



Ashfield Girls' High School



“Each different. Each talented. All valued.”

Literacy Policy

Author(s)	Mr C Moore - Literacy Coordinator
Adopted Date:	October 2025
Review Date:	October 2027





Contents	Page
Executive Summary	3
Section A - Aims of the Policy	4
Section B - Legislative Context, Guidance and Linked Policies	5
Section C - Policy and Procedure	6
Section D - Roles and Responsibilities	12
Section E - Consultation, Communications, Monitoring and Evaluation	15
Appendices	16



Executive Summary

The aim of Ashfield Girls' High School is to provide each student with an education that meets their individual needs and prepares them for life beyond school. In seeking to fulfil this aim, the school endeavours to increase the ability for every pupil to access the curriculum and to provide them with positive experiences of education that respond to specific needs.

The Literacy Policy outlines the overall aim of 'making words work' for all pupils by maintaining a coherent, consistent and collaborative approach to all that we do pertaining to literacy development at Ashfield Girls' High School.

The Literacy Policy outlines procedures relating to:

- The promotion of literacy across the school;
- The development of consistent, cross-curricular literacy skills and
- The implementation of individual literacy support interventions.

The roles and responsibilities relating to the Literacy Policy and the implementation of the policy are clarified.

The process for monitoring, evaluation and review are stated.



Policy Aims

The policy relates to literacy within Ashfield Girls' High School.

'Count, Read: Succeed' (paragraph 1.7) defines literacy as:

The ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly, taking account of different purposes, contexts, conventions and audiences.

At Ashfield Girls' High School, we developed a more pupil friendly definition:

Literacy is the ability to communicate your thoughts in words (writing and speaking) and the ability to understand the thoughts and words of others (reading and listening).

The policy itself aims to:

- Outline how literacy is positively promoted within the school;
- Outline how the acquisition and confident use of cross-curricular literacy skills are developed and consistently reinforced across the curriculum;
- Provide clarity to all school stakeholders on the framework of individual literacy support implementation available to pupils (including the procedures for enrolment in key intervention strategies that incorporate the effective use of formative and summative data) and
- Delineate the roles and responsibilities of all school stakeholders in the development of literacy.

Together, these policy aims are intended to show that we are, as a school and for our pupils, 'making words work'.

Legislation Context and Guidance

The mission statement of Ashfield Girls' High School is 'Each different. Each talented. All valued.' This supports the vision of the Department of Education which is 'to ensure that every learner fulfils her or his full potential at each stage of their development.' (DENI 2010).

In their policy document 'Count, Read: Succeed – A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy' the Department of Education further state that 'literacy [is] at the very heart of the revised curriculum' and so 'developing literacy, therefore, must be [a] central element of any school's delivery of the revised curriculum, and of the support and professional development for teachers in implementing the curriculum.'

Further guidance on the implementation of the revised curriculum was outlined in the 'Every School a Good School' policy document (ESAGS DENI 2009). The characteristics of a successful school were noted as follows:

- Child-centred provision;
- High quality teaching and learning;
- Effective leadership and
- A school connected its local community.

Ultimately, in order to embed literacy as a central element across the whole of Ashfield Girls' High School and to ensure that the documents above are reflected in our practises, this Literacy Policy has been developed alongside our School Development Plan to ensure that each different and talented individual truly is enabled, empowered and valued.

Linked Policies

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Effective Use of Data Policy

Numeracy Policy

SEN Policy

Social Media Policy

Related Documents

Count, Read: Succeed - A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/count-read-succeed-a-strategy-to-improve-outcomes-in-literacy-and-numeracy.pdf>

Every School a Good School - A Policy for School Improvement: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/ESAGS%20Policy%20for%20School%20Improvement%20-%20Final%20Version%2005-05-2009.pdf>

The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF): https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/the-inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation-questions-for-post-primary_1.pdf



Policy and Procedure

The policy and procedures for literacy in Ashfield Girls' High School are categorised as:

- Promotion of literacy;
- Development of consistent, cross-curricular literacy skills and
- Implementation of individual literacy support interventions

Promotion of literacy

The positive promotion of literacy is paramount to overall pupil perception and aids the development of literacy skills across the school. Sustainable programmes and events have been embedded into the life of Ashfield Girls' High School to enable us to positively promote a love of literacy.

