

Aughnacloy P.S.

Language and Literacy Policy

May 2011

CONTEXT:

The stated vision of the Department of Education for N 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 N Ireland Revised 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.**

The strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy: Count Read: Succeed (DENI 2011) aims to:

- support teachers and school leaders in their work to raise overall levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy among young people
- narrow the current gaps in educational outcomes.

INTRODUCTION:

At Aughnacloy Primary School, we believe that pupils' literacy skills, ie. 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 will 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 Aughnacloy Primary School, we intend 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, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct*
- *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 technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.*

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

In the Foundation Stage children should be 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 should learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage Two (Years 5-7), children should learn to change the way they talk and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They should 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 Every School A Good School (ESaGS) will be reflected in the school'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 promoting 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

Inclusion:

We, in Aughnacloy P.S., aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

In Count Read: Succeed (DENI 2011) The strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy the following five steps that teachers will do to raise literacy standards have been identified.

1. provide high quality teaching for all pupils through:

- a variety of teaching strategies, e.g. modelled, shared and guided
- a range of learning experiences which appeal to all different types of learning styles
- different grouping strategies, e.g. mixed ability pairs, small ability groups, snowballing, jig-sawing, etc.
- clearly defined differentiation
- providing opportunities for independent and extended learning experiences

2. address underachievement as soon as it emerges by:

- identifying underachievement through:
 - teacher and classroom assistants' observation
 - on-going formative assessment
 - running records
 - EYES (Early Years Easy Screen)
 - MIST
 - Salford Reading Test
 - NFER English
 - Parallel Spelling Test
 - GRT (Group Reading Tests)
 - INCaS
 - End of Key Stage assessments
 - NRIT
 - CAT (Cognitive Ability Test)

Comparisons made between standardised scores (reading and spelling) and NRIT/CAT scores.

- class teacher decides on the appropriate form of support:
 - focussed guided work
 - additional resources
 - support from classroom assistant, where appropriate
 - identifying target areas and plan appropriate support

3. address continuing underachievement with support from other staff in the school:

- children who continue to underachieve and experience difficulty with their learning, despite in-class support (step 2), may receive additional support from within the school in the form of:
 - Reading Partnership programme
 - withdrawal groups, using Reading Recovery strategies

4. address continuing underachievement with support from outside the school:

- additional support will focus on helping the teacher meet the needs of the children. It may come from a range of sources, such as :
 - SELB - CASS/ SEN
 - health professionals
 - other agencies, where appropriate

5. meet the needs of pupils after a non-statutory assessment through the SEN framework:

- teacher is responsible for meeting the needs of the child by:
 - identifying any external support and/or resources required for the child in addition to school based provision already in place
 - liaising closely with peripatetic teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc.

When the special educational needs of individual children are identified in accordance with the school's special needs policy, the class teacher draws up clear and realistic Education Plans which are focussed on addressing the identified areas for improvement. These plans are monitored and reviewed regularly in consultation with SENCO, parents, other professionals and support agencies, where appropriate.

Teachers recognise the vital role classroom assistants play in supporting children learning. All classroom assistants have been trained in the Reading Partnership programme which they carry out at least once a term with three children each. All classroom assistants are given opportunities for continuing professional development (both in school and out centres).

Equal opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the Language and Literacy curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING:

The following indicators from Every School A Good School (ESaGS) will be reflected in the school'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 is used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement
- 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
- education outcomes reflect positively on the school and compare well, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken, against the performance of similar schools

Subject organisation

Language and Literacy reflects the statutory curricular requirements (Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary CCEA 2007) (www.ccea.org.uk) and is supported by SELB Language Framework (2007) (www.clounagh.org)

Classroom organisation will vary to suit the purpose, context and children involved. The following range of organisational strategies will be employed:

- whole class teaching
- small group teaching (size, flexibility and composition of the groups will be given consideration - e.g. peer, ability, mixed ability, friendship groups, etc.)
- paired work - similar ability, less experienced pupil working with more experienced pupil
- individual - one-to-one tuition by teacher or classroom assistant
- independent work

Planning

Effective planning for purposeful learning and teaching activities provides opportunities to develop children's thinking and communication skills.

The long term planning (Northern Ireland Curriculum document and SELB Language Framework) ensures that the programme of learning for each child is broad and balanced, and promotes continuity and progression in children's learning. The short/medium term planning identifies learning intentions, assessment opportunities, differentiation, resources, integration of ICT to enhance and support children's learning and provides teachers with opportunities to reflect on classroom practice. Teachers evaluate plans and children's learning to inform future planning. Children have opportunities to contribute to the planning process and to peer and self assess.

Approaches to talking and listening

The strands of talking and 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. Children are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes.

