



Rugby Free

Secondary School

Literacy and Numeracy Policy

INTRODUCTION

In July 2011, the Minister for Education and Skills, R  air   Quinn, launched the National Strategy to improve literacy and numeracy among children and young people, Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020.

Minister Quinn asserted, "This is an issue of equality. Without the skills of literacy and numeracy, a young person or adult is often denied full participation in society. They may be condemned to poorly paid jobs or unemployment and a lifetime of poverty and exclusion. This is why I am convinced that ensuring all our young people acquire good literacy and numeracy skills is one of the greatest contributions that we can make towards achieving equality and social justice in our country."

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Within a broad and balanced curriculum, our school's ethos helps us to encourage curiosity and creativity for life-long learning and discovery, and enkindles in our school members an intentional service to contribute to the common good and the transformation of society. Rugby Free Secondary School acknowledges that a key element of equal education opportunities provision is the fostering of good literacy and numeracy skills which are essential to the life prospects of each person.

RFSS is committed to raising the standards of literacy and numeracy of its pupils in order that each pupil will master these crucial skills to the best of their ability. The focus of this policy is to sustain and build on the high levels of teaching and learning, by providing a formal framework for the implementation of the measures for the development of literacy and numeracy skills as presented in the Department of Education and Skills' Strategy. Continual and consistent efforts to improve literacy and numeracy standards, which may include providing extra available resources to those pupils with additional needs, will further enhance the opportunity for our pupils to participate fully in education and in all aspects of society and culture including local, national and global communities with the aim of making a "real, measurable and positive difference" to their lives and will assist them in achieving their full potential.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

The aims of this policy document are to:

- Support pupils' learning in all subjects by helping teachers to be clear about the ways in which their work with pupils contributes to the development of pupils' communication and numeracy skills;
- develop a shared understanding between all staff of the role of language and mathematics in pupils' learning and how work in different subjects can contribute to and benefit from the development of pupils' ability to communicate and complete mathematical tasks effectively;
- be conscious of the fact that good skills in language and numeracy skills are central to pupils' sense of identity, belonging and growth;
- elevate pupils' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards;
- improve pupils' level of confidence and self-expression;
- promote knowledge and understanding of the pupils' standards of achievement and assessment in speaking and listening, writing and reading and mathematical computation;
- identify areas of strength and weakness and use this information to inform planning.

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR LITERACY

DEFINITION OF LITERACY

In the context of this document literacy is the term used to embrace all forms of language learning. It includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, traditional writing and printed text, broadcast media, and digital media.

RATIONALE FOR LITERACY

RFSS is committed to promoting a better understanding of the critical importance of the core skill of literacy in all of its forms and improving our students' literacy skills so that they can become effective communicators.

For each individual communication, which includes the interdependent skills of talking, listening, reading and writing, is the gateway to social inclusion and being active global citizens. The development of literacy skills is vital to support our pupils' learning and raise standards across the curriculum because:

- Pupils need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of subjects;
- responding to higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry;
- language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do, and on the things others have said, written or done;
- improving literacy and learning can have an impact on pupils' self-esteem, motivation and behaviour;
- high standards of literacy allow pupils to learn independently and the ability to communicate is empowering.

TALKING AND LISTENING

Talk is our main means of communication in everyday life and talking and listening are fundamental to the development of understanding. The teacher explains, questions, describes, organises and evaluates in the classroom and this may often be done orally

The teaching staff in RFSS aims to foster in its pupils the skills of:

- Listening with understanding and respond sensitively and appropriately;
 - using speech appropriately and adjusting ways of speaking clearly and effectively, according to the audience;
- clarifying and expressing their ideas and explaining their thinking, using varied and specialized vocabulary according to context and purpose;
- active listening in order to help improve the students' skills of concentration and sensitivity to the speaker's viewpoint;
- increasing confidence and competence in speaking and listening so that they are able to adapt their speech to a widening range of circumstances including paired and group discussions and speaking to a larger audience and speak for a range of purposes e.g. to narrate, to analyse, to explain, to reflect and evaluate.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

Teaching in RFSS aims to provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to engage in purpose talk, both formally and informally. In planning for talk the pace and timing should be considered, so that purposeful talk is maintained. The aim is to take account of demands on concentration to ensure that pupils are required to listen for realistic lengths of time

The teaching staff in RFSS aims to provide pupils with regular opportunities to speak and listen in the following contexts:

- In pairs with a working partner;
- in small groups with opportunities to take on the roles of chair or scribe;
- with the teacher or another adult;
- in whole class discussions;
- in presentations to a wider audience.