- **Form-time reading programme** – class reading is embedded in the form-time timetable on a regular basis across Key Stage 3 classes and serves as a consistent promotion of the importance of reading. This can take different forms and may involve individual reading of a chosen book, collective reading of a chosen class novel or collective listening to a chosen audio book.
- **Book clubs** – a range of book clubs led by different members of staff meet at varying stages throughout the year, on a rotational basis, to discuss a range of novels. Clubs have been established for Key Stage 3 pupils, Year 11 pupils and Year 13/14 pupils. The Key Stage 3 book club is optional but some pupils finding it a challenge to form reading habits are recommended to attend by English teachers. The two Senior School book clubs are entirely optional. All take place at lunchtime or after school.
- **Literacy focus events** – events throughout the year are celebrated in interactive, enjoyable and varied ways. Some key events include Roald Dahl Day in September, National Poetry Day in October and World Book Day in March. Assemblies with a focus on literacy are also delivered to all pupils each year. These place a particular focus on promoting literacy and, each term, literacy prizes are awarded as part of the Celebration Assemblies. These prizes reward both achievement and effort. A collaborative event between the Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators that takes place for Key Stage 3 pupils is 'Ashfield Does Countdown', an event that places emphasis on the connection between these skills and which places emphasis on engaging with these literacy and numeracy skills for fun.
- **Primary Transition Project** – the Primary 7 Transition Project helps support pupils over summer as they prepare to join Year 8. Pupils are asked to read a novel and complete a short workbook that will inform teaching and learning in September. To develop transition links, the Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators collaborate to lead the 'Ashfield Does Countdown' event in local primary schools. These two projects are being developed further and the shape of the programme will change and improve as existing links with feeder primary schools are grown.
- **Social media promotion** – any relevant events, successes and initiatives are promoted to a wider audience through the school's active social media platforms (in line with the school's Social Media Policy).

Development of consistent, cross-curricular literacy skills

The development of literacy skills is paramount to overall pupil achievement and determines the extent to which any pupil can access the curriculum.

Sustainable strategies have been embedded into the life and curriculum of Ashfield Girls' High School to enable us to provide consistency to the development of key literacy skills.

- **Opportunities for all four strands of literacy embedded in all subject areas** – the Literacy Coordinator works closely with the Literacy Team and Heads of Department to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to engage with reading, writing, speaking and listening across all subject areas. Some examples of this might include:
 - tailoring and embedding subject-specific readings;
 - supporting the development and marking of extended writing with scaffold structures and mark schemes;
 - modelling the accurate usage of subject-specific terminology in speech and
 - equipping pupils with exercises to develop their ability to focus their listening.
- **Literacy audits** - in order to analyse and inform whole school literacy development and planning, the Literacy Coordinator will complete a whole school literacy audit with staff and pupils, either on a large-scale basis once every three years or through smaller, specific audits to assess one area of literacy provision.

