



ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

Literacy Policy

Revised September 2020

Rationale:

In St. Mary's High School, pupils' literacy skills, i.e. their ability to speak, listen, read and write effectively is the key to educational and career progress, to social integration and to personal development and fulfilment. This policy document outlines the strategies and approaches used to support and develop each pupil to ensure they are equipped with the necessary language knowledge, understanding and skills.

We aim for a *“coordinated and effective cross-curricular emphasis on literacy that supports all teachers in recognising and exploiting opportunities to support the development of literacy through their teaching.”*

‘A Strategy for Raising Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy – Consultation Document’

Context:

The stated vision of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) is *‘To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her potential at each stage of his or her development.’* (DENI 2010)

This has been enunciated in the overall aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (DE 2008), which says, *‘The N Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.’*

The School Improvement policy document, ‘Every School a Good School,’ (DENI 2009) has outlined indicators of what will be recognised as effective performance under four headings:

- **Child centred provision**
- **High quality teaching and learning**
- **Effective leadership**
- **A School Connected to its local community.**

Definition:

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. It involves the development of:

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

'Every School a Good School' defines literacy as 'the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly for a range of purposes, within a range of contexts and for a variety of audiences. It also involves the integration of talking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing and includes the knowledge that enables a speaker, writer and reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. Literacy permeates and develops learning in all areas of the curriculum, formal and informal and all areas of social interaction and development.'

'Every School a Good School', DE, June 2009

Aims:

- To promote literacy as an essential life skill to enable young people to develop as individuals and contributors to society;
- To promote positive attitudes towards English and Literacy among pupils and staff;
- To ensure the involvement of all departments in the promotion of literacy across all subjects;
- Literacy remains a key priority on the School Development Plan and as a result must continue to be a priority at all levels within school, classroom, department and whole school;
- To increase teachers' understanding of the contribution which Literacy can make to each curriculum area;
- To employ a range of teaching strategies and styles to meet the needs of all learners;
- To encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning;
- To ensure the English Department takes a leading role in the promotion and development of Literacy across all subjects.

Child Centred Provision:

'A clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity'

(Every School a Good School, June 2009)

We aim to ensure through effective learning and teaching the needs of all pupils are met and they reach their full potential in English.

Curriculum Provision:

KS3 English

- There are five English classes timetabled together in each KS3 Year Group;
- At the beginning of Year 8, MidYIS results, Reading Ages, Spelling Ages and NFER PTM 11 test results are analysed by the SENCO, Literacy & Transition Co-ordinator and Head of English to identify pupils who require additional Literacy support. Pupils identified are withdrawn from PD/English classes once a week; in a small group to receive extra literacy support. While they are receiving this support, English teachers deliver Literacy lessons to their classes. In addition pupils with SEN requirements are taught in smaller classes by the school SENCO;

- In addition, pupils avail of after school Literacy support. Classroom Assistants are trained in Reading Partnership, Talking Partners and the Lexia Programmes and provide one-on-one support to pupils who have additional needs. Year 8 pupils are targeted for Reading Partnership, at the end of this programme their Reading Ages are retested and evaluated. Year 9 pupils are targeted for Spelling Support, at the end of this programme their Spelling Ages are retested and evaluated. Year 8 are also targeted for Talking Partners support. This is a small group (no more than 4) who work with a trained Classroom Assistant to develop and enhance their oracy skills. (subject to Covid-19 restrictions)
- All year 8 pupils complete the Shared Reading Programme and again this data is monitored and analysed to track progress;
- At the beginning of Year 9, Year 8 Standardised Assessments, CCEA Adaptive Assessments and Literacy data is analysed to stream pupils into classes. Year 9 pupils are targeted for a Spelling Support Programme, again at the end of this programme, their ages are retested and the data evaluated;
- At the beginning of Year 10, Year 9 Standardised Assessments and other tracking data are analysed to decide class placement and stream pupils. They are also used to identify pupils who require additional Literacy support and those who would benefit from smaller teaching groups;
- A wide range of teaching strategies including effective questioning, group work, individual task completion, extended activities, peer and self-assessment, scaffolding, graphic organisers and visual literacy are used to ensure pupils are challenged;
- Parents are made aware of all Literacy initiatives and strategies to support their daughter, parents have taken part in Literacy Awareness classes, and parents are regularly informed by letter for improvement to pupils reading and spelling ages;
- Literacy Week is celebrated in school annually. It is a whole school event and particular emphasis is given to KS3 pupils. Parents are informed through the school App, website and an information leaflet;
- Classroom assistants liaise with the SENCO, Literacy Coordinator and Subject Teachers to support pupils with class work, projects and homework;
- Pupils are praised and their achievements acknowledged and celebrated by displaying their work in classrooms, on the Literacy Notice board and on the school website and the department's Twitter account;
- Literacy Booster Packs are used to support pupils who need extra support to develop their literacy skills. Pupils independently complete tasks to develop spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. Designated Literacy classes in school also focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills.

