



# LONGSTONE SCHOOL

## Literacy POLICY

ARTICLE 28

**“Every child has the right to an education.”**

**REVIEWED: May 2020**



## **Longstone School Literacy Policy**

### **Key Documents**

Longstone Special School 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
- 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 Longstone School.
- DENI: Count Read: Succeed – A strategy to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy.
- ETI: Longstone School Inspection Report – February 2019
- Together towards improvement (TTI) / Inspectorate and Self Evaluation Framework (ISEF)

(Article 23 Right to Special Education)

### **Introduction**

#### **Longstone School Ethos**

**“To develop confident young learners through encouraging and inspiring our children in a rights respecting nurturing environment.”**

#### **Mission Statement**

**“Understand, respect, nurture, educate.”**

#### **Overall School Aims**

- We promote the development of self-confidence, self-awareness and a sensitivity to others.
- We promote the development of each pupils’ ICT and Literacy skills to their maximum potential.
- We encourage all pupils to communicate clearly and confidently.
- We equip our pupils with the skills that will enable them to cope efficiently in the world outside school.

(Article 23 Right to Special Education)

## **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:

- 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 areas of social interaction; and
- 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.’ Department of Education.’*

At Longstone School we believe that literacy is central to the achievement of learning both in and outside of school and is an entitlement of all pupils. We believe that pupils’ literacy skills, 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. Longstone School promotes Literacy throughout the curriculum. It is included as a priority in the School Development Plan and in the annual Literacy Action Plan.

## **Statutory Requirements**

Longstone Special School caters for pupils from nursery to end of Key Stage 4. Longstone Literacy Policy will follow the Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English at each key stage as laid out in the Northern Ireland Curriculum of English (CCEA 2007).

**(Article 28 Right to an Education)**

## **Child Centre Provision**

The following indicators from ESaGS are reflected in Longstone approaches:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decisions on planning, resources, curriculum and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school.</li><li>• A clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, and a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul> |
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- 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.

(Article 3 Best Interests of the Child)

(Article 12 Right to an Opinion)

### **Self-Esteem and Learning**

Self-esteem is one of the most important elements in determining whether pupils will become effective learners. Learning is nurtured in a positive and stimulating environment where every pupil has the potential to achieve success.

In such settings Longstone School pupils will have:

- a sense of achievement and enjoyment of language;
- the confidence and time to be tentative and make mistakes;
- the opportunity to interact and collaborate with helpful others;
- an understanding that their view should reflect consideration for others and foster qualities of tolerance and compassion;
- a sense of purpose in their learning and an understanding that although learning can be challenging, it can also be exciting and fun;
- the opportunity to be actively involved in their learning and in self-assessment of their progress.

(Article 3 Best Interests of the Child)

### **To Raise Standards in Literacy**

1. Longstone School aims to provide for all children so that they achieve their potential in Literacy according to their individual abilities. At Longstone School we try to ensure that each child is taught at their own pace and level. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. More able pupils will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.
2. Teachers at Longstone School will continue to raise and maintain standards of literacy by having high expectations for all pupils and sharing these with pupils and parents.

IEPS for all pupils at Longstone School are termly, with time set aside weekly for pupils to work on and review targets. Pupils self- evaluate targets termly and half termly with teachers giving guidance on how to achieve targets.

3. Teachers are responsible to ensure continuity and progression within Literacy by monitoring and evaluating term planners to ensure all areas including Cross Curricular Skills, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, differentiation, new initiatives and assessment are included.
4. Longstone School is a Rights Respecting School. Pupils have a school and class charter, with rights respecting school articles as a focus on display work and letters sent home. Pupils understand the importance of being a Rights Respecting School. We celebrate our pupils' achievements through class reward systems, certificates, assemblies, our points system, reward trips, prize day, our school web site and through the local press.

