Language and Literacy Policy

INTRODUCTION

Dundela Infants' School and Nursery Unit is an inclusive and nurturing school, with a dedicated and child-centred staff, who are committed to delivering stimulating teaching and learning experiences in Literacy for all pupils in our school community.

We aim to develop children's abilities within an integrated programme of Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Our pupils will be given opportunities to interrelate the requirements of this core subject through a broad and balanced approach to teaching Literacy across the curriculum. They will also be provided with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce their skills.

Across the curriculum, pupils should be enabled to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:
1. **Talking and Listening;**
2. **Reading; and**
3. **Writing**

Communication is one of the three cross-curricular skills at the heart of the curriculum. Developing children's communication skills enables them to express themselves socially, emotionally and physically, develop as individuals, engage with others and contribute as members of society.

'Literacy focuses on developing each child's ability to understand and use language, both spoken and written, as an integral part of learning in all areas. The development of these skills enables children to interact effectively in the world around them, to express themselves creatively and to communicate confidently, using the four modes of communication (Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing) and a variety of skills and media.' *(The Northern Ireland Curriculum, Primary, Foundation Stage)*

General Language and Literacy Aims

The delivery of Literacy within Dundela aims to:

1. Assist pupils' self-expression in reading, writing, talking and listening;
2. Raise attainment in Literacy for all learners and encourage all pupils to 'Be the best that they can be';
3. Provide an effective framework for the delivery of high quality learning and teaching in Literacy across the four contexts for learning;
4. Ensure that all staff and stakeholders understand their role in raising attainment in Literacy and increase their skills and confidence in teaching Literacy;
5. Ensure that all learners are provided with planned curricular experiences to acquire the essential Literacy skills, knowledge and understandings, and are given opportunities to apply these skills across the curriculum;
6. Ensure progression and continuity at all stages and across areas of transition to ensure a coherent and relevant Literacy curriculum for all learners;
7. Create a positive classroom ethos in which every child feels respected and valued and is therefore more likely to achieve his/her full potential; and
8. Provide equal access to the Literacy curriculum and equal opportunity for learning for all children regardless of ability, gender, class, culture, race or physical disability.

AIMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM

Talking and Listening

'Children should have opportunities arising from classroom and other first-hand experiences, to develop their talking and listening in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.' *(The Northern Ireland Curriculum, Primary, Foundation Stage)*

In Talking and Listening, children should be enabled to:

- Listen to and take part in discussions, explanations, role-play and presentations;
- Contribute comments, ask questions and respond to others' points of view;
- Communicate information, ideas, opinions, feelings and imaginings, using an expanding vocabulary;
- Structure talk so that ideas can be understood by others;
- Speak clearly and adapt ways of speaking to audience and situation; and
- Use non-verbal methods to express ideas and engage with the listener.

Reading

'Children should be encouraged to develop a love of books and disposition to read......Reading experiences should be informal and enjoyable, with children learning in an environment where print is all around them.' *(The Northern Ireland Curriculum, Primary, Foundation Stage)*

In Reading children should be enabled to:

- Read a range of texts for information, ideas and enjoyment;
- Use a range of strategies to read with increasing independence;
- Find, select and use information from a range of sources;
- Understand and explore ideas, events and features in texts; and
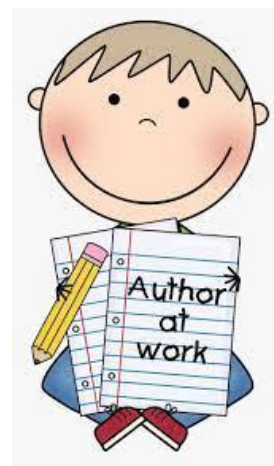- Use evidence from texts to explain opinions.

Writing

'Writing with children provides numerous opportunities to develop children's emergent Literacy capacities including making meaning/expressing ideas in texts, fine motor skills, concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics and creating and exploring texts.' *(Education and Training: Victoria State Government.)*

In Writing, children should be enabled to:

- Talk about, plan and edit work;
- Communicate information, meaning, feelings, imaginings and ideas in a clear and organised way;
- Develop, express and present ideas in a variety of forms and formats, using traditional and digital resources, for different audiences and purposes: and
- Write with increasing accuracy and proficiency.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role and Responsibilities of the Language and Literacy Co-ordinator
The Co-ordinator will:
- Take the lead in policy development and the review process;
- Monitor, evaluate and record progress on the Literacy action plan;
- Report to the Principal and Governors about the school's Literacy development;
- Manage and analyse data collected at set intervals throughout the year to identify low-achievers, to ensure underachievers are being given necessary support and high achievers have been identified for extension activities;
- Meet at regular intervals with the Learning Support teacher and SENCO to ensure the needs of children with specific difficulties in Literacy are being addressed and that tracking procedures are in place to ensure progression;
- Support colleagues in the development of work plans, assessment and record-keeping and be available in an advisory capacity;
- Undertake to keep up-to-date with developments in Literacy education and disseminate the information to colleagues as deemed appropriate;
- Organise school-based INSET as required;
- When applicable, become a member of cluster groups of teachers and Literacy co-ordinators from schools in the area;
- Co-ordinate the purchase and organisation of Literacy resources; and
- Maintain and encourage communication with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, EA, CCEA.

Role of the Senior Leadership Team
In partnership with the Literacy Co-ordinator, SLT will:
- Participate in termly assessment analysis and tracking of pupil progress in order to continue raising Literacy standards for all pupils;
- If required, provide advice/support for class teachers and suggest appropriate interventions for low/under/high achievers, EAL pupils and pupils with social and emotional needs e.g. SENCO advice, Learning Support, EAL specialist advice and pastoral support;
- Review long, medium and short term planning; and
- Promote self-evaluation amongst all teaching staff.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Literacy Team
The Literacy Team will:
- Assist the Literacy Co-ordinator with the action planning process;
- Meet every half term to discuss planning and Literacy progress;
- Act as the 'Literacy expert' within their own year group to offer advice and support; and
- Create medium term plans across all aspects of Literacy.

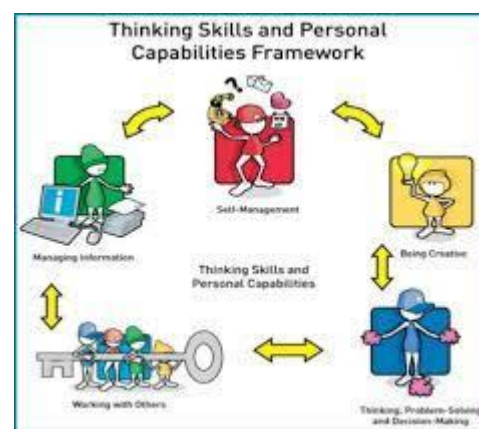### Roles and Responsibilities of the Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Facilitate the development of Literacy in their classroom;
- Promote the skills of reading, writing and talking and listening within their classroom;
- Identify the differing needs of each child and alter teaching strategies and classroom management in accordance with this;
- Identify children with additional learning needs and create IEPs/intervention strategies to support their needs;
- Differentiate the level of work for each group;
- Monitor and assess children's progress in line with the Literacy assessment procedures;
- Set targets thrice annually for groups and/individuals;
- Keep parents informed of their child's progress; and
- Participate in staff development meetings and training.

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Teachers will ensure that the activities which the pupils experience within Literacy will enable them to develop the Statutory Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities set out in the Northern Ireland Curriculum:
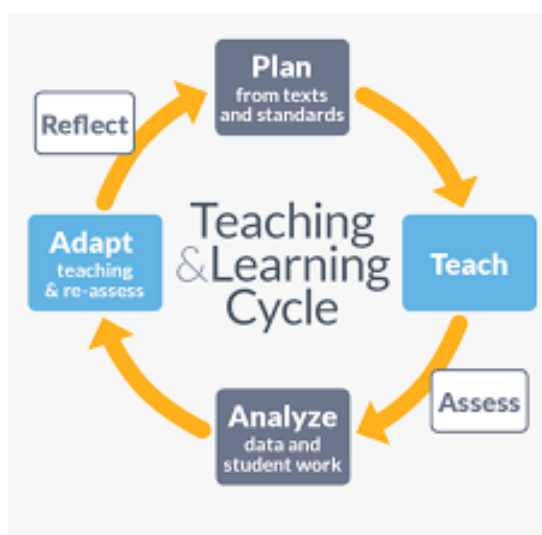
1. Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision Making
2. Self-Management
3. Working with Others
4. Managing Information
5. Being Creative

PLANNING

Long term, medium term and short term Literacy planning occurs. These plans are tailored to meet the needs of individual classes, are used as working documents, help diagnose areas of difficulty and, with reflective practice, inform the next set of plans.