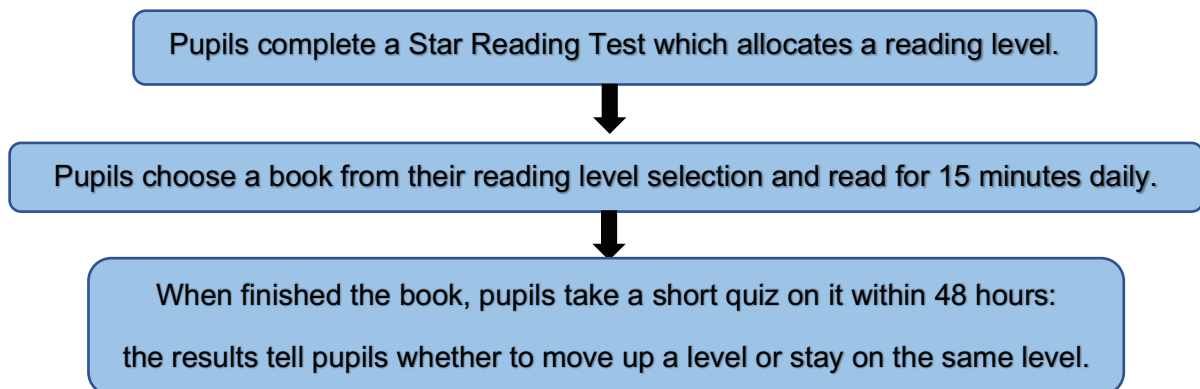
The literacy audit gathers feedback and information relating to the aims of the Literacy Policy. Quantitative and qualitative data about each department's literacy provision will be gathered alongside sample schemes of work and sample evidence of pupil work.

The literacy audit will be used to identify the extent of literacy provision across all departments in Ashfield Girls' High School. Following this, the Literacy Coordinator will evaluate the strengths in literacy provision and identify any areas for further development. The analysis and appropriate actions will then inform future planning and will be communicated to all staff, enabling them to review the provision at department and classroom level.

- **Whole School Style Sheet** – this is a consistent format that all pupils should follow when laying out written work in their classwork books. All classrooms have a wall display of the layout that is explained to all pupils at the beginning of each year and which serves as a constant reminder in all classrooms.
- **SPG Lenses** – this provides a consistent framework for pupils to equip them with how to proof-read all written work for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Staff will use the SPG Lenses marking codes when assessing pupil work – in both a formative and summative context – to provide feedback on pupil performance. A selection of subjects have embedded the SPG Lenses into their Key Stage 3 assessments, ensuring that pupils are assessed on their ability to check their work and on the accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and grammar. All classrooms have a wall display of the SPG Lenses that is explained to pupils at the beginning of each year and which serves as a constant reminder in all classrooms.



- **Oracy prompts** - this provides question stems that all pupils can follow when needing to ask questions in class or after class to the teacher. All classrooms have a wall display of the question stems that is explained to all pupils at the beginning of each year and which serves as a constant reminder in all classrooms.
- **Literacy and Numeracy: Home parent event** – this event, led by the Literacy and Numeracy Coordinator, acts as a chance for a specific group of parents and carers to learn more about the literacy and numeracy initiatives and interventions available as support in school. It also allows parents and carers to participate in training to be equipped with some key strategies for use at home. This is a chance to collaborate with the community and model expectations both inside and outside the classroom.
- **Accelerated Reading** – we provide the Accelerated Reader Programme to all Key Stage 3 pupils. This is a well-recognised and highly successful reading programme that helps parents and staff to monitor independent pupil reading. The programme works as follows:



The English teacher, Form Tutor and Librarian help pupils stick to set goals and direct ongoing reading practice. Pupils currently take their Star Reading Test two times in one year to monitor progress and to receive a new reading age. This is subject to change upon ongoing review.

- **Bedrock Learning** – this is a vocabulary-based ICT programme that explicitly teaches Tier 2 vocabulary using recall, repetition and retrieval exercises. This was introduced by the English Head of Department, is continually led by the English Department and is monitored in collaboration with Form Tutors. Pupils are expected to complete at least two Bedrock lessons per week and prizes are awarded termly for both achievement and effort.

Implementation of individual literacy support interventions

The implementation of targeted literacy intervention is paramount to ensuring that every pupil is able to develop their literacy skills and is equipped in accessing the curriculum

Sustainable intervention programmes have been embedded into the life of Ashfield Girls' High School to enable us to improve the confident use of literacy skills across the curriculum.

