Literacy Policy

May 2017

Improving confidence in Literacy across the community

What is Literacy?

Within *Curriculum for Excellence*, literacy is defined as:

- *"the set of skills which allows an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful."*

(Principles and practice: Literacy across learning, 2009).

In simple terms this means that all of our students should be able:

- ✓ to communicate effectively using their **talking and listening** skills
- ✓ to communicate effectively in **writing**
- ✓ **to read,** not just for information, but also to work out if and when people are aiming to persuade or influence them
- ✓ and above all, to **read** simply for enjoyment.

Why do we need this policy?

The GTCS Standard for Teacher Registration, The United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (Articles 3, 13 and 28) and Curriculum for Excellence all recognise that Literacy is the responsibility of all.

The aim of this policy is to help create a consistent whole school approach to Literacy across the curriculum. We would like to ensure that all staff feel comfortable and confident when discussing the literacy skills and needs of our pupils with colleagues, parents and the pupils themselves. To do this we aim to raise awareness of Literacy skills and to introduce various approaches for all staff to adopt and embed in their practice.

How do we implement literacy across the curriculum?

Literacy is the responsibility of all. The policy is here to assist with the teaching of Literacy across the school by all staff.

Reading

- ✓ Teachers will be provided with an 'I Am Reading' stand to display the book they are reading or have just finished reading. This will help to model good reading habits and provide a topic for discussion with pupils. (Appendix 4)

- ✓ All pupils in S1 and S2 should have an Accelerated Reader book which they bring to school each day. Five or ten minutes reading their book or completing Accelerated Reader Quizzes on their iPads could be used as a starter or extension activity in all subjects. (Appendix 6)

- ✓ The reading ages for S1-S2 will be added into, and tracked through, a Literacy Log using Accelerated Reader twice a year in order to aid staff in the differentiation of coursework. (Appendix 7)

Writing

- ✓ The updated Literacy Code will be displayed clearly in all classrooms. The English department will make pupils aware of the code at the start of each session. Teachers in all subjects will use the code when marking pupil writing. (Advice on how to do this is included in Appendix 1)

All Outcomes

- ✓ A Literacy Newsletter will be emailed to staff each month to help raise the profile of Literacy across the Curriculum. It will include three Literacy Benchmarks chosen to be the focus of that month, a short book review from a member of staff, a subject specific vocabulary section, a Literacy Check-in with tasks for staff and advice on teaching Literacy across the whole school.

- ✓ Each department will have a designated Celebrating Literacy Board where they will display examples of pupil work related to the outcomes of Reading, Writing, Talking & Listening, labelled with Literacy indicators. (Appendix 2)

- ✓ Each department will have access to a set of Literacy Mats to be used by pupils when undertaking Literacy tasks in class such as group discussion, functional writing and solo presentations. (Appendix 3)

- ✓ The Literacy Logo should be displayed in schemes of work and lessons to illustrate when Literacy Outcomes are being covered. (Appendix 5)

- ✓ There should be an aim to hold at least one meeting throughout the session of the whole Education Group to share good practice and be involved in moderation activities with a focus on Literacy.

How do we support learners who struggle with Literacy?

We wish to promote a positive attitude to literacy amongst all staff, learners and parents/carers. In order to do so we have already embedded a number of aids into the curriculum to ensure all learners have an equitable opportunity to develop their literacy.

Dyslexia Friendly School

Doon Academy prides itself on being a Dyslexia Friendly School. We have worked hard over the past few years to ensure our school is as welcoming as possible to all types of learners and we aim to cater for all their needs. Some of our learners have Dyslexia or Visual Stress and we feel it is important to fulfil their learner's needs wherever they are in the school.

The school has set up a student Dyslexia Group who meet to discuss ways in which they feel their learning needs can be met in class. Each classroom is equipped with a Dyslexia Toolkit which provides materials to help learners with the classwork.

Read Write Gold

This programme is available on any computer within the school and helps with reading and writing. It can be used by anyone who needs it. The programme allows users to tint their screens, highlight sections of text and have whole sections of text read to them. It is a fantastic tool for the learners that need it.

