Notre Dame High School

Literacy across learning

December 2014

Literacy across learning

This working document is designed to offer an insight into our engagement with literacy across learning. Re-evaluating our strategy for Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing is part of our School Improvement Plan for this session. It is anticipated that our numeracy document will be released in late March 2015 with our health and wellbeing document scheduled for release around the end of May 2015.

Within this document you will find information on:

- Learning and Teaching

- Arrangements for Moderation

- Tracking and Monitoring

- Profiling and Personal Support

- Building Capacity

- EAL

- Catholic Ethos and RERC

- Key Contacts

This paper has been created as an overview of engagement with literacy across learning, particularly with reference to the Broad General Education phase of secondary education. Our strategy shows that, in time, this will be representative of our pupil experience from S1 – S6.
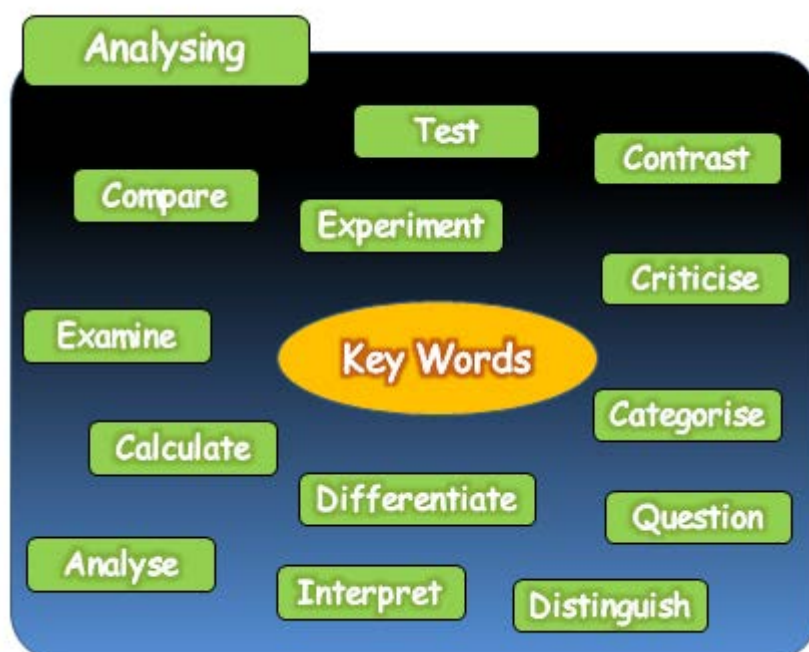
Learning and Teaching

In every classroom in the school there is a 'Thinking Skills' poster on display. During our Personal Support lessons in August, pupils engaged in activities that helped define the meaning of each skill.

'Thinking Skills' Posters

Here is an example of a slide taken from the personal support lesson on 'analysing':

Pupils were asked to provide examples of learning activities where they had encountered the terms on the slide. The process was repeated over the next six weeks for each skill shown on the poster, and pupils were then asked to use their daily planner to start to record the thinking skill focus of each lesson.

At the start of each lesson, our S1-S3 pupils make links between the terms on the poster and the activity they are about to engage with. Every lesson begins with literacy.
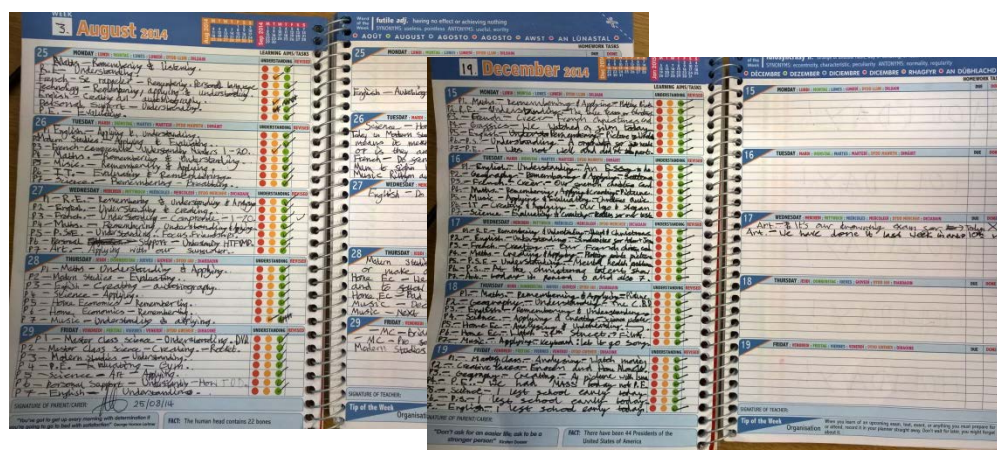
All S1-S3 pupils are encouraged to use their diary/planner to record the thinking skill focus for the lesson ahead, as well as a brief statement that summarises the learning intention. Without good knowledge of the meaning of the terms included on the poster, it would not be possible for our pupils to make links across subject areas or over a period of time.

