



# BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

## Literacy Policy

- *Approval by the Board of Governors: **June 2016***
- *The implementation of this policy will be monitored by: Senior Management Team*
- *This policy will be reviewed every two years*





## DEFINITION

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly, taking account of different purposes, contexts, conventions and audiences. It involves the development of:

- a) an integrated approach to the acquisition of talking, listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum;
- b) knowledge that allows a speaker, writer and reader to use language appropriate to different social situations;
- c) formal and informal language across all areas of social interaction; and
- d) the ability to read, understand and use information in multiple formats and platforms, including traditional print and on-screen material.

*Count, Read; Succeed. A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy [DENI – Launched March 2011 Section 1.7]*

## RATIONALE

Literacy is at the centre of teaching and learning across the curriculum. It is a shared responsibility and a whole school issue. Developing pupils' abilities to speak, listen, read and write for a wide range of purposes and audiences is key to their educational progress and attainment, social integration and to their personal development. All teachers have an essential role to play in supporting pupils' literacy development by enabling pupils to improve literacy skills in all subject areas: *'every teacher regardless of the subject he / she teaches, must promote and model high standards of literacy.'* (Count, Read: Succeed)

## AIMS

This aims of this policy are to:

- develop pupils' confidence as learners and users of language;
- develop pupils' skills in all areas of language;
- raise pupils' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards;
- develop an understanding amongst staff of the role of literacy in pupils' learning and how different subjects can contribute to and benefit from the pupils' ability to communicate effectively.
- ensure consistency of approach by teachers;
- recognise that good literacy skills are a key factor to raising standards across all subjects



In order to improve whole school standards of literacy this policy will be applied in accordance with the four key principles of the 'Every School a Good School: a policy for school improvement' document (ESaGS 2009).

- *Child Centred Provision*
- *High Quality Teaching and Learning*
- *Effective Leadership*
- *A School Connected to its Local Community*

### **CHILD CENTRED PROVISION**

Pupils will:

- be encouraged to achieve their full potential;
- learn within a culture of achievement, improvement and ambition;
- develop confidence as learners and users of language;
- develop skills in order to read, write and communicate with confidence, fluency and understanding;
- engage in self-improvement;
- be supported as required (low-achieving, underachieving as well as gifted and talented pupils) with effective interventions in order to fulfil their potential;
- be tracked and regularly assessed for progress in literacy;
- be aware of the significance of developing sound literacy skills;
- be encouraged to make use of library and ICT facilities to promote reading;
- be encouraged to engage with literacy initiatives.

### **HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Subject teachers will employ a wide range of teaching strategies in order to promote improvement and develop pupils' literacy skills.

To ensure the implementation of high quality teaching and learning the following key indicators of ESaGS will be adopted:

- A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for the pupils;
- An emphasis on literacy exists across the curriculum;
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with pupils and are dedicated to improving learning;
- Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom;
- Assessment and other data is used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement;

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- Rigorous self-evaluation is carried out by teachers and the whole school, using objective data and leading to sustained self-improvement;
  - Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils.

It is the aim of the school to ensure that achieving high standards of literacy is a cross-curricular focus and requires a consistency of approach by teachers.

Teachers will:

- support pupils' learning in all subjects by understanding how their work with pupils contributes to the development of pupils' communication skills;
- use assessment data effectively to inform teaching and learning;
- ensure a consistency of approach within departments and across the curriculum;
- recognise that good literacy skills are a key factor to raising standards across all subjects;
- have planned opportunities for the development of literacy skills and strategies highlighted in Schemes of Work;
- encourage and expect a high standard of pupil work;
- provide opportunities for extended writing and will provide exemplar material and model an approach to 'extended' answers;
- address under-achievement in literacy as soon as it emerges in order to support pupil skills and will advise the Literacy Co-ordinator / SENCO as appropriate;
- ensure the provision of literacy-friendly classrooms with displays modelling the most effective uses of literacy;
- adhere to whole school policy on marking for literacy;
- vary questioning techniques to elicit a range of responses from pupils;
- ensure tasks are appropriate to pupil ability and offer opportunities for progression;
- engage in In Service Training on literacy;
- liaise with the Literacy Co-ordinator for additional support as required;
- monitor and evaluate their own practice and adapt it as required to meet the needs of all pupils.