• Core Learning Support Programme

The Core Learning Support Programme provides pupils in Ashfield Girls' High School with one-to-one or small group support with the Learning Support Assistant on a weekly basis.

This support aims to help pupils who have difficulties with literacy to grow in competence and confidence through a structured teaching programme in which the Learning Support Assistant reinforces the key foundational concepts of literacy pupils need across the curriculum and in everyday life.

Content of the Core Learning Support Programme is adapted to suit each pupils' individual needs and delivered using a range of intervention programmes. This intervention uses a series of baseline assessments to identify pupils' individual strengths and areas for development in literacy. The Learning Support Assistant then provides tailored teaching activities and resources to help pupils make progress in specific areas.

The attained skills and relevant progress of each pupil is monitored closely in order to effectively evaluate the progress made throughout their time on the programme. This data is then, in turn, used to review pupil progress and contributes towards future planning and interventions.

• Criteria for Core Learning Support Programme

A number of criteria are applied when identifying pupils who would benefit from participation on the Core Learning Support Programme. These are informed by relevant pupil data which is collected, collated, and analysed by the Literacy Coordinator.

In identifying pupils for Core Learning Support, the Literacy Coordinator will:

- Analyse the most up-to-date PTE scores (following PTE testing in Key Stage 3);
- Analyse the most up-to-date NGRT scores (following NGRT testing in Key Stage 3);
- Apply PASS data provided by the Pastoral Team;
- Identify any Special Educational Needs (primarily in relation to literacy);
- Analyse any recent standardised assessment scores provided by class teachers;
- Request comments from English teachers about pupils' progress during lessons;
- Examine attendance data with the support of the Pastoral Team and
- Identify any other intervention programmes in which pupils currently participate.

The Literacy Coordinator will also consider:

- Any specific request for support made by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator;
- Requests for support made by Heads of Progress;
- Concerns raised through form tutors and
- Requests for support made by parents.



As the Core Learning Support Programme can only support a limited number of pupils, the following specific criteria will initially be applied:

- PTE scores below 85;
- NGRT scores below average;
- PASS data which demonstrates the need for intervention/positive attitude to learning;
- Standardised assessment scores below 30%;
- Pupils with attendance of 90% and above;
- Qualitative data provided by English teachers (for instance, progress comments);
- Pupils not receiving support through any other interventions and
- Pupils in need of both literacy and numeracy interventions.

This criteria has been set and agreed but is subject to regular review.

A visual representation of the criteria for the Core Learning Support Programme is detailed in Appendix 1.

A flow chart to demonstrate how pupils are selected is detailed in Appendix 2.

A visual representation of the protocol for the referral process is detailed in Appendix 3 and this should be followed by all staff in the interest of fairness and consistency.

- **Paired Reading**

The Paired Reading peer-support programme was introduced in September 2021. This programme aims to:

- Identify and support Year 8 pupils who have difficulty forming reading habits;
- Provide regular, informal opportunities for students to strengthen foundational reading skills through peer support;
- Utilise sixth form students as mentors to younger students to build strong school relationships across year groups and
- Encourage sixth form students to contribute to school-life.

The Literacy Coordinator identifies pupils who would benefit from support with reading and pairs them with a sixth form student who acts as a mentor. This programme aims specifically to target pupils whose PTE and NGRT data report highlights that they have achieved a score which is 'lower than' expected, suggesting the fundamental literacy abilities are in place but that the pupil lacks confidence or would benefit from further consolidation of their learning.

- **Criteria for the Paired Reading programme**

The following guidelines are followed when selecting students to participate in the Paired-Reading peer support programme:

For the Year 8 pupil, the following will be considered:

- Most recent PTE and NGRT profiles;
- PASS data;
- Teacher data and comments;
- Attendance figures;
- Any special educational needs and
- Participation in any other interventions.