The posters were introduced to the school during the 2013/2014 term and we formally adopted the strategy of sharing a thinking skill focus in August 2014. We are very pleased with the level of pupil engagement. If you are reading this online you may be able to zoom in to see that the girls have maintained their enthusiasm for recording the skill focus throughout the term.

One of our S1 pupils was asked to explain why she liked to record the 'Thinking Skill' focus at the start of each lesson.

'I like to be organised and I remember things if I write it down. When I look at my planner I remember what I was doing in class.'

Subject Engagement

In some subject areas, it is necessary for pupils to become literate in another language. Naturally, Modern Languages present pupils with the opportunity to develop an understanding of a different language structure. In full support of the national 1 + 2 policy, we offer French and Italian as part of our Broad General Education delivery. Of our S1 intake, eighty seven pupils speak English as an additional language. Many of these pupils are fluent in English but have grown up in bi-lingual families. In essence, just over seventy five per cent of our S1 cohort are already overtaking the 1 + 2 policy given that their mother tongue is not English. More information can be found within the EAL section of this document.

Short courses in Spanish are part of our Senior Phase Wider Achievement column and we are working with our associated primary schools to implement a rotational languages programme in Primary 6 and Primary 7. The intention being that we will offer Italian in S1 for one cohort with the subsequent cohort starting French. It is hoped that uptake in Spanish will also increase in the coming years.

Elsewhere in the school, Computing Science courses place an emphasis on learning programming languages. S3 pupils begin by reading structured paragraphs describing a problem. They are then required to analyse such paragraphs for descriptions of repetition and selection. From this point pupils need to create pseudocode, whereby the key elements of a problem are broken down into discrete steps.

Modern Languages and Computing Science are obvious contexts for deep engagement with subject specific literacy skills. There are innumerable examples that we could draw on from elsewhere across the curriculum.

Thirty Words

At the time of writing we are rolling out our thirty word strategy. Drawing on the very basic premise of pupils having the ability to define and recognise words and terms, each classroom in our school includes a wall display with thirty key words from the Broad General Education course on offer.

We are adding these displays to each classroom as part of a rolling program. When collating the returns for this activity, it became apparent that our pupils are expected to understand and use a wide range of terminology, some of which may only be known within a circle of staff delivering subject specific content.

It can be the case that tried and tested methods of improving knowledge and understanding can be overlooked. Having had the time to see the range of terminology covered it is our firm belief that raising the profile of literacy in this way is for the benefit of staff and pupils.

Some Principal Teachers have expressed a desire to use the word wall strategically, deliberately focussing on elements of planned learning as the year unfolds. Others have suggested potential use as part of lesson starters and plenary activities.

Thirty Words Competition

Our English department have started a fortnightly competition for S1 pupils. The competition involves defining terms displayed on classroom walls throughout the school. It should be an interesting competition when taking into account the demands of some of the terminology covered throughout the Broad General Education.

Sample Words taken from a range of subject areas in S1-S3

Iconography	Reconciliation	Iteration	Orthographic
Rendering	Unlimited Liability	Entrepreneur	Tolerance
Mode	Median	Profiling	Pseudocode
Photosynthesis	Respiration	Alkaline	Stalactite
Propaganda	Ideology	Composing	Tempo
Soliloquy	Juxtaposition	Algorithm	

Arrangements for Moderation

The fairly recent publication of progression framework statements has provided us with a very natural mechanism for self-evaluation. Planned learning in all curricular areas must now take account of these statements and the related significant aspects of learning.

Principal Teachers have worked with department colleagues to map our entire Broad General Education curriculum against the newly published statements. Planned learning takes account of:

- Pupil Entitlement in relation to third level experiences and outcomes
- Development of 'Thinking Skills' during the course of planned learning
- Use of a range of assessment methodologies
- Recording experiences out with class (on-going at time of writing)
- Tracking progress in relation to progression framework statements at both third and fourth levels

At the heart of effective tracking is professional dialogue and moderation. The system we have in place for tracking is an outstanding piece of in-house software. However, the software alone would be worth very little if it were not supported by a whole school commitment to agreeing upon standards. The primary aim of department level moderation is to establish what constitutes progress from one level to another.

In most subject areas, the release of the progression framework statements has been a great help. When compared to experiences and outcomes, the statements are generally more descriptive and provide clearer frameworks for engaging in professional dialogue.

In a handful of subjects the statements almost exactly match the experiences and outcomes or contain less detail. Nevertheless, we have committed to setting aside a large part of INSET day four to the task of carrying out department level moderation based on the progression framework statements. Principal teachers will then take ownership of renewed moderation activities for all S1-S3 courses throughout the remainder of the 2014/2015 term and into the new session.

In relation to Literacy across the curriculum, we have a specific plan for moderation and professional dialogue that stems from our recently developed tracking system.

Tracking and Monitoring

Over the course of the past seven months we have been developing a whole school tracking and monitoring database. Mr Hegarty teaches Graphic Communication and has liaised with Mrs Martin (HT) and Mr Kane (DHT BGE) to create a system that is in line with our strategic plan for the school. We are indebted to Mr Hegarty for the technical expertise that he has demonstrated to make our vision a reality.

Information on how we track Literacy across the curriculum and indeed any aspect of our BGE coverage can be found on the next few pages. The system is ready to go live and Principal Teachers have now submitted nearly all of the data we require. We are trialling the software from now until Easter and intend to formally introduce the system when our new timetable gets underway in June.

Our System

The system has been designed to allow class teachers to track progress in terms of work completed during course delivery in S1-S3. Each department has agreed upon the items of work that occur naturally during the course of learning and teaching. In general, most departments are tracking pupils across between five and eight activities in each subject per academic year. In time, we plan to release a comprehensive guide to this system and we also intend to demonstrate the system during the Literacy conference in January, albeit while in its infancy.

The system allows users to extract the following data:

- Class by class progress
- Pupil by pupil progress
- Sub group progress e.g. FME, LAAC or EAL students
- Subject by subject progress
- Curricular area progress by pupil, class and cohort
- Literacy progress by pupil, class and cohort
- Numeracy progress by pupil, class and cohort
- Health and Wellbeing progress by pupil, class and cohort
- Wider Achievement and Outdoor Learning by pupil, class and cohort

By default, all pupils are entered as on track in every activity. Class teachers can change the status of a pupil to either 'Ready to Progress' or 'Requires Support'. Here is a screenshot of the data entry screen that class teacher will use to track progress.

Here is a sample screen showing a test run report of a cohort's progress across all curricular areas.

nmary by Curricular Area

	English				Literacy				Modern Languages				Maths				Numeracy				Health and Wellbeing				Science		
QTY.	RTP	OT	NS	QTY.	RTP	OT	NS	QTY.	RTP	OT	NS	QTY.	RTP	OT	NS	QTY.	RTP	OT	NS	QTY.	RTP	OT	NS	QTY.	RTP	OT	
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Users can drill down and view data for each child as necessary. Any readers interested in the tracking database should see the 'Find out more' section at the end of this document.

Our plan for literacy is to identify departments assessing against the same literacy progression framework statements. We then intend to moderate across departments where there is a shared focus. For example, if it becomes apparent that three departments are making judgements based on activities that focus on listening skills, we will allow representatives of each department to share their understanding of standards with one another.

This could allow us to create some whole school guidance in relation to specific elements of literacy delivery and engagement.

Logistically, this will prove challenging and may take time. Once we have completed our re-evaluation of department level moderation we will devise a programme for moderation that is specific to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

In real terms, we anticipate that this moderation will take place around six months to a year from now. The strategic vision is in place but we aim to ensure that department level auditing of literacy delivery is complete before engaging with moderation of literacy across learning.

Transition from Primary to Secondary (Notre Dame PS and St. Ninian's PS)

Both of our associated primary schools submit a literacy portfolio as the girls engage in transition activities during Primary Seven. Our transition council spent a great deal of time collaborating to agree on best practice in literacy and the quality of the work produced in primary seven has been outstanding. Primary Seven teachers have expressed an interest in having the chance to meet with staff delivering English in our school. We are keen to pursue the possibility of this professional learning exercise. We believe that the standard of work produced in primary seven is in some cases at third level prior to enrolment at Notre Dame High.

This is testament to the standard of teaching in our associated schools. Out with our catchment schools we are faced with an extreme logistical challenge as we endeavour to turnaround a transition programme in a six week timescale.
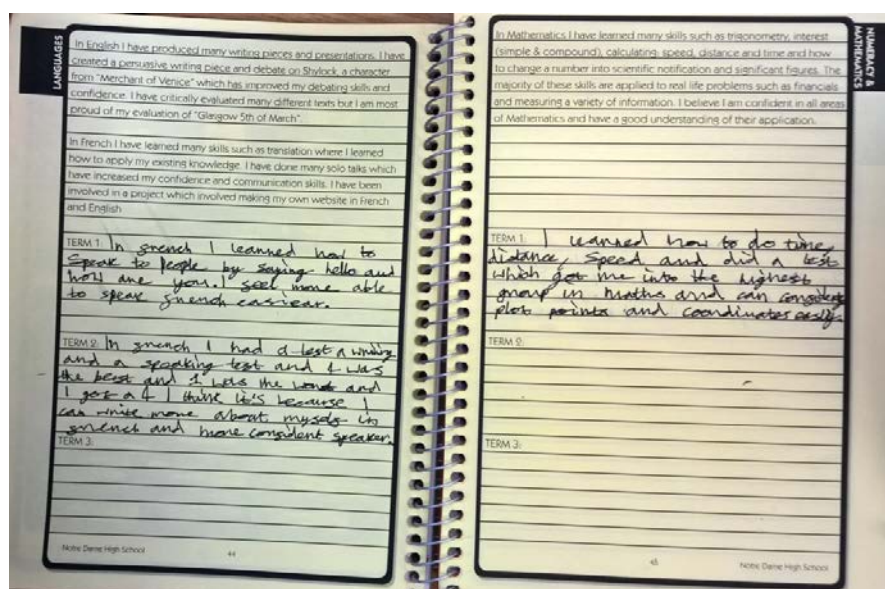
With upwards of fifty schools to liaise with, we do manage to capture the tracked level of progress in literacy and other curricular areas. However, moderation or formal transition activities are not viable in the timescale that we have. This presents a real challenge for us as nearly three quarters of our intake are placing requests from non-associated schools.

Profiling

Our curriculum has been designed to allow us to devote six consecutive double periods to the creation of the S3 profile. The six lesson block takes place during our timetabled Masterclass curriculum near the end of S3.

While the creation of the profile is important, it is the process of profiling that is both crucial and challenging. The earlier mentioned strategy of asking pupils to record the 'Thinking Skill' focus for each lesson allows pupils to get used to the idea of recording progress. Another section of our planner is used during Personal Support periods at the end of each term.

Pupils are asked to look back over the entries they have made for each curricular area. They then note their most recent and best success for the term that they have just completed. This reflection process is repeated three times during the year.

The profile template that we have devised allows pupils to record their most recent and best achievements in literacy across the curriculum. We focus specifically on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for two of our six double period sessions.

Personal Support

Our Personal Support curriculum is designed to engage pupils in short, focussed lessons. Personal Support is delivered across three days, with fifteen minute sessions on a Monday and a Friday along with a twenty minute session on a Wednesday.

Our curriculum rationale document provides further information on the aims of Personal Support.

In summary the focus of each day is:

Monday   Whole School/Local Community/Citizenship

Wednesday   Learning and Teaching/Profiling

Friday   GIRFEC/Health and Wellbeing/Catholic Ethos and Spirituality

Wednesday's are the day of choice for focussing on learning and teaching and the curriculum. Earlier in the year pupils watched a video created by Mr McColm. The video is based around the theme of 'Literacy across the Curriculum' and was viewed by every pupil and teacher in the school.

The video is the main focus of our stall at the forthcoming Literacy conference. You can find the video on our YouTube channel and our website, or by clicking on the screen shot shown below:

http://www.notredamehigh.glasgow.sch.uk/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R088edAQYzc

Literacy Across the Curriculum

NDHSglasgow

Subscribe 35

377 views

The power of Film

Mr McColm and the pupils involved in the Film Making club have devoted a lot of time to the development of video based lessons for delivery during Personal Support. As well as the Literacy clip we also have clips around the theme of:

- Numeracy across the curriculum
- How to use your planner
- What is Personal Support?
- We are Notre Dame (Award winning film created by our Film Club)
- Subject Specific content clips for Drama and Graphic Communication

Digital Literacy is also an important skill and it has been our experience that the creation of engaging video clips has improved pupil and staff awareness of the aims of our curricular structure. In time, we intend to develop as many clips as necessary to support both the Personal Support curriculum and literacy across the curriculum. We would like to extend our thanks to Mr McColm, the girls of the Film Club and all who agreed to be filmed.
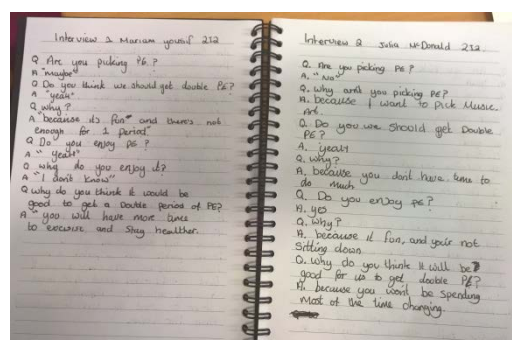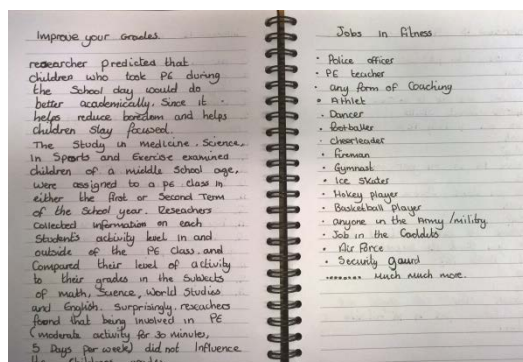
Reading for Enjoyment

As well as library clubs offered by Glasgow Life, we also have a reading for enjoyment group led by one of our senior pupils. The group are in the process of creating a video about why they enjoy reading. To find out how the girls got on, visit our website just before the Easter holidays. The girls are meeting after the prelim exams to formalise the content of their video. The group is an informal pupil led initiative.
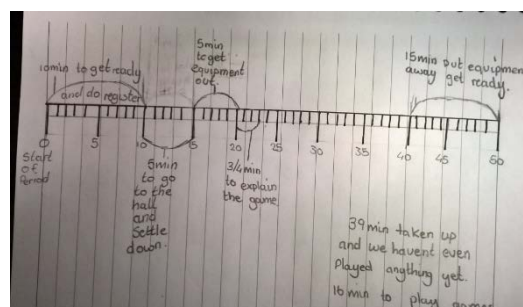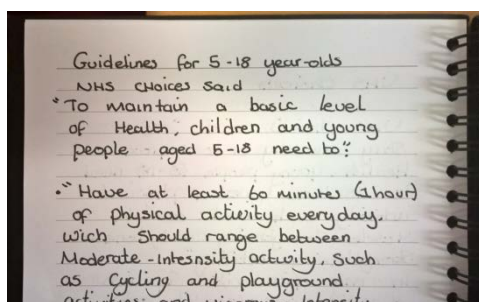
Double Periods of PE

Double periods of PE might not seem relevant to a paper produced to examine literacy across the curriculum. However, one of our S2 students recently approached her Year Group Head with a black book in hand. Contained within the book were quotes from current educational policy, some of which the DHT in question recognised, others that required some serious research to source.

As the teacher turned the pages of this book he found page after page of interview transcripts. There was then a diagram detailing the actual time spent engaged in physical activity during single periods of PE. This pupil had captured the opinion of a more than reasonable subset of her peers, she had applied her understanding of the power of graphs as a medium for communication and had sourced reliable and credible evidence to back up her assertion that double periods of PE were the only way to go in order to truly meet national policy.

The creation of this proposal was perhaps a better demonstration of the success of literacy across learning in our school than anything else in this document. It is an outstanding example of pupil led engagement with literacy, even if the pupil was not necessarily aware of the power of her proposal.

Building Capacity – Professional Learning

As part of our internal Aspiring Leaders programme, we offer staff the chance to lead aspects of faculty life. We have three aspiring Principal Teachers who have been asked to fulfil the following faculty based remit:

- Take full responsibility for the Literacy or Numeracy audit in your department and in light of the progression framework release
- Embed pupil voice activities into the audit (Learner Conversations)
- Collate subject specific evidence for potential moderation at whole school or cluster level
- Evaluate the process, reflecting on what you have learned, both about Literacy in your department and the challenges of managing and leading others

One member of staff has taken on responsibility for Numeracy in their department, the others Literacy. This element of our Aspiring Leaders programme runs until Easter, when staff will have the chance to feedback to the group and conduct some self-evaluation into how they managed to increase the profile of Literacy in their own department.

The same process will be replicated across the school, before we carry out Literacy specific moderation that will depend upon the information held in our tracking database at that time.
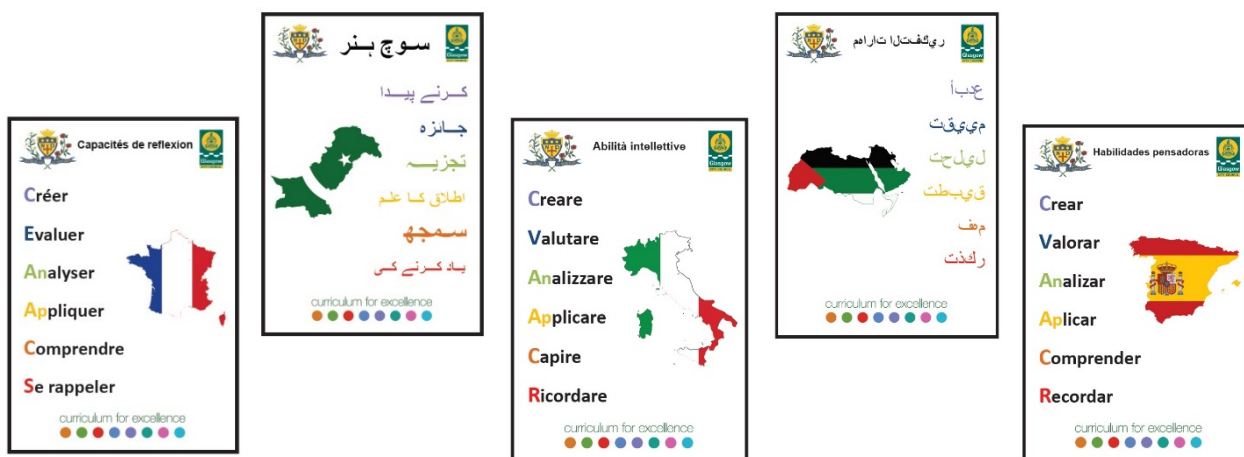
Amazon Kindle

