“Stars of the Shelves” returns to inspire hundreds of young readers across Powys

Following last year’s success, the “Stars of the Shelves” project has made a welcome return, continuing its mission to spark creativity and a love of reading among children across Wales. Funded by the Welsh Government and coordinated by the Books Council of Wales, the initiative invites well known authors to deliver interactive workshops for school children in libraries across the country.

Running until the end of March 2026, this year’s programme has once again brought a strong line up of literary talent to Powys. Authors such as Siŷn Tomos Owen – the current Bardd Plant Cymru, Eloise Williams, Daniel Morden, Nicola Davies – the current Children’s Laureate for Wales, Jenny Valentine, Lucy Owen and Rhian Cadwaladr have all taken part, offering lively sessions designed to inspire young readers and budding writers aged 7 to 12.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Over 500 children from more than 24 schools have taken part, with many pupils enjoying the rare opportunity to meet published authors, ask questions, and learn more about the writing process. Beyond the excitement of meeting authors face to face, the project has also encouraged hundreds of children to step inside their local libraries—many for the very first time. Staff hope the experience will help build lasting connections with libraries and give young people the confidence to return again and again to discover the magic of books – and perhaps begin a creative journey of their own.

The Books Council of Wales says the project continues to play an important role in supporting literacy, creativity, and cultural engagement across the country, while also showcasing the vital role libraries play in local communities.





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StoriPowys

Connecting people to culture, learning and heritage in Powys

**Summer
Reading
Challenge**

Summer Reading Challenge - volunteers needed!

Powys Libraries are looking for volunteers aged 14 – 25 to help support library staff with the Summer Reading Challenge from mid-July to the end of August.

Volunteers should:

- Be energetic, enthusiastic and imaginative
- Enjoy talking to people and interacting with children
- Be polite and responsible
- Have a love of reading.

The role will include:

- Creating displays linked to the "Read to the Beat" theme
- Preparing resources for activities (including craft or music themed sessions)
- Supporting staff during library events
- Helping to keep the children's area organised

Further information will be sent to High Schools after Easter.

Theory Test Pro



Theory Test Pro is a highly realistic online simulation of the UK's driving theory tests for all vehicle categories that contains all the official test questions licensed from the DVSA, the people who set the tests.

It can be accessed free in your local library and library members can log in from home using the number on the back of their library card.



Literacy collaborative enquiries

We currently have a number of literacy-focused collaborative enquiries running across clusters and schools in Powys. These include: Brynlywarch Hall and Ysgol Penmaes (reading), Calon Cymru (reading culture/ phonics), Caereinion (reading), Crickhowell (oracy/ talk tactics), Gwernyfed (phonics, with a focus on the secondary phase), Knighton and Presteigne (spelling), Rhayader CiW School (oracy/ collaborative talk), Ystradgynlais (reading) and Welshpool (writing).

In the summer term we will be sharing the progress and impact of this work across communication channels in Powys. If you are interested in learning more about any of these enquiries, please contact me directly via email - laura.evans1@powys.gov.uk

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Developing a reading culture at Llandysilio CiW School - Sophie's Shelf!

As a passionate reader, Sophie, a pupil at Llandysillio CiW Primary School, has been tasked with recommending books for each of the classes across the school.

Since October 2025, Sophie has been producing a monthly entertaining, informative and enthusiastic video using Google Vids on Hwb to share her enthusiasm and inspire the school community to read more!

Visit Sophie's Shelf via the school website:
<https://www.llandysilio.co.uk/sophies-shelf>



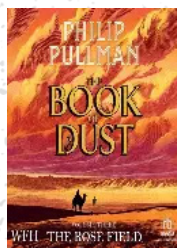
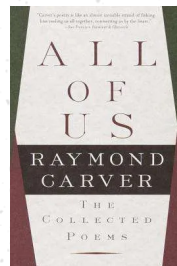
The Reading Room - A Powys Perspective

Dr Richard Jones' (Director of Education) favourite read -

"All of Us" by Raymond Carver is one of my favourite reads that I am permanently dipping in and out of. It's a collection of poetry that feels deeply honest without pretending to be anything more than it is.

What I love most is the voice. Carver doesn't preach or perform; the poems feel like someone talking to you, not at you—intimate, open, and unforced. Some poems are very moving, others quietly unsettling or unexpectedly funny, but all share a focus on the everyday and the ordinary - the overlooked details and small nearly invisible moments that are easily rushed past.

For me, it is Carver's quiet scrutiny that makes the world feel freshly seen.



Sally Llewellyn's (Head of School Improvement & Learning) current read -

I have just finished reading *The Rose Field*

- Author: Philip Pullman
- Published: 23 October 2025
- What it is: The third and final volume of *The Book of Dust* trilogy
- Context: It concludes the story of Lyra Belacqua, following *La Belle Sauvage* (2017) and *The Secret Commonwealth* (2019) It brings Pullman's long-running exploration of Dust, consciousness, imagination, and authority to a close and is widely described as a more adult, philosophical conclusion to the world first introduced in *His Dark Materials*.

I have taught Philip Pullman's books over many years and read them with my own children as they were growing up I just love the combination of fantasy and realism exploring what it means to exist in the world, why we are here and above all the power of the imagination.