

Portrush Primary School

Literacy & Numeracy Policy

Area Leaders: H. Henry & J. McNeill

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1. Introduction

The Literacy and Numeracy Policy of Portrush PS has strong links to the School Development Plan and the targets set annually for KS1 and KS2 pupils. Each teacher will work within a whole school approach and draw on the support available within the school from the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. Individual teachers will be responsible for ensuring effective planning and communication with any support staff.

2. Context

The stated vision of the Department of Education for N Ireland is: 'To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her potential at each stage of his or her development.' (DE 2010)

This has been enunciated in the overall aim of the N Ireland Curriculum (DE 2008), which states: 'The N Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.'

The School Improvement policy document, *'Every School a Good School,'* (DE 2009) has outlined characteristics of what will be recognised as effective performance under four headings:

- child centred provision;
- high quality teaching and learning;
- effective leadership and
- a school connected to its local community.

In March 2011 DE published *'Count, Read, Succeed - A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy'*.

It states: 'Literacy and Numeracy are at the very heart of the revised curriculum' (para 2.3)

'Developing literacy and numeracy therefore must be central elements of a school's delivery of the revised curriculum, and of the support and professional development for teachers in implementing the curriculum' (para 2.5)

In this context Portrush PS will endeavour to ensure that all pupils will develop the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to succeed at school and later on, in life and at work.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Duties of both the Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Leaders will include:

- overseeing the preparation of an appropriate scheme of work for the school in consultation with all staff members;
- providing guidance and support for other members of staff implementing this scheme of work, both by means of meetings and by working with individual teachers;
- arranging school based in-service training for members of staff as appropriate;
- monitoring work in Literacy and Numeracy throughout the school, including methods of assessment and record keeping;
- maintaining liaison with outside agencies and
- maintaining Literacy and Numeracy as a common thread which runs throughout the curriculum.

4. Definitions

We in Portrush Primary agree with the definitions of **Literacy** and **Numeracy** as outlined in **Count Read Succeed**, as follows:

Paragraph 1.7 defines **Literacy** as:

'The ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly, taking account of different purposes, contexts, conventions and audiences. It involves the development of:

- i. an integrated approach to the acquisition of talking, listening , reading and writing skills across the curriculum;

- ii. knowledge that allows a speaker, writer and reader to use language appropriate to different social situations;
- iii. formal and informal language across all areas of social interaction; and
- iv. the ability to read, understand and use information in multiple formats and platforms, including traditional print and on-screen material'.

Para 1.10 defines **Numeracy** as:

'The ability to apply appropriate mathematical skills and knowledge in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, and in a range of settings throughout life, including the workplace. It involves the development of:

- i. an understanding of key mathematical concepts and their inter-connectedness;
- ii. appropriate reasoning and problem-solving;
- iii. the proficient and appropriate use of methods and procedures (formal and informal, mental and written);
- iv. active participation in the exploration of mathematical ideas and models and
- v. appropriate ICT skills for solving mathematical problems. '

We also recognise the definitions of **Underachievement** and **Low Achievement** as set out in **Count, Read, Succeed** (paragraphs 1.13 and 1.15).

Underachievement is used to describe a situation where performance is below what is expected based on ability.

Low Achievement is where a pupil is achieving to the full extent of his or her ability, but is well below average compared to his or her peers.

Provision of Literacy & Numeracy within Portrush Primary School is measured in line with the four characteristics of effectiveness set out in the **ESaGS** document and the requirements of **Count, Read, Succeed**.

a. Child Centred Provision

Happy children will learn more effectively in a positive and safe environment, where they are valued and where their success is celebrated. Therefore it is an essential element of our school that:

- decisions on planning, resources, curriculum and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school. The School Development Plan is targeted at perceived need and each action plan is costed accordingly. Area coordinators present their resource needs and the SMT approve funding from within the limits of the school budget;
- a clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity;
- a school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists - with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability. In line with our SEN Policy and procedures, pupils who under achieve relative to their measured potential are targeted and intervention procedures followed. Success is celebrated at various levels, including individual rewards, class awards and whole school awards;
- effective interventions and support are in place, within the limitations of budgetary resources to meet the additional, education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning. We acknowledge that all children are not the same and for some their potential is much lower. We will strive to match performance to potential at all times;
- there is a commitment to involve young people in discussions and decisions on school life that directly affect them and to listen to their views;
- the highest standards of pastoral care and child protection are in place and
- a commitment exists to support healthy children, who are better able to learn and develop.

b. High Quality Teaching and Learning

The staff of Portrush Primary agree that high quality Teaching and Learning, throughout the curriculum, should always include the following aims:

- to encourage the effective use of language and numeracy;
- to develop the ability to think clearly and logically;
- to develop in pupils the personal qualities of perseverance, confidence, independence and co-operation with others;
- to enable all pupils to experience success and pleasure through a range of practical, oral and written activities;
- to enable pupils to communicate effectively through a variety of media, including language and numeracy;
- to foster an understanding of literacy and numeracy through a process of enquiry and experiment;
- to encourage mastery of literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge and
- to encourage the use of UICT to enhance learning throughout the curriculum and especially in literacy and numeracy.

