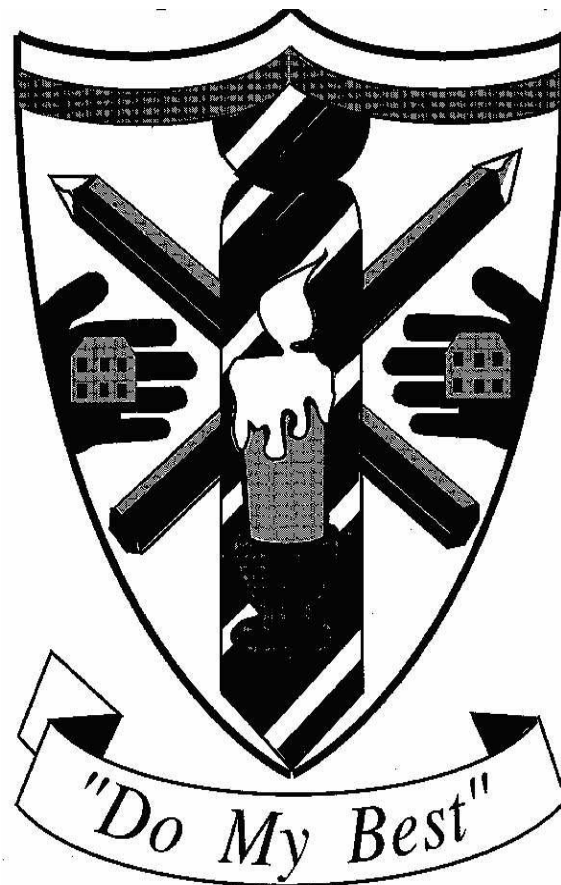


# St. Eugene's Primary School Derry



## Literacy Policy

## Context

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

This has been enunciated in the overall aim of the N Ireland Curriculum (DE 2008), which says, '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,' (DENI 2009) has outlined indicators of what will be recognised as effective performance under four headings:

- **Child centred provision**
- **High quality teaching and learning**
- **Effective leadership**
- **A school connected to its local community.**

## Introduction

In St. Eugene's Primary School we believe that pupils' literacy skills, ie. their ability to talk, listen, read and write effectively, for purpose and audience, is the key to educational progress, to social integration and to personal development and happiness.

This policy document will outline the strategies and approaches we will support and develop in order to ensure that each child becomes equipped with the necessary language knowledge, understanding and skills.

## Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the N Ireland Curriculum for English (CCEA, 2007) and include:

**In the Foundation Stage** children should be given opportunities to:

- talk and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication.

**At Key Stage One (Years 3 and 4),** children should learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

**At Key Stage Two (Years 5-7),** children should learn to change the way they talk and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

In St. Eugene's Primary School, we intend that, by the end of Key Stage 2, a child will be able to:

- speak confidently to a range of audiences with an awareness of purpose
- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- **become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication.**

### Principles

- Our understanding of literacy incorporates **talking, listening, reading and writing**. These elements of language are interdependent and integral to all learning. Literacy should therefore be promoted holistically.
- The literacy policy is seen as a key policy of the school, reflecting the priority that Literacy has on the School Development Plan.
- In addition to communication, effective literacy development should encourage interest and pleasure in language in all its forms.
- All staff have responsibility for pupil literacy and share responsibility for every pupil's attainment.

- All elements of the literacy policy should be reflected across the curriculum and will consider the needs of every pupil, as literacy is fundamental to personal and social development.
- The policy will be supported by a strong staff development programme.