The Sixth Form pupil will have:

- Attended full, formal training to equip them in the delivery of the programme;
- Achieved a C or above in GCSE English;
- Demonstrate positive attendance figures;
- Been a positive contributor to school life;
- A good attitude to school and learning and
- A strong ability to manage personal workload.

- **PARK support**

This is an additional literacy support intervention delivered by an external agency to develop reading as a lifelong learning skill. The support staff assess reading ages and use the appropriate level of book from the Fast Forward Reading Scheme to increase pupil competence and confidence. A pupil involved in this programme will receive support at least once a week either in a one-to-one context or in a small group setting.



Roles and Responsibilities

Below are the roles and responsibilities attributed to all school stakeholders. These roles and responsibilities provide clarity, accountability and ensure legislation is met across the school.

The Board of Governors will:

- Ratify, monitor, and review the aims and direction set out in the Literacy Policy.

The Principal and Vice-Principal will:

- Contribute to the monitoring and review of the literacy provision outlined in policy;
- Provide support to the Literacy Coordinator in the development of literacy provision across the school;
- Embed opportunities or whole staff training in relation to literacy provision;
- Disseminate information provided by the Literacy Coordinator to Heads of Department, Heads of Progress and the wider staff team;
- Aid the Literacy Coordinator in the establishment of the Literacy Action Plan in line with the aims of the School Development Plan and
- Lead by example in the promotion, development, and use of literacy skills across the school.

The Literacy Coordinator will:

- Provide clear leadership, guidance, and direction for the delivery of literacy across the curriculum;
- Support Heads of Department in the embedding of literacy skills in schemes of work, resources, and planning documents;
- Provide relevant training to staff on the effective delivery of literacy across the school;
- Oversee the delivery of the Learning Support Programme for literacy in partnership with the Learning Support Assistant;
- Carry out curriculum audits and pupil audits for literacy;
- Provide relevant resources to aid current - and incoming - pupils, parents and staff in the development of literacy skills;
- Oversee the acquisition and analysis of PTE and NGRT data for all Key Stage 3 pupils;
- Disseminate analysis of relevant data to all teaching staff including PTE profiling, audit responses and data relevant to the Learning Support Assistant;
- Lead and coordinate the School Improvement Team for literacy and
- Review the Literacy Action Plan in line with the School Development Plan on a yearly basis.

The Literacy Team will:

- Support the Literacy Coordinator in the development of the Literacy Action Plan;
- Support the Literacy Coordinator in the development of literacy skills across the curriculum and
- Participate in the establishment or trialling of new initiatives and
- Contribute to the agreed pedagogy to be promoted and shared with all staff in order to help develop consistency in literacy.

Heads of Department will:

- Support the Literacy Coordinator in the development of literacy skills across the curriculum;
- Participate in identifying pupils to be supported through the literacy interventions using any relevant data and
- Contribute to the agreed pedagogy to be promoted and shared with all staff in order to help develop consistency in literacy.

The Learning Support Assistant will:

- Under the direction of the Literacy Coordinator, plan, deliver and evaluate the Learning Support Programme;
- Provided one-to-one/small group support to pupils identified by the Literacy Coordinator and other contributing staff members and
- Undergo any training of professional development as identified by the themselves or the Literacy Coordinator.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator will:

- Provide support, advice and guidance on any reasonable adjustments required for pupils on the SEND register in relation to literacy and
- Share any information in relation to legislation, training or intervention programmes available to pupils on the SEND register that would have a direct impact on the development of literacy skills.

Teachers will:

- Promote the development of literacy skills in their subject through planning, teaching, learning and assessment;
- Support the Literacy Coordinator in embedding whole school literacy initiatives and interventions;
- Provide constructive feedback on the provision and leadership on literacy through regular literacy audits;
- Contribute towards a consistent approach to the delivery of literacy provision, following the guidance provided by the Literacy Coordinator and English department and
- Liaise with the Literacy Coordinator in relation to any feedback, concerns or aspirations in relation to the provision of literacy across the school.