On the advice of Annemarie McGougan (Development Officer for Professional, GCC), we are purchasing some Amazon Kindle devices to support staff in their professional reading. The latest version of Kindle allows for the storage and subsequent reading of PDF documents. We intend to upload a catalogue of current educational policy at both local and national level. Staff will then have the chance to borrow the devices as necessary. In the longer term, we are aiming to also buy a class set to allow teachers to store PDF versions of class notes and revision materials. The devices can be used in class instead of photocopying and we can issue PDFs to pupils so that they can use them on their own devices at home.

EAL

In our current S1 cohort, there are thirty one different mother tongues other than English. We are immensely proud of the cultural diversity that exists in our school. While no formal plans are in place at the time of writing, we intend to celebrate the linguistic diversity of our school community during the 2015/2016 term. It should be noted that the languages listed only take account of our current S1 cohort.

Irish Gaelic	Urdu	Punjabi	Arabic	Polish	Tamil	Akan
Hausa	Dari	Swahili	French	Russian	Italian	Fanti
Farsi	Hindi	Ndebele	Pushto	Scots	Tagalog	Filipino
Cantonese	Igbo	Twi	Russian	Spanish	Bemba	Kurdish
Kurundi	Turkish	Somali				

A significant number of our pupils either speak Arabic or Urdu as their first language. With this in mind we have had the Thinking Skills poster translated into both languages, as well as the languages taught within the curriculum. These posters are on display in specific rooms throughout the school.

There are different challenges facing the teaching of literacies to pupils with English as an Additional Language.

They come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some have been traumatised or had a very limited education. Yet some have had a full academic schooling.

Most can develop their English language for social purposes within two years. This is used during play, in everyday conversation and in normal classroom interaction. Bilingual pupils develop their language skills when paired with a competent speaker of English to encourage conversation and dialogue.

Progress in language for academic purposes can take from five to eleven years to develop. This is the language used for learning. Here the cognitive demand is greater because meaning is conveyed mainly by the language alone.

In mainstream classes, teachers can support pupils by using key visuals such as charts and diagrams. The use of writing frames is essential in introducing a topic and breaking down a complex task into more easily understood responses.

Catholic Ethos and RERC

Literacy is at the very heart of RERC. Pupils use specific vocabulary, read specific styles of text, develop and express arguments persuasively, develop original thinking and learn how to justify their ideas.

At Notre Dame, we are acutely aware of the need to develop the religious and spiritual life of each of our pupils. During RE lessons pupils engage in Literacy based activities in the following ways:

- Referencing and reading of Scripture
- Conveying in the written and spoken word the underlying message of Scriptural text (Diary text, drama, poetry, prose)
- The study of other world religions, with marked awareness of celebrations throughout the year
- Daily prayers from school planners read out by volunteer pupils at the start of each lesson
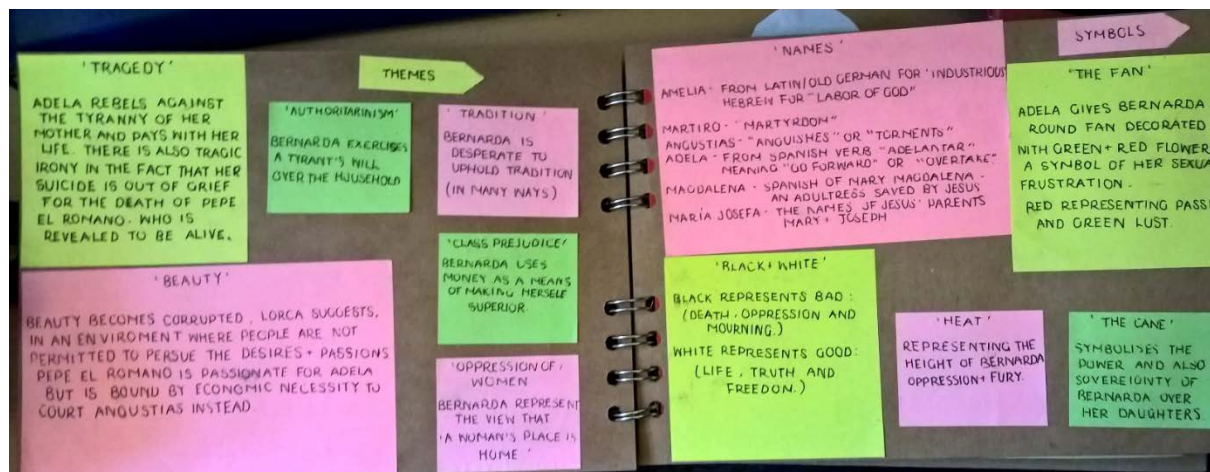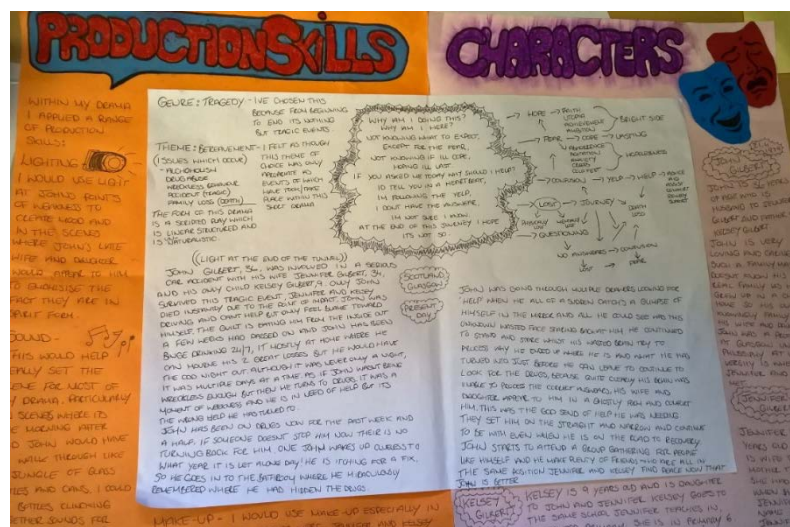
Some examples of Literacy in RERC out with the class are as follows:

- Way of the Cross, composed by pupils and re-enacted as a drama/mime
- Living Rosary Drama
- Leading prayer services for staff and pupils in Oratory
- Reading at school liturgies/paraliturgies

Beyond the Broad General Education

As stated earlier, this document is a work in progress and primarily draws on current practice between S1 and S3. In time, we will develop this paper to include more specific examples of engagement with literacy in the 'Senior Phase'.

We have included one or two examples of the work of our S4 and S5 Drama pupils. This work demonstrates the fact that pupils continue to experience a rich variety of activities that draw on literacy skills developed across the curriculum.

If you would like to contact us about any aspect of this document, please see the 'Find out more page' overleaf.

Find out more

Colleagues from other establishments and parents/carers interested in finding out more about aspects of our Broad General Education implementation can contact us as follows:

Head Teacher

Mrs Rosie Martin   headteacher@notredamehigh.glasgow.sch.uk

DHT with responsibility for BGE curriculum

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Tracking and Monitoring Database Design

Mr Pat Hegarty   phegarty@notredamehigh.glasgow.sch.uk

Literacy across the curriculum video

Mr Richie McColm   rmccolm@notredamehigh.glasgow.sch.uk

Support for pupils speaking English as an Additional Language

Ms Meg McGuinness   mcguinness@notredamehigh.glasgow.sch.uk

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Catholic Ethos and RERC

Miss Maria McMahon   mmcmahon@notredamehigh.glasgow.sch.uk

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Version 1.4 – 11 December 2014 (J. Kane)