Long and Medium Term Planning Process

- Literacy team member creates half termly plans which incorporate all aspects of Literacy, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and Assessment for Learning Strategies;
- Literacy plans include specific teaching techniques including Jolly Phonics, some Linguistic Phonics and Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' lessons;
- Literacy team member shares the plans among their year group. These are used as a structure and are to be amended by the individual class teachers to suit the needs of their specific class;
- Medium term plans are submitted to the Literacy Co-ordinator and team for monitoring for evidence of continuity and progression; and
- Half termly plans are used as working documents, being evaluated regularly by the class teacher and at the end of the half term, within year groups.

Short Term Planning Process

- Each class teacher completes differentiated short term plans for reading and weekly Literacy activities;
- Short term plans are a working document and are used to note progress of groups of children and individuals;
- A sample is submitted for monitoring and evaluating each term and feedback given to staff.

WHOLE SCHOOL MONITORING AND EVALUATING STRATEGIES

Careful and continuous monitoring is an integral part of an effective Literacy programme because **it enables teachers to determine the most effective strategies for teaching reading and writing and helps assess students' learning.** School monitoring and evaluation help in providing a consolidated source of information showing the progress of the school and its pupils.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Literacy within our school includes:

- Classroom observations (PRSD/'Trusted Colleague');
- Termly book scoops/book looks;
- Classroom and corridor displays;
- Folders/portfolios of pupils' work;
- Discussion and sharing of approaches at staff meetings;
- Evaluated teachers' planners;
- School tests and standardised tests;
- Photographs of pupils engaging in tasks;
- Examples of pupils' work;
- Parent questionnaires and appropriate samples demonstrating pupil voice.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the cornerstone of good learning and teaching within Literacy. It can make a vital contribution to improving Literacy outcomes for all pupils. In Dundela we use a mix of formative, diagnostic, evaluative and summative assessment and embed assessment practices into learning and teaching. Our assessment strategies

- Complement and support the key aims of Language and Literacy in the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- Are fit for purpose;
- Are manageable; and
- Are supported by teachers' professional judgements.

At classroom level, our use of assessments measures the current level of pupils, provides information about where pupils need to progress to next, and helps to establish the best strategies required to help pupils reach the 'next steps' in their learning.

At co-ordinator and whole school level, our use of assessments provides information on how Literacy is performing, provides evidence when establishing trends and helps create new priorities for the next School Development Plan.

What do we assess?

- Pupil performance and achievement in Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing;
- Pupil Cross-Curricular Skills in Primary 3, using the Levels of Progression; and
- Pupils' Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

The following pupil performance assessments are performed thrice annually.

Primary One	Primary 2	Primary 3
Baseline Assessment COMET Jolly Phonics Screening Sets 1-7 Segmenting and Blending Sight Words Informal Assessment of TS&PC X3 Writing Assessment	Jolly Phonics Screening Sets 1-7 Segmenting and Blending 100-150 Sight Words YARC (Standardised) SEN pupils Informal Assessment of TS&PC X3 Writing Assessment PM Benchmark	All 60 Sounds Screening Test Segmenting and Blending 150 Sight Words Salford Reading Test (Standardised) Star and end of P3 Cross Curricular Skills Assessed for Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing Informal Assessment of TS&PC X3 Writing Assessment PM Benchmark

OUR TRACKING PROCESS

In order to monitor pupil progress, we implement the following tracking procedures:
- Literacy data is submitted each half term to the Literacy Co-ordinator and SLT;
- Pupil progress is analysed;
- Low/under/high achieving pupils are identified and their needs addressed;
- Class teachers create 6 weekly Literacy targets to support the learning at all levels; and
- Targets are evaluated every 6 weeks and used to inform the next set of targets.

INTERNAL STANDARDISATION

Internal standardisation is used within Literacy to ensure that our school has a **shared understanding of pupil progress and achievement and that we maintain consistency in teacher judgement.**

Teachers use the Levels of Progression for Communication as a framework for all areas of learning. This can help pupils to develop their communication skills across the curriculum and acquire the skills relevant to other areas of learning. This is a collaborative process that is currently used within Key Stage One to assess and analyse pupil writing.