How do we celebrate literacy?

We feel that as a school Doon Academy is very good at celebrating Literacy, especially when it comes to reading and writing. There are many ways in which we do this both within and out with the school. We would like to see these things continuing into the future. These activities and events include:

- Celebrating World Book Day

- Participating in Scottish Book Trust's 'Book Weeks'

- Partaking in the East Ayrshire Schools Readers Cup Quiz

- Organising author Visits to the school

- Setting up author workshops in the school

- Taking part in the Nationwide Readathon for charity

- Hosting the Scholastic Book Fair

- Organising school trips themed around improving and experiencing literacy such as trips to the Boswell Book Festival, the Sky Academy and Waterstones bookstore.

- Running a pupil-led magazine that celebrates pupil writing and artwork

- Becoming Book Givers to the community for World Book Night

- Holding the Dark Skies Award within the school to promote and celebrate the writing of our pupils

- Broadening the English Option choices to include Media at Senior Phase

- Holding Drama Workshops through Gold Dust Drama

- Incorporating a range of IDL lessons

- Showcasing examples of pupil work on our display boards across the school

- Arranging Accelerated Reader Assemblies to acknowledge the achievements of learners in the Accelerated Reader scheme

- Offer a range of literacy based clubs on topics such as comics, creative writing and homework.

- Pupils can celebrate their reading and recommend books to each other by using the Reading Tree in the library. This displays books to all learners that other pupils or staff have read and enjoyed. We aim to start as many conversations about reading as possible.

Appendix 1: Literacy Code

- The Literacy Code has been refreshed and should be used across all departments to mark any extended pieces of written work.
- The code is straightforward to use — when a pupil has made a mistake in their writing, the teacher should write the appropriate code in the margin next to the mistake to indicate to pupils what type of mistake it is. e.g. If it is a spelling mistake then mark SP in the margin of the line where the mistake can be found. (Please see the example below.)
- Below is an example of an English piece that has been marked using the Literacy Code. The correction codes have been written in the margin. You should use your professional judgement when deciding how often to apply the code and which mistakes to identify. If a pupil has spelling mistakes in every line you don't need to identify them all. Use your knowledge of the pupil to decide which mistakes to indicate – you might just focus on common words which are misspelled or key vocabulary relevant to the topic.

Doon Academy — Literacy Code

SP	Spelling mistake
NS	Take a new sentence
NP	Take a new paragraph
R	Use a ruler here
C	Use a capital letter
P	Punctuation mistake
^	A word is missing
?	Doesn't make sense
VT	Wrong verb tense
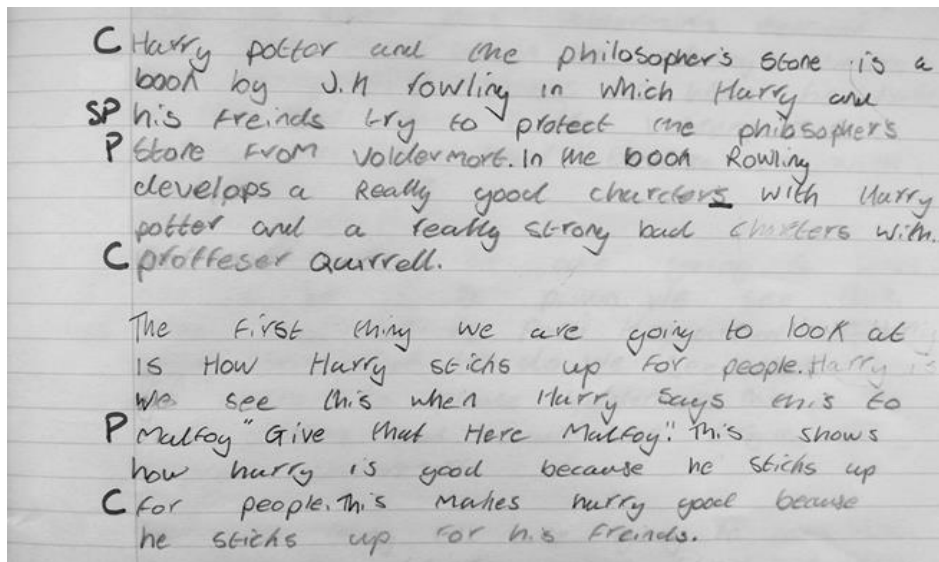
- The purpose of the Literacy Code is to encourage pupils to become more confident in self-correcting and editing their own writing. Mistakes could be corrected at the end of the piece of work or when redrafting the work. Asking the pupils to complete a second draft after the code has been used in their first draft is a good way to get them to focus on correcting their mistakes.