**Parents will:**

- Promote the importance and development of literacy skills with their children at home;
- Support pupils in the development of literacy skills as recommended by the Literacy Coordinator and English department;
- Encourage pupils to engage positively with the literacy related opportunities available in school and
- Seek support from the Literacy Coordinator and wider school community where and when it is required.

Pupils will:

- Recognise the importance of literacy and approach all literacy related learning with a positive attitude.
- Take ownership of their own learning in relation to literacy, using the supporting resources and programmes provided within school.
- Seek the support within school of relevant staff members where and when required.

Role of the School Library

A welcoming and vibrant school library is an invaluable asset in the development of whole school literacy. A recent study by Of-Sted, entitled, 'Good School Libraries: Making a Difference to Learning', states that the school library has a 'central role in the improvement of pupil literacy'. In order to meet the needs of the pupils, the school library (including the Library Coordinator and Librarian) will:

- Take a lead role in supporting and teaching literacy across the curriculum;
- Promote the Accelerated Reading programme throughout the year;
- Collaborate with Heads of Department and subject teachers to embed literacy across the curriculum;
- Provide an environment suitable for all requirements of the library;
- Ensure high standards of behaviour within the library, facilitating for library classes alongside sixth-form provision and additional school needs;
- Provide a wide range of suitable, refreshed resources;
- Stimulate independent learning.

The Literacy Coordinator works alongside the Librarian and the Library Coordinator to ensure that this provision is being met, to communicate developments to staff and to encourage the use of the Library, beyond English lessons, for the whole school.

All of the above detail is subject to amendment following the next review of the Literacy Policy (August 2024).



Consultation, Communication, Monitoring and Review of Policy

Consultation

The Literacy Policy was first sent for consultation with all staff in June 2023, ratified with the Board of Governors in August 2023 and published in September 2023.

This policy represents the unanimous aims and support of the staff in Ashfield Girls' High School. Any amendments to the policy will be discussed and thereafter presented following review of the policy in June 2024.

Communication

A copy of the Literacy Policy is available on the school website: <https://www.ashfieldgirls.org/>

Electronic and physical copies of the literacy policy are available to staff in staff resources, on Microsoft Teams and in the school office.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

Policy to be reviewed in June 2024 and thereafter on a bi-annual basis. Any suggested amendments to the policy will be discussed with staff, the Literacy Coordinator, Vice Principal and Principal before being ratified by the Board of Governors.

Appendix 1 – Learning Support Criteria: Relevant Pupil Data

Pupil data to be examined when identifying pupils to participate in any Learning Support Programme

Quantitative Data

Pupils' most recent **PTE score** identified as less than 85 and **NGRT score** is below average

Pupils' percentage attendance 90% or above.
(Some consideration will be given to students whose academic capabilities are impacting of their attendance, where possible).

Pupils' standardised assessment data demonstrates difficulties with literacy [predominately scores below 30%].