Opportunities for the development of talking and listening:

- daily routines - greeting time, planning time, review time
- sharing news/ recounts
- story sacks
- drama strategies - hot seating, role play, including during 'work time', freeze frames, conscience alley, etc.
- listening to stories, poems and rhymes
- paired, group and class discussions
- class buddies
- phonological awareness tasks
- 'show and tell' sessions
- puppet shows
- gallery sessions
- circle time
- use of ICT e.g. Learning NI news desk, interactive whiteboards , Dissolving Boundaries
- performance readings at assemblies
- speech and drama festivals
- school productions
- KWL grids
- listening games

All teachers provide opportunities for the children to interact with in a range of contexts, e.g. with teachers, other adults and with peers through the use of a number of grouping strategies such as think-pair-share, rainbowing, snowballing and jigsawing.

Effective use of questioning, 'thinking time', use of lollipop sticks, peer assessment and evaluation help promote thinking skills and oracy

Approaches to reading

In Aughnacloy P.S. all teachers aim to foster a love of reading and encourage children to develop a disposition to read by reading a range of interesting and exciting genre and giving children the opportunity to explore a range of books with adults and other children.

We provide a balanced reading programme including well planned and focused modelled, shared, guided, independent and silent reading sessions. Children are paired (older and younger child in each pairing) as 'Reading Buddies' and meet on a weekly basis to share and discuss books. On occasions the older children will make books to share with the younger children.

In Foundation Stage children phonological awareness skills are developed through a range of practical, active and enjoyable tasks. A consistent approach to the teaching of phonics is implemented throughout the school. Through the Linguistic Phonics approach children gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become competent readers and spellers.

In order to ensure that children are able to read across the curriculum with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment, they need to orchestrate the following range of strategies:

- phonic knowledge and skills
- contextual knowledge
- grammatical understanding
- word decoding and recognition
- language comprehension

These strategies are developed through modelled, shared, guided, independent and silent reading.

All children, in Aughnaloy P.S., have access to a wide variety of quality texts, including:

- fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts
- digital and media texts
- texts written by other children

Guided reading texts in Foundation Stage and KS1 are levelled and colour banded. The class teacher/classroom assistant uses running records as an assessment tool to judge the suitability of the level/colour band for each child.

A love of reading is also developed through the following:

- annual World Book Day celebrations, e.g. dressing up as favourite book characters, quizzes, book reviews, drama, etc.
- annual book fair
- mobile library van visits termly

- class libraries
- school library with ALICE system - all classes are timetabled weekly
- Reading buddies
- Story sacks

Approaches to writing

In Aughnacloy P.S. writing is seen as an enjoyable, purposeful and creative experience. It is taught within the wide context of literacy which underpins the whole curriculum. Children have opportunities, throughout the school day, to write for a range of purposes and audiences, e.g. persuasive letters to companies/businesses, stories for younger children, invitations to parents for an event in the school, etc.

Children have regular opportunities, as a whole class, in small groups or individually to see modelled writing and to participate in shared writing. As they progress they have opportunities to write individually, with a partner or in small groups with teacher/classroom assistant's guidance, where appropriate. Teachers promote the strategy 'Think it, Say it, Like it? Write it, Read it aloud'.

Resources used to support the teaching of writing include writing frames, word banks, topic displays, dictionaries, thesauri, individual whiteboards, 'magpie' books, as well as a range of media and texts which help build confidence and a positive disposition to writing.

Teachers also encourage on-going improvement in the children's learning through self-reflection and monitoring / evaluation of progress. Children's work will be marked positively and constructively in relation to the learning intention and the success criteria, using pink and green markers to indicate success and areas for improvement.

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities/Cross curricular opportunities for literacy development

All teachers take advantage of opportunities to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and to make cross-curricular links. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through language lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

Thinking skills are developed through:

- A.C.T.S. programme
- use of open-ended tasks
- awareness of different learning styles
- use of active learning strategies
- effective questioning

The use of ICT

In Aughnacloy P.S. opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning in Literacy will be planned for and used as appropriate.

- interactive whiteboards in all classrooms
- software to enhance and develop learning experiences and opportunities
- Mac Book - used for a range of purposes
- video-conferencing
- sending e-mails through secure forums
- create own interactive wiki-webs and web pages
- Learning NI news desk
- Internet used for researching purposes
- create own power-points across all areas of the curriculum
- digital stories
- ICT accreditation - tasks completed in P4 and P7

Assessment and target-setting

Assessment for learning is an integral part of the learning and teaching process and assessment evidence is used to modify teaching to meet the needs of the children and improve learning. Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment Policy.