Appendix 2: Literacy Boards

When displaying work in your department we would like you to place a Literacy Indicator on the board relating to the main literacy focus of the work involved. There are eight to choose from – Reading, Researching, Group Work, Solo Talk Presentation, Information Writing, Argumentative Writing, Creative Writing and Personal Writing.

Appendix 3: Literacy Mats

Each department will have a set of Literacy Mats. They should be handed out to students who need help with certain types of literacy tasks. It reinforces the Literacy Code, covers group work, note-taking, reporting, essay writing, and presenting skills. There are also points on growth mind-set and Bloom's Taxonomy which the learners have covered through JLA and CANI coaching.

Appendix 4: 'I Am Reading' Teacher Book Stands

In order to model good reading practice to the learners we ask that all teachers display an 'I Am Reading' stand on their desk. All teachers have been provided with a metal desk stand to place their most recent read in. Each stand will have a laminated backing display with the Literacy Logo and the teacher's name on it.

Appendix 5: The Literacy Logo

The Literacy logo, like the Numeracy logo developed last year, should be added to any lessons (slides, worksheets or units of work) where Literacy outcomes are being met.

Appendix 6 – Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader is a programme used in English lessons to encourage and monitor progress in reading. This is important as reading has been proven to be the quickest and easiest way to help learners improve their literacy. It does this by exposing the learners to new vocabulary and sentence structure. Those who read more have been shown to perform better in exams and are more likely to be successful in later life. This is an indicator of a positive ethos towards an individual's own learning. Reading also opens learners up to a wealth of knowledge and other cultures and ideas they might not otherwise get the opportunity to experience.

The learners are tested at the start of each term. The Accelerated Reader programme works out the reading age of the learner and assigns them a book level which goes from level 1 to 12. They do not have to read at this level, but books at this level will be most accessible to them. The programme also assigns the learner a target to reach. This is based on a designated amount of reading per day – for most of our learners this will be fifteen minutes although we put the reading time up for those who are successful readers.

For each book the learner reads, they sit a short comprehension test, and acquire points towards their target. It is very easy to spot if a learner is not completing their reading homework or if there are other learning issues such as dyslexia, long-sightedness or visual stress. These can then be dealt with accordingly.

At the end of each session the progress of the readers is celebrated with an Assembly where they receive certificates and prizes. This builds confidence in reading and encourages others to read.

The programme is a fantastic tool. Even though this is predominantly being used by the English Department, the information garnered from the programme will be shared with other teachers and staff such as the reading ages. This should be used to inform the learning and teaching in other departments by aiding with differentiation.

Appendix 7 – Reading Ages

The pupils we work with at Doon Academy are all at different reading ages. There are a number of pupils who join Doon Academy and have a reading age that is half their actual age. This can mean that it is very difficult for them to complete the work set for them. They cannot comprehend what they are being asked to read and their reading fluency is very poor. Even if they can read the words separately, they might not be able to understand the whole sentence.

What can we do to improve any of this? We need to encourage the pupils to read as much as possible and as widely as possible. The guide below may help you to tailor some of the work that is to be read in classes to suit the individual needs of learners as it shows an example of the types of language accessible to pupils of different reading ages.

Age 6 (CfE Literacy Level 1)

This is Peter. This is Paul. Peter and Paul were the best of friends. Paul made Peter laugh by being funny and noisy. They spent their days happily fishing around their rocky island. One day when they were diving a storm blew up. A big, BIG storm. Peter was lost. He was blown out to sea.

