



# **Culmore Primary School**

## **Literacy Policy**

**Context:**

Culmore P.S Literacy Policy has been written within the context of the most currently available legislation and guidance. Staff members are guided by the following:

- The Northern Ireland Curriculum (Primary)
- NI Literacy framework (reworked by EA CASS team)
- DENI: Every School A Good School- A Policy for School Improvement. This has greatly impacted on the strategic plan we have for the development of Literacy in Culmore P.S as referenced in the School Development Plan and Literacy action plans.
- ETI: Better Literacy in Primary Schools. Feb 2008

**Introduction: AIMS**

In Culmore P.S, we believe that pupils' literacy skills, i.e. their ability to talk, listen, read and write effectively, for purpose and audience, is the key to educational progress, to social integration and to personal development and happiness.

This policy document will outline the strategies and approaches we support and develop in order to ensure that each child becomes equipped with the necessary language knowledge, understanding and skills. The continuity and progression in our language planning will be underpinned by the learning intentions outlined in the Primary Language Framework.

At Culmore P.S, our intention is that, by the end of Key Stage 2, a child will be able to:

- *speak confidently to a range of audiences with an awareness of purpose*
- *read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding,*
- *have an interest in books and read for enjoyment,*
- *have an interest in words, their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms*
- *understand a range of text types and genres and be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation*
- *develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness*
- *Use a suitable vocabulary to articulate their responses.*

**STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the N Ireland Curriculum for English (CCEA, 2007).

In Culmore P.S, those children in **the Foundation Stage** are given opportunities to:

- talk and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication.

**At Key Stage One (Years 3 and 4)**, children are encouraged to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say and to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They are encouraged to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

**At Key Stage Two (Years 5-7)**, children are encouraged to learn to change the way they talk and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They have opportunities to read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them and to explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

### **CHILD CENTRED PROVISION:**

The following indicators from ESaGS are reflected in Culmore P.S approaches:

- Decisions on planning, resources, curriculum and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school.
- A clear commitment exists to promote equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity.
- A school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability.
- Effective interventions and support are in place to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning.
- There is a commitment to involve young people in discussions and decisions on school life that directly affect them and to listen to their views.

### **Teaching and Learning - Inclusion**

*We aim to provide for all children so that they reach their full potential in literacy according to their individual abilities.*

*- The staff of Culmore P.S recognises the importance of identifying, as early as possible, those children who have special educational needs. The school follows the 5-Stage approach, as set out in the Code of practice.*

*-Children are identified initially by the class teacher who will provide support within the normal curriculum framework. The SENCO and parents are informed. I.E.P.S are written and reviewed every term. On review, new or amended targets will be set. A small number of children who require further help will move on to the next stage.*

*-Children identified by the class teacher can access Yearn to Learn support. We currently have one teacher who provides this in our school.*

*- She provides this support through 1-1 or group work sessions. The focus is on phonological awareness and the reinforcement of high frequency words. All children are assessed before and after intervention.*

- Staff also use assessment tools to identify children with special educational needs and to identify foci for all teaching. (This also takes into account our gifted and talented children and our underachieving children, as shown by any discrepancy between their standardised scores in literacy and their NRIT score).

**Assessment tools include**

- Baseline assessment – Year 1 – Initial Sounds.
- PTE end of year tests Y3-7,
- End of Key Stage tasks,
- NFER reading test
- NFER spelling test,
- Accelerated Reading quizzes
- Lexia check-ups

All are analysed using SIMS for planning and intervention.

-Class work is differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Reading groups are constantly monitored to ensure that pupils are reading at an appropriate level.

-Classroom assistants provide support to individual children and to small groups.

- Parents are kept informed through parent teacher meetings and targets set in I.E.P.S.

-Resources for literacy include

- interactive white board
- class computers and programs,
- web based activities
- Reading books/schemes which support Accelerated Reading and classroom reading books.
- Linguistic Phonics Programme and other phonic resources.,
- class novels ,
- class library
- Accelerated Reading Programme

Pupils have equal access to all resources

**HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING:**

The following indicators from ESaGS are reflected in Culmore P.S approaches:

- A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for the pupils.
- An emphasis on literacy and numeracy exists across the curriculum.
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school-based staff and dedicated to improving learning.
- Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom.
- Assessment, and other data, are used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement.
- 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.
- Education outcomes reflect positively on the school, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken.