At the beginning of each school year, teachers analyse standardised scores:

- compare performance scores with ability levels
- identify low achieving children as well as those who are underachieving or gifted and/or talented
- set SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) for each child
- identifying appropriate interventions

Effective Performance Data Management

Data generated from standardised tests, INCaS and statutory assessment is analysed for a range of purposes:

- to track pupil progress
- to track complete classes
- to identify individual children's cognitive strengths and weaknesses
- to inform planning for teaching and learning
- to identify underachieving pupils for further support
- to set targets for individuals, groups or entire class
- to compare progress between groups / schools
- to make meaningful comparisons between scores from more than one test

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:

The following indicators from Every School A Good School (ESaGS) will be reflected in the school's approaches.

- an effective school development plan is in place, providing clear and realistic targets for improvement based on a sound vision for the school
- governors understand their responsibilities and provide clear strategic direction as well as support and challenge to the Principal in carrying forward the process of improvement
- school leaders demonstrate a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for staff, particularly teachers, and promote a readiness to share and learn from best practice
- teachers are given the opportunity to share in the leadership of the school
- the resources at the disposal of the school are managed properly and effectively, with appropriate arrangements in place for financial management, attendance management, and working relationships
- school leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan itself

All teachers in Aughnacloy P.S. accept shared responsibility for promoting Literacy throughout the school. However, the literacy co-ordinator has responsibility for co-ordinating the development of language and literacy. There is a school development plan in place which has been contributed to and agreed and is supported by appropriate action planning for language and literacy.

Role of the Literacy Co-ordinator

The Literacy Co-ordinator is responsible, in consultation with the principal, teachers and parents, for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- monitoring and evaluating
 - pupil progress
 - provision of Literacy (including Intervention and Support programmes)
 - the quality of the Learning Environment;
 - the deployment and provision of support staff
 - ensuring that children are progressing through the colour bands at an appropriate rate
 - audits and requisitions reading/writing resources
 - team teaching
 - joint planning
 - monitoring children's work
 - monitoring teachers' plans
 - in class observations

- taking the lead in policy development

- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD

- purchasing and organising resources

- keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments

- ensuring channels of communication are open and active with all relevant outside agencies including DENI, SELB, CCEA, RTU, etc

The Board of Governors

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

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY:

The following indicators from Every School A Good School (ESaGS) will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- good relationships that facilitate engagement and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serves
- the school and its teachers are held in respect by parents and the local community who in turn actively support the work of the school
- the school uses its involvement in particular programmes (for example Extended Schools or Specialist Schools) effectively in meeting the needs of the community and nearby schools
- good relationships and clear channels of communication are in place between the school and the education agencies that support it
- the school works closely with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies whose work impacts on education, especially Health, Social Services, the Public Library Service and, where appropriate, local Neighbourhood Renewal groups

Parental involvement

In Aughnacloy Primary School parents are encouraged to become actively involved in promoting their child's learning. Parents receive clear information about policies, the curriculum and ways in which to support their children:

- Linguistic Phonics information meeting
- parent/teacher meetings
- verbal and written reports on children's progress
- liaison through the reading record book and home/school books in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- information leaflets
- supporting children with homework tasks/activities

Parents have regular opportunities to visit the school and celebrate the work of the children through:

- open night
- induction meetings
- school performances, e.g. Christmas show, assemblies, other religious events

Parents are also involved in the life of the school through:

- volunteering as reading partners
- newsletters
- involvement in World Book Day events and annual book fair
- recording the maintenance of organic school garden

Community links

Contacts with the local community, including other schools, are established to help foster positive attitudes and values among the children. For example:

- visitors to the school, e.g. storytellers, visiting theatre groups, writers, school nurse, dentist, fire service, PSNI, etc.
- school trips, e.g. Share Centre, Carrickfergus Castle, Parkanaur, Ulster American Folkpark, etc.
- visits to local businesses, e.g. Derek Loane Motors, Pat Trainor's butcher. etc.
- cross community links with St Mary's P.S. Aughnacloy
- Dissolving Boundaries -
- events with other schools, e.g. sporting events
- transitions programme with Aughnacloy Community Playgroup and Clogher Valley Sure Start
- links with Aughnacloy College
- Clogher Valley Show - children are encouraged to enter various competitions
- Dungannon music and drama festival
- involvement in national competitions, e.g. BBC My Place, My Space; Sentinus; Impact 2010

Effective links are maintained with statutory agencies including educational support services, e.g. psychology, behaviour management team, CASS, ASD team, speech and language therapists, etc.

CONCLUSION:

This policy should be read in line with other school policies, including:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Record Keeping
- Marking policy
- Special Educational Needs' Policy
- ICT Policy
- Equal Opportunities' Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

REVIEW OF POLICY:

This policy will be reviewed regularly or in light of changes to the statutory curriculum. The policy document will be monitored on an on-going basis.