(*Puffin Peter* by Petr Horacek)

Age 7 (CfE Literacy Level 1)

Animal babies need lots of care. Most of the time, animal mums care for their babies alone. But some animal dads take care of their babies, too.

A sea horse dad takes care of his babies before they are born. Mum lays eggs in a special pouch in his belly. The eggs hatch inside his belly. After they hatch, he pushes out the babies one by one. He can have up to 300 babies at once!

(*Young and Wild* by Laura Hirschel et al.)

Age 8 (CfE Literacy Level 1)

The Crash: The Crash happened in 2021. Alien space ships crash landed on Earth. After the Crash, the Earth became very cold and dark. Now the aliens rule the world. The aliens have changed shape so they look like people. People call the aliens The Enemy.

Life After The Crash: People are afraid. They do not know who is an Enemy and who is a friend.

(*Shadows under Fire* by Paul Blum)

Age 9 (CfE Literacy Level 2)

Sparrow walked nervously towards the entrance to the stable yard. He could not help thinking that if a boy had not done it, then whoever had must still be around. Taking a deep breath, he lifted the latch and opened the gate.

Before he could take another step, he was stopped in his tracks by an ear-shattering blast of ferocious barking. A dark shape was hurtling across the yard straight towards him. Sparrow froze, his heart pounding. He was done for! He shrank back against the gate, pressing himself into the slats, away from the savage dog. Then, just before it reached him, it was jerked to a sudden halt. It was chained!

(*The Case of the Racehorse Ringer* by Anthony Reid)

Age 10 years 6 months (CfE Literacy Level 2)

It's a funny thing about mothers and fathers. Even when their own child is the most disgusting little blister you could ever imagine, they still think that he or she is wonderful.

Some parents go further. They become so blinded by adoration they manage to convince themselves their child has qualities of genius.

Well, there is nothing very wrong with all this. It's the way of the world. It is only when the parents begin telling *us* about the brilliance of their own revolting offspring, that we start shouting, 'Bring us a basin! We're going to be sick!'

(*Matilda* by Roald Dahl)

Age 12 (CfE Literacy Level 3)

Cherry lay on her side where the tide had lifted her and coughed until her lungs were clear. She woke as the sea came in once again and frothed around her legs. She rolled on her back, feeling the salt spray on her face and saw that it was night. The sky above her was dashed with stars and the moon rode through the clouds.

She scrambled to her feet, one hand still holding her precious shells close to her. Instinctively she backed away from the sea and looked around her. With growing dismay he saw that she had been thrown back on the wrong side of the rocks, that she was not now in Boat Cove. The tide had left only a few feet of sand and rock between her and the cliff face.

(*The White Horse of Zennor and Other Stories* by Michael Morpurgo)

Age 13 years 6 months (CfE Literacy Level 3/4)

'Humans, however,' continued the Dragon thoughtfully, 'humans really *should* be fileted. The spine in particular can be very tickly as it goes down the throat...'

As the Dragon spoke, he extended his claws, the talons slowly emerging from the thick stumps of his fingers and rising up until they resembled nothing more than gigantic razors, six feet wide and twenty feet long, with points on the end like a surgeon's scalpel.

'Removing the human backbone is a delicate job', hissed the Dragon nastily, 'but one that I am particularly good at... a small incision at the back of the neck,' – he gestured at Hiccup's neck – 'a swift stroke downwards, then flick it out... its practically painless. For ME...'

The Dragon's eyes lit up with the purest pleasure.

(*How to Train Your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell)

Age 15 and above (CfE Literacy Level 4)

On the forenoon of the second day, coming to the top of a hill, I saw all the country fall away before me down to the sea; and in the midst of this descent, on a long ridge, the city of Edinburgh smoking like a kiln. There was a flag upon the castle, and ships moving or lying anchored in the firth; both of which, for as far away as they were, I could distinguish clearly; and both brought my country heart into my mouth.

(*Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson)