

**Swindon Schools Literacy Pledge Guidance Document**



## Context

The National Literacy Trust Hub in Swindon is known locally as Swindon Stories. In partnership with Swindon Borough Council and WHSmith, Swindon Stories will encompass a range of programmes and activities to equip children and young people in the town with the literacy skills they need to succeed in life.

Swindon Stories encourages businesses, schools and parents to play an important role in changing literacy attitudes and behaviours across the town.

The signing of the Schools Pledge represents the expression of a shared commitment between Swindon Stories, its partners and Swindon schools to tackling low literacy in 2018 and beyond. It is also a recognition that change can only occur when we all commit to make it. Through this engagement we aim to be able to identify, share and celebrate good practice across Swindon schools, as well as supporting schools in areas which they have prioritised as needing development.

The following document sets out the guidelines for working through the terms of your own Schools Pledge. We are inviting every school in Swindon to undertake a range of actions which will help to put literacy at the heart of school strategy, both in the community and in the classroom. In line with the focus of activity across the hub we are focussing here on speaking and listening as a key component of literacy but we hope that your activity will impact on reading and writing in your school and that you will build on these activities with your own provision.

## Building a Swindon Schools Literacy Pledge

The following section highlights the different aspects of the pledge we are committing to develop together. These are divided into three areas: strategic, community and in-school. We have assigned 10 steps in total which make up the Schools Pledge and form the basis of the work we are looking to develop.

Schools all have existing strengths and challenges and each is on a unique journey of improvement. So the below guidelines are flexible and we encourage you to use the approaches that work best for your setting, and to seek out additional resources and interventions from our [website](https://literacytrust.org.uk/). A copy of the pledge certificate is included for you to print and sign to display in reception and waiting areas.

## Strategic

### These steps will help in building your unique school literacy strategy

1. Review your setting’s oracy provision using the “spoken language” sections of the National Literacy Trust’s [Annual Literacy Review](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/annual-literacy-school-review-201718/). This will help you highlight areas to focus on for your pupils, staff and whole-school approach.
2. Complete the National Literacy Trust’s annual [Children and Young People Reading Attitudes Survey](https://literacytrust.org.uk/contact-us/annual-literacy-survey/). Not only will your pupils contribute to the biggest survey of its kind in the world, providing us with vital information on the nation’s literacy, but participating schools get their own individual school report that outlines your basic findings, which you can compare nationally once the national reports are published.
3. Use National Literacy Trust members’ resources to inform school strategy and practice. As a member you have access to our full range of resources but to get you started:
   1. [Transition talk – an environment themed oracy project](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/transition-talk-oracy-project/). This resource for teachers to support year 6 pupils preparing to develop the skills needed for year 7 provides an explicit focus on oracy, with direct teaching of talk skills through tasks.
   2. [Top five tips for encouraging talk](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/top-five-tips-encouraging-talk-practical-examples/) presents a range of approaches that teachers can use to provoke discussion and scaffold presentations in the secondary classroom.
   3. [Developing listening skills in secondary school.](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/developing-listening-skills-secondary-school/) Listening is the form of communication that we use the most, yet we spend almost no time learning how to do it well. This guide sets out some of the techniques for good listening and suggests some simple activities to support students in practising and improving their listening skills.
   4. [28 ways to turn your children into storytellers](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/28-ways-turn-children-storytellers/)

