

**ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, MAGHERA**

# LITERACY POLICY



***Together for Children***

**The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Literacy is recognised as a top priority across the school and that all staff knowledgeably play a part in its promotion.**

**In response to the School Improvement Programme (SIP) we have included statements on: -**

- ⇒ **the responsibility which every member of staff has for developing literacy;**
- ⇒ **the ways in which literacy is promoted across all areas of the curriculum;**
- ⇒ **how ICT will be used across the curriculum to support and develop literacy;**
- ⇒ **procedures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievements and the teaching approaches used;**
- ⇒ **arrangements for ensuring that all pupils make appropriate progress in literacy;**
- ⇒ **the standards being achieved in the school;**
- ⇒ **targets for improving performance and the actions necessary to achieve them;**
- ⇒ **the nature and purpose of homework in supporting literacy;**
- ⇒ **the involvement of parents in supporting learning at home and in improving standards;**
- ⇒ **The role and contribution of any additional arrangements outside normal classroom activities e.g. library visits.**

### **Principles**

**Language spoken and written is the principal medium for learning and so permeates our entire school curriculum. Literacy is both a subject and a medium of instruction for other subjects. The approach to teaching literacy in St Mary's PS is based on three central principles: -**

**Literacy is**

- 1. Heuristic** - **learning through discovery**
- 2. Recursive** - **builds on existing knowledge: development is not simply the acquisition of new skills but a more sophisticated ability to handle familiar skills**
- 3. Holistic** - **the four modes of language are inter-linked and interwoven and are taught as such in this school.**

### **Rationale**

**It is our belief that the study of literacy seeks to develop the ability of pupils to communicate effectively, appropriately and accurately in talk and writing, to understand and respond imaginatively to what they hear, read and experience in a variety of media and to foster their appreciation and enjoyment of literature. This is what we seek in St Mary's PS**

## **AIMS**

- 1. To assist pupils to express and communicate meaning in spoken language, listening to and interpreting what others say, matching style and response to audience, context and purpose.**
- 2. To offer pupils opportunities to develop their ability to read, understand and engage with various types of texts for enjoyment and learning.**
- 3. To assist children to make and shape text in order to communicate meaning in written language appropriate to context, purpose, reader or audience.**

**While these aims are the same for all pupils, individual needs will be taken into account by staff when planning work. Different children will achieve these aims to differing extents, at different stages and at different rates depending on ability, personality and interest. This will be reflected in the work that they are required to undertake.**