### **Purposes**

- To raise standards for all.
- To develop the attitudes and dispositions of the NI Curriculum (personal responsibility, self management, flexibility, self-belief etc.)
- To link language development with the Cross Curricular skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.
- To develop children's knowledge of and familiarity with a wide range of texts,  
including media texts, both fiction and non-fiction.
- To teach children to read fluently and with understanding, using reading methods that are appropriate to the material and to the writing purpose.
- To develop writing skills for a range of purposes and audiences, using spelling, punctuation and syntax appropriately and with confidence.
- To promote a wide use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a medium for the development of literacy appropriate to the audience and purpose.
- To enable children to communicate clearly and with assurance in appropriate forms of speech. They should be able to talk and listen in a variety of groupings and in both formal and informal contexts.

- To promote a shared view of literacy and literacy development across the curriculum and provide appropriate staff development.
- To develop literacy within the wider framework of the school improvement process in school.
- To increase parental involvement.
- To provide leadership and management of literacy at all levels in the school.
- To improve the dissemination of good practice within and across schools.

### **Child Centred Provision :**

The following indicators from, "Every School A Good School" (DENI 2009), will be reflected in St. Eugene's Primary School's approaches:

- Decisions on planning, resources, curriculum and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school
- A clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a 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.
- Effective interventions and support are in place to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning.
- 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.

### **Inclusion:**

We, in St. Eugene's Primary School, aim to provide provision for all children so that they reach their full potential in Language and Literacy according to their individual abilities.

We identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and those with special educational needs in order to take steps to improve attainment. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

Pupils who are gifted, underachieving or have Special Educational Needs are identified at the earliest opportunity through the use of classroom observation, and through the testing of pupils.

The scores from Standardised Tests - PTE and the CAT test are compared and assessed to identify pupils in need of support or challenge to increase personal achievements in literacy.

These pupils may also be brought to the school's attention by parents themselves or by other agencies such as the Health and Social Services departments.

A small number of children throughout this school have difficulties in relation to language and literacy skills. These include speech problems, specific language difficulties, poor language experience and auditory problems. These pupils once identified, are referred for suitable outside agency support- e.g. Speech Therapy, Peripatetic Hearing Service Support and pupil need is recorded in an Individual Education Plan.

All teachers in this school have responsibility for identifying and providing for pupils deemed to be gifted, underachieving, or with special educational needs within their classes. Diagnostic tests (e.g. MIST, Quest etc) will be used appropriately to aid understanding of specific areas of difficulty, and to inform remediation.

The SENCo provides advice and support for all staff and co-ordinates with class teachers, peripatetic support staff (as and when appropriate) and with other relevant professionals, particularly when drawing up Individual Education Plans and monitoring pupil progress.

Parents will be regularly advised as to their own child's difficulties, the programme of support provided and the progress being made, as detailed in the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (1998).

Parental interviews, during the school year, facilitate a two way flow of information about pupil progress.

Parents of pupils on Individual Education Plans are also invited for interview once a term to review progress and to be made aware of any developments regarding their child's improvement.

### **Intervention Programmes:**

Pupils are identified for intervention at the start of the school year and programmes are put in place accordingly.

### **Reading:**

The Reading Partnership Programme

This programme has aims to raise standards in literacy by providing children with additional help and opportunity to read. This reading Programme is 10 weeks in duration with the trained reading partner working with three children individually. Each child is given three 15 minute sessions per week for 10 weeks. Pupils are tested at the beginning of the session and at the end to monitor learning and progression. This programme is for pupils who are deemed to be underachieving.

### **Equal Opportunities Statement :**

All pupils are provided with equal access to the Language and Literacy Curriculum and all staff will aim to treat every child as an individual, and will respect their individuality, regardless of gender, academic or physical ability or socio-economic background.

### **Practices**

### **High Quality Teaching and Learning :**

The following indicators from Every School a Good School (DENI 2009) will be reflected in St. Eugene's Primary School's approaches to teaching and learning:

- A broad and balanced curriculum is provided for the pupils.
- An emphasis on Literacy exists across the curriculum.
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school-based staff and dedicated to improving learning.
- Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom.
- Assessment and other data are used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement.
- Rigorous self-evaluation is carried out by teachers and the whole school, using objective data and leading to sustained self-improvement.
- Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils.
- Adequate procedures are in place to address underachievement.
- Effective use of digital technology to support learning.
- Infusion of Assessment for Learning strategies, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, activity based learning/ drama strategies and collaborative working.
- Education outcomes reflect positively on the school and compare well, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken, against the performance of similar schools.