In these contexts, some of the following activities may take place:

- Exploring and describing events, activities and problems, exploring and developing ideas with others
- reporting back to a wider audience in order to consolidate ideas and understanding;
- asking questions as well as answering them;
- speculating, hypothesizing and imagining;
- planning, organising and reviewing activities;
- investigating and solving problems collaboratively;
- evaluating experiences and reflecting on learning;
- talking at length and adopting the 'expert' role.

READING

Reading from a wide variety of texts affords pupils the opportunity of learning from sources beyond their immediate knowledge. Fluent reading allows pupils to develop their potential as learners by understanding others' ideas from the past and present and to explore those of the future by creating meaning and sense through the integration of information encountered in the texts and connecting it with existent knowledge, skills and understanding.

The whole school and the individual classrooms shall reflect that reading is a worthwhile activity. The reading environment shall reflect a school philosophy to promote reading. The teaching staff in RFSS aims to foster in its pupils:

- The ability to make judgments about and respond critically to what is significant in a text;
- an enjoyment of reading and motivation in reluctant readers;
- the motivation to spell correctly;
- increasing confidence and competence in reading so that they are able to read fluently, accurately and with understanding;
- the skills necessary to become independent and critical readers and make informed and appropriate choices.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

All teachers should be aware of pupils' reading levels in order to make informed choices about appropriate texts and to plan appropriate support for pupils in order that they may successfully access texts. Opportunities may be taken to demonstrate pleasure in reading. Opportunities may be created in lessons for students and teachers to share their reading experiences.

The teaching staff in RFSS may plan opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to:

- Read and follow written instructions;
- read and engage with narratives of events or activities;
- follow up their interests and read texts of varying lengths;
- question and challenge printed information and views;
- read with understanding descriptions of processes, structures and mechanisms;
- read and explore ideas and theories;
- learn how to sift and select, and take notes from text and read to locate and relocate information;
- learn how to scan for overall meaning and scan for key points, words and phrases;
- use reading to research and investigate from printed words and moving images ICT texts.

In selecting texts and generating texts (e.g. worksheets etc.), the following may be considered:

Scanning for overall impressions:

Print;

- is the print clear?
- are the lines of print short enough to be easily read?
- is the size and style of font appropriate?

Illustrations;

- are the illustrations appropriate? informative? attractive? accurate?
- are the illustrations representative? e.g. of the whole community?
- are the graphics clear? helpful?
- how well does the text relate to illustrations and graphics?

signposts;

- are headings and sub-headings clear? helpful?
- are the contents pages, index and glossary appropriate? clear?

quality;

- is the text balanced in its presentation of gender?
- is the text balanced in its presentation of different peoples and cultures?
- is the information accurate? up-to-date? reliable?

- is the content relevant and accessible to pupils?

Looking closely at a sample page:

Sentences;

- how long are the sentences?
- how complex are the sentences?
- are sentences mainly 'active' or 'passive'? vocabulary;
- is the choice of vocabulary and terminology appropriate?
- are the difficult words made clear? e.g. re-phrased in the text?

cohesion;

- is the text clearly organised? logical? easy to follow?

Asking students to comment:

(Choose students to represent the full range of ability with which the text might be used.)

- What are their general impressions?
- can they use the index to find information?
- can they relate the illustrations to the text?
- can they read and understand the text?
- (Use a simple cloze test: copy a passage from the text and obscure every seventh word; if students cannot reconstruct the text to make reasonable sense, it is probably too difficult for independent use.)
- are there any words they don't know and can't deduce from the context?

Assessing overall suitability:

Use;

- how often will the text be use?
- which students would you use this text with?"
- how would you use it with the students; - for background reading? - giving essential information? - stimulating interest and further enquire? - enjoyment?
- how will different students need to be supported in using this text?

WRITING

Many lessons include and depend on written communication. Writing development is recursive. Pupils do not learn particular features of written language once and for all at a specific stage. They shall therefore be encouraged to behave as independent writers throughout their school career, gradually developing the range, extent and subject content of their writing. They shall be exposed to fiction and non-fiction text types, including those whose language features involve recounting, reporting, explanation, instruction, persuasion and discussion.

