**Development of Student’s Literacy Skills – Literacy Plan**

At Meanscoil Nua an Leith Triuigh we believe literacy is the key to improving learning and raising standards; it enables students to gain access to the subjects studied in school, to read for information and pleasure and to communicate effectively. Poor levels of literacy impact negatively on what students can do and how they see themselves. All staff share responsibility for the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. Crucially, we believe that literate students will ultimately emerge as confident and articulate communicators, fully prepared to enter the adult work, whether to continue their academic studies or to enter the work of work.

 Improving literacy is a whole school approach. All members of staff are committed to adopting the literacy plan. We aim to help all student improve their literacy skills, however we are adopting a roll out programme starting with junior classes. 1st year students are assessed on spelling, grammar, structure and critical thinking skills. Results are calculated and a literacy plan is devised and implemented based on the findings.

**Aims of our Literacy Plan**:

1. To adopt a whole-school approach to literacy across the curriculum.
2. To enable all students to reach their potential in the key literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.
3. To raise staff awareness of key literacy strategies.
4. To encourage staff to take responsibility for the development of literacy in their subject areas through the inclusion of appropriate schemes of work and lesson planning.
5. To support the development of literacy through the deployment of a range of resources in the school e.g. Library, ICT and equipment etc.
6. To identify specific roles and responsibilities within the school with regard to the development of literacy work.
7. To establish procedures for monitoring literacy across the curriculum.
8. To foster a love of learning
9. To assess students strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, structure and critical thinking
10. To analyse findings and develop a plan to improve on these findings

**Objectives of Literacy Plan:**

* Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding
* Enjoy reading and writing
* Write for a wider audience
* Use their skills in speaking and listening to explore, articulate and extend their understanding of texts
* Be able to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes
* Be aware of and improve spelling, grammar and structure
* Have an interest in words, their usage and meanings and an extensive vocabulary used appropriately for different purposes
* Know, understand and be able to write in a range of fiction and poetry genres, and be familiar with ways in which those genres are constructed
* Understand the conventions of different non-fiction types and be able to use these conventions confidently as readers and writers
* Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing from notes to a finished form; understand the publishing process and be able to use a variety of means including ICT to produce texts for different audiences
* Read and write with enjoyment
* Through reading and writing develop their powers of imagination, critical awareness and thinking
* Be able to research independently and make notes from a variety of sources
* Use appropriate reading strategies to extract particular information, e.g. highlighting, scanning, skimming
* Use talk to develop thinking about complex issues and ideas
* Be able to write cohesively in an increasingly sophisticated style, using varied punctuation, sentence structures, paragraphs and technical devices
* Adapt their writing to suit audience and purpose
* Be confident users of subject specific vocabulary and correct spellings

**Strategies:**

**Reading:**

Across the whole curriculum teachers will provide activities for students to:

* Read and follow written instructions
* Read to explore and to develop understanding
* Learn how to sift, select and take notes from the text
* Learn how to access their textbook, including format and index
* Learn how to select from written material, reformulate, question and challenge what they read in textbooks etc

Teachers will also provide reading material of high quality and variety and use appropriate strategies to improve reading, e.g. DEAR

**Writing:**

Across the curriculum teachers will provide activities for students to;

* Plan, draft, discuss and reflect on their writing, using ICT, where appropriate
* Write for a range of purposes and audiences including answering examination questions
* Make notes in a variety of formats, e.g. brain storming, fish diagrams

Teachers will set writing tasks that have a clear and immediate purpose, are objective driven and which are appropriate for the age and ability of the students concerned.

Teachers will teach students how to structure their writing using a variety of sentence structures, paragraphs and a wide range of punctuation.

Where students are asked to write in a particular genre e.g. a newspaper report, teachers will ensure that students are familiar with the appropriate style and conventions

Teachers will correct errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling in a manner suitable to the age, ability and level of the student.

Teachers will aim to:

* Provide good models of particular kinds of writing
* Provide frameworks where appropriate
* Display Key Words in the classroom or on the white board during lessons
* Teach subject specific vocabulary and spelling
* Encourage high standards of presentation
* Differentiate the curriculum
* State aims at the beginning of each lesson

**Speaking & Listening**

Across the whole curriculum teachers will provide activities for students to:

* Listen and carry out instructions
* Explore and develop ideas with others, through talk; pair and group work
* Ask questions as well as answer them
* Work collaboratively with others

**Roles and responsibilities** **of Staff – All Staff…**.

* Are teachers of literacy
* Should ensure that they are familiar with the specific literacy demands of their subject and ensure sufficient coverage of these skills in their lesson planning
* Should be able to identify a student’s literacy strengths and weaknesses and know how to build upon these in order to promote student progress
* Should report on a student’s standard of literacy at Parent Teacher Meetings or as appropriate
* Should have a common marking policy where a positive approach is taken and only a small number of mistakes focused upon at any one time
* Afl Assessment for learning: two stars and a wish

**Subject Departments should:**

* Monitor the work of the department with regard to the inclusion of subject specific literacy strategies in lesson planning
* Encourage models of good practice e.g. modeling and close collaboration between colleagues in order to promote literacy developments

**Parents:**

Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the learning of their children and strong home school links are encouraged through the following:

* Use of the diary to review work and sign on a weekly basis
* Attendance at parent teacher meetings and other meetings as required
* Support the policy by seeking to provide their child with suitable reading materials at home
* Please also see Homework Policy

**The Principal/Deputy Principal should:**

* Establish such structures and procedures that are necessary for the implementation of the policy
* Provide opportunities to staff for CDP in this area
* Monitor the implementation of the policy

**Students should:**

* Make every effort to improve their literacy skills
* Participate and involve themselves with all activities provided by staff to improve literacy
* See also Homework Policy

**Monitoring Procedures:**

* Tracking of results at State Examinations and Reading Ages
* Tracking of numbers taking Higher Level papers
* Regular inclusion of literacy issues at AP, staff and other relevant meetings

**Review procedures:**

The Policy will be reviewed after two years. Review methods will include data analysis, views and experiences of staff and students.

**Literacy initiatives**

Literacy week

The MS Readathon

The library

Key Words Board in every classroom

Literacy notice board

Word of the day board

Subject notice boards for all subjects

Internet access in all classrooms with speakers

DEAR Programme

Newspapers and Agri Aware Magazines, farmers journals, National Geographic, Foinse, etc

The student newspaper The TY Times

Make a book Project: Home Economics

Poetry Read Aloud Competition

Debating Team

Literacy Reading Class for Junior Students

**Methodologies:**

A wide variety of methodologies are being adopted in order to improve levels of literacy:

Whole class teaching

Team Teaching

Role Play

Peer Teaching

Brainstorm

ASL Assessment for learning

Discovery Learning

ICT

Questioning

In class discussion and analysis

**S.E.N.**

Students sit the Drumcondra Reasoning Test in September as 1ST Years

* Verbal Reasoning

Results are sent away and marked by ETC and returned to the school.

These results inform staff of students’ ability in verbal reasoning which informs teaching practice.

**Literacy Policy**

In 2012 we assessed the 1st year students using a literacy checklist. This checklist assessed their spelling, grammar, structure, presentation of work, range of vocabulary and critical thinking skills. We assessed them across a range of subjects, including history and geography. The findings were collated and analysed.

 We discovered that some students excelled in these areas, while some did not. It was agreed among staff that literacy in these areas were an area of concern and a plan was needed.

 The literacy team developed a strategy of action based on this decision. The following is a list of literacy initiatives designed to be implemented in 2013/2014.

Key White Board:

It was decided that students would benefit from a small a small white board beside the main white board. This is to be used for the key words in the lesson so students become more aware of new words.

Homework and classwork:

It was agreed that all staff would become teachers of literacy. They will make a conscious effort to correct literacy errors in students’ work. (spelling, grammar, structure etc).

Critical Thinking:

Where possible it was agreed that staff would encourage students to think for themselves. A discovery learning approach is to be embraced where students are given time in class to work (individually or as a group) on a problem or read text and summarise their key findings. This is to make students active learners rather than passive observers.

 It will also develop their reading skill and time taken to read passages will increase which will benefit them in exam situations.

The Library:

Reading is the key to success. All staff agree that students should be reading in their spare time. To foster a love of learning Meanscoil Nua an Leith Triuigh will adopt the DEAR Programme (Drop Everything and Read). This will again help students to improve their literacy skills (reading, spelling, grammar).

 Also teachers are actively seeking to stock the library with journals, magazines, newspapers that are relevant to their subject. This means students will be reading material that is current and of a high standard, again improving their literacy skills.

 Furthermore, this year all Junior classes will have a literacy class, where they will read a book each term. This is an excellent initiative and welcomed by all staff.

Notice boards:

In the staff room there is now a notice board which has lots of useful information for helping teachers to focus on literacy.

There are also notice boards in the hallway, one for every subject. Here teachers can display information pertaining to their subjects, such as relevant websites, apps, competitions for students. This will encourage students to become drivers of their own education, by sharing the tools of technology with them.

Digital Literacy:

Teachers will where possible engage with technology in the classroom. They will share knowledge about interesting websites and helpful mobile phone apps which will act as education tools for pupils at home.

The Visual Classroom:

It is recognized that all students learn differently. In order to meet the needs of the visual learner posters, work and key words will be displayed in the classroom and on the walls to assist them in their learning.

Literacy Week:

2013 will be the 3rd Literacy Week in Meanscoil. Students enjoy it and look forward to it. It is a celebration of literacy which takes place in October in conjunction with The MS Readathon. The TY students are in charge of organizing events (book swap, book club, making dust covers, bookmarks, popcorn reading festival, tea parties etc) to promote the importance of reading.

Cross Curricular Links and The TY Times:

This is a Transition Year initiative undertaken by the TY students in English class. They research, and report on school activities, current affairs, local news, sporting events, careers, fashion, cookery, geographical news, farming features and so on. Every facet of school life features in this paper (academic, sport, pastoral care, religion etc). Both students and staff contribute. The wider community of Castlegregory read it, which means the Students are writing for a real audience which they enjoy.

Other strategies which will/have been adopted are to be found on the following pages. These were discussed at a staff meeting in April of 2013.