### **Subject Organisation**

The English Curriculum is delivered using the requirements in the N. Ireland Curriculum for Language and Literacy. In St. Eugene's Primary School, we plan for Literacy in three phases- long term, medium term and short term using the N. Ireland Curriculum document to identify the key aims and objectives for teaching literacy.

Our long term planning which is being reviewed at present to take cognisance of new levels of attainment, inter board documents and advice from EA details the learning intentions, teaching strategies, pupil activities and resources for Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing in each year group.



Our medium term planning is undertaken in six week intervals. These six week planners include the learning intention, activities, differentiation and resources. Evaluation of a six week planner informs planning for the next one.

Short term daily notes are prepared by teachers detailing the day to day administration of the literacy programme in a personal planning book.

### **Approaches to Talking and Listening**

The strands of talking, listening, group discussion and interaction and drama pervade the whole curriculum. Oral language should be recognised as the **primary mode of language** and hence should receive a central emphasis and focus in all areas of the curriculum and in the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes.

We, in St. Eugene's Primary School, recognise that talking and listening are essential skills upon which the educational development of our pupils depends. Through the development of both oral and aural skills pupils learn about language and this knowledge ultimately equips them to demonstrate and enhance their learning.

In St. Eugene's Primary School our overall aim is for pupils to become competent language users. This will be achieved by assigning time, energy and resources to the development of oral communication. Through focussed interaction with teachers, children will be provided with experiences that develop their skills in talking and listening.

To facilitate the implementation of the statutory requirements, we aim to create an environment where pupils feel relaxed, accepted, affirmed and at ease, empowered to express opinions and talk openly. All pupils, from Primary One to Primary Seven, are given opportunities to exchange views supported by teachers who affirm that all contributions are valuable.

### **Teaching Approaches to foster Talking and Listening include:**

- Talking and Listening activities are planned within many areas across the curriculum
- Experiences and activities are designed to promote a wide range of types of talk e.g. class discussion, role play, debating, reporting etc.
- Imaginative role play areas in Foundation Stage classrooms are used to develop talking and listening skills.
- Talking and Listening is indorsed as a social, communicative and a cognitive process
- Activities involve the use of pairs, small and larger groups, with an emphasis on varying the composition and roles within groups.
- The teacher constantly models oral language
- Resources and displays are used to stimulate and enhance Talking and Listening skills
- Talking is promoted during shared and guided reading lessons
- Teachers perpetually refine their questioning techniques to encourage deeper thinking and improved talking
- PDMU to enhance personal confidence, self -esteem and emotional development
- Group and drama strategies are used to encourage children to engage in a range of creative and imaginative role-play activities and to encourage thinking skills / problem solving through the use of language and talk
- Class /School Council membership.

### **Approaches to Reading**

In St. Eugene's Primary School, we strive to teach all our pupils to read and enjoy a variety of texts so that they will become independent, critical, life-long readers and learners. We believe that reading is a fundamental skill and it is this conviction which underpins the considerable importance we place on the teaching of reading in our school. Thus, successful reading depends on the ability to use many sources of information in a strategic manner. Pupils therefore, will be encouraged to implement the three "cue-systems" when they read-i.e. Semantic, Syntactic and Grapho-phonic.

We aim to provide a classroom environment which fosters a love of books and reading, where pupils become absorbed in print and feel inspired to

read. Each classroom, thus, is a language rich environment filled with lots of environmental print, labels, posters, information, and displays of pupils' work etc. Books are given their rightful place throughout the school as each classroom has a class library where books are displayed in a variety of ways to attract and stimulate pupil interest. Topic books are displayed and are easily accessible to pupils to motivate interest.

