



Literacy Policy

2014

Context:

St. Mary's P.S Literacy Policy has been written within the context of the most currently available legislation and guidance. Staff members are guided by the following:

- The Northern Ireland Curriculum (Primary)
- NI Literacy framework (reworked by SELB & WELB CASS team)
- DENI : Every School A Good School- A Policy for School Improvement.

This has greatly impacted on the strategic plan we have for the development of Literacy in St. Mary's P.S as referenced in the School Development Plan and Literacy action plans.

Introduction: AIMS

In St. Mary's P.S, we believe that pupils' literacy skills, i.e. 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 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.

At St. Mary's P.S, 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,*
- *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 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) In St. Mary's P.S children, in **the Foundation Stage** are given opportunities to:

- talk and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;

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

At Key Stage Two (Years 5-7), children are encouraged to learn to change the way they talk and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They have opportunities to read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them and to 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 are reflected in St. Mary's P.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, and 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.

Teaching and learning-Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they reach their full potential in literacy according to their individual abilities.

-The staff of St. Mary's P.S school recognises the importance of identifying, as early as possible, those children who have special educational needs. The school follows the 5-Stage approach, as set out in the Code of practice.

-Children are identified initially by the class teacher who will provide support within the normal curriculum framework. The SENCO and parents are informed. E.P.S are written and reviewed termly or earlier if necessary. On review, new or amended targets will be set. A small number of children who require further help will move on to the next stage.

-Children identified by the class teacher in P3 can access Reading Partnership. We currently have three classroom assistants who have received reading partnership training.

- From P4 to P7 specialised literacy support is available for pupils who require further intervention, through tuition in small withdrawal groups and/or 1-1 by peripatetic teacher

- Staff also use assessment tools to identify children with special educational needs and to identify foci for all teaching. [This also takes into account our gifted and talented children and our underachieving children, as shown by any discrepancy between their standardised scores in PIE and their CATS score.]

Assessment tools include

Base line assessment, M.I.ST -February P.2, running records, CATS, GL Online Assessment, end of year tests P3-7, End of key stage tests, NGRT reading tests, spelling test, Salford Sentence tests, Star Reading Tests, AR assessments. All are analysed using SIMS for planning and intervention.

-Class work is differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, reading materials are banded and regular running records are carried out to ensure all children are reading at an appropriate level.

-Classroom assistants provide support to individual children and to small groups.

- Parents are kept informed through parent teacher meetings and targets set in E.P.S.

-Resources for literacy include interactive white board, class computers and Collins Primary Literacy program, book banded reading [Collins Big Cat, Rigby Star, Oxford Reading Tree, Project X and Lighthouse are our reading schemes], linguistic phonic resources, Penpals for handwriting, class novels, class library, AR Resources, Lexia Reading Programme, iPad apps. Pupils have equal access to all resources

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING:

The following indicators from ESaGS are reflected in St. Mary's P.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 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 is used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement.
- 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.
- Education outcomes **reflect positively** on the school, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken.

Subject organisation

The English Curriculum is delivered using the requirements in the N. Ireland Curriculum for Language and Literacy.

St. Mary's P.S currently has an enrolment of 189 pupils, with seven classes, seven full time teachers and five classroom assistants

- *Lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. This is also reflected in our planning. Children have opportunities to work in mixed and ability groups. Long term plans are on a yearly basis.*
- *Classroom assistants are used to support and guide groups and individual children*
- *Long term planning is determined by the Primary Language Framework [SELB], medium term planning is on a monthly basis [text, sentence, and word level learning intentions are out lined] and short term planning is monthly. All medium term plans are placed on Staff documents and evaluated to inform future planning. Planning is kept in a file in each class on the Teacher's desk.*

Approaches to talking and listening

Oral language is recognised as the **primary mode of language** and this is reflected in its focus in all areas of the curriculum and in the life of St. Mary's P.S. Pupils are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes. They are encouraged to listen to others and take turns, and to respond appropriately to what has been said and to value the opinions of others.

