Mountjoy School

Literacy and Communications Policy

March 2021

In accordance with Article 28 and 29 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Policy reviewed by Senior Leadership Team:	March 2021
Next Review due:	March 2022

Literacy and Communications Policy

Introduction

The Mountjoy School Literacy and Communication policy encompasses all aspects of communication - non-verbal, verbal, listening and reading and writing. Work in Literacy and Communication promotes learning across the curriculum and underpins pupils' achievements and participation in all aspects of their lives.

In particular, the Mountjoy School approach to Literacy and Communication provides its pupils with opportunities to:

- develop the ability to respond, to listen and to understand
- interact and communicate effectively with others in a range of social and learning situations
- make choices, obtain information, question and be actively involved in decision making
- develop creativity and imagination
- have access to a wide range of literature to enrich and broaden their experience
- initiate communication, for example, through smiling, making eye contact, reaching out, touching, or drawing attention to an object or event of interest
- communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas verbally, in written form and with the use of technological aids
- develop an enjoyment of communicating verbally, non-verbally, listening, reading and writing
- experience a wide range of communicative genres
- facilitate the building and maintenance of relationships with others
- be active participants in their communities
- become fully involved in physical and practical activities using tools, such as Eye Gaze, and switch technology.

Breadth and Progression within English and Information and Communication Technology

In Literacy and Communication, pupils will have opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through:

- using a wide variety of activities, which are age-related, especially where aspects of the programmes of study are revisited at later key stages
- increasing engagement in, and the quality of, a range of literature and communication activities
- adapting to different circumstances and contexts with independence and confidence
- acquiring an increasing range of vocabulary, from the names of everyday objects, events and people, to vocabulary used across the curriculum and related to the wider community.

Literacy and Communication

Speaking and listening

In the broadest interpretation, speaking and listening encompasses all forms of communicative responses and intent. Communication may include one or more of the following:

- the use of body movements, for example, whole body movements (such as turning towards or away), eye gaze, facial expressions (such as smiling or grimacing), and pointing using eye, head, foot, fists or fingers
- gestures, for example, clapping, waving and reaching, and formalised signs
- communication aids, for example, objects of reference, photographs, pictures, symbols and electronic communicators
- vocalisation and speech.

Speaking

Speaking is concerned with encouraging pupils to express their likes, dislikes, feelings, emotions and preferences for different audiences, it is important to develop vocalisation, whether spontaneous or imitative, and/or the use of a range of communicative movements and gestures.

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills by enabling them to:

- participate in social routines and to communicate in a widening range of situations
- develop oral motor skills to support the development of speech, for example, blowing, sucking, licking and humming
- produce sequences of intonated sounds and words
- use a widening range of vocabulary
- use an appropriate form of communication for a range of purposes, for example, to request, instruct, question, share information, organise actions and thoughts
- vary the tone and volume of their voices in different situations and then monitor their use of volume, tone and pitch
- use appropriate facial expressions.

Listening and responding

It is important to develop the ability to attend, listen and discriminate between contrasting stimuli, for example, auditory, visual, tactile and olfactory.

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their listening and responding skills by enabling them to:

- listen and develop auditory memory, for example, responding to sounds in the environment or to the cessation of sound, attending to adult imitation of their own sounds, responding to their own name, imitation and turn-taking activities, responding appropriately to specific sounds, words and phrases and exploring language in different contexts

- maintain and develop concentration, for example, focusing on an activity, tracking a sound or movement, copying sequences of sounds, listening and attending to rhymes, stories, music and simple recounts linked to sensory cues, sustaining attention in different activities, and responding to instructions.

Reading

The development of reading is a complex process for pupils with complex needs, reading is also a sensory and physical activity and the development of reading skills requires teachers to break down reading into its basic components.

The development of reading skills relies on the progressive acquisition of skills, together with a broadening and reinforcing of acquired reading skills. An important aspect of the acquisition of reading skills is access to a rich and varied range of motivating, high quality texts for individuals, small group and whole class reading.

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills by enabling them to:

- encounter and enjoy sounds and letters
- become aware that different combinations of letters create different sounds, including patterns and blends of sounds
- develop an awareness and understanding of the linkage between sounds and letters
- derive meanings from visual and tactile representations
- encounter and enjoy printed media
- become aware that single words (and pictures or other representations) convey meaning
- become aware that single words (and pictures or other representations) can be combined to convey meaning
- read (and listen) with an adult to single letters, combinations of letters, single words, combinations of words and simple sentences
- read (and listen) with by self to single letters, combinations of letters, single words, combinations of words and simple sentences.

Developing phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge by enabling them to:

- locate, track and sequence sounds
- sustain attention in a listening activity
- recognise that sounds and words can relate to people, situations, actions and objects
- discriminate between different sounds, words and phrases
- blend sounds for reading and segment them for spelling
- develop knowledge of grapheme and phoneme correspondences.

Developing word recognition and symbolic knowledge

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their word recognition and symbolic knowledge by enabling them to:

- discriminate between different representations
- distinguish between text and illustrations
- match and identify a range of familiar representations, for example, signs, symbols and words of personal importance, high-frequency words, content words or phrases from familiar books or reading schemes, social and environmental vocabulary, cross-curricular and subject-specific vocabulary.

Developing grammatical awareness

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their grammatical awareness by enabling them to:

- recognise patterns and continue a pattern of objects or symbols
- sequence objects, symbols and words from left to right, and understand that they need to be accessed in that way to make sense
- develop the concept of beginnings and ends, for example, of a story, an information text, a sentence or a word
- recognise when the order of an object, picture, symbol or word sequence has been changed and how such changes can alter meanings.

