**School Improvement Plan for Literacy in Dunhill N.S.**

**Introduction**

We carried out a School Self Evaluation (SSE) in the teaching and learning of Literacy over the 2013/2014 school year. For more information on this process you can see our School Self Evaluation on Literacy on our school website – [www.dunhillns.ie](http://www.dunhillns.ie)

**Timeframe of plan**: September 2014 - June 2017. The implementation and monitoring of the SSE is over a 3 year period.

**Summary of the school’s main strengths in the area of Literacy**

**Our School has strengths in the following areas:**

* Pupils in general have a positive attitude to literacy. Pupils in 2nd- 6th classes were surveyed and the majority of them say they like English and reading and felt that they are good readers. A lower proportion felt that they were good at hand-writing.
* Parents have been surveyed in relation to their child’s literacy and are on the whole positive with regard to the development of literacy skills in their child/children.
* The Parents Association & the parents themselves are extremely supportive of literacy initiatives and have provided assistance for literacy resources (reading-buddies scheme etc.)
* The teaching staff is conscious of the importance of literacy development and are constantly upskilling in this area.
* The majority of pupils enjoy reading at school and at home and a proportion of pupils are joined the library.
* A wide range of assessment tools are used to assess pupil progress and put interventions in place following consultation with parents and outside agencies, if necessary.
* Reading Initiatives to encourage reading – Paired reading, DEAR, Readathon, shared reading and visits to Library.
* There are good resources available in the school
* There are a variety of assessment tools used
* There is a print rich environment – lots of sight vocabulary
* There is a good variety of reading texts used
* Standardised and Diagnostic tests are administered in the school
* Results of assessments are used to inform teacher planning
* The school has a very successful on-going reading-buddy initiative which fosters reading for enjoyment
* Parental attitude to Literacy is very positive and parents are very supportive towards the school, the teaching staff and Literacy in Dunhill N.S.
* The school is very well equipped regarding ICT

**The Following Areas are prioritised for improvement:**

1. **– Hand Writing**

21% of pupils surveyed felt that their handwriting was not good

26% felt that they do not hold a pencil/pen properly

The staff did their own survey on pencil/pen grip and found that around 20% of the pupils had the incorrect pencil/pen grip.

It was noted that at the induction day for the new entrants (2013/14) in May 2013, 33.3% of the pupils had the incorrect pencil/crayon grip.

Therefore we plan

* To improve how pupils hold a pencil/pen when writing.
* To improve the level of handwriting within the school, particularly the male students in the higher classes.
* To ensure that the school handwriting plan is adhered to and that there is continuity from Infants to 6th Class.
* To bring the proper pencil grip to the attention of the pre-schools in the area so that the pupils have the proper grip even before beginning Junior Infants. To bring it to the attention of all the parents in the school via an informative information letter.

**2 - Oral Language Skills**

Improvement in Oral Language confidence & fluency and a development in the expressive capacity of pupils.

i) Specific Oral Language skills are to be taught and practiced

ii) Offer opportunities for pupils to develop oral language skills at each class level.

**3 - Poetry**

We hope to improve the pupil’s interest in Poetry in the following ways.

* To make poetry more interesting and purposeful for people.
* To ensure that children experience a broad range of different types of Poetry
* To get children to create/write poems either in a group or individual basis.
* That children would be able to recite a poem by heart.

**Improvement Targets:**

**Handwriting**:

Currently 80% of the children in school have the correct pencil grip. We aim to increase this percentage to 82% of pupils at the end of year 1, 84% at the end of year 2 and 85% at the end of the 3rd year of the self-evaluation.

**Oral Language**:

1 – Use of the Drumcondra Vocabulary tests (1st-6th classes). Children will be tested at their level at the beginning and end of the school year over a three year period. We aim to improve the class average by 2% each year.

2 – Each year we will undertake a 5 week Oral language programme. We will concentrate on eye contact, use of full sentences and correct grammar usage. We will assess pupils at the beginning and at the end of the programme. We aim for a 2% improvement per annum in each area.

**Poetry**:

In the different class levels we hope to introduce different types of poetry

* Infants – 2nd Class: 4 different types of poetry – Nursery Rhymes/Variations on, Humorous, Acrostic, narrative.
* 3rd – 6th Class: 6 different types of poetry – Limericks, Shape Poems, Haiku, Couplet, Humorous, narrative.