KS4 English

- There are five GCSE English classes in Year 11 and 12, two classes study both Language and Literature while three studying English Language. English Language classes are streamed;
- All pupils follow the CCEA syllabus;
- Classroom Assistants support pupils with Special Educational Needs;
- Teachers adopt a wide range of teaching styles and strategies to meet the needs of all learners;
- After school Booster GCSE English Classes are used to support pupils, especially those identified as underachieving;
- The Engage Programme for the academic year 2020/21 is used to reinforce and support learning and raise attainment.

Through our established assessment and monitoring arrangements, pupils who are underachieving or have special educational needs are identified and support strategies are initiated to raise pupil attainment. The following support strategies are already established:

- Pupils who are under-achieving or on the C/D border line are targeted and receive additional support. Pupils are withdrawn from non-exam classes and receive support from English teachers.;
- Underachieving pupils in Year 12 are placed on the Assertive Mentoring Programme;
- Year 14 pupils act as Learning Partners to support Year 8 pupils who are underachieving;
- Classroom Assistants support pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their learning and employ strategies to promote learning;
- Engage Programme in place October 2020 to reinforce and support learning across KS3 & KS4;
- Class teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies including effective questioning, self and peer assessment, group work, ICT and individual work to challenge pupils' thinking and understanding.

Newcomer Pupils:

- The New Comer Co-ordinator supports departments and individual teachers to provide extra support for New Comer Pupils, progress is tracked across key stages and data shared with all staff;
- Staff complete the CEFR framework to track Newcomer pupil attainment across all subjects.

Special Educational Needs:

- Classroom Assistants support pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their learning and employ support strategies to promote learning;
- Staff complete IEP's for all pupils on Stages 2 – 5 on the SEN Code of Practice. Targets are set, reviewed and revised bi-annually;
- Pupils with specific learning difficulties in English/Literacy are taught in a smaller class at KS3;
- Progress is tracked across all key stages and data is shared with all staff.

High Quality Teaching and Learning:

‘Assessment and other data is used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school, in the classroom and to promote improvement’

(Every School a Good School, June 2009)

Learning and Teaching Strategies

Class teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies including effective questioning, self and peer assessment, group work, ICT, blended learning and online platforms (Showbie) and individual work to develop pupils’ Literacy skills.

“Teachers, drawing on their professional expertise, will use a variety of teaching strategies including whole-class teaching, co-operative small group work and individual work, differentiated where appropriate” (Count, Read: Succeed paragraph 5.3).

Literacy Initiatives across the curriculum (subject to Covid-19 restrictions);

- Presentation and Marking Code
- Posters displaying Key Terms in classrooms
- Learning plans with Key words
- Public speaking competitions
- Writing competitions
- Reading Week
- Connected Learning for Years 8 and 9
- World Book Day
- Reading Partnership
- Spelling Support Programme
- Shared Reading Programme
- Designated Literacy Classes
- Team-teaching
- Individual Pupil Support
- Literacy Club
- Talking Partners
- Spelling BEE
- Whole school key word booklets

Effective Use of ICT

ICT is used to support learning and teaching in Literacy lessons and across the curriculum. Every classroom has an Interactive Whiteboard and ICT Suites are available on request. iPads, Kindles and Netbooks are available for use in classrooms and the C2K online learning environment FRONTER is used to support independent learning. Blended learning in place and use of online platforms (Showbie) enhance the sharing of resources and work between pupils and teachers.

