



LITERACY POLICY

Date Ratified by Board of Governors: 11/9/23

Date of Review: 11/9/24

CONTEXT:

St. John's PS Literacy Policy has been written within the context of the available legislation and guidance. St. John's English P.S currently has an enrolment of 83 pupils, with four composite classes.

Staff members are guided by the following:

- The Northern Ireland Curriculum (Primary)
- NI Literacy framework
- 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. John's English PS
- ETI: Chief Inspector's Report
- ETI: Better Literacy in Primary Schools. Feb 2008
- Count Read Succeed 2011
- The Reflective Teacher 2005

AIMS

In St. John's PS, 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. John's PS, we intend that, by the end of Key Stage 2, a child will:

1. Develop a positive attitude to Literacy as an interesting and attractive subject by taking part in a stimulating, attractive environment where encouragement, praise and reward are key factors.
2. Develop confidence as users of language and to develop key skills in all areas of language.
3. View Literacy as enjoyable and perceive its relevance to everyday life.
4. Have a knowledge of and familiarity with a wide range of literature, both fiction and nonfiction for their enjoyment.
5. Understand a range of text types and genres and be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
6. Read fluently and with understanding of all types of material and locate and extract and use relevant information.
7. Be provided for regardless of their needs and/or requirements.
8. Be presented with literacy as a cross-curricular topic when appropriate.
9. Develop writing skills for a range of purposes and audiences, using spelling, punctuation and syntax appropriately and with confidence.
10. Develop skills in literacy through ICT.
11. Work on oral skills in both formal and informal contexts.

12. Have access to teaching which aims to develop strategies to further nurture and develop independent thinking and learning skills.
13. Be given opportunities to work on specific language as early as possible e.g. noun, metaphor etc.

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. John's PS children, in the Foundation Stage (P1 and 2) 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 (P3 and 4), children are encouraged to:

- Speak confidently and listen to what others have to say
- Read and write independently and with enthusiasm
- Use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds

At Key Stage Two (P5-7), children are encouraged to:

- Learn to change the way they talk and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences
- Use opportunities to read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them
- Explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts
- Learn how the structure of language works

PLANNING

Schemes of work have been drawn up from the Primary Literacy Framework. These schemes will be evaluated on an annual basis and amended accordingly.

Long term planning is determined by the Primary Language Framework [Education Authority], medium term planning is on a monthly basis [text, sentence, and word level learning intentions are out lined] and short-term planning is daily. All medium-term plans are placed on RM staff and evaluated to inform future planning. Weekly planning will be readily available as and when required.

CHILD CENTRED PROVISION

Teachers will ensure that children make appropriate progress in all areas of Language and Literacy through providing suitably differentiated learning activities to ensure that individual needs are properly addressed.

IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING UNDERACHIEVEMENT

In St. John's PS, we consider it to be absolutely essential that each and every pupil fulfils their full potential as a learner of Language and Literacy. To this end we aim to identify any pupils who are under-achieving and to ensure that an appropriate

remediation process is set in place, based on specific identified areas for improvement. Every pupil's current PTE standardised score is compared with their most recent Verbal CATS standardised score. If a pupil's PTE score is 10 or more points below their Verbal CATS score, this is an indication that the pupil is under-achieving in Literacy. This is monitored from year to year.

IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The staff of St. John's PS recognises the importance of identifying, as early as possible, those children who have special educational needs. A range of assessment tools (see St. John's PS, Assessment Policy) are used by each class teacher to identify children with special educational needs and to identify foci for all teaching (gifted and talented children as well as underachieving children are taken account of). The school follows the 5-Stage approach, as set out in the Code of practice. Support and advice are retrieved from the Educational Psychologist when required and referrals are made when necessary.

