



LONGSTONE SCHOOL

Essential Skills Policy

Article 28 –
Every child has the right to an
education.

To be Reviewed: August 2023



Introduction

This policy outlines the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Essential Skills Literacy and Numeracy at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 in Longstone School.

Aims of the School

In Longstone we aim to provide a broad and balanced set of educational and vocational experiences, which are designed to prepare our pupils for life after school, including the skills and attributes which are necessary for participation in the world of work. **(Article 29 Develop Talents and Abilities).**

In Key Stage Four we try to achieve these aims by matching pupils to learning programmes which suit the individual needs and abilities of each pupil. We encourage pupils to participate in all elements of their course of study, helping them to develop both academic and practical skills which they can take to their Post 16 destination. **(Article 28 Right to an Education).**

The staff work hard to create a happy and secure learning environment where pupils are motivated to succeed, are rewarded for success and are encouraged to respect the rights of others. **(Article 24 Right to a Safe Environment).**

Aims of Essential Skills Award

The Northern Ireland government launched its Essential Skills for Living Strategy in 2002. The aim of the strategy was to improve adult Literacy, Numeracy and Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in Northern Ireland. A suite of Essential Skills qualifications was developed as part of this strategy. The suite of qualifications comprises qualifications from Entry level up to Level 2 in Literacy/Communication and Numeracy/Application of Number, and qualifications at Level 1 and 2 in ICT. The qualifications were designed to be suitable for learners in education, training, work and everyday life situations who would like to gain a nationally accredited qualification.

A review of Essential Skills Level 1 & 2 Certificates in Communication and Application of Number was initiated in 2015 to refresh these particular qualifications and ensure they were suitable for learners from age 14 upwards. The result of this review is a set of revised specifications for the delivery of Level 1 & 2 Communication and Application of Number from September 2016.

At the same time as these qualifications were being reviewed the Essential Skills Curriculum for Literacy and Numeracy was also being reviewed; the result was a new curriculum, Essential Skills Standards and Curriculum for Literacy and Numeracy in Northern Ireland, which was introduced from 2016 to support the delivery of the Essential Skills qualifications in Literacy/Communication and Numeracy/Application of Number.

Curriculum Objectives

The NI curriculum seeks to empower pupils to achieve their potential and make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. It is about helping pupils prepare for life and work: As individuals, as contributors to society and as contributors to the economy and environment. **(Article 12 Right to an Opinion).**

Essential Skills and the Northern Ireland Curriculum Objectives

Please see the government guidance 'Essential Skills Standards and Curriculum for Literacy and Numeracy in Northern Ireland' (2016) for how the Essential Skills qualification meets curriculum objectives.

Staff in the Department

Numeracy:	Mrs S Switzer
Literacy:	Mrs C Mitchell
Examinations Officer:	Mrs S Plunkett

All Key Stage Four Classroom Assistants will assist in the delivery of Essential Skills, through one-to-one and small group tutoring, invigilating and general paperwork and administration duties.

Staff Development

Mrs Switzer attended Essential Skills training in September 2018, Mrs Mitchell will attend Essential Skills virtual training in 2022-2023. We have undergone initial quality assurance visit in January 2019 and are now a recognised centre for delivery of OCN qualifications in our school.

Yr 12 Classroom Assistants underwent Invigilation training in December 2021, they will attend refresher training in December 2022.

Teaching Allocation

The Numeracy aspect is delivered alongside the CCEA Entry Level coursework, as a dual qualification during timetabled Key Stage Four Mathematics lessons (5 periods per week). The Literacy aspect is delivered alongside the CCEA Entry Level coursework, as a dual qualification during Yr 11 English lessons (5 periods per week). Both Miss Mitchell and Mrs Switzer inform Mrs Plunkett who needs to be registered for the course by Halloween.

Entry Level Assessment

Pupils will undergo an initial baseline assessment the results of which will be used, alongside standardised test results, to stream the pupils at the appropriate level. Pupils will then practice key skills required until the teacher and pupil feel they are ready to pass the desktop task. Pupils can sit the Entry Level desktop task at any time throughout the year. Once pupils have achieved a level they will automatically progress to the next level, encouraging them to achieve the highest level possible, in line with their individual ability. **(Article 1 Non Discrimination)**.

Pupils achievement will be tracked on the Key Stage Four Assessment Plan tracking document online.

Pupils will sit desktop tasks in examination conditions in the canteen to reduce distractions and ensure we follow JCQ procedures. The tasks will be given to the pupils **unseen** and **no assistance** may be offered to the pupils when they are sitting the desktop tasks. Once completed the assessments must be stored securely in a locked drawer / filing cabinet. If a pupil does not pass a desktop task they must be issued with a different task for the re-sit.

ES Entry Level Literacy	Assessment	Certification requirements
Entry 1 – Entry 3 40 GLH	Externally set task, administered under supervision and internally marked. Internally verified by the centre. Externally moderated by OCN NI	All 3 sub-skill sections (Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening) completed successfully with achievement at the appropriate level
ES Entry Level Numeracy	Assessment	Certification requirements
Entry 1 – Entry 3 40 GLH	Externally set task, administered under supervision and internally marked. Internally verified by the centre. Externally moderated by OCN NI	All 3 curriculum areas (number, measure, shape & space, handling data) completed successfully with achievement at the appropriate level

Level 1 / Level 2 Assessment

Pupils will undergo an initial baseline assessment the results of which will be used, alongside standardised test results, to stream the pupils at the appropriate level. Pupils will then practice key skills required until the teacher and pupil feel they are ready to pass the examination. Pupils achievement will be tracked on the Key Stage Four Assessment Plan tracking document online.

Pupils will sit desktop tasks in examination conditions in the canteen to reduce distractions and ensure we follow JCQ procedures. There are set dates provided by OCN NI which will guide us as to when pupils complete the Essential Skills Level 1 and Level 2 tasks. The Application of Number and Reading and Writing assessments for Communication are externally set and marked by OCN NI. All papers (used and unused) must be returned to OCN NI within set deadline.

ES Communication	Assessment	Certification requirements
Level 1 & Level 2 45 GLH 60 TQT	Reading & Writing: externally set and externally marked assessment. Speaking & Listening: internally set and internally marked within CCEA Regulation's Controlled Assessment criteria. Internally verified by the centre. Externally moderated by OCN NI	Both components Reading & Writing and Speaking & Listening completed successfully at the appropriate level
ES Application of Number	Assessment	Certification requirements
Level 1 & Level 2 45 GLH 60 TQT	Externally set and externally marked assessment.	External assessment successfully completed at the appropriate level.

Examinations Officer Responsibilities

- Ensure suitably qualified and trained Teachers / Classroom Assistants are involved in the delivery and invigilation of Essential Skills course.
- Ensure that Longstone meets the JCQ Requirements for the delivery and invigilation of the Essential Skills courses.
- Internally moderate work and internally verify assessment material.
- Order in assessment tasks as and when required and upload results from assessments.

Teachers Responsibilities

- Plan a programme of study including writing term planners and creating / adapting teaching resources which meet the curriculum standards and engage the learners.
- Organise initial assessments to stream pupils at the appropriate ability.

- Provide feedback and coach pupils to help them reach the required standards before assessments take place.

Pupil responsibilities

- Arrive on time for the desktop tasks / examinations. Pupils who are more than 10 minutes late will automatically fail the exam.
- Bring all required materials needed for the examination (see list below).
- Take feedback and advice from teachers / classroom assistants to complete classwork and homework set.

Equipment Approved for use during Examinations

Communication – Reading & Writing	Application of Number
Blue pen/black pen	Blue pen/black pen
Dictionary	30cm ruler
	Calculator
	Protractor
	Bilingual dictionary

Differentiation

We are offering the full range of levels for Essential Skills (Entry Level 1 – 3, Level 1 and Level 2). This is to ensure our lower ability pupils are given the opportunity to achieve success as well as to stretch our higher ability pupils, opening more destination options for them at Post 16. **(Article 1 Non Discrimination)**.

Where necessary we will apply for reasonable adjustments for pupils with specific learning needs.

Teachers are expected to plan lessons which engage the pupils and cater for individual learning preferences.

Essential Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

The Essential Skills Literacy and Numeracy specification provides opportunities for pupils to develop the following key skills: **(Article 29 Talents & Abilities)**.

Application of number
 Communication;
 Improving own learning and performance;
 Information and communication technology;
 Problem-solving; and
 Working with others.

See individual term planners for tasks devised to develop the above skills.

RRSA and Local and Global Citizenship

Pupils are encouraged to achieve the highest grade possible in line with **UNCRC Article 28 Right to a Quality Education**. Pupils explore a range of topics such as ‘Caring for the World We Live in’, ‘Green Finger’s and ‘Health and Safety’ which link in with Global Learning and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Health and Safety in Essential Skills

All staff involved in the teaching and delivery of this subject will ensure they maintain a clean and safe learning environment (**UNCRC Article 24**) for the pupils. Teachers will undertake classroom risk assessments at the beginning of the academic year.

Evaluation

We will monitor and evaluate the success of Essential Skills in different ways. For example, we will use feedback from OCN Principal moderator reports. Staff will attend appropriate training courses in order to stay up-to-date with requirements.

We also take on board pupil feedback and make changes where necessary. For example, all Key Stage Four pupils complete an annual pupil satisfaction survey where they can recommend changes to the current system.

To be reviewed: August 2023