Qualitative Data

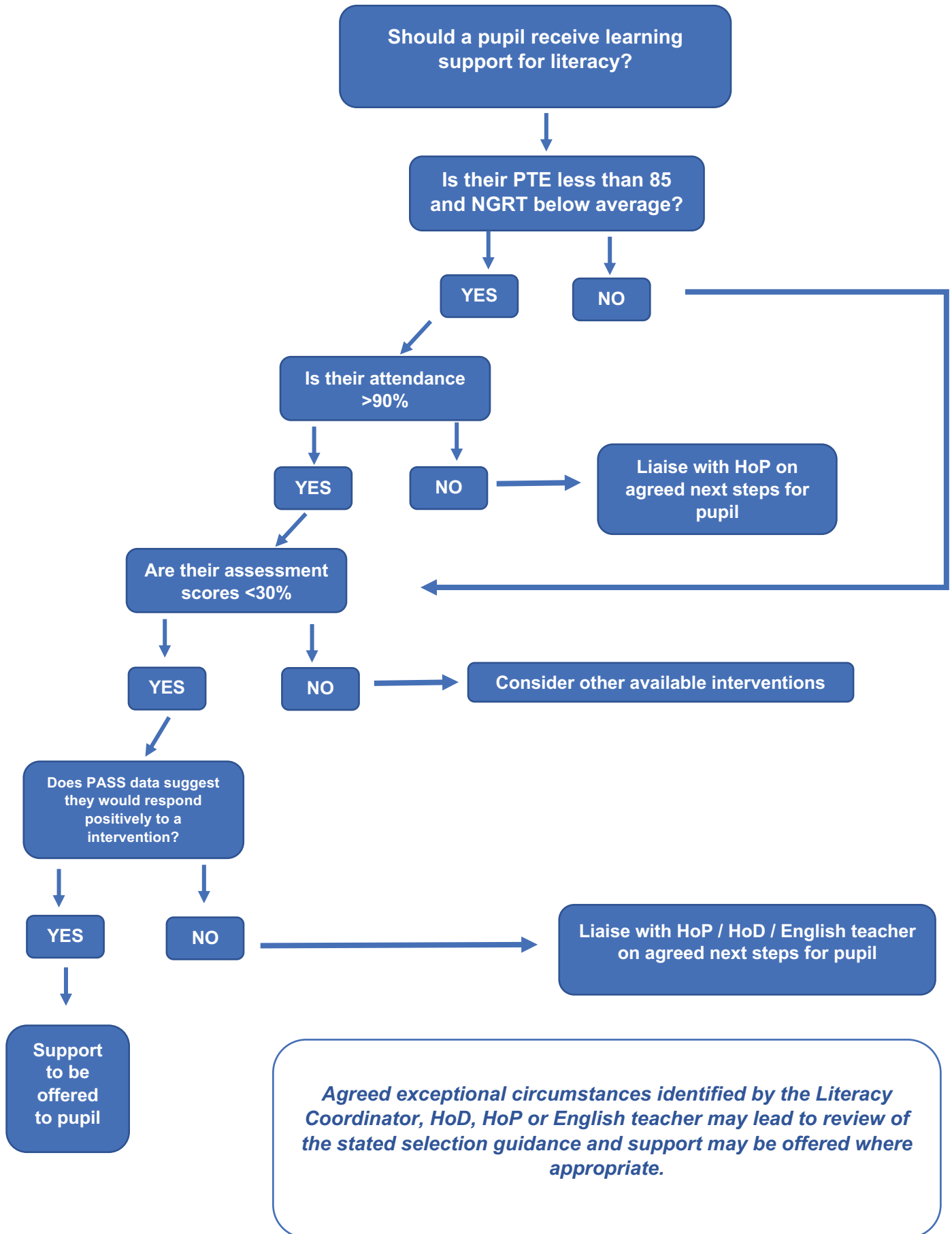
PASS Data examined [priority will be given to pupils whose PASS data suggests pupils may struggle academically but have a positive attitude towards school].

Identify if pupil is/isn't on the **Special Educational Needs [SEN]** register, the nature of their needs and how they should be met.