(Article 42 Right to Learn about your Rights)

5. Examples of pupils' literacy across all subject areas are kept in Pupil Profile Folders. Pupils select work regularly to be placed into the folders. These are then transferred at the end of each year.
6. Teachers complete pupil profile forms to transfer at the end of each year supplying valuable information on pupils' levels of literacy in the statutory area of: reading, writing and talking and listening. Teachers also report on thinking skills and personal capabilities.
7. Teachers monitor and track pupils' progress through school standardised, biannual reading and spelling tests. Through teacher judgement and tracking data on Sims for individuals and groups, helps to determine where support is given.
8. Monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress through data collected with a trial group on accelerated reader. Parental involvement is provided during this process. Accelerated Reader is a good motivator to stretch and challenge our more able pupils and also to inform of pupils needing support.
9. Engaging and reporting to parents biannually on open evening and annual review interviews. Parents receive end of week test results, interim reports and full reports.

10. At Longstone School we ensure the use of a variety of teaching strategies (whole class, small guided groups, individual work, shared, modelled and guided and differentiated, varied approaches to suit all learning styles.)
11. At Longstone School teachers ensure pupils understand intended learning outcomes and success criteria against which their progress will be assessed. Pupils will have the opportunity to evaluate their own progress. (WALT, share learning intentions and success criteria with pupils, self and peer AFL, 2 stars and a wish for writing, individual and class writing targets.)
12. At Longstone School we ensure a personalised approach to learning to enable all children to develop their literacy skills to the best of their ability. (differentiation in class, guided support from teachers and classroom assistants and extra support where needed.)
13. At Longstone School we ensure the Literacy Policy is linked to the School Development Plan and Annual Literacy Action Plan.

(Article 23 Right to Special Education)

### **The Involvement of Pupils in School Life**

Longstone Pupils are involved in making decisions such as the theme for Book Week. The Literacy coordinator talks with Primary and Secondary teachers who involve their class in the decision making of a suitable theme. Results are then brought by class representatives to the student council who then make the overall decision on a theme for Book Week.

(Article 12 Right to an Opinion)

### **Equal Opportunities**

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

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

The following indicators from 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.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

### **Subject organisation**

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

- each teacher is responsible for the delivery of Literacy within their own class;
- it is the responsibility of each teacher to ensure differentiation, in literacy activities, occurs;
- the teacher will use his or her judgement when grouping pupils for reading sessions/tasks;
- classroom assistants support the teacher in overseeing classroom activities or in providing one-to-one assistance;
- teachers adhere to termly plans where Learning Intentions and Self Evaluation are a dominant feature;
- daily planning for Literacy is at the discretion of the class teacher;
- annually, an action plan is agreed on an aspect of Literacy and included in, the three year Development Plan;
- Literacy progress is monitored through marking of work, Friday Tests and reading records;
- Teachers use Assessment for Learning strategies to promote self-evaluation.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

### **Classroom organisation**

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.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

### **Talking and Listening**

At Longstone School we recognise that oral language is the basic means of communication and provides a necessary foundation for the related skills of reading and writing. Talking and listening have been identified as separate modes of language but at Longstone we recognise that talking and listening are reciprocal and interactive activities.

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. interactive whiteboards, iPads.
- readings at assemblies
- school productions
- KWL grids
- listening games

- Student Council.  
(Article 28 Right to an Education)

**In their planning for oral language, teachers will be guided by the following principles:**

- teachers should create a classroom atmosphere where pupils' talk is valued and where enjoyment is seen to be an intrinsic feature of learning;
- oral activities will require detailed planning and careful management by all teachers if they are to be purposeful, challenging and enjoyable;
- teachers should plan strategies to allow time for pupils to reflect on their achievements and performance as talkers and listeners;
- assessment, through talk, should inform attainment in all subjects;
- teachers should plan strategies to reassure pupils about the value of talking and listening;
- parents should be encouraged, wherever possible, to become closely involved in positively supporting their child's development of oral skills e.g. story sacks.

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, rainbowning and snowballing.

Effective use of questioning, 'thinking time', peer assessment and evaluation help promote thinking skills and oral skills.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

## **Reading**

In Longstone School 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. On occasions the older children will read with younger children.

In Foundation Stage children's 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 Letters and Sounds approach children gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become competent readers and spellers.

