

# WCB Literacy Policy

## Policy



**Literacy Policy (Learning & Teaching)**

## 1. Definition

Wellington College Belfast uses the following documents as guidance towards arriving at a suitable definition for Literacy.

### **Every School a Good School, DENI June 2008:**

4.7: “Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly for a range of purposes, within a range of contexts and for a variety of audiences. It also involves the integration of talking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing and includes the knowledge that enables a speaker, writer and reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. Literacy permeates and develops learning in all areas of the curriculum, formal and informal, and all areas of social interaction and development.”

### **A Joint Report by the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate on Promoting and Improving Literacy in Post-Primary Schools, ETI/DESI April 2015:**

4.8 “...Teachers in all subjects must be conscious of their responsibility to act as role models in the use of language...In all areas of the curriculum teachers should create opportunities to develop the learners’ vocabulary and interest in language as an essential support for learning.”

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Articulate the College’s cross-curricular emphasis on Literacy (including the KS3 cross-curricular skill of Communication);
- Promote staff awareness of how literacy can improve achievement;
- Outline a coherent approach and consistent expectations, through the sharing and dissemination of good practice;
- Recognise and support the central place of the class teacher in relation to Literacy;
- Ensure high quality teaching and learning experiences for pupils of all abilities;
- Raise standards for all;
- Monitor, evaluate and enhance Literacy provision, through School/Departmental planning and the effective use of appropriate data;
- Identify specific areas of responsibility at whole school, departmental and individual levels;
- Clarify how parents/guardians can support their child’s Literacy development.

Departments will adhere to the Whole School Literacy Policy and have either a subject-specific Literacy Policy or implement this policy through their Departmental schemes of work.

## 2. Rationale

Wellington College Belfast is committed to the development of Literacy across the curriculum. The College recognises that all young people should have the opportunity to develop the literacy skills of reading, writing and talking and listening – skills which will enable the young person to develop as an individual and become a contributor to society and to the economy.

We aim to provide a language-rich curriculum, encompassing Cross-Curricular Skills, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, through high-quality whole class and individual teaching across all subjects.

The College recognises that learning takes place most effectively when all three modes of language are engaged:

- Talking, for a range of purposes and audience, when allied with listening actively to others, interpreting meanings, intentions and feelings;
- Reading to gain ideas, information and stimulus from texts, both written and digital;
- Writing clearly and accurately to communicate understanding, for a range of purposes and audiences.

Literacy, when taught well, will have a positive impact on a pupil's self-esteem and motivation, allowing them to have the confidence to work independently.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **3.1. Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team fully supports the work of the Literacy Co-ordinator and recognises the fact that all teachers are teachers of Literacy. The Senior Leadership Team should:

- Give a high profile to Literacy on the School Development Plan;
- Provide opportunities for staff training on Literacy.

#### **3.2. Literacy Co-ordinator**

The Literacy Co-ordinator should:

- Lead the College's Literacy strategy;
- Draw up an annual Action Plan for Literacy;
- In conjunction with relevant staff and external bodies, devise WCB's whole school literacy policy;
- Work with relevant staff to implement a whole school approach to literacy;
- Develop WCB's policies in line with 'Count, Read, Succeed' (*DENI*) and 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools' (*Education Endowment Fund*);
- Support the development of a transition programme from KS2-3;
- Lead staff development in the area of Literacy;
- Use data (Vernon Spelling Test, Access Reading Test and CAT data) to identify pupils in need of additional support for literacy;

- Manage a tiered programme of intervention for pupils requiring literacy support;
- Engage with parents to raise standards in literacy;
- Report to SLT as required.

### **3.3. Heads of Department**

The Head of Department should:

- Ensure subject specific literacy is embedded within departmental schemes of work;
- Facilitate discussion of literacy at a departmental level;
- Encourage sharing of good practice and collaboration between colleagues;

### **3.4. SENCO**

The SENCO should:

- Communicate with staff about pupils with a special educational need affecting literacy and give advice on strategies that may be useful;
- Implement support for pupils with a special educational need affecting literacy;
- Monitor the progress of statemented pupils with a special educational need affecting literacy through the use of IEPs, review meetings, as well other feedback from subject staff.

### **3.5. All Staff**

All staff should:

- Be role models in the good and appropriate use of language;
- Contribute to improving literacy by providing pupils with a range of reading, writing and speaking and listening opportunities over the course of the academic year;
- Encourage pupils to be independent readers and writers;
- Promote pupil progress in Literacy.