In the role of observer, facilitator, model, reader and supporter of literacy skills, the teaching staff in RFSS aims to foster in its pupils the skills to:

- Write in order to help sustain and order thought and to record;
- write logs and journals in order to clarify thoughts and develop new understanding;
- know when and how to plan, draft, discuss, redraft, reflect and proof-read their writing analyse and explore;
- learn the conventions of different forms of writing in different subject areas, e.g. by scaffolding pupils' writing and providing models of good writing;
- by providing frameworks for writing consisting of starters, connectives and sentence modifiers and provide clear models for communication;
- write coherently about a wide range of topics, issues, ideas and incidents, organising text in ways which help the reader;
- craft their writing, showing an improved control of grammatical structure and of a differentiated vocabulary; • write at appropriate length, sometimes briefly;
- write collaboratively with other students;
 - develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader using wide-ranging and technical vocabulary and an effective style, organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently;
- have a high standard of presentation for their finished work clearly using accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting;
 - appreciate the differences between standard English and non-standard forms of the language;
- recognize appropriate form for their written responses so that they know when to respond in note form and when more formal constructions are required;
- apply word processing conventions and understand the principles of authoring multi-media text;
- understand the criteria for marking writing;
 - present some writing for display or publication, showing varying degrees of ability.
- write in a widening variety of forms for different purposes e.g. to interpret, evaluate, explain,

THE LITERATE STUDENT

Please note that this list is neither definitive nor prescriptive.

At the end of her secondary school education a literate pupil shall:

- Use written language to express and reflect on experiences;
- write a formal and informal letter;
- write a report – a factual account of an event or situation;
- respond to and make sense of a range of reading materials, literary texts, data and media sources including internet and digital media;
- comment on the purpose, content and features of various advertisements and print media;
- describe, reflect and respond to a novel, short story, poetry, play or a film studied;

- review a novel, poem, play, film, song, or any other creative work studied;
- produce an original piece of creative writing, drawing on either an external stimulus, or on imagination;
- find and understand general and specific information from a variety of texts, e.g. signs, notices and instructions;
- be aware of the significance of pictorial and printed symbols;
- make appropriate use of written language when dealing with the normal demands of school and everyday life, e.g. use correct punctuation, address envelopes and cards correctly;
- apply a range of higher-order skills and strategies for reading comprehension, e.g. retrieving, questioning, inferring, synthesising, critical evaluation;
- use written or oral language to demonstrate the ability to listen and to retain information accurately, e.g. follow a sequence of instructions given by someone or summarise a story told by one or more people;
- use the spoken word to accurately express opinions and experiences in a social context, e.g. leave a message on a telephone answering machine.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH TEACHER

The role of the English teacher may involve:

- The explicit teaching of the structure and function of written and oral language;
- providing dictionaries, glossaries and lists of appropriate subject vocabulary and encouraging students to use them;
 - applying techniques such as skimming, scanning, and text-marking effectively in order to research and appraise texts;
- selecting information from a wide range of texts and sources including print, media and ICT and evaluating those sources;
- the explicit development of higher-order skills and strategies for reading comprehension (e.g. retrieving, questioning, inferring, synthesising, critically evaluating) in a wide range of contexts;
- the development of lower-order skills (handwriting, spelling, punctuation) and higher order skills and strategies (choosing topics, generating and crafting ideas, revising, editing) to support writing development;
- ensuring that there is systematic and explicit attention given to the teaching of a range of literacy skills in English including oral and aural skills, fluency, reading comprehension strategies, including the ability to respond critically, analyse, evaluate, describe, discuss, explore, reflect on, question and infer meaning.
- ensuring that systematic and explicit attention given to language awareness skills including functional and structural aspects of language, and competence in spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraph organisation, awareness of the concept of style and knowledge of fundamental literary concepts.

- help students to use a range of strategies to learn spellings, including:
 - look, say, cover, write, check
 - making connections between words with the same visual pattern
 - exploring families of words;
- ensuring that there is systematic and explicit attention given to vocabulary development, writing skills and appropriate development of lower-order and higher-order skills, including the ability to express, explain, defend opinions, and to use language appropriate to context and audience in a range of literary forms;
- ensures that there is systematic and explicit attention given to the teaching of a range of literacy skills in English including oral and aural skills, fluency, reading comprehension strategies, language awareness skills including functional and structural aspects of language, vocabulary development, writing skills and appropriate development of lower-order and higher-order skills;
- increasing the awareness of the importance of digital literacy;
 - encouraging students to read for enjoyment, and to write and communicate in a range of authentic contexts for different purposes with a variety of audiences;
 - being familiar with the various strategies, approaches, methodologies and interventions that can be used to teach literacy and numeracy as discrete areas and across the curriculum.