I.E.P.S are written which include SMART targets. The targets are regularly monitored and reviewed regularly with a final review completed at the end of each term. Class work is differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Classroom assistants provide support to individual children and to small groups. Parents are kept informed at all stages and are given advice and support as to how they help and support their child at home through parent teacher meetings. On review, new or amended targets will be set.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Through the use of Engage funding children identified by the class teacher in Primary 2, through teacher judgement, and in P3-7, through use of PTE scores, avail of small group withdrawal support by their class teacher who is released by sub cover.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING:

The content of the Language and Literacy curriculum taught at St. John's PS is guided by our statutory requirement to deliver the statutory curriculum for Language and Literacy as laid out in the Northern Ireland Curriculum (CCEA 2007). It sets out the minimum requirements that must be taught at each Key Stage, grouped into 3 areas:

- Talking and Listening,
- Reading
- Writing

The staff have used this content alongside the Language and Literacy Framework document to produce a School Scheme of Work for Language and Literacy which sets out the areas to be covered and the learning intentions to be achieved in each term/month.

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. John's PS. 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. Talking and listening is promoted as a social, communicative and cognitive process.

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 feedback 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.

Talking is promoted during shared and guided reading lessons.

Children have opportunities to discuss, interact and talk in pairs, small and larger groups across the Curriculum.

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.

However, different approaches will be used with different children and these approaches will be adopted during guided reading sessions. Since children learn in different ways and at different rates, a flexible approach is considered most effective. Guided Reading records are kept in children’s reading journals.

Teaching Approaches to Promote Reading

Teachers will always strive to:

- Build children’s confidence and self esteem
- Develop children’s independence
- Allow all children to experience regular success
- Make reading, writing and talking and listening a relevant and satisfying part of their school experience

Teachers will use a range of approaches to develop reading:

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

- Modelling by the teacher
- Shared reading
- Guided reading
- Silent reading (Key Stage 2)

- Paired Reading
- Pupils are encouraged to read back over their own writing and correct mistakes
- Read a range of different genres for different purposes and audiences
- Using ICT
- Library
- Book Banding – Key Stage 1
- Accelerated Reading
- Running Records – Foundation and Key Stage 1, 1 per term
- Effective questioning to develop thinking skills
- Jolly phonics
- Book Fairs
- Library van
- Drama
- Role Play
- Discussion to gain understanding
- Sharing learning intentions and success criteria with pupils

Writing

Children write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions and to present evidence from 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 from an early stage, 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. Although each teacher is an individual, with their own personal style of teaching, the staff has agreed that the following points will be a feature of all teaching in Language and Literacy in St. John's PS. These are designed to ensure that every pupil is given the opportunity to experience success and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

Teachers will always strive to

- Build children's confidence and self esteem
- Develop children's independence
- Teach a range of genres
- Allow all children to experience regular success
- Make reading, writing and talking and listening a relevant and satisfying part of their school experience
- Encourage and teach children to form letters correctly. Joined up writing will be taught from Primary 5 upwards.

Teachers will use a range of teaching approaches to develop writing:

- Modelling by the teacher

- Shared writing
- Guided Writing
- Independent Writing
- Discussing with partners, small groups and whole class to gain understanding
- Children are placed in writing groups and each group has specific targets they are working towards achieving
- Pupils are encouraged to read back over their own writing and correct mistakes
- Children plan their writing
- Children listen to feedback and edit and redraft their work
- Write in different genres for different purposes and audiences
- Encouraging children to use the 'think it, say it, like it, write it and read it aloud' strategy when developing their writing
- Using classroom displays to inform and celebrate writing success
- Using ICT
- Competitions are used to motivate pupils
- Assemblies are used to celebrate writing and enable others to listen to a variety of genre
- Sharing learning intentions and success criteria with pupils

Spelling

As of September 2023 the entire school is using the Jolly Phonics scheme. This is to provide for continuous progression. The teachers will follow the scheme which will help with spelling and grammar as the children move from P1 to P7.

Teachers will use a range of teaching approaches to develop spelling:

- Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check, Remember
- Say the word very slowly running a finger under it
- Find and focus on the tricky part(s) of the word
- Find words within words
- Exaggerate or change the pronunciation of the spelling
- Say the word rhythmically in separate chunks with pauses in between
- Tap out syllables and write down the syllable as you say it
- Use mnemonics
- Link the word to another key word or known word with the same spelling pattern
- Think about spelling patterns and rules
- Think about word derivations and roots
- Make up and write a sentence using the word

ICT

(See also 'St. John's English Primary School ICT Policy')

In St. John's English Primary School we use a variety of ICT activities to promote Language and Literacy Skills. We believe that effective and appropriate use of ICT in Language and Literacy can:

- Support the teaching of Literacy at word, sentence and text level.

- Facilitate a differentiated pace and level of learning that takes account of individual pupil abilities, including those in the gifted and talented group.
- Help provide appropriate support and scope for greater independence for children of all abilities.
- Facilitate access to sources of information from a wide variety of resources.
- Foster the development of information skills that teach pupils to be astute in their use of information and to be able to shape and present it in ways appropriate to the context.
- Increase motivation to learn.
- Provide a stimulating and non-threatening learning environment.
- Engage children more deeply in their learning.

In St. John's English Primary School, ICT activities will include:

- Whole class or group work, often led by the teacher. These involve the use of an Interactive Whiteboard which is used as a direct teaching aid, used to model the writing process effectively allowing children to interact and engage in the process.
- Individual or small group activities. These usually involve the children working independently at a computer, usually to complement current work on a particular topic.
- ICT activities form part of the range of activities detailed in teachers' monthly planners for Literacy.

Resources

- Interactive Whiteboards
- Computers and Laptops
- Internet (See 'St. John's English P.S. Acceptable Use of Internet Policy')
- Software available through C2k Managed Service
- iPads

THINKING SKILLS AND PERSONAL CAPABILITIES

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.

Teachers will ensure that the activities which the pupils experience in Language and Literacy will enable them to develop the statutory Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities set out in the Northern Ireland Curriculum:

- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Managing Information
- Being Creative
- Self Management
- Working with Others

CROSS CURRICULAR SKILLS

Teachers will ensure that the activities which the pupils experience in Language and Literacy will also enable them to develop the statutory Cross Curricular Skills set out in the NI Curriculum:

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using ICT

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

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 outlines the importance of feedback (both oral and written) and ensures that a key part of children's writing experiences involves editing and reformatting their work for improvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF LITERACY

In St. John's English Primary School, Miss Breffni Hughes, fulfils the role of Language and Literacy Co-ordinator and has responsibility for the management of the development of Language and Literacy within the school.

The Literacy Co-ordinator's responsibilities include:

- In collaboration with the rest of the teaching staff, identifying priorities for development within Language and Literacy.
- Engages in book monitoring, classroom observations and reviews teachers Literacy planners and evaluations of all Literacy planners.
- Contributing to the production of the School Development Plan, to include at least one aspect of the development of Language and Literacy.
- Producing Action Plans to address these issues.
- Monitoring and Evaluating the implementation of these Action Plans and the achievement of their Success Criteria.
- In conjunction with relevant teachers producing annual targets for standards achieved in Statutory Assessment.
- Monitoring and Evaluating pupil achievement and producing whole school performance data from these results.
- Completing annual evaluations using a variety of tools e.g. questionnaires, feedback from pupils, parents and teachers.
- Updating the School Programme of Study, and School Literacy Policy, to keep in line with curriculum changes.
- In conjunction with the whole staff, participating in a programme of self-evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the provision of Language and Literacy.
- Oversee teachers gather work samples for pupil portfolio in Literacy and use this to gauge pupil progress.
- Discuss developments/issues with the Principal and lead the school in literacy.
- Organising and leading school based INSET and School Development Days.

- Liaising with Education Authority to ensure staff receive suitable and sufficient support and training.
- Providing support to teachers and classroom assistants in the teaching of Literacy.
- Maintaining a file of evidence indicating standards achieved within the school.
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Communicating with all relevant outside agencies.
- Auditing resources.
- Reporting to the Board of Governors on the progress of English provision and on the standards being achieved by the school.
- Ensuring Classroom assistants are used effectively to support and guide groups and individual children.

EVALUATION OF THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

In St. John's PS we are committed to a process of continuous improvement, based around the four characteristics of a successful school as set out in "Every School a Good School - a Policy for School Improvement" (DE 2009).

We believe that constant self-evaluation of our provision for Language and Literacy is the most effective way of ensuring we provide high quality teaching and learning experiences for our children, and that all our children realise their full potential in the areas of language and Literacy.

Self-evaluation takes place on three levels:

1. Each class teacher monitors and evaluates their own teaching on an ongoing basis. This involves assessing children's achievement of intended learning outcomes. The information generated is used to determine the effectiveness of the teaching approaches used and to inform planning for further teaching and learning.

2. The Literacy Co-ordinator will monitor teaching and learning through book looks (at the end of each term), review of planners (at the end of each term) and classroom observations (which will take place in Term 1). The Literacy Co-ordinator will engage with teachers and duties will take place in a supportive not critical manner.

3. The Literacy Coordinator and Principal work together to monitor and evaluate the whole school's provision of Language and Literacy through:

- Monitoring implementation of Literacy Action Plans.
- Evaluating the achievement of Success Criteria contained within Action Plans.
- Coordinating self evaluation through monitoring of monthly planners.
- Monitoring the results of Statutory Assessment at KS1 and KS2 using benchmarked performance data.
- Detailed analysis of pupil performance data from standardised assessment and statutory assessment outcomes.
- Leading an on-going, collegial approach to whole school self-evaluation such as detailed in "Better Literacy" (Feb 2008), the quality indicators taken from "Together Towards Improvement" (ETI 2010) or the Self Evaluating Performance (ETI).

In St. John's Eglsh Primary School self evaluation is an ongoing process which is a component of our Cycle of Development. The information gained through self evaluation feeds back into the cycle to enable us to plan for future improvement and determine training and development needs.

From evaluation of data the Literacy Co-ordinator alongside the Principal will:

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

END OF KEY STAGE ASSESSMENT

The following elements will contribute to the setting of targets for the end of Key Stage 1 assessment:

- Teachers' professional judgement
- Results of Standardised tests

The following will contribute to the setting of targets for the end of Key Stage 2 assessment:-

- Key Stage 1 results
- Teachers professional judgement
- Results of Standardised results.
- Previous achievements of Pupils at Key Stage 2

A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS COMMUNITY

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
- Information/workshop sessions (e.g. p1 intake or curricular evenings)
- Links and meetings with local Playgroup
- School performances, e.g. Christmas show, assemblies, other religious events
- Visitors to the school, e.g. storytellers, visiting theatre groups, poets, writers, school nurse, library
- Participation in writing competitions

- Literacy information evenings
- Homework guidance on jolly phonics and reading
- Book fairs
- Events for world book fair
- Regular newsletters
- School trips

Role of the Parents

St. John's English Primary School we believe that parents have a vital role to play in ensuring their children make appropriate progress and realise their potential in the areas of Literacy. We actively seek strong partnerships with parents and will work to ensure that parents feel involved in their child's education. education.

In St. John's Primary School parents will:

- Be able to discuss their child's progress in Literacy , or any areas of concern, at any time during the year by appointment with the class teacher.
- Be invited to meet more formally with the class teacher once per year at Parent: Teacher Interview, which will include discussion of the results of diagnostic tests.
- Receive one written report on their child's strengths, weaknesses and progress pr year, usually in June.
- Be encouraged to participate with their children in Literacy homework activities.

Homework

(See also St. John's English Primary School Homework Policy)

The nature of homework given will vary according to the age and level of progress of children, but will always be designed to complement current class work, to:

- Inform parents of the type of work their child is currently involved with.
- To allow the child to practice and improve skills introduced in class.
- To give the child the opportunity to improve their ability to work independently and organise themselves.
- To give the teacher information on the extent to which children have achieved the skills/knowledge and understanding of what has been taught.

In order to achieve these objectives we would request parents, as far as is possible to:

- Provide a suitable quiet area for homework activities.
- Discuss with their child what they are expected to do before they start.
- Ensure their child starts homework early enough so they can complete it by a reasonable time.
- Present children with practical activities.
- Identify Language and Literacy in the children's everyday environment e.g. Road signs, magazines, newspapers, letters, lists etc.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

This Policy is designed to reflect current practice within the school environment. Although the overall aims for the teaching and learning of Literacy are likely to remain fairly constant, the practices evolve over time as the school progresses in its development of the provision of Language and Literacy.

Accordingly this Policy is under a process of constant review and will be updated regularly to ensure it continues to reflect current practice and to achieve its designated purpose.