Approaches to Literacy Development

Talking and Listening

The strands of talking, listening, group discussion and interaction and drama pervade the whole curriculum. Oral language should be recognised as the *primary mode of language* and hence should receive a central emphasis and focus in all areas of the curriculum and in the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes. Talking and Listening will be developed:

- Within the classroom, formally and informally
- Using whole class discussions, groups, pairs or individual presentations
- Use of effective questioning by the teacher- open questions
- Public Speaking Competitions throughout the year (**connected to the wider community**)
- School Council promotion
- Assemblies

Reading

An emphasis must be placed on the importance of comprehension skills and strategies, which must be developed and encouraged from the beginning. The pleasure and enjoyment of reading should be fostered in the language lessons, across the curriculum and beyond the classroom. Involvement of the parents can be critical in this context. We will develop Reading through:

- Resources within departments- Books, Kindles, iPads, Netbooks;
- Wider reading: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama;
- Strategies to encourage and stimulate an enjoyment of reading including encouraging use of the library, tailoring selection of books within the English department to interest females;
- Reading Week embedded within the English department;
- Encouragement of using the local town library (**connected to the wider community**);
- Special events such as visiting speakers, writers, story-tellers (**connected to the wider community**);
- Regularly updating parents on ways to help their child improve his literacy and encourage reading through home- school liaison and parent information correspondence- section on website (**connected to the wider community**)
- **Proud to be the only school in NI with a Patron of Reading**

Writing

There will be many opportunities for writing which will be varied across all learning areas. There must be an emphasis placed on accuracy in written communication; spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils will be encouraged to transfer skills throughout learning areas and subjects.

We will develop writing through:

- Modelled writing- using other writers as stimulus material;
- Shared writing- working in pairs;
- Guided writing- writing frames;
- Independent writing- individual class work and homework;
- Extended writing opportunities- continuation of story, alternative novel ending;

- Examining a variety of writing forms- personal narratives, poetry media scripts, letters, advertisements, reports, articles, leaflets, speeches, discursive essays;
- Pupils displaying confidence in matching writing to audience and purpose and presenting information effectively using an appropriate style;
- Phonics and spellings- pupils can spell accurately commonly used words and a number of unfamiliar words;
- Pupils confidently using a range of punctuation and accurate grammar on most occasions

Encouraging pupils to **think it, say it, write it and read it aloud** when developing their writing encourages them to recognise the links between talking and writing e.g. reading as a writer and writing as a reader.

Assessment

Assessment plays a key role in helping the school to improve educational outcomes. Knowing how each pupil is performing allows teachers to implement strategies to help individuals improve. This in turn promotes improvement at class level, then at school level, allowing the school to set meaningful and challenging targets in its School Development Plan. Summative assessment plays an equally important role. It allows schools to monitor the progress of individual pupils, keeping parents and pupils informed about their progress, particularly at important key stage transitions.

Key Stage 3:

The school collates a range of Literacy Assessment Data including Reading Ages, Key Stage 2 Results, MidYis, PTE11 Results, CCEA Adaptive Assessments (Years 8 & 10), Christmas and Summer Results. Each subject area promotes the development of literacy and marks for SPG are included with marks schemes for summative assessments.

Information is regularly analysed by the Raising Standards Leader, SENCO, Heads of Department, Transition Coordinator and SLT to identify those pupils who are underachieving and those with Special Educational Needs.

External Assessment at KS4

All pupils are entered for GCSE English Language.

English Language:

Pupils sit CCEA Examination board and complete 4 units;

Unit 1: Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non-Fiction and Media Texts. This is an exam unit and is worth 30% of the pupils overall GCSE grade, it is sat in January of Year 12.

Unit 2: Speaking and Listening. This is a controlled assessment unit in which pupils must complete 3 tasks. It is moderated by CCEA and is worth 20% of the pupils overall GCSE grade.

Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Language. This is a controlled assessment unit and is worth 20% of the overall GCSE grade. Pupils must complete 2 tasks.

Unit 4: Personal or Creative Writing and Reading Literary and Non-Fiction Texts. This is another exam unit which again is worth 30% of the overall GCSE grade. Literature students sit this module in January of Year 12 and the non-Literature students sit it in May/June of Year 12.

Dual Award Classes:

Two classes study both English Language and English Literature.