Pupils at KS3 and a small number of younger pupils through outreach services are benefitting from Longstone School, Accelerated Reader with the hope of implementing this further in the school in 2020-2021. Books will be levelled according to accelerated reader. Pupils are able to access online books at home, during school time, evenings, weekends and school holiday periods.

(Article 29 Develop Talents and Abilities)

**In their planning for developing reading skills teachers will be guided by the following principles:**

- teachers need to demonstrate, by the organisation of their classroom, that reading is a valued activity;
- reading should be promoted as a purposeful and enjoyable activity across the curriculum;
- the links between reading, writing, talking and listening should be recognised and exploited to enhance language development;
- teachers should use a variety of teaching and learning strategies to support and extend pupils' reading development;
- pupils' texts should be monitored regularly to ensure that the reading level is both appropriate and challenging;
- a range of relevant reading resources from a variety of cultures should be available in all classrooms for information and enjoyment;
- pupils should be taught how to read and respond to fiction and non-fiction texts;
- pupils should be encouraged to extend their vocabulary in all subject areas;
- teachers should encourage their pupils in all subject areas to access a wide range of resources in both class, online books at home and public libraries;
- teachers should recognise that on-going assessment is vital to reading development;
- parents should be encouraged, wherever possible, to become closely involved in positively supporting their child's reading development.

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. (Article 28 Right to an Education)

All children, in Longstone School 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.

(Article 13 Right to find out things)

**A love of reading is also developed through the following:**

- Annual Book Week celebrations, e.g. dressing up as favourite book characters, quizzes, book reviews, drama, links with other subject areas. Pupils deciding on the theme of our Annual Book Week.
- (Article 12 Right to an Opinion)
- Annual Book Fair, in line with World International book day.
  - Class libraries.
  - Local library visits.
  - Reading buddies.
  - Story sacks.
  - Competitions.
  - Accelerated Reader Certificates and Rewards for individual pupils and classes.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

## Writing

In Longstone School 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. The links between talking and writing should be recognised and developed, eg. reading as a writer and writing as a reader.

## Organisation and Management

- resources used to support the teaching of writing in Longstone School are as follows:
  - topic based word mats
  - first word book/picture dictionary
  - thesaurus
  - dictionary/rhyming dictionary/spelling dictionary
  - spellcheck
- the use of writing frames
  - postcards
  - notelets
  - menus
  - newspaper reports
  - book reviews
  - clicker and other ICT templates
  - teacher made templates
- development of an understanding of genre/text-type in fiction and non-fiction
  - persuasion, discussion, recount, report, explanation, instruction
- awareness of purpose and audience and the link to genre and form
- providing a wide range of opportunities to write with attention to purpose and audience.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

**CPD Literacy Project** – To aid transition in Literacy. Year 7 and year 8 pupils worked together to create spelling dictionaries. Pupils met with subject specialist teachers to obtain the most frequently used words. Spelling dictionaries travel with pupils from class to class, for use across all curricular areas. They are distributed each year to pupils in Years 8-12. They are used in Year 7 to Year 8 transition in Term 3.

(Article 12 Right to an Opinion)

**Phonics** - Following participation in the CPD Literacy Project with Stranmillis College, a Longstone School Phonics Progression was produced and supported with Letters and Sounds resources

**Letters and Sounds** – In classrooms throughout the school, phase 2 Letters and Sounds, High Frequency words are displayed to aid both reading and writing

**Handwriting-** We have an agreed letter formation standard which is displayed in each classroom and is available to parents and guardians.

## **Homework**

Pupils are regularly given homework to consolidate classroom learning and to develop the ability to work independently. A homework timetable is compiled annually and this should be adhered to.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

## **Assessment, Recording, Evaluation**

Assessment is viewed as fundamental to our pupils' educational development and as such is an integral part of teachers' individual planning, bearing direct relation to objectives and activities.

Teachers encourage on-going improvement in the children's learning through self-reflection and monitoring / evaluation of progress.

### **Formative Assessment – AFL**

AFL is where we share learning intentions with our pupils.

