



Literacy Policy

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Throughout this policy document the “teacher” is used to refer all class-based staff.

To teach literacy, the teacher fulfils several roles.

The teacher is a:

- Model – as a skilled user of language the teacher’s role is vital in fostering positive attitudes towards literacy.
- Instructor – central to effective language development is the clear, appropriate and timely teaching of specific skills and conventions.
- Facilitator – providing a supportive and stimulating environment and organising purposeful activities.
- Initiator – providing a variety of resources and opportunities for a range of balanced activities to encourage the development of skills in talking, listening, reading and writing.
- Collaborator – working with pupils to assist in their development.
- Monitor – observing and recording attainment in order to plan further learning.
- Assessor – evaluating and assessing the development of literacy.

ROLE OF THE LITERACY CO-ORDINATOR

Although all classroom staff in St. Mary’s Primary School accept shared responsibility for promoting literacy the designated Literacy Co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing this work. The role of Literacy Co-ordinator is currently fulfilled by the Principal.

The Literacy Co-ordinator:

- Provides a positive role model to colleagues as a literacy teacher,
- Provides leadership and direction in the promotion of literacy,
- Takes part in ongoing professional development for the role of co-ordinator and informs the rest of the staff of curriculum innovations and research in literacy teaching,
- Encourages high standards of teaching and learning in language and thinking,
- Develops and reviews the literacy policy in keeping with DENI requirements and in consultation with staff,
- Supports and motivates colleagues in matters relating to teaching and learning in literacy,
- In consultation with staff, identifies needs and sets priorities and targets as part of School Development Planning,
- Provides relevant information to governors about literacy learning, teaching and achievement,
- Takes responsibility for monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching of literacy.

TALKING AND LISTENING

“Oral language is used to communicate with people, to share and release feelings, to give and obtain information and to understand ideas and develop thoughts.” N I Curriculum 2007

Talking and listening are fundamental skills upon which the educational development of our pupils depend. Through the development of aural and oral skills, they learn about language and this equips them to demonstrate and refine their learning. Our overall aim is for our pupils to become efficient language users. We believe that this is achieved by devoting time, energy and resources to the development of oral communication. Through purposeful interaction with teachers our pupils are provided with experiences that develop their skills and their thinking.

Foundation Stage (Reception – Primary 2)

Pupils have opportunities, arising from classroom activities and first-hand experiences, to develop talking and listening in a range of contexts and across the curriculum. Our foundation stage curriculum is planned to ensure that the following statutory requirements are met:

- Attention and listening skills.
- Phonological awareness.
- Social use of language.
- Language and thinking.
- An extended vocabulary.

Key Stage 1 (Primary 3 & Primary 4)

“Children should be given the opportunity to listen and respond appropriately and effectively to a range of stimuli, including multimedia. They should be helped to speak clearly, with clear pronunciation and intonation, appropriate to the needs of their listeners. They need to learn to use language in imaginative ways. They should be helped to structure their talk, using it to develop and clarify their thinking.” N I Curriculum 2007

Key Stage 2 (Primary 5 – Primary 7)

“Children should be helped to develop the ability to listen and respond in a range of contexts, thinking about what has been said and the language used, and to speak coherently and confidently for a variety of purposes and audiences. They should also be given the opportunities to develop their ability to communicate and capture the interest of listeners.” N I Curriculum 2007

The Learning Environment

In St. Mary's Primary School we seek to create a learning environment in which our pupils feel relaxed, accepted and affirmed and therefore feel comfortable to express opinions and talk openly.

Talk is planned for within schemes, class plans and teachers notes.

All children are encouraged to talk and each contribution is valued. Our teachers emphasise the importance of talk and pupils are encouraged to recognise that such talk is work.

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning

- Talk is planned for across all areas of the curriculum.
- Experiences and activities to promote a wide range of types of talk are provided.
- Talking and listening is valued for social, communicative and cognitive purposes.
- Classroom organisation and management varies throughout the school day as appropriate, including paired work and small and larger groups.
- Teachers use a wide range of resources and displays including interest tables, book displays and multimedia to stimulate talk.
- Talk is linked to reading and writing activities.

READING

It is our aim to ensure that our pupils learn to read and to enjoy a wide variety of texts so that they become independent, critical, life-long readers.

The Learning Environment

We strive to provide a learning environment which stimulates and inspires all our pupils to read. Books and reading materials are readily available and attractively displayed in both classrooms. The range of texts both fiction and non-fiction, is varied and caters for the needs of all pupils.

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning

A range of teaching approaches are used as appropriate, including:

- Regular reading to children in all classes P1 – P7,
- Shared reading - a whole class activity where children join in or share the reading of a book or other text while guided and supported by a teacher,
- Guided reading - teacher works with a small group of students who are at a similar reading stage and can read similar levels of texts to teach appropriate reading skills,
- Phonological awareness activities – Jolly Phonics,
- Comprehension activities.

Reading for Information

Reading for the purposes of study requires specific skills. It is linked to the skill of Managing Information (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities) whereby pupils

access, select, record and communicate information. Where appropriate we teach these skills in context through World Around Us.

Reading for Information skills include:

- Use of contents pages and index pages,
- Classifying information by alphabetical order,
- Using dictionaries and thesauruses,
- Reference materials such as atlases, directories, timetables, brochures, internet search engines and internet websites,
- Skimming a text for a general impression of what it is about,
- Scanning a text to search for specific information,
- Note-making by selecting what is relevant and appropriate,
- Distinguishing between fact and opinion in evaluating information.

WRITING

“Children should learn to communicate meaning through enjoyable writing activities, whereby they express themselves in writing both imaginatively and factually and including digital resources.” N I Curriculum 2007

We aim to ensure that our pupils develop the ability to write effectively in a variety of forms according to purpose and audience. They are encouraged to develop as independent writers, learning over time to use conventional spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting.

The Learning Environment

Teachers aim to provide a stimulating environment where our pupils are encouraged and inspired to write. There are writing materials provided in the Foundation/Key Stage 1 classroom and writing is encouraged during play not only in the writing area but in role play.

In both classrooms there is a variety of stimuli such as dictionaries, thesauruses and spell checkers.

Displays of writing by the pupils themselves and anthologies or big books of their own work are used to be re-read.

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning

- Examples of various forms of writing are displayed and discussed so that pupils become familiar with the structure and language features of these form,
- Writing is taught through a variety of modelled, shared, guided and independent sessions as appropriate,
- The purpose of the writing is shared with the pupils before they begin – such as to amuse, persuade or inform the reader,
- Pupils write for a variety of audiences – themselves, peers, parents and other outside groups,

- Writing sessions include time for discussion and planning,
- From P4 onwards pupils are encouraged to re-draft their work as part of the overall process of writing. This is done in consultation with the teacher and their peers,
- All pupils are encouraged to have a go at spelling words for themselves using word books or try pads,
- Pupils are taught to frequently read back over their writing for sense.
- Spelling is taught from P2 onwards using Key Word lists and Nelson Spelling.
- Cursive script for handwriting is taught from P4 onwards.
- All pupils P1 – P7 are given opportunities to compose, re-draft and publish their writing digitally.
- Teachers respond to pupils' writing to create improvement. Where possible, this is done with the child in person to facilitate two-way interaction. Written comments by teachers are positive as far as possible and will provide direction to the pupil for further improvement.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

At St. Mary's Primary School, we believe that education is a collaborative enterprise between pupils, teachers and parents for the benefit of our pupils. We recognise the home support is vital to enhance literacy development. In the development of Literacy, we involve our parents through homework, reading activities, comments in reading diaries, reports and parent meetings.

ASSESSMENT

We regard assessment as an ongoing and integral part of the learning process. Pupils' 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:

- Teacher observation.
- Samples of work for monitoring and for pupil records.
- Standardised tests.
- Statutory End of Key Stage Assessment.

Records of progress and samples of work are kept for each child.

The Principal and class teachers monitor the outcomes of Standardised tests and take appropriate action. Individual pupil attainment is reported to parents through the October meeting and the Annual Report.

RESOURCES

A wide range of resources are utilised in the teaching of literacy, including:

- Jolly Phonics;
- Nelson spelling
- Better English

- English in Practice
- Scholastic Comprehension
- Storysacks;
- Lighthouse Reading;
- Oxford Reading Tree;
- Tree Tops;
- Class novels;
- Nelson Spelling;
- Twinkl Handwriting;
- Class Library;
- Digital resources.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Pupils with specific needs in literacy are usually identified initially by the class teacher as a result of class work and standardised testing. In collaboration with the Principal, they are placed on the SEN register and follow the process through the stages.

MONITORING and EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary in the light of any further guidance or legislation or once during each 3-year development cycle.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the Literacy Coordinator to:

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensure that each member of staff receives the necessary training and support to enable them to carry out their responsibilities at induction and as part of ongoing INSET.

This Literacy Policy has been prepared in consultation with all teaching staff.

Adopted by the Board of Governors of St. Mary's Primary at a meeting held on
4th April 2022

Reviewed in January 2024

Signed  (Chairperson)

Reviewed in February 2026

Signed.....  (Chairperson)