- Key Stage One writing is assessed internally twice throughout the year and in Primary 2 at the end of year; and
- Agreed samples of work are kept and used for moderation and tracking purposes throughout the school.
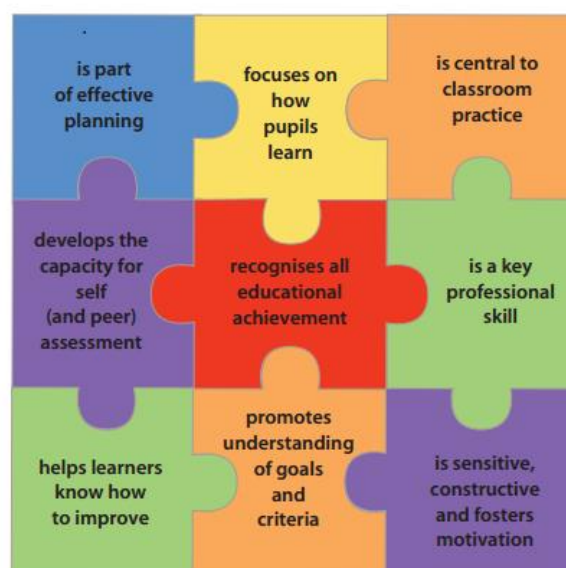
ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide **where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.**

Within Literacy, AFL should;

- Be part of every class teacher's planning;
- Focus on how students learn;
- Be central to classroom practice;
- Be sensitive and constructive;
- Take account of the importance of learner motivation;
- Promote commitment to learning goals;
- Provide pupils with constructive guidance as to how they can improve; and
- Should develop each learner's capacity for self-assessment so that they can become reflective and self-managing.

In Dundela we promote the use of the following AFL strategies:

- Sharing learning intentions (WALT);
- Sharing success criteria (WILF);
- Giving verbal, pictorial and written feedback to all pupils in accordance with our marking policy;
- Using effective questioning;
- Promoting pupil voice by encouraging children to take an active role in assessment in accordance with their age, ability and educational needs.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The class teacher's role is central to **meeting the needs of each individual pupil.** The following action is taken to meet the needs of identified children:

- Early identification of problems through classroom observations and testing;
- Informing the SENCO of concerns about a child's progress for discussion, consultation and possible placement on the school's SEN register;
- Providing children with SEN access to a broad and balanced curriculum and ensuring that the provision is at an appropriate level in order to supply the individual child with opportunities to succeed through differentiated classroom tasks;
- Liaising with the SENCO in providing Individual Education Plans for all children with SEN within their classroom. The Personal Learning Plans should set clear, realistic targets, which indicate the special educational provision required to address the needs of the pupils on the register;
- Collaborative medium term planning between class teachers and Learning Support; and
- For those low-achieving pupils who may still be struggling to make progress, additional standardised tests may be completed to decide if they qualify to receive additional support from Harberton Learning Outreach.

IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT

In Dundela we consider it essential that each and every pupil fulfils his or her potential as a learner. To this end, we aim to identify pupils who are under-achieving and to ensure that an appropriate level of intervention is set in place. Within our unique 'Infant School' set-up, we use a blend of support from our SENCO, Learning Support teacher and the class teacher. The following intervention steps are in place for under-achieving pupils:

1. Class teacher's observations and assessments identify possible under-achievement;
2. Concerns are discussed with SENCO and/or Learning Support teacher;
3. Learning Support teacher performs informal baseline tests to gain an accurate picture of pupil ability;
4. Pupil offered extra support through shorter term booster sessions in Literacy with the Learning Support teacher and other pupils targeted in class;
5. Pupil progress assessed each half term to gauge impact of intervention;
6. Collaborative medium term planning between class teachers and Learning Support;
7. Pupils who make sufficient progress cease booster classes and are monitored by the class teacher;
8. Pupils experiencing slow progress continue the support, however if progress continues to be limited, further action may be required after liaising with the school SENCO;
9. 'Hearsay' programme is utilised as an intervention strategy to support pupils with talking and listening difficulties within Primary 2. Pupils are identified as requiring support through the end of Primary 1 COMET assessments and teacher observations.

INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Dundela prides itself on being an 'inclusive' school which takes practical steps in the classroom and beyond, to meet pupils' needs effectively so that they can achieve their potential within Literacy. Every classroom is a Literacy-rich environment which is inclusive of the following groups of pupils:

- All genders
- Ethnic minorities, travellers, asylum-seekers and refugees
- Pupils who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL)
- Pupils with special educational needs
- Gifted and talented pupils
- 'Looked after' children
- Pupils with emotional health and wellbeing issues
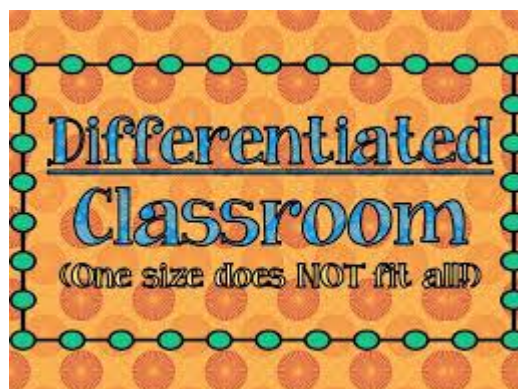
DIFFERENTIATION

Allowance is made for the wide range of abilities and learning styles within each class. Each class teacher provides a range of multi-sensory Literacy experiences which cater for the following learning styles:

1. **V**isual
2. **A**uditory
3. **R**eading and Writing; and
4. **K**inesthetic.

During Literacy sessions, class teachers use **a variety of differentiation strategies** to ensure that the needs of individual learners are met. This can be achieved within Literacy using four main techniques:
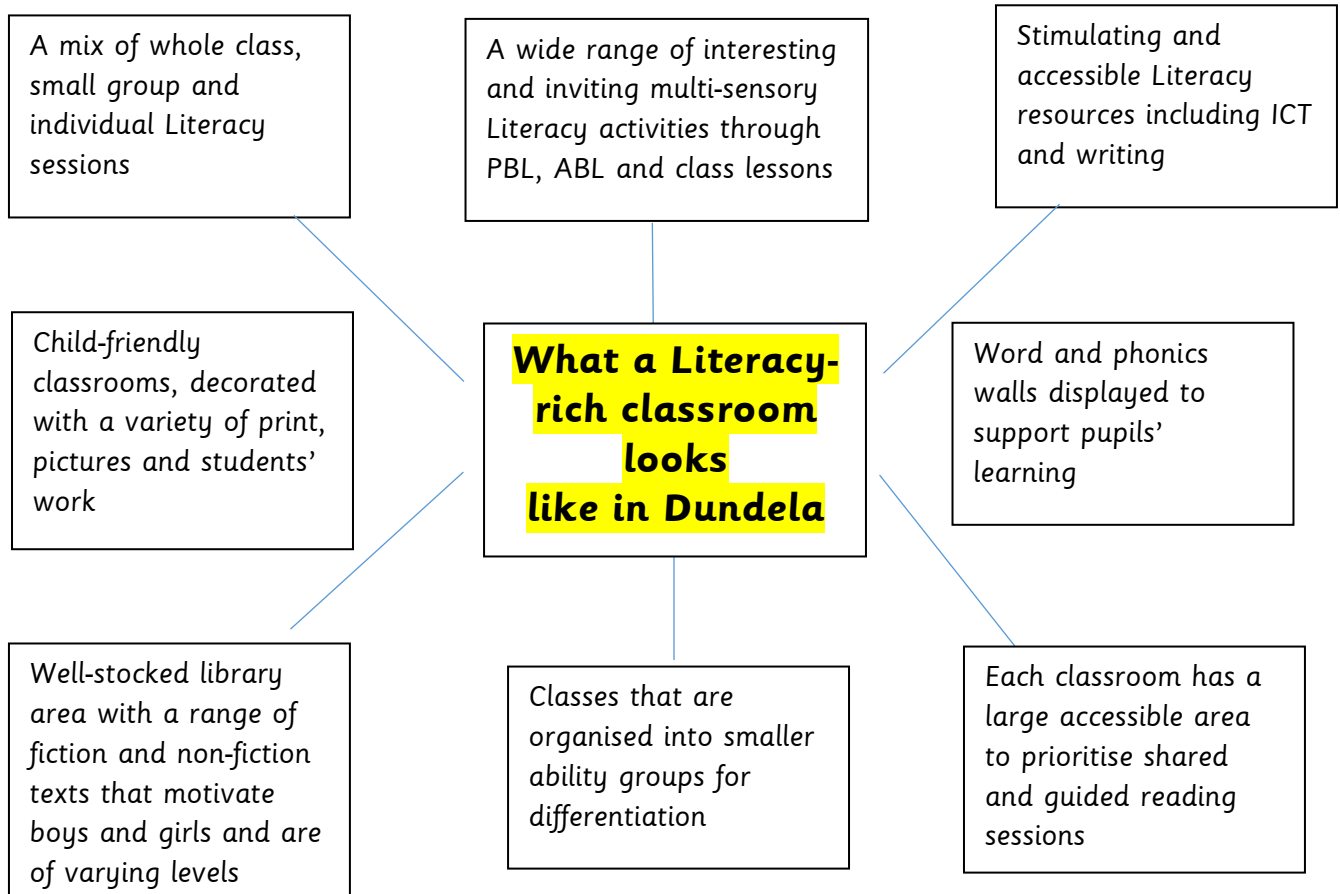
1. Differentiation through CONTENT;
2. Differentiation through PROCESS;
3. Differentiation through PRODUCT; and
4. Differentiation through the effective use of the LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