English Literature:

CCEA

Unit1: The Study of Prose (30%)

Unit 2: The Study of Drama and Poetry (50%)

Unit 3: Controlled Assessment. The Study of Shakespeare (20%)

Internal Assessment at KS4

At the beginning of Year 11 each pupil is awarded a target grade in English Language and other subjects based on data such as Key Stage 3 Results, previous assessments and teacher professional judgment and this grade is used as a benchmark to monitor pupil attainment and progress. Teachers use nine standardised department assessments at identified times throughout the two year GCSE course. Assessment Manager (C2K) is used by all departments to monitor pupil attainment.

Intervention strategies are initiated for those pupils who have been identified as underachieving in a number of subject areas. Mrs J Hughes (Raising Standards Leader) will liaise with Subject Leaders, SENCO, Year Tutors and SLT to coordinate the programme.

Key Stage 5:

'A' Level subject teachers promote meaningful opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge of Literacy within their subject area. Pupils who do not achieve a grade 'C' or above in their GCSE English and are studying Post 16 subjects in St Mary's are entered for their repeat GCSE exam and are encouraged to attend English classes or after school classes (timetable depending). Through collaboration with St Mark's High School and St Colman's college, students are able to continue their study of English Literature to 'A' Level standard.

Effective Leadership:

'School Leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan itself'

(Every School a Good School, June 2009)

The SLT and the Literacy Curriculum Team are responsible for the management of the Literacy Strategy in St. Mary's. Mrs A Hughes (Literacy Coordinator) will oversee the implementation of the Literacy Strategy and Action Plan. Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that they embed Literacy in their subject area Scheme of Work and encouraging members of the Department to implement the use of Literacy in their everyday teaching. The Literacy Coordinator will promote and coordinate Literacy across the curriculum. English teachers will continue to be primarily responsible for developing an understanding of key terms/rules, however literacy **must** be supported in all subject areas. All members of staff, therefore, have a responsibility to develop and promote literacy within their subject area.

The Literacy Coordinator and members of the English Department will be available to work with departments as necessary to help promote Literacy.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Senior Leadership Team:

The Senior Leadership Team has an overall responsibility for developing effective practices within the school for Literacy. The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Monitor, evaluate and review the whole school Literacy policy, and associated policies;
- Identify key priorities in Literacy as outlined in the School Development Plan which includes relevant professional training;
- Ensure the school meets all statutory requirements in relation to Literacy across all Key Stages;
- Develop effective procedures to fully utilise relevant assessment data from Primary Schools to allow ease of transition between Key Stages 2 and 3;
- Analyse assessment data e.g. Key Stage 3 and GCSE results to monitor pupil attainment and progress against whole school Literacy targets;
- Ensure assessment systems are effective and disseminate data throughout the school to facilitate self evaluation and target setting;
- Present assessment data to Governors and External Agencies e.g. DENI, CCMS, EA;
- Lead whole school Target Setting ensuring effective procedures for the identification of underachievers and initiate support strategies to raise pupil attainment;
- Ensure consistent whole school approach towards assessment, recording and reporting;
- Monitor, evaluate and review the whole school Literacy Strategy in line with school policy and statutory requirements.

Literacy Coordinator:

- Consult with Governors, SLT, HODs, SENCO, ICT Coordinator and External Agencies (including EA, CCEA, DENI);
- Provide leadership, guidance and direction for the delivery of Literacy across the curriculum;
- Encourage improved standards, understanding and competence in Literacy;
- Take a lead in the development of the Literacy Policy in consultation with SLT;
- Devise the whole school Literacy Action Plan and ensure the actions are fully implemented in consultation with key stakeholders
- Identify appropriate learning resources that will support the development of literacy
- Coordinate the implementation of Literacy related projects between relevant departments;
- Organise and plan relevant Staff Development Training.
- Evaluate the progress of whole school approaches to Literacy;
- Report progress under this policy to the Principal on an annual basis.

Head of English:

- Provide leadership, guidance and direction for the delivery of English/Communication within the department and across the curriculum;
- Devise, implement and monitor department policies in line with the whole school policy;
- Introduce, coordinate and implementation new Assessment and Reporting arrangements in relation to literacy

- Effectively use assessment and whole school data, both internal and external, to facilitate target setting and self-evaluation within their department;
- Identify relevant training opportunities for department members in relation to aspects of Literacy/Communication;
- Develop effective department Literacy strategies for those pupils who have Special Educational Needs;
- Collate and analyse relevant formative and summative assessment data within the English Department and report to the Principal and SLT in relation to all aspects of assessment when required.

Heads of Department:

- Devise, implement and monitor the Departmental Literacy Policy in line with the whole school policy;
- Ensure Literacy is embedded in their subject area Scheme of Work and encourage members of the Department to implement the use of Literacy in their everyday teaching;
- Effectively use assessment and whole school data, both internal and external, to facilitate target setting and self evaluation within their department;
- Identify relevant training opportunities for department members in relation to aspects of Literacy;
- In consultation with the English Department, develop effective department Literacy strategies for those pupils who have Special Educational Needs;
- Collate and analyse relevant formative and summative assessment data within the department and report to the Principal and SLT in relation to all aspects of assessment when required.

Subject Teachers:

- Implement the whole school and department Literacy Policies;
- Promote meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop Literacy within their subject area;

SENCO:

- Liaising with other staff, identify pupils with Special Educational Needs and assess their specific Literacy needs;
- Working with other staff, develop and support appropriate assessment arrangements for pupils on the SEN register;
- Ensure statutory requirements are met to support pupils on the SEN register during external examinations;
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of pupils on the SEN register, reporting to parents and other stakeholders at set times throughout the year;
- Lead whole staff training in relation to assessment arrangements for special needs pupils.

Raising Standards Leader

- The Raising Standards Leader is responsible for the effective use of Assessment Data within the school to raise pupil attainment;
- The Leader will coordinate whole staff training on the effective use of data to monitor pupil progress across all Key Stages and disseminate data to staff;

- Initiate procedures within the school to identify students who are:
 - ✚ Gifted and Talented
 - ✚ Underachieving
 - ✚ Special Educational Needs
- Monitor pupil attainment in Literacy
- Co-ordinate the whole school Mentoring Programme to support pupils who are underachieving;
- Develop communication procedures to inform parents regarding their daughter's progress and areas for improvement. This will include information evenings, study skills programmes, parent and student guides.

Community Links

'Good relationships that facilitate engagement and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serves'

(Every School a Good School, June 2009)

St Mary's has established quality, sustainable links with our Partner Primary and Post Primary School, local businesses and community groups. These links develop a collaborative learning culture which enhances the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and the learning and teaching experience of pupils in all key stages. The school has contributed to the development of an enterprise culture, in line with current government policy exemplified through the CEIAG, STEM and curriculum provisions at Key Stages 4 and 5.

Parents: (subject to Covid-19 restrictions)

- Annual Parent Teacher Meetings (Terms 1 and 2);
- Year 11 Transition Seminar (August);
- English Department Area on school website (www.stmarysnewry.com);
- Use of the school app and social media platforms;
- Shared Reading Programme for Year 8 parents and pupils;
- Year 8 Literacy Support Class for parents.

Primary Schools:

- Established links between Literacy Coordinators in St Mary's and St Clare's Primary School to discuss the KS2 and KS3 Curriculums and the transition between KS2 and KS3.

Post Primary Schools:

- Head of English shares good practice with other English Departments in the EA area;
- Staff Development: English Department share good practice with other English Departments in Area Learning Community.

Extended Curriculum: (subject to Covid-19 restrictions)

- Year 8 and 9 Library classes;
- After school booster classes;
- Literacy Book Club

Related Whole School Policies:

This policy is set within the broader school context of curriculum and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following policies:

- Curriculum Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Assessment Policy
- SEN Policy
- Numeracy Policy
- ICT and E Safety Policy
- CEIAG Policy
- Professional Development Policy

All policies are available from the school website www.stmarysnewry.com.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

As Literacy Coordinator, Mrs A Hughes is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the promotion of Literacy across the curriculum. The whole school Literacy Policy and Action Plan will be revised in line with statutory requirements. Mrs A Hughes will report annually to the Principal and SLT on the development and progress of Literacy based on the success of the Action Plan and targets set.

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Principal: _____

Date: _____

Date of Review: __September 2023_____