**Our overall objective is to develop each individual's confidence and competence in the four modes of language.**

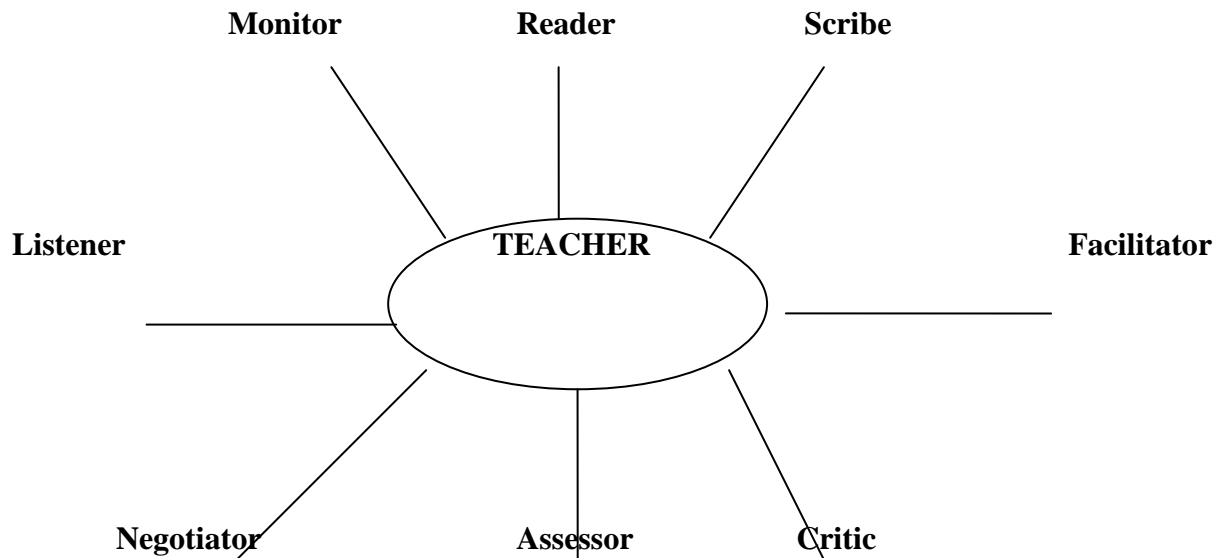
## **The Role of the Teacher**

- 1. To foster in each child confidence in employing language in both spoken and written form.**
- 2. To help each child to develop the ability to listen attentively and with understanding.**
- 3. To help each child to learn how to convey meaning clearly and fluently in speech appropriate to different occasions and purposes.**
- 4. To develop each child's ability to read with accuracy, fluency and understanding.**
- 5. To help each child to learn how to convey meaning clearly in writing appropriate to different occasions and purposes.**
- 6. To help and encourage each child to develop the habit of reading.**
- 7. To help each child to discover pleasure and satisfaction in literature.**
- 8. To help children develop a discriminating and critical attitude to what s/he reads, hears and sees and, in turn, develops respect and tolerance of opinions other than his/her own.**
- 9. To help each child develop a legible and fluent style of handwriting.**
- 10. To teach each child the mechanics of language - spelling, syntax, punctuation and common usage.**

**11 To help each child to develop the skills of acquiring information from a wide variety of sources, note-taking, summarising and recording information in a variety of ways including the use of ICT.**

**12 To make regular assessment of achievement and progress and to plan for future learning so that each child's confidence and competence are improved.**

**In summary the role of the teacher is**



## **TALKING and LISTENING**

### **Rationale**

Language is a basic medium of communication, thinking and learning. It is chiefly through spoken language that children make sense of their world and establish relationships. They learn through talking and listening and demonstrate and refine their learning through talk.

### **The Teacher should**

Provide a secure and warm classroom environment, where children are encouraged to experiment with talk and with the articulation of their thoughts, feelings and opinions. Within this atmosphere the teacher can share in the learning experiences of children, by showing them that there is a genuine interest in all contributions to class, small groups and one to one situations.

Provide an example of clear diction, accurate instructions, reasoned argument, imaginative language and considerate attention to speakers.

Give opportunities for a variety of speaking and listening situations within the classroom, including collaborative discussion work, debates and question & answer sessions including work as individuals, in pairs, as members of a small group and as members of the class.

Be aware that listening is a skill which needs to be taught to children and should provide specifically designed activities to this end.

Provide listening resources using audio devices, headphones and ICT.

Provide opportunities for children to engage in talking & listening in its own right

Provide opportunities for children to engage in talking & listening as a result of their reading and writing or, indeed, as a necessary prerequisite of reading and writing.

Provide encouragement, support and guidance to children in their efforts to develop their talking and listening skills

### **The school should**

Maintain the importance of speaking and listening skills as facilitators for the whole curriculum

Actively encourage listening on a whole school basis, in particular through assemblies

Continually update listening resources

Encourage listening and reasoned argument as a vehicle for the avoidance of physical confrontation and aggression.

## **READING**

### **Rationale**

Reading is a vital process, which is central to Literacy and to the whole curriculum. Since literacy involves all four modes of language inextricably interwoven, only partial learning can occur in any one content area. Our ultimate aim in the reading curriculum is to produce independent learners who can read critically and efficiently in order to meet the demands of adult life, who can read to learn; actively interrogating text and matching purpose to skills to extract meaning, and who, above all, want to read and enjoy their reading.

We recognise that our pupils have different needs and thus a variety of approaches to the teaching of reading will be employed. These include the use of a structured reading scheme (KS1), Teacher Directed Group Reading, Class and Group Novels, Teacher Reading, USSR, Language Experience, Look & Say, Paired Reading, Phonics, Phonological Awareness Training, Group Cloze Procedures, Group Sequencing, Independent Personal Reading, Restructuring Text (Frameworks), Modelling & Diagramming, Comprehension Tasks, Dramatisation, Reading Aloud.

We use The Oxford Reading Tree scheme in Key Stage 1. Children will supplement these books with a variety of other texts including class library books. Additionally, teachers develop a range of activities in connection with and as an extension to the reading scheme material. Within the last year of the Key Stage (P4) children are introduced to novels as opposed to continuing with the scheme.