Maximum use is also made of Classroom Assistants to support children's Literacy needs. All Primary 1 and 2 classes have a Classroom Assistant and the Primary 3 timetable facilitates the sharing of two Assistants during Literacy hours.

Differentiated Classroom (One size does NOT fit all)

LITERACY-RICH CLASSROOMS

The literacy-rich environment emphasises the importance of talking, listening, reading and writing. Within our infant classrooms we enrich our children's Literacy experiences through having:

A mix of whole class, small group and individual Literacy sessions

A wide range of interesting and inviting multi-sensory Literacy activities through PBL, ABL and class lessons

Stimulating and accessible Literacy resources including ICT and writing

Child-friendly classrooms, decorated with a variety of print, pictures and students' work

What a Literacy-rich classroom looks like in Dundela

Word and phonics walls displayed to support pupils' learning

Well-stocked library area with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts that motivate boys and girls and are of varying levels

Classes that are organised into smaller ability groups for differentiation

Each classroom has a large accessible area to prioritise shared and guided reading sessions

DIGITAL LITERACY

Technology has become a huge part of our everyday lives, and has brought with it a new form of Literacy: **DIGITAL LITERACY**. Information, digital and media Literacy skills are essential for children to learn and learning these types of Literacy skills also prepare children for life outside school and beyond their education. Within Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, Literacy skills are enhanced by using the following technology and activities:

- Desktop Computers, Interactive Whiteboards and iPads;
- Literacy Websites;
- Online Literacy Games;
- Reading Websites and Reading Apps;
- E Books;
- Jolly Phonics Software;
- Videos;
- Online Literacy homework tasks; and
- Using forms of technology to record learning in Literacy.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is recognised as **an important influence on a child's development in Literacy.** It is imperative that we maintain an open dialogue with our families in which children's learning and progress can be discussed and any concerns can be raised.

In Dundela, we promote parental involvement through:

Sharing of Pupil Progress
- Regular and positive communications are made between teachers and parents on a formal and informal basis;
- We use a blend of an open door policy and communication via Seesaw to communicate on a less formal level;
- We hold our Parent Consultations twice annually, affording parents the opportunity to see their child's work and discuss their progress with the class teacher and, where applicable, with the Learning Support teacher and SENCO; and
- We provide an end of year report which gives parents a summative record of their child's progress and offers an opportunity to share feedback on their child's report slip.

Supporting Parents to develop children's Literacy Skills

We aim to harness the support of the home to stimulate and enhance pupils' Literacy development. Homework is seen as an integral and coordinated element of the school's practice, in which parents are encouraged to participate.

Literacy Homework in Dundela is:
- A blend of tasks sent home in pupils' folders and online, via Seesaw;
- A mixture of book reading and online reading;
- Learning weekly spellings and sight vocabulary;

How parents can support their child's Literacy development at home:

- Listen to them read each day;
- Reinforce the learning of high frequency words through games and other multi-sensory activities;
- In Years 2 and 3, spend time each weekday revising weekly spellings;
- Regularly visit the Literacy section of the school website to access further material which supports the learning of sight words and spellings and extends phonological skills, and to follow links to fun games which reinforce a range of Literacy skills;
- Take time to look at their child's completed work (sent home on a termly basis) to review their progress; and

- Praise and encourage their child's efforts within Literacy.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

By engaging with the local community, we can actively support students' development and learning within Literacy. Community involvement also sends out a strong signal that children's learning, progress and the standards they achieve are priorities in our school.

Opportunities to promote community involvement include:
- School performances, e.g. Christmas show, assemblies, other events;
- Visitors to the school, e.g. storytellers, visiting theatre groups, poets and authors;
- Holding events such as our 'ECO book swap' and World Book Day;
- Visiting local libraries.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be agreed with the Board of Governors and shared with teachers and parents. It will be reviewed every three years by the Literacy Co-ordinator and uploaded to the school website.

J.Herron
August 2022

CONTENTS PAGE