

Dungarvan CBS Literacy Policy

5th October 2014



Rationale

The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy Among Children and Young People states that literacy and numeracy are the most important life skills that our schools teach. Children should not leave school without having mastered these skills to the best of their abilities. Literacy and numeracy skills are crucial to a person's ability to develop fully as an individual, to live a satisfying and rewarding life and to participate fully in our society. Ensuring that all young people acquire these skills is one of the greatest contributions that we can make to achieving social justice and equity in our country. (pg 2)

The key findings from the PISA Report 2009 show that:

- 15 year old students read significantly less for pleasure in 2009 than in 2000.
- Standards in reading and mathematics have been declining since 2000
- Nearly one quarter of Irish boys have low literacy levels

Literacy: A whole-school policy

In Dungarvan CBS, we are committed to implementing a whole-school literacy policy in order to improve learning among our students. We aim to raise the literacy standards across our school.

The Board of Management, teachers and all other staff acknowledge that we have a responsibility to promote and raise literacy levels in our students as directed under ***The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People, 2011-2020*** and *Circular 0025/2012*.

All staff are committed to raising literacy standards within their own subject areas, or whenever an opportunity arises. Further, we contend that students of Dungarvan CBS also actively engage in improving their own literacy. We aspire to create an educational environment where students take responsibility for their own learning in order to facilitate them in becoming independent adults who fully participate in society.

This literacy policy is underpinned by our school's Mission Statement, which commits us to preparing all students for the challenges of life and to respecting the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school. The school's role in the development of young people is enriched by the active participation of teachers and parents / guardians.

Definition of Literacy

Literacy includes following:

- The ability to read and write.
- The ability to understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast and digital media.
- Improving literacy and learning can impact positively on students' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour.
- Competent literacy ability enables students to learn independently and develop the skills they required to pursue further education, obtain meaningful employment and engage in the benefits of lifelong learning.

Literacy Committee/Working Party

A Literacy Committee will be set up within the school staff. This group will be responsible for developing and implementing a plan for a whole school approach to literacy development - encompassing professional development for teachers, short-term interventions and a school-wide enrichment policy. This group will comprise the following:

- Literacy co-ordinator
- Learning support teacher
- Management representative

Aims:

First Year Screening

- Implement a targeted intervention programme for students whose screening tests indicate they have literacy difficulties.
- Give each First Year a laminated copy of *The Writing Wheel*.

Reading

- Build up a store of reading books for the Junior Years and TYs.
- Take Junior students and TYs to the town library. Encourage all year groups to use the library.
- Every other week devote one class to reading for pleasure.
- Have Newspapers in the Assembly Area so that students can read them in the morning or during lunch break
- Introduce a *word of the week*; display it on the TV in the Assembly Area. This word would be used as much as possible by every staff member in order to build students' vocabulary.

Class Room Strategies

- Introduce specific learning methodologies in each Subject Department and update literacy plans in each subject department.
- Each Department should have a keyword bank for that specific subject/discipline
- Use strategies such as Anticipation Charts, Graphic Organisers, DARTS (Directed Activities Related to Texts)
- Partition the white board or get an extra one, so there is a **Literacy and Numeracy column** which will facilitate teachers in implementing these concept in all classes.
- Focus on the presentation of written material (specific copy/folder for different subjects). Emphasise neatness, grammar, punctuation, margins, date, skip lines between paragraphs and general presentation issues.
- Display the Writing Wheel in each room to help with written presentation.

Oral Language

- Give students an opportunity to deliver oral presentations to their class
- Presentations could be incorporated as part of project work or as a way of revising a topic
- Link up with the local Toastmasters particularly in Transition Year
- Communication skills such as speaking, listening, organising material and conveying the core message can be honed and developed through giving class presentations

Special Educational Needs:

Learning Support Co-ordinator, Mr E. O'Mahony, will liaise with staff members so that the needs of students with literacy challenges can be best met. Staff members will also liaise with the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) in order to facilitate positive learning outcomes for the specific students they assist.

Policy Formulated: May 2013

Date for Review: May 2014