Emphasis on oral language is reflected in

- *The planning for talking and listening in many areas of the curriculum,*
- *Use of Speech and language lessons in the foundation stage,*
- *The promotion and extension of oral language through play, pupils are given opportunities to talk about decisions they make and to ask and answer questions on their play.*
- *Pupils are given opportunities to talk about their work, give oral feed back and presentations.*
- *Talk is linked to writing through –'think it, say it, like it, write it, read it aloud' strategy and is further extended with the use of active learning strategies and effective questioning.*
- *All children have opportunities to participate in monthly assemblies, Christmas plays ,circle time etc*
- *Talking is promoted during shared and guided reading lessons.*

- *Children have opportunities to discuss, interact and talk in pairs, small and larger groups,*

Talking and listening is promoted as a social, communicative and cognitive process.

Approaches to reading

We strive to teach all our children to read and to enjoy a variety of texts so that they will become independent, readers and learners, we believe reading is a vital skill and this is reflected in the emphasis placed on the teaching of reading in our school.

-Each classroom has a class library where books are displayed in a variety of ways. Texts include fiction, non-fiction, different genres and novels for the more able readers.

-A Reading Centre houses our extensive range of Guided Reading material and our AR resources.

- All children experience modelled, shared, guided and independent reading. Teacher's "model" good reading practices in each of their classes. In KS1 and 2 silent reading is part of our daily classroom practice.

-Some classroom assistants are also trained in the reading partnership programme. Pupils identified by the class teacher take part in an eight week reading partnership programme. We have an extensive range of books banded solely for RP use only. As a result classroom assistants also play a key role in daily guided reading sessions.

-Our reading schemes are Collins Big Cat, Rigby Star, Oxford Reading Tree, Project X and Lighthouse. This is supplemented by other schemes to allow for differentiation and extension. Reading resources are stored as a shared resource. We also have an SEN reading section for those pupils experiencing difficulty. This allows these children to read at their own pace without lowering their self-esteem as the other pupils do not have access to their reading material.

-Book banding is used throughout the school to allow for standardisation of communication in relation to pupils reading ability.

-The Star Reading Test from Renaissance Learning is also used as guidance for standardising the reading groups.

-Children are encouraged to choose AR material at their own ZPD.

-Running records and reading ages are used to ensure children are reading at the appropriate level.

-Comprehension skills are developed during guided reading sessions.

- Library and study and dictionary skills are developed through work on reference books and use of the class library, computer programs and the internet and through the preparation of projects.
- KS2 children have opportunities to read to and share reading with children in the foundation stage through our Paired Reading Scheme.
- The linguistic phonics scheme is used through out the school to develop phonological awareness. Spelling lists are grouped in stages and phases which allows for differentiation and extension of more able children.
- Curriculum information evenings are organised to help and inform parents.
- Reading homework allows children to practice their reading skills and share their reading with their parents.
- Parent teacher meetings are used as an opportunity to share information on approaches to literacy.
- Regular book fairs are held to promote reading enjoyment and build up literacy resources. We organise activities for pupils during Book Week.
- Visits to our local library and from authors and story tellers are organised to promote a love of reading.
- The mobile library visits the school 2 times a year. This allows the teachers to change our class and central library resources.
- The children's mobile library visits the school 2 times a month. This allows KS2 pupils to change their reading resources.

We aim to provide a classroom environment which promotes a love of books and reading.

'Children who read become adults who think'

Writing

Children write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions and to present evidence of research. By developing these skills, we aim to equip our children to use writing across a range of curricular activities in which they are involved. We aim to develop within our children an ability to write effectively in various forms according to purpose and audience. They will be encouraged to develop as independent writers, learning over time to use conventional spelling, punctuation, grammatical organisation and handwriting.

Teaching Approaches to Promote Writing

We strive to provide an environment where children are inspired to write.

- In the Foundation/Key Stage One, writing is encouraged during play, in the writing area and in the role play area.
- From P1 are encouraged to write independently, gradually developing the range and extent of their writing. Teachers develop independent writing by observing, facilitating and modelling.
- Word banks, dictionaries and thesauri are available for the children in all key stages.
- Classroom displays also contain language which children may require in their writing.
- Writing frames are also used to help children organise their writing and write for a purpose.
- Modelled, shared, guided and independent writing sessions take place across all age groups and all genres of writing
- Children write for themselves, for peers, for a parent, for the school and audiences outside the school, etc Children are given opportunities to and are encouraged to write in different genres for different purposes and audiences.
- Children enter writing and handwriting competitions, take notes, edit, and make presentations to classes for Eco committee and the School council.
- Children's work is displayed in their classroom and samples of writing from all classes are displayed on a central M&E board.
- Our marking policy outlines the importance of feedback and ensures that a key part of their writing experience involves editing and reformatting their work for improvement.
- Learning intentions and success criteria are shared with the children.
- Through linguistic phonics, children are encouraged to have a go, to problem solve and use their knowledge to try and spell words for themselves. Spelling is taught through linguistic phonics.
- Children are taught to frequently read back over their writing to make sure it makes sense.
- Feedback is consistently given to children on their writing – both verbal and written. Feedback is also given by their peers.
- Children are encouraged to self-evaluate their work in lines with the Learning Intention.

- The links between talking and writing are recognised and developed, e.g. reading as a writer and writing as a reader. Children are encouraged to use the think it, say it, write it and read it aloud when developing their writing.
- Samples of work are gathered in literacy from P1-7 and this is used to gauge progress.
- Word processing is promoted, wherever appropriate, to facilitate both the crafting and editing of writing and presentation of work.
- The quality of handwriting is promoted and encouraged through the introduction of Penpals for writing in Foundation. At KS1 script and joined writing is taught and built upon in KS2.

Resources-

Resources for writing *include Penpals for writing, word processing programs including – Microsoft word , Activi Inspire, Clicker 5, role play resources, white boards and markers, writing frames, Powerpoints, dictionaries, thesauri, word bank etc.[resources will be added to each year]*

TS and PCs/Cross Curricular Opportunities for Literacy Development

We aim to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and to make cross-curricular links. The pupils are given opportunities to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through language lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

-Pupils are encouraged to use their visual, auditory and kinaesthetic channels for better learning and a range of active learning strategies is used to engage children. This includes drama and role play.

- Pupils are given opportunities to develop good social skills, to work effectively as part of a team, to develop oral language and oral skills.

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities are threaded through many of everyday classroom activities.

- Teachers make good use of effective questioning to promote thinking and reasoning skills. Children are given opportunities to ask and answer questions, to predict, give reasons and express opinions, think about similarities and differences, sequence and order events and information

-Teachers are aware of the importance of time to listen to children, and children are encouraged to listen to each other,

- Teachers model thinking strategies and pupils are encouraged to reason and think and consider all options and to give reasons for answers.

The Use of ICT

We aim to make the maximum use of I.C.T. across the curriculum to promote the pupils' literacy skills, as well as developing competence in I.C.T. skills. This involves the use of computers, iPads and the Interactive White Board.

- Pupils have opportunities to gain confidence in the use of I.C.T., for example in using word processors for drafting, using spreadsheets and databases, and using the Internet to research and communicate and to present their work.*
- The children's work is used to enhance the school's website.*
- The range of I.C.T. resources available include: Desktops and Laptops with access to C2K network, Interactive White Boards and iPads.*
- The use of information and communication technology supports the teaching of Literacy at word, sentence and text level. ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent level.*
- The interactive white board enables text to be read and shared and the writing process can be modelled effectively. Pupils have opportunities to make talking books and class books.*
- A range of equipment such as digital cameras, headphones, interactive white boards and digital microphones are used to promote speaking and listening and also prepare children for writing experiences*
- The Interactive Whiteboard is used regularly to model writing as it allows children to interact and engage with the writing process.*
- Staff development meetings are allocated to provide staff with time to research software and websites to enhance their literacy teaching.*
- I.C.T planning is included in our monthly planners. I.C.T accreditation is awarded at end of ks1 and ks2.*

Assessment and Target-Setting

Assessment for Learning strategies is a key component of the Teaching and Learning in Literacy. The learning intentions and success criteria are shared with the children. The marking strategies outlined in the school marking and assessment policies ensures the pupils' literacy experience involves editing and reformatting their work for improvement. Ongoing monitoring of pupils' Literacy skills is a key part of the teaching and learning in each class.

The literacy coordinator engages in book monitoring of literacy class work. Teachers gather work samples for pupil portfolio in Literacy and use this to gauge pupil progress

Use is made of data to inform classroom and whole school practice in literacy. We use P1 Baseline assessment, BPVS, Running Records, Salford Sentence Test, end of year GL Online assessment, P2 MI ST, CATS, end of key stage assessments, Star Reading Test, Lexia reports, spelling and CBAS to inform future planning. Teachers evaluate literacy planners on a monthly basis. Assessments and plans can be viewed on RM staff.

Teachers use the assessment tools outlined above to;

1. Identify pupils who are under achieving. Strategies for increasing their attainment are implemented and evaluated on a termly basis.
2. Identify pupils for whom extension and differentiation programmes are to be developed.
3. Identify key foci for their own teaching in the current year.
4. Consider areas of their own teaching that require training/ further development.
5. Set year on year targets for individual classes, key stages and whole school and areas for development.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:

A full literacy audit will be conducted every 3 years to identify areas for improvement. At least one component of Language and Literacy features on each yearly strand of The School Development Plan. These components are determined following:

- Whole school review
- Co-ordinator training
- Analysis of current attainment/practice in literacy
- Educational change and trends

An effective school development plan is in place providing targets for improvement based on the vision of the school. Governors understand their responsibilities and provide clear strategic direction as well as support to the Principal in carrying out the process of improvement. There is a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for staff. Teachers are given the opportunity to share in the leadership of the school. The resources of the school are managed properly and effectively, with appropriate arrangements in place for **financial management**, **attendance management**, and working relationship.

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

Role of the Literacy Co-Ordinator

The co-ordinator's role is responsible, in consultation with the Principal, teachers, for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy.

- *The co-ordinator with the SMT evaluates the quality of learning and teaching within the area of Language and Literacy by;*
- *setting targets in an action plan and areas of development for the whole school*
- *Evaluating monthly planners and pupils books*
- *Annual evaluations using a variety of tools eg questionnaires, feedback from pupils, parents and teachers.*
- *monitoring pupil progress with the SMT and analysis of data.*
- *provision of support with literacy i.e. reading partnership*
- *Auditing resources and supporting colleagues*
- *Taking the lead in policy development*
- *Purchasing and organising resources*
- *Keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments*
- *Maintaining contact with all concerned: Principal, Senior Management in the school, teachers, other staff, parents, and pupils*

- *Communicating with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, the Board, CCMS, RTU, CCEA, etc.*

The role of the class teachers

The teacher's role is to:

- *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 own language use and position as a role model*
- *to avoid negative responses to children's contributions*
- *to use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning in Literacy*
- *to be aware of the need for careful planning progressively across the curriculum, differentiating where appropriate*

- to recognise that skills need to be taught right through 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

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 LOCAL COMMUNITY:

1. Parental links: Parental and Community Involvement

We believe that the education of our pupils is a partnership 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.

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include:

- Cluster meetings with neighbouring schools
- Parent teacher meetings
- Links with local football clubs-Kildress Wolfe Tonnes
- Information/ workshop sessions (e.g. p1 intake)
- Participation in Sure Start Projects
- Links and meetings with local Nursery-Tiny Tots
- School performances, e.g. Christmas show, assemblies, other religious Events, ceili, Halloween dance
- Visitors to the school, e.g. storytellers, visiting theatre groups, poets, writers, school nurse, mobile library van
- Participation in Writers in Schools Project
- Literacy information evenings. These have included linguistic phonics, Lexia and AR
- Homework guidance on linguistic phonics and reading
- Annual book fair
- Events for world book fair
- Visit from author [Liz Weir-2014)
- Regular newsletters
- School trips
- School website

CONCLUSION:

This policy is in line with other school policies, including:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Record Keeping
- Responding to pupils' work / Feedback / Marking policy
- Special Educational Needs' Policy
- ICT Policy
- Equal Opportunities' Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

REVIEW OF POLICY:

Literacy policy will be reviewed every three years [and /or in line with educational trends and developments]