Throughout KS2 the children use novels as their core reading material. These and other reading materials are used as the stimulus for a wide variety of comprehension activities designed to assist children in responding to their reading with increased sophistication, discrimination and enjoyment, while promoting reading for learning and pleasure. Such activities will stress the inter-relatedness with writing, talking and listening and through all areas of the curriculum.

### **The Teacher should**

Provide attractive and imaginative reading areas including various types of books, labels, captions, posters, instructions and tasks.

Prominently display children's responses to reading including written responses, artistic responses and various comprehension activity outcomes, including work relating to other curricular areas which the children have developed through literature.

Value books and shows an interest in them by setting a personal example.

Keep records of children's reading achievements.

Hear children read, share books with children on a regular basis.

Read aloud (fiction and/or non-fiction) every day.

**Provide a daily opportunity for USSR with the realisation that this time is valuable and should occupy everyone's attention, including that of the teacher.**

**Ensure the use of a wide range of books of various styles and by a variety of authors/sources including picture books, fiction, information texts, poetry, consumer texts, newspapers and magazines, directories, dictionaries and thesauri.**

**Plan for a wide range of purposeful and relevant activities that will allow children to develop a range of reading/comprehension strategies in order to match skills to the reading task.**

**Promote children's achievements and build a positive self-image for each child so that they remain confident in their ability as readers and take enjoyment from literature.**

**Arrange visits to the local library and invite others into their room to promote reading among children - this should include other teachers, older children, ancillary staff, parents, grand-parents, library staff etc.**

**Promote the acquisition of research skills and provide suitable opportunities for children to learn independently through research.**

**Maintain a system of contact with home (e.g. a reading diary) which encourages the continuation of the reading process at home and keeps parents informed of what is expected of their child as regards reading on a daily basis. This should also allow parents the opportunity to respond to the home reading activity and develop a line of communication between teacher and parent, parent and child, teacher and child.**

**Read and know the books children are using for their core reading.**

### **The school should**

**Provide a varied library**

**Create and maintain a stimulating environment for children to experience and explore reading at their own pace with confidence and enjoyment to promote lifelong reading.**

**Maintain reading as a valued, high profile activity that accesses the whole curriculum.**

**Involve and support parents in their children's reading development**

## **WRITING**

### **Rationale**

The writing process is an essential tool in learning and communication. We will place emphasis upon the process of writing as well as the product. We will attempt to create an environment which allows pupils to share the process of writing with teachers and peers so that they may exchange ideas and gradually develop the ability to apply constructive criticism to their own work and that of others.

Children will be exposed to a wide variety of forms of writing appropriate to context and purpose. They will be taught form and encouraged to reflect on the best ways to present writing according to audience, context and purpose. They will be taught to plan, draft and re-draft writing where necessary.

We are very aware that the process of writing cannot be isolated from talking & listening and reading and to this extent stimuli for writing will come from what the children are reading, discussing or learning about. The context and purpose for writing will most often be embedded in other areas of the curriculum.

In establishing an atmosphere that reflects our belief in building self-confidence and in highlighting writing as an important and valuable tool in all aspects of a child's education; we will prominently display children's writing in classrooms, corridors and other areas of the school.

Their writing shall be responded to positively by teachers on a regular basis in oral, written and demonstrative form and, often, in a combination of all three. Such responses will also advise the child as to how they can improve their work. Written responses will be in clear, legible, neat handwriting in a style consistent to that being taught to the children.

We will systematically teach a neat, legible cursive style of handwriting in line with the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

Children will be taught the conventions of spelling, grammar and punctuation both in the context of their own writing and through specifically designed activities.

Children shall be given the opportunity to use a wide variety of writing tools including a variety of pencils, pens, papers and the computer. Every child will be taught to use word-processing and other desktop publishing packages.

Our aim is to develop ability, confidence and self-esteem in our children so that they can communicate their views, opinions, emotions and knowledge in writing effectively.



