

St Joseph's Primary School Literacy Policy

"A School at the heart of the Community, Community at the heart of the school"

MISSION STATEMENT

In St Joseph's Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment. We celebrate the academic and non-academic achievements of all our pupils. We have very high yet realistic expectations for all our pupils and we encourage them to work hard and achieve their full potential.

Our parents are key partners in laying the foundations for future learning in the school. As a Catholic school the Board of Governors and Staff are firmly committed to promoting the spiritual, academic, social, physical, and aesthetic development of all our children..

In our school we aim to:

- Create a safe, enjoyable learning environment where effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
- Implement all aspects of the NI Revised Curriculum;
- Help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
- Value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
- Encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to support and care for one another;
- Equip our children with the necessary life skills to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
- Develop and strengthen each pupil's understanding and love of Catholic values by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
- Involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

CONTEXT

The stated vision of the Department of Education for N Ireland (DENI) is 'To ensure that every learner fulfills 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; and**
- **A school connected to its local community.**

INTRODUCTION

In St Joseph'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 outlines 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.

The continuity and progression in our language planning will be underpinned by the learning intentions outlined in the Primary Language Framework.

In St Joseph'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;
- have an interest in books and read for enjoyment;
- have an interest in words, their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms;
- understand a range of text types and genres and be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation;
- develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness;
- use a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

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 (Years 1 and 2) 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.

In 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.

In 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.

CHILD CENTRED PROVISION

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in the 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 (Better Reading programme at individual level/target groups)
- 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 aim to provide for all children so that they reach their full potential in Literacy according to their individual abilities. The role of the teacher 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 children's learning styles and rates of learning;
 - To be aware of their own language use and position as a role model;
 - To use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning in literacy;
 - To recognise that literacy skills need to be taught throughout the school;
 - To promote thinking skills in literacy lessons when the context lends itself to this;
 - To avoid negative responses to children's contributions and facilitate learning through the use of quality formative feedback (Tickled Pink; Green for Growth)
 - To encourage children to reflect upon their own work and comment constructively on the work of others through peer assessment, when appropriate;
 - To be aware of the need for careful planning progressively across the curriculum, differentiating where appropriate;
 - To keep records and monitor the progress of children in their class (HFWs, Salford termly)
 - To use data to inform decision-making and target-setting and to measure improvements and standards in literacy; and
 - To direct teaching assistants to work with individuals or small groups.
- We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are underachieving and those with special educational needs in order to take steps to improve their attainment. High achieving children will also be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

The teachers in St Joseph's Primary School have a responsibility to identify children with language and literacy difficulties at the earliest opportunity. Pupils are identified through analysis of literacy data and or classroom observations. They may also be brought to the school's attention by parents themselves or by other agencies such as the Health and Social Services departments.

Diagnostic tests will be used, where appropriate, to aid understanding of specific areas of difficulty, and to inform plans for remediation. The SENCo will provide advice and support for all staff and will liaise with class teachers, peripatetic support staff (when appropriate), and other relevant professionals, particularly when drawing up IEPs and monitoring progress. Pupils will benefit from in-class support from the teacher and teaching assistant (where applicable). Parents will be regularly informed about their children's difficulties, the programme of support being

provided and the progress being made, as detailed in the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (1998).

Through analysis of literacy data and in consultation with their class teacher, children from P2 onwards will be selected to take part in the Better Reading programme. This programme aims to help eligible pupils become better, more successful readers by developing their confidence and motivation. Pupils work with our Reading Tutors and their progress is monitored using the Salford Sentence Reading Test. The effectiveness of the programme is evaluated at its conclusion by each pupil, their parents and their class teacher.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for the pupils;
- An emphasis on literacy and numeracy exists across the curriculum;
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with their pupils and are dedicated to improving learning;
- Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom;
- Assessment and other data is 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; and
- Education outcomes reflect positively on the school and compare well, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken, against the performance of similar schools.

Subject Organisation

The Literacy Curriculum is delivered using the requirements in the N. Ireland Curriculum for Language and Literacy. We recognise that a sound underlying organisation and management of the classroom environment is crucial to promote and support learning.

Organisation will vary to suit the purpose, context and the children involved; a range of organisational strategies is essential.

- To help children feel confident and comfortable within the classroom, attention will be given to the layout - freedom of movement; flexibility to work; easy access to resources of all kinds, including fiction, non-fiction, ICT and media texts.

- Different types of groupings will be used where appropriate, and size, flexibility and composition of groups will be considered. These may include independent, individual, paired and partner work, small group, ability, mixed ability, mixed age and whole class.
- Texts and tasks in all areas of language will be differentiated according to individual ability, age, learning style, learning rate and needs.

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; as a small staff we always take a collaborative approach to planning, monitoring and evaluating. The EA's 'Language Framework for the Primary School' was used to help develop progression and continuity between year groups and classes, and each teacher has a copy of this Literacy Scheme of Work. Planning is done monthly and individual teachers also prepare shorter-term notes which detail the day-to-day administration of their Literacy lessons. This is shared with classroom assistants where relevant and evaluated rigorously to inform next steps. The literacy coordinator has responsibility for overseeing and monitoring plans and evaluations, ensuring learning intentions and success criteria are clearly indicated. The standard of children's work is monitored by means of literacy book scoops, Collaborative Book Monitoring sessions and classroom observations. Following the book scoops and classroom observations, teachers are provided with an opportunity to share good literacy practice.

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 our school. Pupils are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately.

Children will have opportunities to develop talking and listening skills through a range of oral, aural and practical activities. Drama and role-play also provide contexts for talking and listening. The children will speak for a variety of audiences and purposes including assemblies, school performances, open mornings/evenings, First Penance, First Communion, Confirmation and other religious events etc. They will develop their confidence, self-esteem and emotional development through regular Circle Time sessions and interaction with other pupils, teachers and

visitors to the school.

Approaches to reading

A wide range of text types and forms (fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama) will be introduced throughout Foundation Stage and Key Stages One and Two. We have recently purchased a new reading scheme 'Bug Club' for KS1/2 pupils (both hard copies and E-Books for use on ipads). Oxford Reading Tree has also been recently purchased for Foundation Stage pupils (Sept 2016) who will use this scheme alongside the computer based 'Bug Club' which gives them access to a range of genres.

Teachers adopt a wide number of strategies to develop reading, incorporating language experience, 'look and say', phonics, contextual and syntactic approaches. These will be taught through modelled, shared and guided reading methods to develop independence and fluency. Running records are used in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One to ensure pupils are reading at their appropriate level. Guided reading materials are book-banded and will be sent home weekly. They will be supplemented with 'Easy Read' texts which are intended to promote enjoyment and independent reading skills and may be accessed by children on a daily basis. Teachers will record children's guided reading in their Reading Record Books to promote effective home-school liaison.

An emphasis is placed on the importance of comprehension skills and strategies, which are developed and encouraged from the beginning (Literacy priority 2016-17) The pleasure and enjoyment of reading is also fostered in the language lessons, across the curriculum and beyond the classroom. Opportunities for silent and independent reading are given in all classes (A timetable is in place for class use of our central library and ERIC time is given daily)

A stimulating print environment will be maintained in all classrooms and throughout the wider school environment. Charts, posters and labels will provide information for the children. Reading areas and writing areas will be utilised appropriately within individual classrooms.

Approaches to writing

A range of text types and styles, including commercially produced resources, teacher-made materials and the children's own work will be presented throughout the school reflecting word-processed and handwritten forms of presentation. The use of Letter-join and Joinit will be used to support our whole school approach to continuous cursive script. Writing will be taught through a process of selecting specific text forms and supporting the children through a process of familiarisation with the form through reading experiences, leading to a stage of problem solving to analyse the features of the form. The teacher will demonstrate

aspects of the writing process through modelled and shared writing, and will then scaffold the children's own writing in guided writing until the children are confident and competent enough to write independently. The pupils will be provided with a wide range of opportunities to write with attention to purpose and audience. Teachers will remind pupils in all year groups to: **think it, say it, write it and read it aloud** when developing their writing.

Spelling will be taught throughout the school from P2-7 using Prim-Ed My Spelling Workbooks. Spelling will be baselined in September using Vernon spelling assessment (P3-7) and this will identify high achievers. Teachers at their discretion may move an individual pupil up a level if they deem appropriate (differentiation). Teachers encourage children to make links between reading, writing and oral language to help them develop into effective spellers.

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities/Cross curricular opportunities for literacy development

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, to highlight this in their planning and to make cross- curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practice and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through language lessons to other areas of the curriculum. They will use a range of active learning strategies in the classroom, including drama strategies for example, hot-seating a character, conscience alley.

The use of ICT

Opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning in literacy will be planned for and used as appropriate.

We aim to make maximum use of ICT across the curriculum to promote the pupils' literacy skills, as well as developing competence in ICT skills. This involves the use of computers, and also the possibilities offered by the wide range of audio-visual materials, graphics, radio and television broadcasts, which are available through BBC iPlayer.

Pupils will be provided with opportunities to gain confidence in the use of ICT, for example in using C2K literacy programmes, word processing programmes for drafting work, spreadsheets, databases and the internet for research and communication purposes. With the recent purchase of 10 iPads, animation and digital literacy will be a focus for further development.

The range of ICT resources available include:

- Computers, laptops and iPads;

- Interactive White Board and Active Panels;
- My School, internet and e-mail;
- CD players, headphones;
- Cameras - digital/video/web cam;
- Telephone and fax;
- Microphones;
- School website.

Staff will be given opportunities to access continuing professional development and the use of technology will be planned and evaluated in line with the requirements of the UICT assessment levels.

Target-setting, assessment, monitoring and evaluation

Teachers begin each new learning experience by sharing learning intentions and success criteria. The Assessment for Learning principles are outlined below:

What we are doing (Learning Intention)

How will we know if we have been successful (Success Criteria)

Learning Climate **AfL** (Enjoy learning)

Effective Questioning

Self and Peer Assessment

Quality formative feedback to inform next steps

The children's progress and achievement is also measured using a range of summative assessment procedures, which both monitor progress and inform future planning. These include:

- PTE standardised tests (P3 - P7);
- Statutory End of Key Stage Assessments (P4 and P7);
- NRIT (P3, P5 and P6);
- NILA (P4-P7);
- Running records; and
- Screening and diagnostic tests (where appropriate)

Records of attainment in standardised tests and End of Key Stage Assessments are kept by relevant teachers, the principal/SENCO and Literacy and Numeracy coordinators.

Children's work will be marked positively and constructively in relation to the agreed Learning Intention and Success Criteria. All teachers will use *Tickled Pink; Green for Growth* and share their feedback with the pupils to support them in making further improvements (if necessary) in their work. Pupils are also encouraged to reflect upon and evaluate their work and that of their peers, when appropriate. Progress is reported to

parents verbally and in written form annually by class teachers. Staff meetings regularly include aspects of literacy such as dissemination of good practice, approaches to planning and analysis of samples of children's work.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- 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 the opportunity 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; and
- School leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan itself.

Role of the Literacy Coordinator

The Literacy coordinator is responsible, in consultation with the teachers, parents and governors for improving the standards of teaching and learning in literacy through:

- Monitoring and evaluating literacy
 - pupil progress
 - management and analysis of relevant data
 - provision of literacy (including intervention and support programmes)
 - the quality of the learning environment
 - the deployment and provision of support staff
- 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
- Maintaining contact with all concerned: teachers, staff, parents, pupils
- Ensuring channels of communication are open and active with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, EA SER, CCMS, RTU, CCEA, etc.

The Board of Governors

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of Literacy provision and on the standards being achieved by the school.

A school connected to its community

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- Good relationships that facilitate engagement and communication between the school, its parents, the governors and the wider community that it serves;
- The school and its staff are held in respect by parents, by governors and by the local community who in turn actively support the work of the school;
- The school uses its involvement in particular programmes effectively in meeting the needs of the pupils and the community;
- Good relationships and clear channels of communication are in place between the school and the education agencies that support it; and
- The school works closely with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies whose work impacts on education, especially Health and Social Services and the Public Library Service.

Parental and Community Involvement

We believe that the education of our pupils is collaborative involving teachers, parents, pupils, external agencies (where appropriate) 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.

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include:

- Open morning/evening
P1 intake induction, parent/teacher meetings, newsletters, curriculum workshops for parents;
- School events, e.g. Christmas production, First Communion, other religious events;
- Catholic Schools Week
- Involvement in World Book Day and the annual Book Fair;
- Our very active PTFA;
- Supporting homework, reading and talking to children at home;
- School trips;
- School website;

- Visits from storytellers, authors, drama groups;
- Links with Play-Links and post-primary schools for transition;
- Connecting to local businesses, school nurse, dentist, the PSNI, Fire Service, etc; and

Resources

All teachers will aim to ensure full access to the Northern Ireland curriculum for all pupils. Materials will be provided which will be appropriate to the range of children's interests and abilities and differentiation may be by task and / or outcome.

CONCLUSION

This policy should be in line with other school policies, including:

- Learning and Teaching Policy;
- Assessment/Marking Policy;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy
- ICT Policy;

REVIEW OF POLICY

This Literacy Policy will be reviewed in October 2018 or sooner if required.