### **Subject organisation**

The Literacy Curriculum is delivered using the requirements in the N. Ireland Curriculum for Language and Literacy.

Culmore P.S currently has an enrolment of 69 pupils, with three composite classes and one single-year group class, four full time teachers, one part-time teacher and 4 classroom assistants.

- *Lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. This is also reflected in our planning. Children have opportunities to work in mixed and ability groups. Long term plans are on a two year basis to cater for the needs of composite class - ie rolling programme of topics over a 2 year period.*
- *Classroom assistants are used to support and guide groups and individual children.*
- *Long term planning is based around the Primary Language Framework and medium term planning is on a half termly basis. All medium term plans are given to the Literacy Co-ordinator. Teachers evaluate on a daily, weekly and half termly basis to inform future planning. Weekly planning is kept by the class teacher.*

## Approaches to Talking and Listening

Oral language is recognised as the **primary mode of language** and this is reflected in its focus in all areas of the curriculum and in the life of Culmore P.S. Pupils are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes. They are encouraged to listen to others and take turns, and to respond appropriately to what has been said and to value the opinions of others.

Emphasis on oral language is reflected in

- *The planning for talking and listening in many areas of the curriculum,*
- *The promotion and extension of oral language. Through play, pupils are given opportunities to talk about decisions they make and to ask and answer questions on their play.*
- *Pupils are given opportunities to talk about their work, give oral feedback and presentations .*
- *Talk is linked to writing through - think it, say it, like it, write, read it aloud strategy and is further extended with the use of active learning strategies and effective questioning.*
- *All children have opportunities to participate in assemblies, Christmas Show, circle time, “show and tell” etc...*
- *Talking is promoted during shared and guided reading lessons, snack and lunch times etc...*
- *Children have opportunities to discuss, interact and talk in pairs, small and larger groups.*

Talking and listening is promoted as a social, communicative and cognitive process.

## Approaches to Reading

We strive to teach all our children to read and to enjoy a variety of texts so that they will become independent readers and learners. We believe reading is a vital skill and this is reflected in the emphasis placed on the teaching of reading in our school.

*-Each classroom has a class library where books are displayed in a variety of ways.*

*-In KS1 and KS2 silent reading (Accelerated Reading) is part of classroom practice.*

*- All children experience modelled, shared, guided and independent reading. Teachers “model” good reading practice.*

*- Pupils identified by the class teacher can take part in the Yearn to Learn programme. In all key stages, classroom assistants also play a key role in daily guided reading sessions*

*-Our main reading scheme is Oxford Reading Tree. This is supplemented by other schemes to allow for differentiation and extension. Reading resources are stored as a shared/classroom resource .*

*-Comprehension skills are developed during guided reading sessions.*

*-Library, research and dictionary skills are developed through work on reference books and use of the class library, computer programs and the internet and through the preparation of projects.*

*- KS1 and KS2 children have opportunities to read to, and share, reading with children in the Foundation Stage.*

*-The Linguistic Phonics Scheme is used throughout the school to develop phonological awareness. Spelling lists are grouped in stages and phases which allow for differentiation and extension of more able children.*

*-Reading homework allows children to practice their reading skills and share their reading with their parents.*

*-Parent teacher meetings are used as an opportunity to share information on approaches to literacy.*

*- Regular book fairs are held to promote reading enjoyment and build up literacy resources. We organise activities for pupils during Book Week.*

*- Visits from authors and story tellers are organised to promote a love of reading.*

*-The mobile library visits the school 2 times a year. This allows us to change our class, and central library, resources.*

We aim to provide a classroom environment which promotes a love of books and reading.

## Writing

Children write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions and to present evidence of research. By developing these skills, we aim to equip our children to use writing across a range of curricular activities in which they are involved. We aim to develop, within our children, an ability to write effectively in various forms according to purpose and audience. They will be encouraged to develop as independent writers, learning over time to use conventional spelling, punctuation, grammatical organisation and handwriting.