## **The teacher should**

**Plan for an extensive range of writing activities**

**Relate writing to the experiences and learning of children.**

**Provide a stimulating environment that recognises the value of children's writing.**

**Write alongside pupils, sharing in their writing tasks and discussing their writing with them.**

**Respond positively and with interest to all attempts at writing.**

**Teach handwriting on a regular basis and be competent in the form used in school.**

**Reinforce correct spelling, punctuation and grammar as appropriate in children's writing.**

**Teach the basic rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation, as well as common exceptions and usage - both in a structured manner and, importantly, within the context of children's writing.**

**Teach new forms of writing bearing in mind the "First Steps" approach of Familiarisation; Problem Solving; Modelling; Shared Writing; Guided Writing and Independent Writing.**

**Familiarise themselves with the "First Steps Writing Continuum" approaches. (*This scheme has many useful features including some very useful structured approaches to studying or introducing various forms of writing and linking teaching strategies to children's developmental stage. However, it is important that teachers ensure a balance between structure and freedom to experiment with different forms of writing. It is also important that children are given sufficient opportunities and time to choose their own topics, purposes and audiences Also, care needs to be taken to relate texts to the children's experiences and cultural setting.*)**

**Provide reference tools such as dictionaries, word banks, thesauri & spell checkers etc.**

**Collect examples of "good" writing from various sources including the children and assist children to understand the criteria for such writing.**

**Provide areas and opportunities for experimental, emergent and collaborative writing.**

**Enter children's writing into competitions and provide a wide audience for children's writing including the use of newspapers, booklets, newsletters and school publications.**

**Be aware of the process of writing: - Pre-writing; Drafting/Composing; Revising; Editing and Publishing.**

**Demonstrate a clear distinction between Secretarial and Compositional Skills both in their responses to children's writing and the activities they ask children to undertake.**

**Keep records of each child's writing which reflect the breadth of activity undertaken and allow progression to be monitored over a period of time.**

**Keep a record of regular handwriting activity undertaken by each child.**

**Encourage a high standard of presentation of written work, have guidelines which are known to children in this regard and regularly set short-term targets for improvement for each child in this area. This should carry forward into written homework so parents can assist children also. The teacher should respond regularly to the standard of presentation of written homework in the child's book to give a guide to the child and Parent. Such responses should reinforce the positive as well as indicating areas for improvement.**

**Plan for each child to have regular access to word processing and desktop publishing packages at the drafting and redrafting stages of writing. Keep records of each child's progress in both their word processing/publishing skills and completed work - i.e. actual copies of printed documents completed by each child.**

**Plan for the use of a variety of ICT media such as Computer Programs, Television, Radio, Tape, Video and OHP presentations as stimuli for writing.**

#### **The school should**

**Highlight writing as an important and valuable tool for all aspects of a child's education**

**Prominently display writing of all types, including the children's own writing.**

**Produce regular "publications" which contain children's writing for distribution to parents and a wider audience.**

**Recognise achievement and reward progress.**

**Hold parent meetings to inform parents both of individual child progress and approaches to writing taken in the school.**

## **Handwriting**

**Pupils will be taught the conventional ways of forming letter shapes in upper and lower case as in the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. When able to produce a satisfactory printed style, children will be encouraged to develop an appropriate connected style. Children will have regular handwriting activity (minimum 3 times per week) and a record of this will be maintained for each child. Teachers will regularly monitor this work at an individual level and both recognise achievement and set new short-term targets for improvement. Children will be encouraged to transfer the skills developed in handwriting into their normal presentation of work. Teachers will comment on this when responding to written homework and written work in other subjects as appropriate. Care will be taken to reinforce the positive as well as setting targets for improvement in the short term.**

**As we have already stated, teachers are expected to be proficient in the use of the style employed within the school personally and will communicate in writing with children using this style in books, on the blackboard, in overheads etc.**

**All children will write mostly in pencil until years 6 and 7, when they will be introduced to the use of pens for the majority of their written work.**

**Examples of good handwriting will be prominently displayed in classrooms, corridors and throughout the school. Year groups should plan for regular handwriting competitions that allow achievement to be recognised and rewarded.**

## **Spelling**

**In St Mary's PS we adopt the "Catchwords" scheme as our core spelling approach. This scheme uses the concept that spelling is mainly related to visual discrimination. As such children will be asked to employ the Look Cover Read Spell Check approach to learning new spellings. This will be reflected in the nature of work undertaken in school and as part of homework. Activities will encourage children to study the visual construction of words, recognise common letter strings and be familiar with most of the common words used by them in their writing.**

**Within KS1 children will be systematically introduced to these more common patterns and encouraged to spell correctly a range of words that occur regularly in their reading or writing. Within KS2 pupils will be helped to extend knowledge acquired and emphasis will be placed upon independent searching for words in dictionaries, thesauri and spell checkers and on pupils discussing words with each other and the teacher.**