A wide variety of teaching strategies should be utilised by all teachers to facilitate learning. These should include:

- opportunities for our pupils to work individually, in pairs, in groups and at a whole class level. (Active learning opportunities are included within these opportunities);
- a good balance of practical, written, artistic and oral work;
- opportunities for independent learning;
- effective and appropriate use of modelled, shared and guided literacy to enhance language development;
- appropriate differentiation of work matched to the level of ability of the pupils;

- appropriate time for pupil reflection and then for building upon what they have learned and
- suitable opportunities for pupils to celebrate their successes / achievements.

Early intervention is essential in identifying and overcoming under-achievement. Clear procedures are set out in our SEN policy and all staff are familiar with and using these procedures.

c. Effective Leadership

The Board of Governors, working with the Principal and the SMT, have the primary responsibility for ensuring that the school ethos, the expectations it has for its pupils, its pastoral care arrangements and its teaching and curricular provision, support and motivate the pupils and provide them with opportunities to succeed. School leaders are also responsible for making sure that emphasis is placed on the pupils achieving at an appropriate level across all areas of the curriculum, but especially in literacy and numeracy. The Board of Governors of Portrush Primary School has the responsibility for ensuring that the Principal, and the staff, put in place all the necessary arrangements and mechanisms to help each pupil to succeed and to achieve to his or her full potential.

d. Links to our Local Community

Clearly, pupils and their parents have a responsibility to make best use of the opportunities provided in school. We in Portrush Primary School also need the participation and active support of parents and the community to ensure that children attend school, approach their studies in a diligent fashion, co-operate with their teachers and other staff, complete their homework assignments and prepare adequately for school-based and external examinations. This will be essential if standards in Literacy and Numeracy are to be raised.

Parents need to be involved in all aspects of school life in order to demonstrate a commitment to their child's education and to show that school is valued. This may include all of the above and attending events, fundraising and sharing expertise.

Our staff recognise the need for effective communication with parents regarding all aspects of their child's learning. This is undertaken via homework diaries, texts, website information, and parent-teacher

consultations focusing on Literacy and Numeracy and regular updates on other developments in school.

We in Portrush recognise the continuity of education and endeavour to establish close working relationships with feeder pre-school establishments and with post primary transferor schools to maintain pupils' progress in learning, especially in Literacy and Numeracy, as they move through the education system.

In an effort to enhance the pupils' learning, especially in Literacy and Numeracy, the school have well established links with a range of external agencies from within the wider community. These include local businesses, community associations, local experts, local press, public bodies such as PSNI, Health and Government agencies and the appropriate agencies attached to our ELB and other educational partners.

5. Professional Competencies of Effective Practitioners

We in Portrush Primary School believe that there are five professional competencies within our school, which apply to all teaching staff: -

- Planning
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Knowledge of the needs of young people
- Monitoring and evaluation of learning
- Classroom management

We recognise, that in our endeavours to raise standards in Literacy and Numeracy, these competencies should be properly developed and well practiced in each classroom.

6. Data

The staff of Portrush Primary School believe that pupils' progress should be tracked carefully to help ensure that they are reaching their potential in Literacy and Numeracy. Though we recognise the individuality and personality of each pupil, data, in a range of forms, is collected and analysed by curriculum leaders and feedback on performance is provided for class teachers. This allows staff to identify low and underachievers and action can be taken and individual targets set.

This is all placed in the context of the teachers' professional judgement, ongoing observations and the regular and continuous assessment of the pupils' work.

7. Self Evaluation

In line with paragraph 4.8g in **Count, Read, Succeed**, the staff in Portrush Primary School seek to "share and learn from good practice." Effective teachers never stop learning and it is the responsibility of each teacher, with the support of the Literacy and Numeracy leaders to engage in an ongoing process of "rigorous self-evaluation to promote improvement." The PRSD programme will form the core of such a process and will always include a focus on Literacy and Numeracy.

8. Resources

In line with the principles laid out in **Count, Read, Succeed**, the Board of Governors, working with the Principal and the SMT, will endeavour to give priority allocation of resources to raising standards in Literacy and Numeracy. We recognise the many demands made on the school budget and the many limitations faced within the current economic climate. Requests for funding within the context of action plans linked to the school development plan will be given equal consideration and resources allocated as and when available. The Board of Governors, Principal and the SMT in Portrush Primary School recognise the class teacher as the greatest resource available at any time, and will therefore use the school budget first and foremost to enhance the school's teaching compliment.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

In line with the school's existing Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, this policy, with its procedures and practices, will be reviewed by staff and Governors on a regular basis. A summary of the policy will be made available to parents on request.