

St. Mary's Primary School Draperstown



Language & Literacy Policy

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CONTENTS

- Literacy Policy: Rationale - Principles - Aims - Role of the Teacher
- Role of the Literacy Co-ordinator
- Talking and Listening : Rationale - Aims - Classroom Environment
- Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning for Talking and Listening
- Reading : Rationale - Aims - Classroom and Reading Environment
- Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning for Reading
- Writing : Rationale - Aims - Classroom Environment
- Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning for Writing
- Spelling and Handwriting
- Parental Involvement in Literacy
- Parental Involvement in Reading
- Assessment
- Homework Policy
- Marking Policy and Key
- Gender Issues and Equal Opportunities
- Extra Activities

Literacy Policy

Rationale

We aim to provide a supportive, stimulating and secure environment where all children are encouraged to express themselves and where their contributions are valued. We will provide for the language development of pupils and will develop their ability to use language to think, to explore and to recognise and communicate their ideas.

Principles

We agree:

- Literacy is a right for each and every pupil.
- It is the responsibility of all teachers to develop literacy.
- Literacy recurs in all subjects and should be developed across all areas of the curriculum
- In a holistic approach where teaching and learning, reading and writing are inter-woven.

Aims

Our aims are:

- To raise the standard of literacy.
- To enable pupils to express and communicate meaning in spoken language, listen to and interpret what others say and match style and response to audience, context and purpose.
- To provide pupils with a range of relevant and purposeful opportunities to develop their ability to read, understand and engage with various types of text for enjoyment and learning.
- To enable children to communicate using written language effectively, making and shaping text appropriately, according to context, purpose, reader or audience.

Role of the Teacher

In the teaching of literacy we see our roles as:

- **Model:** fostering a positive attitude towards literacy
- **Facilitator:** providing a supportive, changing and stimulating environment, organising purposeful activities and enabling children to develop literacy skills
- **Initiator:** providing a variety of resources and opportunities for a wide range of balanced activities to encourage the development of skills in literacy.
- **Monitor:** observing and recording the development of skills in literacy.
- **Assessor:** evaluating and assessing the development of skills in literacy.

The Role of the Literacy Co-ordinator

The Literacy Co-ordinator should:

- Have a good knowledge of issues related to literacy and keep up to date with developments: E.g. teaching methods, resources required, assessment issues and record-keeping procedures
- Ensure that there are schemes of work for Literacy which cover aims, objectives, content, resources, teaching methods, differentiation, use of ICT equipment and assessment and record-keeping procedures;
- Monitor and evaluate teaching of literacy across the curriculum and if necessary work alongside the teacher in the classroom;
- Check regularly throughout the year that children's records and assessment activities are being kept up-to-date;
- Be responsible for organising, maintaining and cataloguing up-to-date resources and equipment;
- Order new books and equipment when required or as finances permit;
- Encourage displays of children's work in literacy;
- Assist, identify and provide in-service handouts, workshop sessions and demonstration lessons for staff as required; advise beginning teachers, lead discussion groups and represent the subject to outsiders, E.g. governors, advisers, inspectors and parents;
- Keep the whole area under review and have an action plan;
- Keep notes / minutes of meetings connected with literacy.

TALKING AND LISTENING

Rationale

Talking and listening are fundamental skills upon which the educational development of all our children depends. Through the development of oral skills they learn about language and this equips them to demonstrate and refine their learning.

Aims

Our overall aim is for all our children to become efficient language users. We will devote time, energy and resources to the development of oral communication. Through purposeful interaction with teachers, children will be provided with experiences that develop their skills and their thinking.

Classroom Environment

- The classroom atmosphere will be one in which the children feel relaxed, accepted and affirmed.
- Children's contributions will be valued.
- A range of stimuli from a variety of sources will be used to encourage children's involvement and enjoyment to ensure that they understand that talk is work.
- Boys and girls will be given equal opportunity

These are also the key elements for the linguistic development of the Newcomer pupils

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning for Talking and Listening.

Teachers will model oral language.

Teachers will plan for talk, linked with reading and writing and in all areas across the curriculum.

Experiences and activities will be provided to promote a wide range of types of talk.

Pupils will be given the opportunity for Talking and Listening in pairs, small groups and class groups of various mixes. Pupils will be given various roles within groups.

A wide range of resources will be used including extensive use of ICT facilities.

READING

Rationale

Reading is a fundamental skill to enable children to extend their learning. Reading may be an end in itself and may be used as preparation for talking and listening, writing and / or other work across the curriculum.

Aims

Our aims are that all our children will learn to read, enjoy a wide variety of texts and become independent, critical readers and learners.

Classroom and Reading Environment

The classroom will show that reading is a valued activity and will provide an environment where pupils may read on their own or with others.

The atmosphere will allow the pupils to feel relaxed, accepted and affirmed.

Children's work will be displayed along with a variety of texts, books, magazines, leaflets, posters, factual and fictional work encouraging boys and girls to feel inspired to read.

Pupils will have the opportunities to:

- Make use of the book corner / library in each class
- Read from the computer / Use audio aids
- Participate in Book Events / Book Fairs / World Book Day / Book Clubs
- Read environmental print and changing displays
- Choose own books
- Read aloud to a variety of audiences
- Read silently
- Listen to teachers and other read and tell stories
- Browse

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning For Reading

- In order to facilitate pupils' various styles and abilities a wide variety of approaches will be used in teaching and encouraging reading.
- A wide variety of language experiences will be modelled across the curriculum
- Pupils will be read to regularly, from P1 to P7
- The phonic method will be emphasised strongly and flashcards will be used up to P3 and for children with learning difficulties
- Jolly Phonics from P1 to P3 progressing on to P4
- Sustained silent reading is encouraged
- We will try to ensure that pupils will develop a capability to read for meaning and begin to form judgements based on personal opinion.
- Oxford Reading Tree, Storyworlds, PM books, etc are levelled and used for Foundation to P4 and pupils with reading difficulties.
- We are continually monitoring and aiming to improve reading materials and the standard of reading throughout the school. We have made a considerable financial commitment to improving the reading resources.
- In KS2 teachers have extended their reading material to include a wider range of novels.
- All teachers have access to levelled reading material
- The P1 and P7 teachers have been trained in Reading Recovery
- Children with reading difficulties are given special attention in smaller groups within the classroom and some are withdrawn for support.

- We have extended our reading materials for children with learning difficulties to ensure they have high interest, low level books to ensure enjoyment, increase interest and provide more success
- Pupils will use class libraries and visit the local library
- Group novels will be used in KS2 and teachers will move away from hearing pupils read on a daily basis
- Parents of P1 pupils will be invited into school for presentation on how to help their child with reading and how to encourage good practice. (See Parental Involvement)

Reading for the purpose of study requires specific skills. Children will be taught and have the opportunity to practice:

- Extracting information from books using contents page or index
- Extracting information on topics / characters in stories
- Classifying information in alphabetical order
- Using a dictionary / bilingual & picture dictionaries
- Using computer to research information
- Using reference materials such as encyclopaedias, atlases, directories, timetables, brochures & Internet search engines
- Formulating questions which require a search for information
- Skimming text to get an impression of what it is about
- Scanning text to search for specific information
- Making notes, selecting what is relevant and appropriate
- Distinguishing between fact and opinion in evaluation information

See planners for objectives, activities, learning intentions and resources

WRITING

Rationale

Writing is an essential tool in the learning process. Children write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions and to present evidence of research. By developing these skills we can equip all our children to use writing across the range of curricular activities in which they are involved.

Aims

Our aim is that our children will develop the ability to write effectively in various forms according to purpose and audience.

Classroom Environment

The classroom atmosphere will be one where the pupils feel relaxed, accepted and affirmed enabling them to succeed as writers.

The environment will be stimulating where children are given the opportunities to write, encouraged and inspired to write.

Children's writing will be displayed along with writing by favourite authors / poets where appropriate.

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning For Writing

We have devised and agreed a checklist for monitoring and evaluating handwriting and writing from P1 to P7. Cornerstones continues to be our main scheme for teaching writing throughout the school

* See file for Monitoring & Evaluating checklists

- All classes will use 'Cornerstones For Writing' to teach both Fictional and Factual Writing through;
- Modelling
- Planning
- Drafting
- Editing and
- Publishing

Self assessment suggestions and worksheets can be completed at the end of each topic

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning For Writing

- Examples of various forms of writing will be displayed and discussed so that children become familiar with the structure and language features of these forms; E.g. letters, diaries, lists, invitations, notes, stories, etc.
- Children will write for various audiences - themselves, their peers, the school, family and wider community.
- The purpose of the writing will be made clear before children begin. E.g. Are they trying to persuade, frighten, inform or amuse the reader?
- Learning Intentions will be shared with the pupils
- Teachers will show the children how to approach writing task by modelling - explaining what they are doing as they go along, and / or by scribing children's ideas on large sheets or on the board.
- Children will have the opportunity to engage in collaborative writing, as a class group or in small groups
- Time will be given for discussion and planning for writing (writing lessons need not end in a writing task for the children)
- Children will be encouraged to revise and redraft work
- Attention will be paid to the correct spelling - children will be encouraged to use keyword lists, word books, dictionaries, thesauri, have-a go books, etc. as appropriate. (See Spelling)
- Children will be made aware of the importance of presentation and handwriting in their work. (See Handwriting)

Spelling

A variety of spelling methods will be used:

- Magnetic letters
- Phonics
- The 'Look, Say, Cover, Write & Check' method
- Alphabetical lists
- Keyword lists
- Word books
- Analogy
- Dictionaries, thesauri and computer spellchecker

Foundation Level pupils will be encouraged to write their name and some keywords as they show readiness. Regular practice will be given in spelling throughout the school from KS1.

Pupils will have the opportunities to observe spelling rules. They will be taught spelling rules and the use of analogy.

The 'Look, Cover, Write and Check' method will be encouraged. Supplementary spelling and phonic activities may be used.

Handwriting

Using 'Penpals For Writing' from Foundation Level children will start to progress from letter formation / printing, to connected handwriting. Regular practice will be maintained throughout the school.

Handwriting will be displayed to raise children's awareness and to show progression from P1 to P7.

Parental Involvement

Parents will have the opportunity to discuss children's progress in Literacy. They will be given advice about how to help where needed.

Results from assessments will be shared with parents.
Annual reports will include child's achievements in all areas of literacy

Homework diaries and reading notebooks can be used to inform parents. Children's books will be sent home at various times for parents to see.

Home / school journals, use of bilingual books and keyword lists allow discussion with the Newcomer parents of topics covered, with the inclusion of first language words, enabling the children to draw on previous knowledge

Newcomer parents will have an interpreter present to gather information (Data Capture Form) and discuss children's progress. Parents of children with special educational needs will have the opportunity to discuss child's individual education plans with SENCo and / or class teacher, and will be encouraged to become involved in the plan of work.

Parents of Primary 1 children will be invited into school for presentation from P1 teacher on the use of phonics and early reading strategies.

Parents will be informed of any updates and changes in the Literacy Programme.

Parental Involvement in Reading

We recognise that all parents have a very important role to play in the development of their children's reading. We hope to involve them in the following ways:

By encouraging them to:

- Read with and to their child
- Talk about books and stories
- Talk about pictures in books
- Encourage their child to talk about the stories they have enjoyed together and about the child's own discoveries and choices
- Attend book centred events in school
- Attend story telling events
- Take their child to the library and share experiences with them
- Listen to their child reading aloud
- Participate in Paired Reading

For parents of Newcomer pupils children could have dual language library books

Assessment

Teachers will monitor pupils on a regular basis in all areas of literacy.

Different methods of assessment will be employed - teacher observation, standardised PIE tests and graded reading and spelling assessments.

In writing, teachers will take account of the overall style, its appropriateness, content and organisation of ideas, handwriting, presentation and grammar.

Pupils will be encouraged to move towards self and peer assessment exercises.

Homework Policy

It is the policy of this school to provide opportunities for children to do homework a maximum of four nights per week.

Homework will be designed to:

- Provide reinforcement for work completed in class.
- Give parents an opportunity to work with their child
- Provide opportunities for extension of work done in school.
- Provide opportunities to assess understanding of work covered in school
- Provide opportunities for pupils to do further work on topics and to gather information
- Encourage independent learning

Children should be able to complete work with little help required.

'Homework Topic Packs' have been developed for use In Foundation Stage 1 for use on a weekly basis.

KS1 pupils should be able to complete homework in a half hour or less.

KS2 pupils should be able to complete homework in one hour approximately.

Children will be encouraged to read books and novels at all times
Provision will be made for Newcomer children with adapted resources and for children with learning difficulties.

Homework assignments in Talking & Listening, Reading and Writing will reflect the classroom practice and be used as a method of reinforcement and/or preparatory work.

* See Homework Policy

Marking Policy

Aims:

- All written tasks will have a clearly defined focus whereby pupils will understand exactly what is required of them
- To encourage pupils to develop an awareness of their own writing
- To review all written work carefully with a positive outlook and to mark and comment accordingly

Objectives:

- All written work will be marked and feedback will be given as soon as possible
- Work will be commented on. Verbal comments will be added where the teacher feels it necessary.
- Where possible the comments will reflect the nature of the task and take account of the learning intentions.
- Teachers will use the uniform 'key' for marking
- Corrections will be: Individual, re-doing of work where necessary

*See School Marking Policy

Gender Issues / Equal Opportunities

We are aware of the research that suggests boys underachieve in Literacy. We aim to raise standards among all children equally. We aim to employ a balance of topics to motivate both boys and girls

Promotion of Literacy

Book Fair

To promote literacy we have an annual book fair. Commission made from selling books is used to buy more books for the classrooms and the library.

World Book Day

Reading is encouraged when children are given book tokens and made aware of World Book Day through displays, posters and events.

Library

Class Teachers take children to visit the local library to:

- See the wide range of resources a library provides.
- Encourage children to go regularly with parents.
- Introduce younger children to the librarian.
- Participate in events and competitions organised by the library.

Book Clubs

Pupils will have the opportunity to buy books from a selection in Scholastic Book Club. They will be aware that the school get a commission and that this is spent on books for the school.

National Poetry Day

National Poetry day will be used to highlight and raise awareness of poets and poetry.

European Day of Languages will be celebrated annually.