ROLE OF TEACHERS OTHER THAN ENGLISH

All departments and all teachers have a crucial role to play in supporting students' literacy development. Teachers across the curriculum contribute to pupils' development of language, since speaking, listening, writing and reading are, to varying degrees, integral in all lessons. Helping students to express themselves clearly orally and in writing enhances and enriches teaching and learning in all subjects.

Teachers other than English may:

- Incorporate a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy in lesson plans and the inclusion of explicit literacy and numeracy strategies into subject department plan;
- raise awareness of the importance of oral and written language in all its forms in lessons and foster a positive attitude in students to literacy and numeracy;
- incorporate specific reference to literacy and numeracy development in lesson and subject planning;
- work towards the development of lower-order skills (handwriting, spelling, punctuation) and higher order skills and strategies (choosing topics, generating and crafting ideas, revising, editing) to support writing development;
- increase the awareness of the importance of digital literacy;
- promote confident use of oral communication skills;
- encourage students to read for learning and leisure;
- be familiar with the various strategies, approaches, methodologies and interventions that can be used to teach literacy across the curriculum.

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR NUMERACY

DEFINITION OF NUMERACY

Numeracy is a proficiency which involves confidence and competence with numbers and measures. It is more than an ability to do basic arithmetic. Numeracy encompasses the ability to recognise situations where mathematical reasoning and skills can be applied to solve problems and meet the demands of day-to-day living in complex social settings. Numeracy is required for employment, facilitates an understanding of public issues and it makes possible an appreciation of games and sports. It requires understanding of the number system, a repertoire of mathematical techniques and an inclination and ability to solve quantitative problems in a range of contexts. It includes having spatial awareness and the ability to appreciate patterns and sequences. Numeracy also demands that the young person understands how data are collated through computation and measurement. Individuals need to be able to make sense of this numerical information and select appropriate ways to present it, in graphs, diagrams, charts and tables.

WHAT A NUMERATE STUDENT MAY BE ABLE TO DO

Please note that this list is neither definitive nor prescriptive.

A numerate student shall:

- Have a sense of the size of a number and where it fits into the number system;
- recall mathematical facts confidently;
- calculate accurately and efficiently, both mentally and with pencil and paper, drawing on a range of calculation strategies;
- use proportional reasoning to simplify and solve problems;
- use calculators and other ICT resources appropriately and effectively to solve mathematical problems, and select from the display the number of figures appropriate to the context of a calculation;
- use simple formulae and substitute numbers in them;
- measure and estimate measurements, choosing suitable units, and reading numbers correctly from a range of meters, dials and scales;
- calculate simple perimeters, areas and volumes, recognising the degree of accuracy that can be achieved;
- understand and use measures of time and speed, and rates such as € per hour or kilometres per litre;
- draw plane figures to given specifications and appreciate the concept of scale in geometrical drawings and maps;
- understand the difference between the mean, median and mode and the purpose for which each is used;
- collect data, discrete and continuous, and draw, interpret and predict from graphs, diagrams, charts and tables;
- have some understanding of the measurement of probability and risk;
- explain methods and justify reasoning and conclusions, using correct mathematical terms;
- judge the reasonableness of solutions and check them when necessary;

- give results to a degree of accuracy appropriate to the context;
- be aware of materials, shape and space;
- be aware of pattern and difference, classifying, matching, comparing and ordering;
- recognise that she can effectively describe and explain her work through a balance of prose, diagrams, tables, graphs, charts, symbols and formulae;
- be able to make the transition from concrete, tactile, kinaesthetic abilities to auditory and analytical skills.

ROLE OF THE MATHS TEACHER

The Maths teacher may:

- Include explicit literacy and numeracy strategies in the Maths Department Plan;
- incorporate a strong emphasis of literacy and numeracy skills into maths lessons;
- be aware of the mathematical techniques / process skills which overlap from other subject areas and provide assistance and advice to other departments, so that a correct and consistent approach is used in all subjects;
- help students to develop a deeper conceptual understanding in mathematics and the ability to apply mathematical concepts in a range of real-life every-day scenarios;
- assist students in understanding and communicating information presented in mathematical terms;
- help students develop their ability to explore, hypothesise and reason logically and to use a variety of methods to solve problems;
- ensure the development of young people's skills in carrying out procedures flexibly and accurately;
- provide opportunities for students to handle data in a range of contexts and to make and monitor decisions about the collection and representation of data;
- infuse language, thought and meaning into mathematics teaching;
- use open-ended challenging tasks that motivate young people to engage with problem-solving in a meaningful way;
- provide information to other subject teachers on appropriate expectations of students and difficulties likely to be experienced in various age and ability groups;
- liaise with other teachers, attempt to ensure that students have appropriate numeracy skills by the time they are needed for work in other subject areas;
- seek opportunities to use topics from other subjects in mathematics lessons;
- be familiar with the various strategies, approaches, methodologies and interventions that can be used to teach numeracy as a discrete area and across the curriculum;
- provide opportunities for students to acquire confidence and fluency in using mathematical language when deciding the mathematics and equipment to use, planning and organising work, conjecturing or hypothesising, generalising, explaining methods and justifying their use and presenting results and conclusions with reasons;
- provide opportunities for students to apply mathematical processes at a level commensurate with the mathematical content covered;

- provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively so that through discussion they can develop their mathematical language and organise their thinking for selecting mathematics and resources to judge their suitability for a range of applications, recording their work, discussing and evaluating their choices;
- plan regular opportunities to use mental computation to improve estimation skills, consolidate quick recall of table facts and prolong the students' memory of computational skills and firm up their understanding in using these;
- provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that students experience work in all attainment targets.

Teachers of subjects other than mathematics may:

- Identify what successful numeracy strategies are already embedded in current classroom practice, document what works well and plan incremental reconstruction of other strategies;
- incorporate a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy in lesson plans and the inclusion of explicit literacy and numeracy strategies into subject department plan;
- ensure that they are familiar with correct mathematical language, notation, conventions and techniques, relating to their own subject, and encourage students to use these correctly;
- identify and plan for the numeracy demands/opportunities within the subject (by topic/by chapter) and identify the connections with numeracy that are essential and meaningful;
- identify the numerical knowledge and skills required and be aware of appropriate expectations of students and difficulties that might be experienced with numeracy skills;
- provide information for mathematics teachers on the stage at which specific numeracy skills will be required for particular groups;
- provide resources for mathematics teachers to enable them to use examples of applications of numeracy relating to other subjects in mathematics lessons;
- become familiar with the various strategies, approaches, methodologies and interventions that can be used to teach numeracy across the curriculum;
- encourage a balanced practice between mental computation and the use of calculators;

MANAGEMENT OF THE WHOLE-SCHOOL LITERACY AND NUMERACY PLAN

The role of the Senior Management Team may involve:

- engaging the whole staff in conducting a review of the literacy and numeracy provision currently available in the school and the range of interventions already being employed for the improvement of literacy and numeracy standards in the school with the aim to establishing a comprehensive and coordinated literacy programme (e.g. school policies on retention, attendance, spelling, homework, presentation of work);
- identifying improvement in literacy and numeracy standards as a priority for the school and establish and maintain a policy on improving literacy and numeracy standards;
- setting up and support the appropriate structures such as a literacy committee, possibly comprising of a Literacy Co-ordinator, two English teachers, two mathematics teachers, Management Representative, Learning Support/Resource teacher and others, responsible for developing and implementing a plan for a whole school approach to literacy development;

- evaluating current teaching practices with regard to literacy and numeracy and identify areas for improvement;
- putting in place structures to review, monitor and evaluate the literacy and numeracy development plan on an annual basis;
- evaluating the efficacy of assessment and evaluation measures in the school and make adjustments as necessary;
- using assessment data to inform national educational policy for literacy and numeracy;
- using assessment information as a source of evidence for the school community to monitor progress and interpret attainment levels with a view to informing planning and adjusting actions as necessary;
- setting challenging but realistic goals for improvement in literacy and numeracy targets, focussed on the progress of every student;
- participating in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the whole school literacy and numeracy strategy;
- determining the role of the Numeracy Co-ordinator;
- specifying expectation of the active role to be played by all teachers in the consolidating the critical core skills of literacy and numeracy;
- regularly reviewing the literacy and numeracy policy and support and maintain the implementation of strategies and provision of resources to improve the standards in literacy and numeracy;
- supporting newly qualified teachers in addressing literacy and numeracy;
- creating a culture of continuous improvement and shared goals;
- supporting the development, implementation and integration across the curriculum of a whole school literacy and numeracy policy;
- providing resources for English and mathematics teachers and other teachers in the school;
- providing finance for material resources and ensure efficient use of available resources;
- providing opportunities for effective communication between the Literacy and Numeracy Coordinator, the Senior Management Team, the English, Mathematics and ICT Departments and other departments so that numeracy, literacy, special educational needs and ICT provision is integrated;
- identifying and make provision for the training needs of staff in the form of relevant and focussed continuing professional development