## Community

### This can be adapted depending on local priorities and existing activities

1. Once per term send information to all parents asking them to read to and alongside their children. The home learning environment and parental attitudes to literacy and learning have a huge influence on young people. There are plenty of helpful resources available, for example our parent-facing [Words for Life](http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/) website. Be sure to encourage them to engage in conversation about reading, too – our [research on mealtime talk](https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/talk-mealtime/) explains the benefits of this.
2. Organise a school visit to your local library or send information to parents on library membership. You can find out more about the effect this has on attainment in our [report on public libraries and reading](https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/public-libraries-and-reading-young-peoples-reading-habits-and-attitudes-public-libraries-and-exploration-relationship-between-public-library-use-and-school-attainment/).
3. Plan activities through our [Lost Words](https://literacytrust.org.uk/communities/swindon/can-you-find-lost-words-hidden-around-swindon-town-centre/) programme and/or your own memorable outdoor experiences in the local area, as well as engaging with other local organisations to promote literacy. Our two-day [CPD on improving writing](https://literacytrust.org.uk/training-and-workshops/improving-writing-key-stage-2/) helps you build literacy outcomes around a memorable experience, using talk and self-regulation to take pupils beyond scaffolded writing.

## In-school

### This can be adapted depending on local priorities and existing activities

1. Promote the [Summer Reading Challenge](https://readingagency.org.uk/children/quick-guides/summer-reading-challenge/); offer regular class visits to the library and actively encourage library membership to all pupils by close collaboration with the library service.This free, fun programme encourages reading and use of libraries. Schools can support by sharing information with children and parents, then celebrating participants on their return to school. It helps to keep young people reading during the long summer holiday.
2. Nominate teachers to deliver assemblies on their favourite book. Teachers modelling themselves as readers is essential to creating a whole-school culture of reading, and promoting discussion around books builds engagement amongst pupils.
3. Organise book groups for pupils and invite parents and carers to join. These can be at lunchtime, before or after school and as well as encouraging pupils to talk about reading it involves parents in an enjoyable, sociable way. [This resource on book tal](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/ideas-peer-book-talk/)k will give you some ideas of activities to include.
4. Identify a school governor to have special responsibility for literacy. A governor with specific responsibility for reading can keep it high on the agenda and be in touch with staff and community reading activities as well as keeping abreast of local, regional and national activities.
5. To support transitions in literacy from yr6 to yr7, there are numerous possibilities to support children. This could include involvement in the Summer Reading Challenge, promoted in yr6, with a tie-in reward/award for those new ye 7s who complete. Promotion could be supported with yr6 parent-evenings and any induction days with feeder schools, before the end of the summer term. Induction days could include ice-breakers with a literacy-focused theme.
6. You could create your own Reading/Literacy Challenge, with your secondary / primary-feeder schools
7. Our cross-phase CPD, Across the Divide: Reading from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 , helps you engage with research and develop sustainable strategies to support pupils in their journey from primary to secondary. This is also a great opportunity for you to build links with other schools and could be linked to any of the above activity.

## Partners and wider opportunities to develop your pledge

Central to the approach of a National Literacy Trust Hub is the concept of mobilising partnerships. We work with a diverse range of businesses, health education and cultural organisations to help raise literacy levels in Swindon.

Each of the partners listed below contributes directly to one of the 10 points, and schools are encouraged to explore all the partner opportunities. From time to time the Swindon Hub is able to broker a new opportunity/resource for Swindon schools, and we will use this partnership to keep you in the loop with latest opportunities. This list is not exhaustive, but is an indicator of who would be a good parthner to work with.

Swindon Libraries

Swindon Libraries Local Studies team

Swindon: Artswords Project

Swindon Borough Council: Education

Swindon: Teaching Schools

Swindon Park Rangers

Swindon Museum & Art Gallery

STEAM

Prime Theatre

Create Studios

Review and accreditation

In recognition of your efforts to improve literacy by signing the Swindon School Literacy Pledge and of our partnership with you in doing so, the National Literacy Trust is pleased to offer the use of their ‘Working with the National Literacy Trust’ logo to all signatories. Visit <https://literacytrust.org.uk/training-and-workshops/working-national-literacy-trust-application-logo/> for more information, or email schools@literacytrust.org.uk.

We also intend to check in with you on your progress against the pledge every six months. This will be to discuss your progress against each of the items on the pledge, to celebrate what is going well and to identify where and how we can provide more support if needed.