The school library, recently refurbished with new books, is accessible to Foundation, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two pupils. Pupils, from Primary One to Primary Seven, may borrow books and this is recorded using the ALICE library system. We endeavour to ensure there are a wide variety of suitable texts for all pupils including fiction, non-fiction books and add to this stock annually through extended schools and the school book fair.

#### **Teachers plan for:**

- Reading aloud
- Shared reading
- Modelled Reading
- Guided Reading
- Independent Reading
- Paired Reading

#### **Teaching Approaches to promote reading:**

- Our aim is to ensure that pupils are exposed to a range of reading material across the genres, including print and digital media
- In Primary One, pupils will move from non-ability groups to emergent reading groups.
- Familiar reading will be participated in within the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils, who have been identified as low achieving in reading, may read from levelled books in an alternative reading scheme.
- Children are read to frequently in all classes
- Reading is through levelled texts to ensure pupils are reading at instructional level
- Modelled, shared and guided reading strategies are used throughout the school.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils read silently.
- Visits are made to Central Library for story telling sessions
- A range of novels are read from Primary Four upwards

- Trained Classroom Assistants are used to support reading (e.g. Reading Partnership)
- Pupils in Primaries 3 - 7 participate in the Accelerated Reading Programme.
- Primary 3 pupils participate in the Paired Reading programme.

### **Approaches to Writing**

Children write to articulate emotions, to convey thoughts and opinions and to present evidence of research. By cultivating such skills, it is our aim in St. Eugene's Primary School to equip our pupils to use writing across the range of curricular activities in which they are involved. Thus, it is the intention of this school to develop within our pupils the ability to write effectively in diverse forms according to purpose and audience.

Pupils will be encouraged to develop as independent writers, learning, over time, to use conventional spelling, punctuation, grammatical organisation and handwriting.

### **A Classroom Environment which supports writing**

St. Eugene's Primary School strives to provide an environment where children are inspired to write. In the writing area within the Foundation playroom pupils are encouraged to, "have a go" and experiment with different styles and for different audiences. This area has a variety of coloured paper, crayons, chalk, card etc. and also contains a range of text on display so that pupils have the opportunity to "copy" e.g. menus, invitations, birthday cards, shopping lists, recipes etc.

Dictionaries are available for the pupils in all key stages with thesauri in Key Stage 2 classrooms.

Each classroom is a "writing rich" environment. Classroom displays may also contain language which children may require in their writing. Books are compiled of children's writing and these are displayed in public areas. Anthologies of poems and stories are compiled and Primary 4- 7 pupils write stories for younger pupils.

Writer of the Month is displayed in the assembly hall and celebrated by the whole school.

### **Teaching Approaches to foster writing:**

- Modelled, shared, guided, interactive and independent writing sessions take place across all age groups and genres of writing
- Children write for themselves, for peers, for parents, for the school website etc.
- Children enter writing and handwriting competitions
- Children are encouraged to plan, draft and re-draft/ edit their writing
- Children are encouraged to "have a go" and try to spell words themselves within a "safe environment"
- Children are taught to frequently read back over their writing to make sure it makes sense
- Spelling is taught from Primary Three using Linguistic Phonic spelling lists
- Feedback is consistently given to pupils on their writing- i.e. verbal and written
- Writing Frames are used

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of Literacy within the school will include:

- Classroom observation
- Book Scoops
- Class and corridor display
- Folders/ portfolios of pupil's work
- Discussion and sharing of approaches at staff meetings
- Teacher's 6 week planners
- Pupil target setting process
- Standardised tests
- End of Key Stage data and Benchmarking data
- IEPs

### **The Role of ICT in Supporting and Developing Literacy**

We aim to use ICT to support teaching and learning in Literacy. ICT will be planned for and used appropriately to promote, enhance and support the teaching and learning in literacy across the curriculum while simultaneously developing pupil competence in ICT skills. ICT offers ways of impacting on learning which is not possible with conventional methods, for example, interactive activities at word, sentence and text level which

consolidate learning. The use of ICT within the learning process involves computers, the Interactive White Board and also the possibilities offered by the wide range of audio-visual materials, graphics, microphones, radio and television broadcasts available.

ICT is used at whole class, group and independent level. The screen projection of text on to classroom interactive whiteboard enables it to be read and shared. The projection of word processing skills also permits the writing process to be modelled effectively. A wide variety of text types are available through the Internet or CD-ROMs to support teaching and learning. Small groups or pairs work at a computer and input information using the keyboard. Software is also used to support independent reading (text to speech) and writing skills e.g. Collins Primary Literacy. ICT provides the means of presenting pupil outcomes (e.g. via multimedia presentations-i.e. words, images and sound combined to convey meaning or items for the school website). Using digital cameras and software such as publishing packages enables pupils to create classroom newspapers etc.

Pupils will have opportunities to gain confidence in the use of ICT, for example, in using word processors for drafting, using spread-sheets and databases and using CD-ROM and the Internet to research and communicate.

### **Assessment for Learning**

In St. Eugene's Primary school it is recognised that assessment is a fundamental part of the learning process. Through continuous correlated assessment, the teachers formulate a comprehensive picture of the progress and learning needs of each child in order to plan future work and, ultimately, improve pupil learning. This improvement in learning is enhanced by teachers taking account of all available information about a child's progress in learning to date. Intrinsic to this is a recognition of the importance of process based learning, as opposed to product based, outcome driven learning, with observation based assessment, carried out in an unobtrusive way as an ongoing and integral part of the learning and teaching process.

Assessment for Learning encourages the active involvement of children in their own learning by means of:

- sharing learning intentions for activities with the pupils
- developing an awareness of the skills and knowledge being developed
- developing an awareness of the strategies employed within pupils' individual learning
- effective feedback given to pupils ( while recognising the influence this can have on motivation and self-esteem, both crucial influences on learning);
- the development of pupil ability for peer and self- assessment through:
  - review and evaluation of their own and another's work e.g. Two Stars and a Wish;
  - setting their own goals following effective questioning and feedback
- the use of outcomes of assessment to inform future teaching and learning,

It is the aim of the school that a varied range of assessment techniques will be used as a fundamental part of the learning and teaching process, and not just at the end of an activity. Teachers, therefore, will select techniques best suited to the activity being assessed and the purpose of the assessment, for example:

- observation
- class discussion
- oral, written, visual presentations or physical demonstrations
- independent or group tasks
- project work
- homework
- diagnostic and/or standardised tests

Evidence from these activities will be used to assist teachers in this school to:

- identify strengths and areas for improvement
- plan for the next stage of learning
- construct summative judgements at a particular point in time, for example at the end of a unit of work or the end of each year.

## **Effective Leadership:**

The following indicators from, "Every School a Good School" (DENI 2009) will be reflected in the school's approach to literacy policy and practice:

- An effective school development plan is in place, providing clear and realistic targets for improvement based on a sound vision for the school
- Governors understand their responsibilities and provide clear strategic direction as well as support and challenge to the Principal in carrying forward the process of improvement
- School leaders demonstrate a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for staff, particularly teachers, and promote a readiness to share and learn from best practice
- Teachers are given opportunities to share in the leadership of the school
- The resources at the disposal of the school are managed properly and effectively, with appropriate arrangements in place for financial management, attendance management and working relationships
- School leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan itself.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Role of the Literacy Co-ordinator**

All teachers in St. Eugene's Primary School accept a shared responsibility for promoting literacy throughout the school. However, the literacy co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing this work in liaison with all staff.

The Literacy Co-ordinator has responsibility, in consultation with the Principal, Literacy Team, Teachers and Parents, for improving the standards of teaching and learning through:

Monitoring and evaluating Literacy by way of:

- pupil progress
- management and analysis of relevant data
- provision of Literacy (including Intervention and Support programmes)



- the quality of the Learning Environment;
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD taking the lead in policy development, purchasing and organising resources, keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments, ensuring channels of communication are open and active with all relevant outside agencies.

### **The Literacy Co-ordinator's primary duties include:**

- the provision of leadership and direction in promoting Literacy
- the encouragement of high standards of teaching and learning with particular responsibility for language and thinking across the curriculum
- the development and maintenance of a school Literacy Policy in consultation with all staff
- the support and motivation for colleagues in ensuring that the needs and aspirations of pupils are met, language teaching is managed and organised to meet school aims, and that standards of achievement are raised.
- the setting of priorities and targets, in liaison with staff, to improve provision
- the identification of needs in areas of language and literacy in relation to the needs of the school
- contribution to evaluation and monitoring procedures
- commitment to her own on-going professional development, and subsequent informing of the rest of the staff of recent curriculum innovations and research in the area of Literacy

### **The Role of the Class Teacher**

#### **The teacher's role is to:**

- build up a caring, trusting and supportive relationship where different points of view are listened to and self-esteem is developed
- be flexible in approaches and to be sensitive to differences in children's learning styles and rates of learning
- be aware of their own language use and position as a role model
- avoid negative responses to children's contributions
- use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning in language and literacy

- be aware of the need for careful planning progressively across the curriculum, differentiating where appropriate
- recognise that skills need to be taught throughout the school
- keep records and monitor progress
- review and evaluate classroom practice and pupil progress regularly
- direct classroom assistants to work with individuals or small groups

#### **Classroom Assistant role:**

- to support the class teacher in the effective implementation of language and literacy

#### **Principal and Board of Governors role:**

- Supporting the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively
- Ensuring that school buildings are best used to support successful teaching and learning
- Monitoring teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations
- Monitoring how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment
- Ensuring that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching

#### **A School Connected to Its Local Community:**

The following indicators from, "Every School a Good School", (D.E.N.I., 2009) will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- Good relationships that facilitate engagement and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serves.
- The school and its teachers are held in respect by parents and the local community who in turn actively support the work of the school
- The school uses its involvement in particular programmes (for example Extended Schools) effectively in meeting the needs of the community and nearby schools.

- Good relationships and clear channels of communication are in place between the school and the education agencies that support it.
- The school works closely with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies whose work impacts on education, especially Health, Social Services, the Library Service and, where appropriate, local Neighbourhood groups.

### **Parental and community involvement:**

In St. Eugene's Primary School, we believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children learn and, as such, consider the education of our pupils to be a collaborative venture involving teachers, parents, pupils and the wider community. Regular and positive communications will be made between teachers and parents, on both a formal and informal basis. It is the aim of the school to connect the support of home and school in order to enhance the literacy development of our pupils. Homework is seen as an integral and co-ordinated element of the school's practice

### **Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include:**

- Parent meetings
- Sacramental preparation evening
- Paired Reading
- School performances e.g. Christmas performances, assemblies
- Visitors to the school e.g. theatre groups, writers, nurse, fire service.
- School Book Fair
- School trips
- Visits to local library

**We endeavour to do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:**

- providing an annual report to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can develop their learning

- parents' information evening to explain to parents how they can support their child with homework and explanations of topics to be covered during the school year
- parental meetings to discuss pupil progress / Individual Education Plans

In St. Eugene's Primary School, we believe that parents have a responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing policies.

Therefore, we would like parents to:

- ensure that their child is equipped for school for taking part in activities
- to inform us if there are matters outside school likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school
- promote a positive attitude towards schooling and learning in general

### **Review of Policy**

This Literacy Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis by the staff.

Approved by the School Board of Governors on