1. **IEPs** –Pupils review and evaluate their own work half termly and understand how to improve. IEPs go onto C2k and will also go into our Pupil Portfolios to keep track of pupil progress.
2. Pupils and teachers select written work regularly for Pupil Profile Portfolios.
3. **High quality marking** – 2 stars and a wish. This system motivates and challenges pupils, informs pupils of their next step and informs teaching. Marking three times per term. 3 books showing differentiation. Evidence brought to Literacy workshops termly. Work copied and put into evidence folder.

The extent of correction should be in direct proportion to the confidence and competence of the writer. Due to the special needs of our pupils, brief written comments will always be supplemented by verbal praise and constructive suggestions.

4. Other forms of assessment include the use of video evidence and Seesaw.

### **Internal Moderation/Standardisation**

One teacher from each year group to bring yearly evidence of a level 1, level 2 and level 3 in Literacy and Numeracy. This ensures that all of our teachers know what each level looks like.

Teachers will bring evidence of marking using AFL to literacy workshops.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

### **Qualifications and Examinations**

External assessments include psychologists' tests and observations.

- Foundation and Key Stage 1 staff have now been trained in Pre- Requisite Skills.
- KS2 and end of Key Stage 3 assessment.
- KS4 offers a two year, ELQ Course which is externally moderated. Pupils get the opportunities to achieve level 1,2 or 3. This course involves continuous monitoring of pupils' work. All external accreditations are presented as part of the Summative Record of Achievement.
- KS4 – Essential Skills Literacy at entry level is now in place for pupils.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

### **TS and PCs/ Cross-Curricular opportunities for literacy development**

Cross-curricular skills should be an integral part of the literacy programme and as such should be incorporated into individual teacher's planning. Each area of the curriculum has a contribution to make to Literacy. Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities will be embedded in the teaching of Literacy.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

### **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:**

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in the school's approaches:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An effective school development plan is in place, providing clear and realistic targets for improvement based on a sound vision for the school.</li></ul> |
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9. To devise, monitor and evaluate Language and literacy Action Plan and inform school development plan.
10. Attend courses and send staff on regularly training courses where appropriate and receive feedback.
11. To familiarise new staff on literacy curriculum in Longstone.
12. Requisition resources.

**Key Stage Co-ordinators** - Ensure continuity and progression within literacy by monitoring and evaluating term planners to ensure all areas including Statutory Requirements, Cross Curricular Skills, Thinking Skills, differentiation and assessment are included.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

### **The Board of Governors**

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

### **A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY:**

The following indicators from 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 is effective in meeting the needs of the community eg Harvest Service, Christmas Concert, Carol Service, Newsletter, Website, Stay & Play Day, Speech & Drama Festival, Quiz nights, Treasure Hunt, class visitors etc.
- 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, and, where appropriate, local educational groups/agencies.

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

## **Parental Involvement**

In Longstone 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.

In Longstone School parents can support their children through:

- Attendance at parent/teacher interviews or information sessions
- Reading and talking to their children at home
- Supporting homework
- Involvement in Book Week and/or the annual Book Fair
- Attending and supporting School performances.
- Supporting, fundraising and/or and joining the Parent Staff Association.
- Regularly visiting the school website.

(Article 3 Best Interests of the Child)

## **Community links include:**

- Local cultural events. Visits from churches and links with School Garden Academy.
- Connecting with local businesses, local medical staff, the PSNI, Fire Service, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Standard's Agency.
- Visits to local business eg Corries the Butchers.
- School trips.
- Visits to the local library.
- Regular visits to Towell House.
- Work Experience.
- Literacy and Therapy dogs.
- Useful and active links with the local primary and post-primary schools.
- Peace 1V Project.
- Links with other schools and colleges within our ALC.
- Primary School visits to aid transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.
- Get Up and Go Green Project – New funding for a community garden.

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

(Article 23 Right to Special Education)

## **Conclusion**

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

Assessment – AFL Policy

Marking Policy

Homework Policy

ICT Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Pastoral Care

Rights Respecting School Policy

(Article 28 Right to an Education)

Review of Policy – This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

Policy reviewed and updated May 2020