Developing contextual understanding

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their contextual understanding by enabling them to:

- become familiar with, and anticipate, routines linked to reading activities
- make connections between different parts of a text, for example, how stories begin and end, the sequence of stories, the order of a recipe, what has been included and omitted in information writing
- predict what happens next in a story or what a book might be about
- apply knowledge gained from experience of other texts.

Developing reading for information

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their reading for information skills by enabling them to:

- access information from a wide variety of sources, for example, objects of reference, pictures and photographs, reference books, tables, charts, maps, diagrams, dictionaries, audio tapes, internet sites
- choose, select and handle books with care and to use a library
- understand terms about books and print and use them correctly, for example, cover, beginning, end, page, line, word, letter, title

- recognise and name different types of non-fiction and non-literary texts and understand their uses, for example, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, cookery books, atlases, diaries, telephone directories, leaflets, letters
- identify, understand, and use subject-specific and specialist vocabularies
- use some of the organisational features of non-fiction texts to find information, for example, headings, captions, illustrations, contents, index and chapters
- identify facts and opinions and compare information from different texts.

Developing a love of literature

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of literature by enabling them to:

- attend and respond to the sound, rhythm and mood of a variety of literary and musical texts
- respond in different ways to what they have read or heard, for example, through movement, mime, role play, art, music, shared writing activities
- develop a wide understanding and use of vocabulary linked to text, supported where appropriate by objects, pictures, symbols and multi-sensory resources
- respond to, identify, and describe characters, events, settings and emotions in fiction texts
- contribute to a shared discussion, making reference to the characters and plot and indicating personal preferences
- compare the work of the same and different writers, identifying similarities and differences, for example, compare two poems by the same poet; compare two pieces of writing on the same theme, but in different styles or from different cultural traditions
- respond to, and be aware of, the different uses of language and subject matter from different traditions.

Writing

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills by enabling them to:

- develop fine motor skills
- make marks
- become aware that symbols and pictures can be used to convey meaning
- encounter different letter forms
- play with letter shapes
- match symbols and pictures to letter forms
- form letter shapes in a variety of ways and representations
- develop an appropriate writing grip
- learn to use a tactile resource to facilitate letter production
- form letter shapes with writing materials
- form combinations of letters
- match symbols and pictures to simple words
- produce simple words to convey meaning

- produce a simple sentence to convey meaning
- produce linked sentences to convey meaning

Composition
The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their composition skills by enabling them to:

- record events, experiences and information, for example, making simple books that reflect personal interests
- link objects, pictures, words and symbols to convey meanings
- select and choose an appropriate vocabulary
- use the experience of stories, poems and simple recounts as a basis for shared and independent writing, for example, re-telling, substituting and extending
- write in different styles, for example, captions, lists, letters, address labels, action plans for progress files, application forms for work experience
- vary their writing for different purposes and different readers.

Planning and drafting
The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their planning and drafting skills by enabling them to:

- trace, overwrite, copy and write familiar words and phrases that have been generated in response to a starting point
- plan, note and develop initial ideas, for example, using objects, pictures or photographs as a starting point for their work; writing frames, ideas webs, lists, concept maps, network diagrams and sign-posting systems
- draft and develop ideas from a plan into a structured written text, for example, through working with an adult as a scribe, copying dictated words and text, selecting symbols, words or sentences or a combination of them on a switch-operated computer program
- revise, change and improve drafts, for example, through working individually with an adult or in a shared writing group and discussing and reviewing the written text, reading their own work aloud
- underlining words that could be substituted by a more interesting vocabulary, cutting and pasting work on a word processor.

Handwriting and presentation
The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their handwriting skills by enabling them to:

- be aware of, attend to and manipulate switches, for example, through adult prompts and guidance, using different body parts, such as head and foot
- develop hand/eye coordination, for example, through left to right tracking activities; a range of fine motor activities; exploring patterns, circular movements and letter shapes and tracing, overwriting, copying and/or forming shapes and letters; colouring within a defined outline; developing and practising handwriting, ensuring correct letter formation, orientation and proportion

- take pride in their work
- recognise and understand how to set out their work, how to check that it is neat and clear, and how to revise it and amend mistakes.

Information and Communication Technology

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas and to make things happen by enabling them to:

- combine pictures, sounds, symbols and words to communicate meaning in a variety of contexts, for example, a mode of communication to make a choice about an activity in class, or to show a like or a dislike
- use a variety of equipment to control a range of situations, for example, use switches, turn a television on and off independently, operate an electric wheelchair
- explore, test and develop the information required for problem solving, for example, to manipulate objects, consistently respond to stimuli, anticipate the outcome of an action.

Exchanging and sharing information

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their abilities to exchange and share information by enabling them to:

- communicate information in a variety of forms using sound, text and graphics for a range of audiences, for example, use a speech output device to choose an activity, draw a picture of their house using a simple graphics package, write a simple sentence using an overlay package, or an on screen word bank
- produce and present work that is of a high quality and understood by others, for example, work that can be displayed on a classroom wall or a story that can be read by others
- share and exchange information in a variety of forms, for example, gesture, speech output devices, videos, tape recorders, letters, telephones and e-mail.

Reviewing, modifying and evaluating work as it progresses

The Literacy and Communication policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils to review, modify and evaluate their own work by enabling them to:

- review what they have achieved as a step towards developing ideas
- repeat a piece of work and demonstrate an ability to make changes as a result of their own, or others' observations
- identify the use of ICT in their own lives, for example, understand that traffic lights control pedestrians and the traffic, know that the controls on a television or microwave can be used to change what happens, understand that a joystick helps to control a wheelchair.