**Required Actions in relation to teaching & learning that will help to achieve our Targets:**

**Handwriting:**

* In all classes children will be taught the proper pencil/pen grip by the class teacher. It will be particularly emphasised in the junior classes.
* All classes will follow the school writing scheme in the Plean Scoile.
* All the children in the senior classes will be encouraged to maintain using joined-writing.
* The pre-schools/Montessori schools in our area will be furnished with information concerning the proper pencil grip. This ensures that the pupils enrolling in our school will be taught the correct pencil grip from as early an age as possible.
* All parents will be given information at the beginning of each school year informing them about the correct pencil grip.
* A letter will be sent to the infant parents informing them of the correct formation of the letters in the alphabet.
* Children’s handwriting will be presented regularly on the class display boards throughout the school.

**Oral language:**

-Promote Auditory Memory: Teachers read poetry/stories to the children. The children are taught to retell stories, recount events, play memory games etc.

- Ensure that children structure a sentence correctly and use full sentences when engaging orally.

**-** Develop Listening and Speaking Skills: Children are taught the rules for social interaction; turn taking, politeness and non-verbal skills (body language, eye-contact). They are made aware of listening and speaking opportunities in all areas. In regard to listening children will be taught to

* recognise and observe simple commands
* establish rules for good listening – no fidgeting, sit nicely with feet on the floor, concentrate, have good eye contact
* Recognise and display non-verbal behaviours

**-** Teach a Variety of Spoken Texts: The children are taught to effectively give oral reports, oral reviews, debates, tell stories and verbalise procedures. Show & Tell will be used for the younger children.

- Create a Language Environment: Teachers ensure their classroom is ‘print rich’; that the classroom library is well stocked with appropriate books; that the environment stimulates and motivates the children to broaden their vocabulary.

**-** Teach and Extend Vocabulary & correct use of grammar: Teachers teach individual words, word strategies, correct grammar, use crosswords, word searches, word banks, dictionaries, thesauruses, use new word sheets and foster an awareness and love of words and language.

- Have awareness of voice projection and show voice projection

- Each year we will undertake a 5 week Oral language programme. This is in addition to our weekly Oral language lessons.

- Themes to be chosen an annual basis.

- Teachers will use a range of organisational settings for development of Oral Language such as individual or pair work, group work, whole class discussion, formal and informal debates and circle work.

- Using spellbound supports the vocabulary development in the classes.

**Poetry**

* Teachers will read the planned variety/genres of Poetry to their classes throughout the school year.
* Children will be taught to recognise these different varities/genres.
* Children will be given the opportunity to respond and interpret these types of poems.
* Children will be encouraged to create/write their own poems
* Children will learn a selection of poems from different genres which will be age appropriate.
* Children’s poems will be put on display outside their classrooms.

**Persons Responsible:**

This S.S.E.I.P. sets out required actions to be carried out by teachers, parents, pupils, local Pre-schools & the Board of Management. Should anyone need clarification they should consult the principal.

**Learning Support/Resource:**

Our Learning Support, Resource teachers will work with the class teachers and this literacy policy to support the effective teaching of literacy in Dunhill N.S.

**Timeframe for Action/Monitor & Review:**

* The school will focus on these 3 areas over the next 3 school years – 2014 to 2017. This S.S.E.I.P. is designed to complement the teaching and learning already happening in Dunhill N.S. The plan is to be implemented from September 2014. If within those 3 years modifications are deemed necessary they will be noted and changes will be made. The plan & targets will be reviewed annually.
* June 2015 (Review Year 1)
* June 2016 (Review Year 2)
* June 2017 (Review Year 3 & Overall Review)
* Teacher observation is a key tool which will be used in monitoring the progress of these literacy strategies in particular when assessing pupil’s pencil grip. Key observations will be noted and discussed at whole staff level at

- Staff meetings

- Literacy review as part of Croke Park hours.

* Administration of Drumcondra Vocabulary tests each year and review of the results.

**Success Criteria:**

The most important objective is to focus on these three areas of the Literacy Curriculum and to carry out the required actions in relation to them. Should this occur then that will be deemed a success. Should we attain our goals for all three literacy areas then that will be considered even further success.