### Teaching Approaches to Promote Writing

We strive to provide an environment where children are inspired to write.

- In the Foundation/Key Stage One, writing is encouraged during play, in the writing area and in the role play area.
- From Year 1 pupils are encouraged to write independently, gradually developing the range and extent of their writing. Teachers develop independent writing by observing, facilitating and modelling.
- Word banks, dictionaries and thesauri are available for the children in all key stages.
- Classroom displays also contain language which children may require in their writing.
- Writing frames are also used to help children organise their writing and write for a purpose.
- Modelled, shared, guided and independent writing sessions take place across all age groups and all genres of writing
- Children write for themselves, for peers, for a parent, for the school and audiences outside the school, etc. Children are given opportunities, and are encouraged, to write in different genres for different purposes and audiences.
- Children's work is displayed in their classroom and on wall displays throughout school.
- Our marking policy outlines the importance of feedback and ensures that a key part of their writing experience involves editing and reformatting their work for improvement.
- Learning intentions and success criteria are shared with the children.
- Children are encouraged to have a go, to problem solve and use their knowledge to try and spell words for themselves.
- Children are taught to frequently read back over their writing to make sure it makes sense.
- Feedback is consistently given to children on their writing – both verbal and written. Feedback is also given by their peers.
- The links between talking and writing are recognised and developed, e.g. reading as a writer and writing as a reader. Children are encouraged to use the think it, say it, write it and read it aloud when developing their writing.
- Samples of work are gathered in literacy from Y1-7 and this is used to gauge progress.
- Word processing is promoted, wherever appropriate, to facilitate both the crafting and editing of writing and presentation of work.

-The quality of handwriting is promoted and encouraged through the use of our handwriting scheme. Joined handwriting is taught in KS2.

### **Resources-**

Resources for writing include:

- *Scheme*
  - *word processing programs including – Microsoft Word and Microsoft Publisher*
  - *Role play resources,*
  - *white boards and markers,*
  - *writing frames for a range of genres,*
  - *power point,*
  - *dictionaries and thesauri,*
  - *word banks etc.*
  - *First Steps Frameworks.*
- (resources will be enhanced each year).*

### **TS and PCs/Cross Curricular Opportunities for Literacy Development**

We aim to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and to make cross-curricular links. The pupils are given opportunities to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through language lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

*-Pupils are encouraged to use their visual, auditory and kinaesthetic channels for better learning and a range of active learning strategies is used to engage children. This includes drama and role play.*

*- Pupils are given opportunities to develop good social skills, to work effectively as part of a team, to develop oral language and oral skills. Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities are threaded through many of everyday classroom activities.*

*- Teachers make good use of effective questioning to promote thinking and reasoning skills. Children are given opportunities to ask and answer questions, to predict, give reasons and express opinions, think about similarities and differences, sequence and order events and information*

*-Teachers are aware of the importance of time to listen to children, and children are encouraged to listen to each other.*

*- Teachers model thinking strategies and pupils are encouraged to reason and think and consider all options and to give reasons for answers.*

## **The Use of ICT**

We aim to make the maximum use of ICT across the curriculum to promote the pupils' literacy skills, as well as developing competence in ICT skills. This involves the use of computers and the Interactive White Board.

*-Pupils have opportunities to gain confidence in the use of ICT, for example in using word processors for drafting, editing and presenting their work, and using the Internet to research topic work.*

*-The range of ICT resources available include:*

- *Desktops and Laptops with access to C2K network,*
- *Interactive White Boards*
- *digital cameras*
- *classroom PCs*
- *easi-speak microphone*

*-The use of information and communication technology supports the teaching of Literacy at word, sentence and text level. ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent level.*

*-The Interactive White board enables text to be read and shared and the writing process can be modelled effectively.*

*-A range of equipment such as digital cameras, headphones, microphones and Interactive White board are used to promote speaking and listening and also prepare children for writing experiences.*

*The Interactive Whiteboard is used regularly to model writing as it allows children to interact and engage with the writing process.*

*- Staff are responsible for researching software and websites to enhance their literacy teaching.*

*-ICT planning is included in our half termly planning using aspects of in the five 'E's. Pupils will be assessed in ICT end of KS1 and KS2.*

## **Assessment and Target-Setting**

Assessment for Learning strategies is a key component of the Teaching and Learning in Literacy. The learning intentions and success criteria are shared with the children. The marking strategies outlined in the school marking and assessment policies ensures the pupils' literacy experience involves editing and reformatting their work for improvement. Ongoing monitoring of pupils' Literacy skills is a key part of the teaching and learning in each class.