### **3.6. Librarian**

The Librarian should:

- Ensure all junior classes visit the Library, understand how to access the Library's resources and conduct research;
- Encourage reading through a range of events and activities, both those within the College and through collaboration with external bodies;
- Deliver the Reading and Writing Partnership Programme for under-performing Year 9 and 10 pupils;
- Provide appropriate resources to support delivery of the curriculum, including Staff Development when necessary.

## **4. Strategies / Implementation**

### **4.1. Reading**

Across the curriculum, teachers will provide opportunities for children to:

- Read quietly and aloud;
- Read and follow instructions;
- Read to explore meaning and acquire understanding;
- Use a range of reading strategies such as scanning, skimming and selecting;
- Reading to make notes;
- Use contextual clues to establish meaning, with indexes, glossaries, headings, illustrations, electronic media etc.;
- Encourage involvement in our annual 'Read On' initiative;
- Develop higher order reading skills such as the awareness of bias, inconsistency, ambivalence and alternative interpretations.

Reading will take place using a variety of quality reading material, which should include fiction, non-fiction (both digital and in print), appropriate to age and ability of the pupils. Pupils will be given the opportunity to use the Library, the Internet and other texts in a guided way to ensure that proper comprehension is taking place.

Reading events, posters and other media will be placed in the school environment to create a culture of reading which is positive, educational and enjoyable.

### **4.2. Writing**

Writing is a complex process, involving a wide range of skills. Wellington College aims for a consistent approach to the teaching of content and expression across subject areas.

This will be done through:

- Providing different opportunities for written expression, such as: recording, analysing, imagining, empathetic writing, feelings and beliefs.
- Providing models of answers, to demonstrate how to structure writing an appropriate manner;
- Encouraging drafting of important pieces of work, proof reading and self-correcting;
- Encouraging a high standard of presentation, with work presented neatly, legibly and in the correct format;
- Providing clear success criteria for content and expression as appropriate;
- Applying departmental marking policies consistently;
- Using the marking style sheet to indicate areas for improvement.

### **4.3. Speaking and Listening**

Teachers will develop strategies to teach pupils how to participate in the three modes of speaking and listening: group work, presentations and drama / role-play. Pupils will be taught how to express their view appropriately for each mode, and how to listen sensitively and effectively. Teachers will provide a range of opportunities across the

curriculum, and facilitate the acquisition of these skills by providing a positive and conducive environment for talk.

## **5. Baseline Tests**

Baseline testing is carried out to establish baseline information for pupils entering the College in Year 8. The results of these tests are analysed to those requiring support in addition to pupils already on the SEN register. Teachers will be made aware of this information to support differentiation within their teaching.

## **6. Literacy Support**

Wellington College offers the following forms of literacy support:

- Differentiation within the classroom by class teachers;
- English surgeries – support sessions offered by teachers to give one to one support for pupils who feel they need it;
- Reading Buddies;
- Reading Partnership Programme;
- Writing Partnership Programme;
- Timetabled support classes;
- Withdrawal support classes with an English teacher.

Within the classroom, teachers will use a range of strategies to provide literacy support:

- Differentiation of task;
- Clear assessment for learning objectives;
- Breaking work into manageable sections;
- Providing additional advice or support;
- Modelled work;
- Encouraging use of dictionaries and thesauri;
- Encouraging drafting, proof reading and self-correction.

## **7. English as an Additional Language**

A number of our pupils have a home language other than English. Wellington College will offer these pupils additional support through the English department as required or through specialist support while they have Newcomer status.

## **8. Special Educational Needs**

All teachers will be made aware of pupils with special educational needs affecting literacy and be provided with copies of their Individual Education Plans. Teachers will

be made aware of those receiving support and any examination access arrangements that may be required.

## **9. Library**

The Library, and the College Librarian, support literacy in the following ways:

- Providing a range of accessible and appropriate non-fiction and fiction texts;
- Promoting reading through author visits, competitions and reading events;
- Supporting study and research skills;
- Monitoring borrowing and reading habits;

The English department, in conjunction with the Librarian, provides a reading period each fortnight for classes in Years 8-10, during which library projects may be undertaken.

**This policy will be reviewed in line with College Policy review procedures.**