

# WHOLE SCHOOL LITERACY POLICY

- At Hamilton High School, we believe that communication, oral and written, is the key to educational progress, to social integration and to personal development and happiness. Throughout their time in our school, all students will be supported and encouraged to achieve their personal best.
- We believe that it is the right of every student to become a competent and confident user of the English language; able to live, work and succeed in a literate world. We aim to equip our students with the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to use language effectively.
- We want our students to experience a wide range of both spoken and written English. Those with Additional Educational Needs and those with English as an Additional Language will be given support, which will enable them to access the language curriculum so that they can achieve their full potential. EAL children's expertise in their first language will also be valued and respected.

## Role of the School

The role of Hamilton High School is to provide leadership in the development of literacy throughout the school by:

- Providing advice, support and guidance in the field of literacy.
- Ensuring good planning and monitoring activities support and enhance the delivery of the literacy curriculum.
  - Keeping abreast of professional development in the field of literacy and ensuring links with outside agencies are maintained, e.g. *Review of National & International Reports on Literacy and Numeracy*, (DES, December 2016).
- Ensuring that statutory requirements for curriculum delivery and assessment are met.
- Fostering cross curricular links and developing the use of ICT in literacy throughout the school.
- Supporting parents with their children's literacy through constant communication.
- Raising the profile of literacy throughout the school.

## Teaching and Learning Styles

Throughout our school we will:

- Teach writing through teacher modelling plus shared, paired and individual writing during English language classes. Planning for writing will be informed by the curriculum aims and objectives of both the Junior and Leaving Certificate syllabi.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for speaking, listening, role-play and drama so that children can organise and reflect upon their learning.
- Encourage the use of pair work and 'talk teams' to allow children to develop their oral skills and their ability to communicate and cooperate with their peers.
- Provide all children with access to a wide range of books for personal reading through access to class and school library.
- Use ICT to provide a simulating environment for our children and reinforce curriculum goals.
- Promote shared reading and structured text-, sentence- and word-level work in English/AEN classes.
- Each child will be regularly assessed to determine their reading level and strategies will be used to further their progress.
- Promote the importance/status of reading through reading weeks/book fairs/World Book Day etc.

## **Whole-School Planning Guidelines for Literacy**

- Spelling and grammar check
- Literacy lessons should be appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.
- Creative and innovative lessons should be planned to incorporate ICT and drama and the use of quality texts.
- Opportunities for speaking and listening will be incorporated into the planning at all times for all subjects.
- Achievable literacy objectives will be the priority for curriculum lessons. This will be most readily measured through summative and, more importantly, formative assessment techniques.

## **Whole-School Objectives**

- Plan for and provide a wide range of stimulating opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills in all subjects.
- Enable children to develop their concentration skills through providing carefully planned activities.
- Provide an extensive range of literacy activities which will lay the foundations for the development of reading and writing.
- Create a stimulating literary environment in the classroom.
- Provide well-planned opportunities for imaginative and structured play, making use of the many languages spoken in the school.
- Encourage children to frequently take books home to share with parents and carers.
- Read regularly with the whole class, groups and individuals leading towards more structured guided reading sessions at later stages.
- Regularly assess and record the children's progress to help inform teacher's planning and to inform parents about their child's progress.
- Actively involve parents in the development of their child's language skills.
- Use visual aids and ICT to support and stimulate the literacy curriculum.

## **Cross Curricular Links**

We aim to generate and foster cross-curricular links within a literacy framework. As the NCCA notes, *'the development of skills in speaking and listening should play as important a role as reading and writing skills'* in all subject programs. In Hamilton High School, fostering awareness in the student of the interrelationship of these skills, and of their central role in the learning and thinking processes, is an integral element of personal growth through the English language.

## **Making Literacy Inclusive (AEN & EAL)**

- Children with special educational needs will be supported in a variety of ways to ensure that they can access the literacy curriculum. This support will include:
  - Daily assessment and support from Teachers and SEN Assistants.
  - Reviews of progress, made by class teacher and teaching assistant, to make sure that targets are being met.
- Students who have English as an additional language will be supported in a variety of ways to ensure that they can access the Literacy curriculum and develop a full range of language skills. This support will include:
  - Assessment and monitoring of pupil progress by the class teacher, in conjunction with the English/EAL Coordinator.
  - Develop opportunities for the children to hear stories in their own language. These approaches will complement links between integration policy and wider social inclusion measures. The ultimate objective of our literacy program is to create an inclusive climate in our school which will promote 'mainstreaming' and avoid parallel societies.

## **Assessment and Recording**

As far as possible, the assessment of a student's literacy will follow similar long-term objectives to the Junior Certificate course objectives, insofar as this will be the standard basis for assessment at the end of three years' schooling. Students will be assessed for age-appropriate skills in the following areas:

- Written composition skills in a variety of contexts.
- Language awareness skills: the student's awareness of the selectivity of all language use in establishing specific meaning; the ability to use the conventions of paragraphing, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling
- Reading and comprehension skills of different kinds: literal, factual, narrative, selective, structural, inferential, evaluative and appreciative.
- Oral skills in a wide variety of personal and social contexts: overall coherence, richness of vocabulary, variety of idiom, structure of presentation, awareness of audience and register in both formal and informal contexts.
- Aural skills in a variety of modes: ability to locate information and evidence, to follow a line of thought and display sensitivity to tone and suggestion.

## **Resources**

- A diverse range of guided reading materials can be found in the Resource Room and Staff Work Room.
- Class sets of novels can be found for every year group in the Resource Room.
- Quality texts are held by the English Subject Department.
- A range of quality picture-based texts are available for teacher's use in the Resource Room.

## **Monitoring and Review**

- The policy will be evaluated each year by the subject teachers, the EAL teacher and the Resource teacher along with other teaching staff.
- Evaluation includes: effectiveness, ease of implementation, identifying any amendments needed and additions required to the policy as a result of legislation changes.
- Teachers should ensure that they are confident with the subject matter and inform management of their training and support needs.
- Subject Department Coordinators should ensure that they are well-informed of current ideas and abreast of developments in literacy by attending appropriate courses, liaising with literacy advisory teams and other professionals. They should disseminate gathered information to colleagues.

## **Intervention**

- Additional support for those children falling behind age appropriate levels is offered during Resource/Learning Support classes.
- IEP targets take precedents over individual targets, but they should include some literacy targets.

## **Extended School**

It is the responsibility of the teachers to identify children who are gifted and talented in literacy, as well as those who could do with additional support, and then place them in the appropriate groups in order to enrich and improve their learning.