The literacy coordinator engages in book monitoring of literacy class work and leads the moderation of work samples to ensure progression across each Key Stage. Teachers gather work samples for pupil portfolios in Literacy and use this to gauge pupil progress.

Use is made of data to inform classroom and whole school practice in literacy.

We use end of year PTE tests, Parallel Spelling, Suffolk Reading, end of key stage assessments, Assessment of the Cross Curricular Skills for Communication, Accelerated reading Tests, BPVS, Lexia check-ups. Class spelling and reading checks also inform future planning. Teachers evaluate literacy planners on a daily, weekly and half termly basis.

Teachers use the assessment tools outlined above to;

1. Identify pupils who are under achieving. Strategies for increasing their attainment are implemented and evaluated on a termly basis.
2. Identify pupils for whom extension and differentiation programmes are to be developed.
3. Identify key foci for their own teaching in the current year.
4. Consider areas of their own teaching that require training/ further development.
5. Set year on year targets for individual classes, key stages and whole school and areas for development.

### **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

A full literacy audit will be conducted every 3 years to identify areas for improvement. At least one component of Language and Literacy features on each yearly strand of The School Development Plan.

These components are determined following:

- Whole school review
- Co-ordinator training
- Analysis of current attainment/practice in literacy
- Educational change and trends

An effective school development plan is in place providing targets for improvement based on the vision of the school. Governors understand their responsibilities and provide clear strategic direction as well as support to the Principal in carrying out the process of improvement. There is a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for staff. Teachers are given the opportunity to share in the leadership of the school. The resources of the school are managed properly and effectively, with appropriate arrangements in place for financial management, attendance management, and working relationship. School leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan.

## **Role of the Literacy Co-Ordinator**

The co-ordinator's role is responsible, in consultation with the Principal and teachers, for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy.

- The co-ordinator with the other staff evaluates the quality of learning and teaching within the area of Language and Literacy by;*
- setting targets in an action plan and areas of development for the whole school*
- Evaluating half term planners and pupils books*
- Evaluations using a variety of tools eg questionnaires, feedback from pupils, parents and teachers.*
- monitoring pupil progress with other staff and analysis of data.*
- provision of support with literacy i.e. reading partnership*
- Auditing resources and supporting*
- Classroom observations*
- Taking the lead in policy development*
- Purchasing and organising resources*
- Keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments*
- Maintaining contact with all concerned: Principal, teachers, other staff, parents, and pupils*
- Communicating with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, the Board, RTU, CCEA, etc.*

## **The Board of Governors**

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of Literacy provision and on the standards being achieved by the school.

## A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY:

### **Parental links and Community Involvement**

We believe that the education of our pupils is a partnership involving teachers, parents, pupils and the wider community. Regular and positive communications will be made between teachers and parents on a formal and informal basis.

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include:

- *Parent teacher meetings*
- *Information sessions (e.g. Year 1 intake)*
- *School performances, e.g. Christmas show, assemblies and other special events.*
- *Visitors to the school, e.g. storytellers, visiting theatre groups, poets, writers, school nurse, library*
- *Homework guidance*
- *Annual book fair*
- *Events for World Book Day*
- *Visit from author*
- *Regular newsletters*
- *School trips*
- *School website*
- *School Facebook*
- *Close links with local post primary schools.*

### **CONCLUSION:**

This policy is in line with other school policies, including:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Record Keeping
- Responding to pupils' work / Feedback / Marking policy
- Special Educational Needs' Policy
- ICT Policy

#### *REVIEW OF POLICY:*

*Literacy policy will be reviewed every three years (and /or in line with educational trends and developments).*