

**Art 13:** Every pupil must be free to express what they think and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law. (RRS Team 2015)

**Art 23:** All pupils in Sperrinview have the right to lead a full and decent life with dignity and independence and to play an active part in the community (RRS team 2015)

**Art 28:** Every pupil in Sperrinview has the right to an education which will be differentiated to meet their individual needs (RRS team 2015)

## **Sperrinview Special School Policy for Language and Literacy**

### ***Rationale***

Language is central to living and learning. Sperrinview Special School fully supports the idea that Literacy is part of the 'core business' of schools (School Improvement Programme, DENI, 1998). This is reflected in the commitment of the staff to promoting language development as one of the school's main priorities, and in the development of a daily Language and Literacy time in all classes throughout the school. Every teacher will promote and support the development of pupil's communication, talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking skills in a variety of meaningful contexts in all curricular areas.

Language should be a source of pleasure, enjoyment and richness as well as providing a means of partaking in a range of activities in family, public, cultural and working life. Pupils bring with them to school a wide range of attitudes towards, understanding of, and experiences with language; and also a range of developmental and communication difficulties. This diversity in pupil's experiences, skills and understanding will be recognised by the staff, who will seek to work with the pupils and their families in the development of each individual as a communication and language user enabling them to take part in life.

We in Sperrinview believe that the effective use of language for learning is the concern of all teachers in every area of the curriculum and we recognise that each area of learning has a contribution to make through the special opportunities and demands it presents. Every teacher will promote and support the development of pupil's communication, talking, listening, reading and writing skills in all curricular areas.

Pupils will be immersed in a stimulating environment of pictures, spoken words, sensory experiences and surrounded by print and other reading

materials presented in an inviting and attractive way. Pupils will have opportunities, across all areas of the curriculum, to present ideas, experiences and understanding in ways which require a growing awareness of other people, wider audiences and various purposes.

Progression will be seen in pupils' increasing independence in communication talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking, their understanding and response to what they feel, see, hear, read and write.

***Aim:***

To support and develop the communication, language and literacy of the pupils as appropriate to the individual child.

***Objectives:***

- To develop pupil's key skills and confidence in all areas of literacy including body movement, facial expression, eye pointing, signing, oracy, reading and writing
- To develop pupil's key skills and confidence in all areas of language
- To develop communication through multi sensory experiences for those pupils working within a sensory curriculum
- To present pupils with a broad range of materials and experiences which will stimulate interest and provide pleasure.
- To link language with thinking processes in a range of curricular contexts in order to apply and develop their language and cognitive skills.
- To enable non verbal pupils to communicate effectively using communication devices, sign and ICT.
- To enable pupils to communicate effectively and confidently within a variety of forms of speech and in a range of social groupings in formal and informal contexts.
- To enable pupils to read social sight vocabulary in their environment and understand signage
- To develop pupil's knowledge, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction text, and to enable them to develop preferences and make informed choices
- To teach pupils to read fluently and with understanding, using appropriate reading methods.
- To develop pupil's ability to use information texts and to locate, extract and use relevant information.
- To develop writing skills

\*Pre writing activities

\*Tracking

\*Tracing

\*Copying

- 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 ICT and media texts as a medium for the further development of language across the curriculum.

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

All teachers in Sperrinview accept shared responsibility for promoting Literacy throughout the school. However, the literacy co-ordinator, Mrs Heather Rowe, has responsibility for overseeing this work in liaison with the Literacy team and all staff; her 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 the area of language 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.

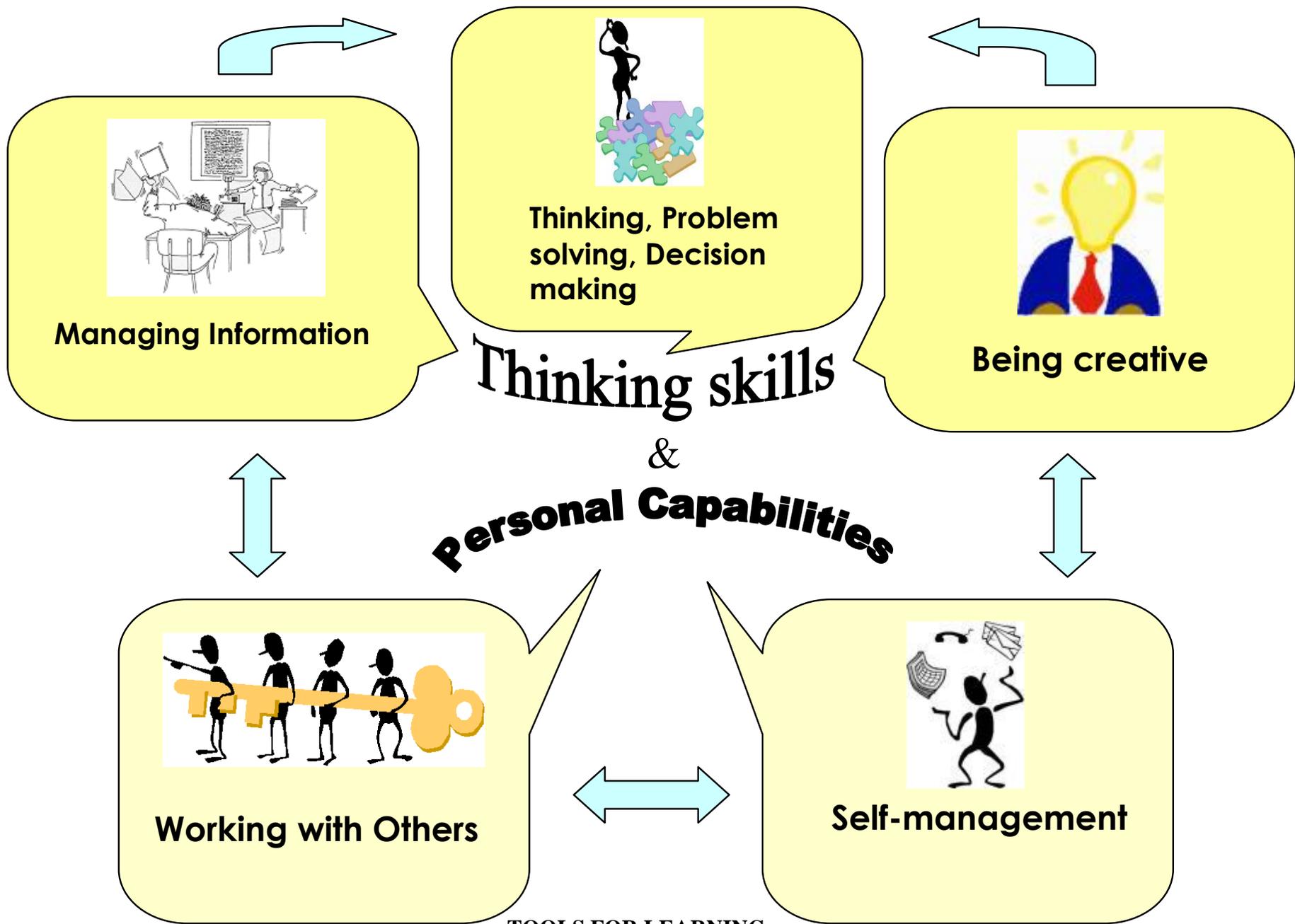
The teacher's role is:

- to build up a caring, trusting and supportive relationship where different points of view are listened to and self-esteem is developed;
- to be flexible in approaches; and to be sensitive to differences in pupil's learning styles and rates of learning;

- to be aware of own language use and position as a role model;
- to avoid negative responses to pupil's contributions;
- to use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning in English;
- to be aware of the need for careful planning progressively across the curriculum, differentiating where appropriate;
- to recognise that skills need to be taught throughout the school;
- to keep records and monitor progress;
- to review and evaluate policy and progress regularly
- to direct classroom assistants to work with individuals or small groups.

### **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities**

At the heart of the Northern Ireland curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. Thinking skills are tools that help pupils go beyond the acquisition of knowledge to search for meaning, apply ideas, analyse patterns and relationships, create and design something new and monitor and evaluate their progress. In Sperrinview we will endeavour to help pupils develop thinking skills and personal capabilities (see Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities framework on following page).



TOOLS FOR LEARNING

### **Environment: organisation, methodology, management**

We recognise that a sound underlying organisation and management of the classroom environment is crucial to support learning. Organisation will vary to suit the purpose, context and pupils involved. The needs of all pupils will be identified and met through effective curricular programmes and support arrangements.

The following range of organisational strategies will be employed:

- whole class teaching
- small group teaching (size, flexibility and composition of the groups will be given consideration - e.g. peer, ability, mixed ability, friendship groups, etc.)
- paired work - similar ability, less experienced pupil working with more experienced pupil
- individual - one-to-one tuition by teacher or classroom assistant
- independent work

Attention will be given to classroom layout, wall displays, access to a diverse range of resources (fiction, non-fiction, ICT, media texts, augmentative communication i.e. PECS, resources from other cultures) and the provision of library areas, writing areas and listening areas with appropriate equipment.

We are aware that progress is enhanced when teachers are sensitive to differences in learning styles. Since pupils learn in different ways and at different rates, a flexible approach which encourages pupil's active engagement in their learning, through problem solving, will extend the pupils' use of language and promote independence. Teachers will have realistically high expectations and will ensure that all pupils understand what is expected of them by making pupils aware of the intended learning intentions and in due course the success criteria [this may be supported by the WALT board]

As literacy permeates all areas of the curriculum cross-curricular opportunities will be used to the best advantage to develop all aspects of talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking. Pupils will have opportunities to develop talking and listening skills through a range of oral and practical activities, including drama and role play. Teachers will employ a range of teaching approaches which will meet the needs of individual pupils, groups and whole classes.

The following methods will be used:

- modelling
- sharing
- guiding
- accuracy
- joint construction of meaning by teachers and pupils during modelled and shared work
- provision of scaffolds or frameworks
- involvement of the pupils in self-monitoring of achievements.

The emphasis will be on promoting pupil's learning through the provision of quality, concrete, active experiences across the curriculum. Planning for cross-curricular activities and the use of a variety of stimuli will ensure that language is used in different contexts, for a range of purposes and audiences. All tasks will have clearly identified outcomes and will be matched to pupils' abilities and interests. Differentiation will be by input, output and by task.

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***Planning, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation:***

Whole school planning makes effective use of the potential contribution of other curricular areas and ensures continuity and progression between year groups, classes and Key Stages. Regular communication thus takes place between staff at all levels of planning.

Progression and continuity between year groups can be developed referencing the performance descriptions (DFES). Planning can be done within Key Stages and should outline both long term and medium term goals. These targets can then be finely tuned by teacher's who write Individual Education Plans (IEP's). The Literacy Co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing planning, and will monitor progress through half termly planning, which will identify specific learning outcomes.

The pupil's progress and achievement is measured using a range of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment procedures, which both monitor progress and inform future planning.

These include:

- Classroom observation
- Individual assessment and teaching
- Collaborative work with therapists

- Screening and diagnostic tests
- Video recording and formative feedback

Individual records of progress are kept by each class teacher and forwarded to the subsequent teacher. Progress reports are kept by the Principal. Progress is reported to parents verbally and in written form annually. Pupils will be encouraged to assess and evaluate their own performance throughout the school. Their work will be marked positively and constructively in relation to their own previous performance.

Pupil's progress will be monitored in relation to the specified learning outcomes. Plans may be modified according to pupil progress. Staff meetings may include discussions of general progress, approaches to planning and analysis of samples of pupils' work.

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### **Resources and their deployment**

The guiding principle for the deployment of resources is one of ensuring full access to the curriculum for all pupils. Materials will be provided which will be appropriate to the range of pupils' interests and abilities. Extension materials will be available for the more able, while reinforcement of core skills and concepts will require appropriately designed resources for the less able. We aim to ensure that all pupils are confident in the use a wide range of resources effectively, e.g. audio-visual aids, hardware for information and communications technology and printed materials.

The variety of resources available include:

- A wide range of book and non-book materials and tasks to suit pupils of differing abilities and interests.
- A range of ICT resources (*see ICT policy*).
- An adequate stock of books, magazines, newspapers and other materials in the school library and in classrooms which reflect the interests and needs of all pupils.
- A variety of appropriate games and activities which will be integrated into day-to-day teaching and learning.
- Custom made and personalised photo and reading books made for individual pupils
- Wide selection of commercially-produced graded reading scheme materials.
- Selection of commercially produced Phonics programmes
- Agreed commercially produced handwriting programme

All resources will be well-designed and kept in well-managed storage and retrieval systems. Pupils will be able to gain easy access thus ensuring the promotion of autonomy in the pupil's use of resources

Schemes of work and half termly planning will indicate a planned use of available resources and show progression and continuity within the curriculum.

### **Cross-Curricular Issues**

A central concern of all our teaching is to develop pupils' abilities to think, explore and communicate (verbally, non-verbally, using communication devices etc), as well as to offer a wide and varied range of experiences. While the English 'lesson' is still useful and necessary for some pupils, many language and literacy skills can be promoted/delivered through other areas of learning and cross-curricular themes.

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

We aim to make maximum use of ICT across the curriculum to promote the pupils' literacy and language skills, as well as developing competence in ICT skills. All pupils will have the opportunity to access computers and other appropriate technology using assistive devices that meet their individual needs. For instance, giving pupils the opportunity to listen to sounds on a switch program which allows less able pupils to develop the skill of active listening. More able pupils will have the opportunity to use word processing programs such as MS Word, Clicker and Writing with Symbols to develop concepts such as capitalisation and sentence structure, as well as spelling and drafting work. There are many software packages that encourage reading and discussion, as well as C2K software titles that support reading schemes such as Wellington Square and Oxford Reading Tree. The Internet opens up a whole new world to our pupils, and it can be used to develop and foster skills such as reading, listening, thinking, writing, and researching to name but a few.

The Range of ICT Resources available include:

Word processors

Touch screens

Concept Keyboards

Whiteboards

Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices (AAC)

C2K (with Internet access, and a wide range of SEN programs)

Other suitable software e.g. Living Books, Boardmaker etc

For further details see ICT Policy

### **Parental and Community Involvement**

We believe that the education of our pupils is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents, pupils and the wider community. Regular and positive communications will be made between teachers and parents, on a formal and informal basis.

We aim to harness the support of the home and to stimulate greater support in order to enhance the pupils' literacy development. Homework is seen as an integral and co-ordinated element of the school's assessment policy and practice.

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include:

- DELTA programme for pre-school and early Key Stage 1
- Forward Together programme (when necessary)
- Paired reading programmes
- Speedwell
- Information/ workshop sessions (e.g. at intake)
- School performances, e.g. Christmas show, assemblies, other religious events
- Sports events
- Book fairs
- Visitors to the school, e.g. storytellers, visiting theatre groups, poets, writers, school nurse, dentist, fire service, etc.
- School trips

### **Equal Opportunities Statement**

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. The staff will be aware of stereotyping in their selection of resources. They are also aware of gender needs in the context of the current focus on the underachievement of boys, and will seek to monitor the situation within the school.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

**Review**

A sub-committee of the board of *Governors* will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy as part of a time tabled ongoing process,

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_