#### **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

The implementation and management of the Literacy Policy and literacy improvement strategies will be supported by effective school leadership.



The Board of Governors will:

- support strategies for whole school development and improvement in literacy;
- be presented with the Literacy Policy and Action Plan for approval;
- ensure the development of literacy skills is evident in the approved School Development Plan.

The Senior Management Team will:

- lead staff in setting and expecting high standards of literacy;
- identify key priorities in Literacy within the School Development Plan;
- ensure all staff have the necessary skills required to promote and monitor literacy improvement;
- analyse assessment data to monitor pupil progress and attainment;
- emphasise the importance of developing literacy skills for pupil progress and attainment;
- monitor, evaluate and review the Literacy Policy, Action Plan and Literacy Strategies in line with whole school policy.

The Literacy Co-ordinator will:

- lead and monitor literacy development across the curriculum and through the implementation of the Literacy Action Plan;
- ensure that the profile of literacy is raised throughout the school;
- liaise with Governors, SMT, SENCO and external agencies as required;
- liaise and communicate with departments to ensure a cross-curricular approach is adopted to raising standards in literacy;
- support departments / staff providing guidance and direction for the delivery of literacy across the curriculum;
- disseminate literacy strategies and share good practice;
- research and share new literacy improvement practices.

Heads of Department will:

- be responsible for ensuring that tasks which develop literacy skills are embedded and highlighted within each subject area Scheme of Work;
- incorporate subject-specific literacy strategies into Departmental Policy;



- encourage members of their Department to implement the use of literacy within their teaching;
- regularly monitor and review how literacy skills are being developed within their department;
- identify training needs in relation to literacy within their department;
- liaise with the Literacy Co-ordinator / SENCO where instances of pupil under-achievement in Literacy are identified.

The Head of English will:

- play a key role for developing an understanding of key literacy concepts;
- work in conjunction with the Literacy Co-ordinator to identify key literacy strategies.

The SENCO will:

- assist and intervene where cases of low-achievement and under-achievement in literacy skills emerge and are identified;
- identify strategies to be used to support pupils on the SEN register.

Subject Teachers will:

- take responsibility for raising standards in literacy within their subject;
- implement whole school and departmental literacy policies within their teaching;
- promote meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills within their subject;
- monitor and evaluate pupil progress in literacy;

### **CONNECTIONS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY**

Ballycastle High School aims to highlight the importance of literacy via its links with the local Primary and Post-Primary Schools as well as the local community. These links aim to develop a collaborative learning culture in order to enhance the learning experience of pupils throughout the school.



#### Links with Parents

- Links will be developed and maintained with parents via reports, annual parents' afternoons, parental surveys, Open Evening, the introduction of Literacy initiatives and also via the schools' website and social media.

#### Links with Primary Schools

- Established links will be further consolidated with Primary School visits and Activity Days to facilitate the transition between KS2 and KS3 and to promote literacy development;

#### Links with Post-Primary Schools

- Links will be consolidated with our collaboration partners and literacy initiatives will be shared when deemed appropriate.

#### Links with the Local Community

- Pupils will be encouraged to make use of local library facilities for research purposes and for reading for pleasure;
- Pupils will also be encouraged to participate in locally held events e.g. public-speaking, drama & writing competitions etc.

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY**

The Literacy Policy will be:

- regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with staff, particularly the Senior Management Team and SENCO;
- presented to the Board of Governors regularly and the progress and success of the Literacy Action Plan will be reviewed;
- shared with parents;
- in line with whole school learning and teaching policy.