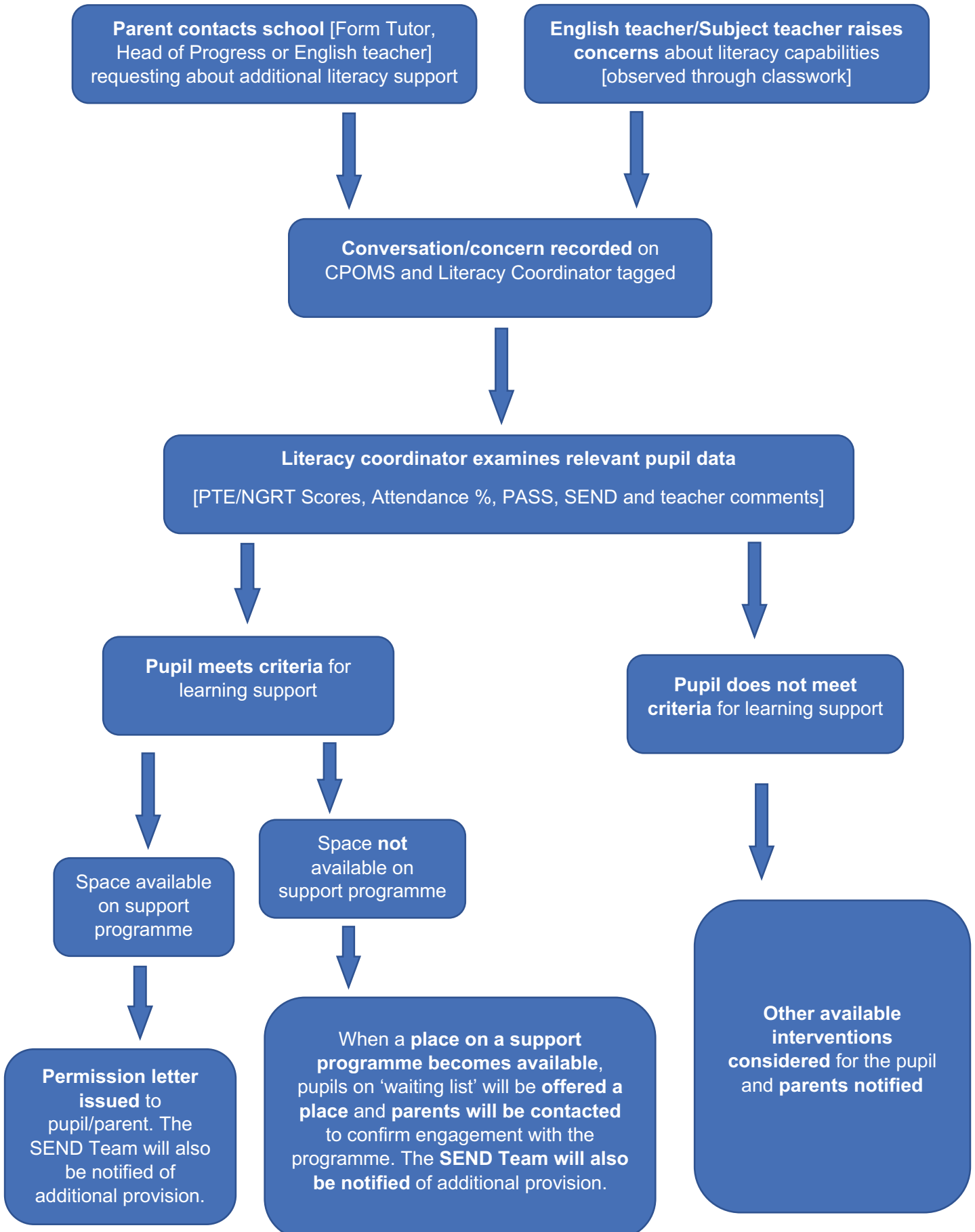
Subject specific comments provided by English teachers on pupil progress (along with comments about attitude/work ethic).

Agreed additional data/information deemed relevant by the Literacy Coordinator, HoD, HoP or English teacher may be considered in addition to the data named above, where appropriate.

Appendix 2 – Selection Guidance for Learning Support Programmes



Appendix 3 – Protocol for Referral to Learning Support Programmes



Challenging girls today; creating women of value in the future



Principal: Mrs Louise Hanvey BSc (Hons) PGCE, PQHNI, PGDH

Hollywood Road, Belfast
BT4 2LY

Tel: 028 9047 1744

www.ashfieldgirls.org
info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk