

St. Jarlath's P.S.

Literacy Policy

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Reviewed: April 2015

Adopted at Board of Governor's meeting:

Signed: _____ Chair

CONTEXT:

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

INTRODUCTION:

Literacy, as defined by "Count, Read: Succeed" has been defined as:

'The ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly, taking account of different purposes, contexts, conventions and audiences. It involves the development of:

- a. an integrated approach to the acquisition of talking, listening , reading and writing skills across the curriculum;
- b. knowledge that allows a speaker, writer and reader to use language appropriate to different social situations;
- c. formal and informal language across all area of social interaction; and
- d. the ability to read, understand and use information in multiple formats and platforms, including traditional print and on-screen material'.

At St. Jarlath'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 will outline 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.

At St. Jarlath'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 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.

At 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.

At 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.
- 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 English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and those with special educational needs, in order to take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

Pupils, on entering St. Jarlath's are closely monitored by the class teacher and in conjunction with parents/guardians, a profile of each pupil is built up. Baseline assessment, which takes the form of Speech and Language Link and the British Picture Vocabulary Scale - B.P.V.S. are carried out and these results are analysed to establish whether there are any underlying learning problems. If learning difficulties become apparent the parents/guardians are informed and the class teacher will provide strategies/reinforcement tasks to improve the child's performance. These tasks will be carried out with the help of the classroom assistant and the parents/guardians. If the child requires further/more specialised assistance, the class teacher will consult with the SEN co-ordinator and the child, if not already on the SEN register, may be placed on it. At the relevant stage of the code of practice the Board's services may be called into play, e.g. assessment by the educational psychologist, literacy screening leading to peripatetic teaching, behaviour support team, etc.

This protocol is called into play in all classes if a literacy problem becomes apparent.

The monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress is an ongoing practice in our school and below are listed the intervention programmes which are in place to help improve pupils' performance.

Intervention programmes

Speech and Language Link P.1

In term 1 the class carry out a computer based assessment and if screened out, a bank of classroom activities is available for teachers and parents to use with the child to alleviate the emergent problems.

BPVS (British Picture Vocabulary Scale) P.1

This is an individually administered, norm-referenced, test of hearing (receptive) vocabulary for standard English. It is an initial screening device to identify high and low ability or language impaired children who may need special attention.

Forward Together Programme P.2

After the M.I.S.T. assessment programme is carried out, at the end of term 2 by all pupils, those pupils who do not achieve a given standard in a number of literacy tasks, will be assigned a 6-week programme of remediation which is home based. This is known as the Forward Together Programme.

Talking Partners P.2

This is a short term intervention programme to encourage more active talking and listening for a range of purposes. It is delivered by a classroom assistant and is implemented over a 10 week period.

Quest Follow-up Programme P.3

Pupils in P.3 undertake a literacy screening test in term 2 and those who are screened out are then given diagnostic tests. Areas of weakness are identified and remediated by a series of follow-up booklets. These activities are carried out at home and at school during term 3.

Lexia: P.3 - P.5

This is a literacy software programme which is predominantly phonics-based and begins at initial letter level. It includes a simple comprehension element and pupils can work through it independently.

Reading Partnership P.3/P.4

This is a 10 week programme carried out in terms 1, 2 and 3. It involves 2 pupils at a time, who are of average ability and need reinforcement in reading. The Salford Reading test is administered at the beginning and at the end of the programme to monitor progress made. It is administered by a classroom assistant/s who have been trained in Reading Partnership.

Paired Reading P.5 (all pupils)

This is a home based reading improvement programme which takes place in term 1 over a period of six weeks. The GRT (2) is administered at the beginning and at the end of the six week period to monitor progress made. In P.6 and P.7 paired reading is also administered, at the teacher's discretion, to those pupils who need reinforcement in reading. It is not carried out at any specific time of the year and may not always be allocated a six week period.

Equal opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

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 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 are 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.
- Education outcomes reflect positively on the school and compare well, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken, against the performance of similar schools.

Subject organisation

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

In St. Jarlath's there are seven classes, one of each year group. There are no composite classes. In the foundation stage in P.1, the class teacher introduces guided language groups at the end of term 1 or the beginning of term 2, depending on pupils' reading readiness. There are generally four groups and the classroom assistant helps with the language activities assigned to the children. In P.2 the same format applies. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there are again three to four guided reading groups in each class.

However, this is dependent on class size and may vary. There are also SEN and newcomer guided groups. The work in these groups is differentiated through the use of various reading schemes/language programmes such as Ginn 360, Oxford Reading Tree (fiction and non-fiction) and Wellington Square, as well as PM Readers for those children involved with the Reading Partnership Programme and newcomer children. The proforma provided by the Primary Language Framework is used by all staff to plan their schemes of work and the planning is located on RM Staff on the school's computer system. Teachers also plan for guided reading sessions using proforma provided by CASS.

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 the school. Pupils are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes.

Opportunities for talking and listening in St. Jarlath's are provided through a wide variety of activities including:

Play based learning in the Foundation Stage

Activity based learning in Key Stage 1

Pair and group work - think, pair, share;

Role Play; Hot Seating

P.D. and M.U.

Assemblies

Christmas Plays

Verse Speaking at the local feis

The School Council

School Trips

Visitors To School

Plenary sessions in art

Debates

Discussions linked to WAU topics, literacy topics, e.g. stories dealing with issues such as race, bullying, etc.

Approaches to Reading

An emphasis must be placed on the importance of comprehension skills and strategies, which must be developed and encouraged from the beginning. The pleasure and enjoyment of reading should be fostered in the language lessons, across the curriculum and beyond the classroom. Involvement of the parents can be critical in this context.

In St. Jarlath's, reading is taught through a range of strategies. Books are banded in the Foundation and Key Stage 1 and running records are used to group those children who do not readily fall into a reading group. The reading schemes used in St. Jarlath's are Ginn 360, Oxford Reading Tree and Storyworlds. Novels are used in P.4 to P.7 as well as the Ginn 360_reading scheme and the Oxford Reading Scheme. There are shared class libraries which the pupils have access to on a regular (time-tabled) basis. The S.E.L.B. Mobile Library Service provides the teachers with the opportunity to change, as well as acquire new reading materials, twice a year. The library service visit the school on a fortnightly basis and pupils in P.4, 5 and 6 avail of this service. The pupils are encouraged to read as often as possible with the following strategies being implemented by the staff:

Modelled Reading - P.1 to P.7 (teacher reads story/novel to pupils)

Shared Reading - Teacher and pupils read aloud P.1 to P.7

Guided Reading - Pupils read at instructional level (all classes)

E.R.I.C. - Everybody Reads In Class - P.1 to P.7

The Accelerated Reader Programme - P.4 - P.7

Visiting Writers - P.5

Paired and Independent Reading - P.4 to P.7

World Book Day

Book Fairs - every two years

Parents play a vital role in developing their child's reading skills and reading records are used in P.2 to P.7 to inform parents of the work that needs to be carried out at home, in order to reinforce the learning in school. Parents can enquire about their child's progress in reading at any time, if they have a concern.

Approaches to writing

In St. Jarlath's phonics and spelling are taught using Linguistic Phonics and the PrimEd Spelling Programme. Writing is encouraged and fostered as a follow on from pupils' own experiences, topic work, current affairs, exploring books and through modelled writing. In St. Jarlath's we develop the children's writing skills with the underlying principle - **"think it, say it, write it and read it aloud"** and this is embedded in every class. Later on we emphasise to the pupils that there is an important link between how they talk/speak and how they write and we try to instil in them that they should "read as a writer and write as a reader".

In St. Jarlath's we use a wide variety of resources to support the teaching of writing, which include:

- Collins Focus on Literacy
- Longmans On Target English
- Heinemann's Essential Texts

Writing frames are used to develop pupils' creative writing skills in Key Stages 1 and 2 and they are exposed to a range of genres both fiction and non-fiction when writing. In all classes, the children write for a wide

range of audiences, including their peers and other classes, and they participate in writing competitions, e.g. Short Story Young Writers Competition

TS and PCs/Cross curricular opportunities for literacy development

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and to make cross-curricular links. Pupils will have the opportunity to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through language lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

The following aspects should be considered:

- awareness of different styles of learning and the need to encourage pupils to use their visual, auditory and kinaesthetic channels for better learning
- use of a range of active learning strategies in the classroom, including drama strategies
- ensure effective questioning by the teacher and pupils.

The use of ICT

All pupils in St. Jarlath's have access to the C2k school computer system and use their own user name and password to log on when working. They save their work in the school system as well as use a wide range of software to present their work and enhance their learning, e.g. "Go To" , Microsoft Word, Clicker 5, Lexia, Accelerated Reader, Letterland and Nessie

They are encouraged to produce their work using a range of font types and WordArt/Clipart to enhance presentation. Microsoft Publisher is introduced in Key Stage 2 to improve presentation and adapt it for a range of purposes/audiences.

All classes have access to interactive whiteboards which enhance the teaching of literacy, eg. Collins CDrom

"Fronter"- which provides information on a wide variety of topics for research purposes is used to develop the teaching of literacy while search engines such as Google are also used by the pupils. The "Newsdesk" facility on C2k is another tool which is being developed within the school to encourage pupils to improve their literacy skills through ICT.

All classes engage in ICT tasks and these tasks encompass the 5 Es - explore, exhibit, exchange, express and evaluate. These tasks are levelled and stored by the pupils' on the school system.

The staff are provided with training in ICT whenever a new initiative arises, eg. c2k Fronter training

Target-setting and Assessment:

We use the results of Standardised Assessments as a vehicle for setting performance targets for literacy as well as for numeracy. Targets are set for:

KS1

% of children achieving Level 2 and above

% of children achieving Level 3

KS2

% of children achieving Level 4 and above

% of children achieving Level 5

These targets are then compared with the actual % achieved in KS1 and KS2 assessments in May. These results are also benchmarked to schools of similar Free School Meals (FSM) and the N. Ireland average. (P4 and P7 only)

The following assessment procedures are carried out in literacy each year:

P.1 BPVS (September); Speech and Language Link (September)

P.2 M.I.S.T. (term 2) with follow up to Mist in term 3;

P.3 Quest (term 2) with follow up to Quest in term 3; PTE (May); SWST (May)

P.4 NRIT (September) or CATS test; GRT(2) (September) ; PTE (May); SWST (May) KS1 Assessment (term 2)

P.5 GRT (2) (September) ; PIE (May); SWST (May)

P.6 NRIT or CATS test; GRT (2) (September); PIE (May); SWST (May)

P.7 GRT(2) (September); PIE (May); KS2 Assessment (term2); SWST (May)

Target setting is carried out in term 1 in Key Stage 1 and 2 and these targets are reviewed in November, February and May.

The MIST and Quest assessment tools have their own remediation programmes carried out in term 3.

After testing, if a pupil is found to be underachieving in literacy, the class teacher will carry out one or more of the following actions:

- Monitor this child's progress for a short period of time - (complete a record of concern)
- Inform the SenCo and place the child on the SEN register
- Forward this child for literacy screening which may result in peripatetic teaching from the EA

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

Role of the Literacy Co-Ordinator

The Literacy Co-Ordinator should be responsible, in consultation with the Principal, teachers and parents, 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: Principal, teachers, other staff, parents, and pupils
- Ensuring channels of communication are open and active with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, the EA, CCMS, RTU, CEA, etc.

The Board of Governors

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

A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY:

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

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

Parental involvement:

- Attending parents' nights/ information sessions
- Reading and talking to their children at home

- Supporting homework and the use of software programmes eg. Lexia, which can be accessed at home.
- Involvement in the Book Fair (every 2 years)
- Participation in paired reading programme (P.5)
- Follow Up Programmes to M.I.S.T. and Quest
- PSG funding for resources

Community links:

- Local Cultural Events - the feis and the Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann
- The mobile library service
- Links with feeder schools - visits to and from the local secondary schools e.g. St. Catherine's, Armagh; St. Patrick's Grammar, Armagh;
- Educational Visits

CONCLUSION:

This policy should be 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
- Health and Safety Policy
- Numeracy Policy

REVIEW OF POLICY:

This policy document will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis.

April 2015