**The marking of spelling within children's writing will reflect our desire to emphasise the positive, to build self-confidence and to encourage short-term improvement. Therefore, not every mistake will be highlighted. Rather, the teacher will use his/her own professional discretion to focus the child on particular patterns, frequent errors in common words or areas of particular focus within the context of spelling being taught in class. Again, the teacher will also highlight the positive as well as focusing the child's attention on error as necessary. The ultimate aim of building confidence and the belief in each child that "I can spell" should not be lost.**

**We hope to give children the necessary skills to be proficient spellers. Teachers will plan to encourage the development of a known spelling base and children will have access to personal, class, topic and common lists of words which they can use to source required vocabulary independently. They will also be taught to use ICT facilities to correct spelling within word processing packages. Teachers are expected to familiarise themselves with the rationale behind the "Catchwords" scheme that is contained in the teachers' handbook. This document also contains information on core patterns, additional patterns and key sight vocabulary for development within particular year groups. This, of course, must be matched against the individual achievement/ability level of the children. Children should not be inhibited in their attempts to express themselves in writing because of a fear of not spelling words correctly. The sensitivity of marking/writing strategies employed by the teacher and evident in their responses to written work should reflect an awareness of the need to encourage and reward development on a short-term basis.**

## **Drama/Role Play**

**In this school we recognise the importance of drama and role-play within Literacy and across the curriculum. We hope to place appropriate activities at the centre of the curriculum to include opportunity for dramatic play: role-play: story telling: acting out: exploration of themes/characters/situations in literature: improvisation and the use of scripted texts.**

### **Responding to pupils work**

**In St Mary's we recognise that the most useful way of responding to the pupils' work is by talking to them about what they have done, discussing content & structure and encouraging independence. The pupils will be encouraged to look at their own work and the work of others critically. We are concerned that the feedback that is received will be positive and supportive. Comments will not, therefore, be restricted to a brief judgmental assessment but will give reasons for suggested change and improvements as well as explanations as to why a piece of work has been successful. Responses will also reflect the purpose of a piece of writing and contain reference to the actual content of the text, particularly when the writing allows the child to include personal content or comment.**

**All written work will be responded to regularly - with responses made during the composition of the work when possible and not just reserved for final comment on finished work. When possible the child will be present when the work is being commented on. This is not practical for all work and teachers will respond to work away from children. When this is returned to the child, they will be afforded the opportunity to discuss the comments with the teacher or others if necessary. Work should reflect the improvement sought by comment over a period of time.**

*Comment alone, however, will not ensure progress. Teachers should adjust the content of teaching to reflect short-term targets for improvement evident in responses to children's written work.*

## **CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL ORGANISATION**

In St Mary's Literacy is clearly viewed as the ultimate cross-curricular subject area. As a subject area, there is a Literacy team with one member of the team as lead co-ordinator. This person sits on the School Management Team and is responsible for representing Literacy at a whole school level as regards prioritisation of needs, funding, time allocation for development/inset and whole school planning, evaluation procedures and target setting. The lead co-ordinator, in consultation with other members of the team, is responsible for planning development meetings; setting agenda for it and ensuring staff are informed and present as necessary. This person also receives information and resources that arrive in school and distributes them. All other aspects of the co-ordination of Literacy involve all members of the team.

### **Team Members**

Mrs Joanne McKenna P6/7 Literacy Co-ordinator

Miss Annette McCullagh P4

Mrs Caroline Burke P3

Mrs Ann-Marie Mullin P2

### **Time Allocation**

The NIC documentation recommends that 35% of teaching time be allocated to English. This also recommends that the NIC commands 80% of teaching time in total. This works out at approximately 5.25 hours per week @ KS1 and 7 hours per week @ KS2. However, given our view that Literacy is central to all aspects of education, it is impossible and incorrect to treat it as a separate subject. Much of the work undertaken in other subject areas will have relevance to Literacy. Teachers should set specific time aside for Literacy development daily. They must also be aware of how this can be used in the delivery of other subject content and [of equal significance] vice-versa. We need to maintain a global view of the whole curriculum if we are to correctly locate Literacy in its rightful place.

### **Planning**

In this school we plan work on a six-week or half term basis. We use a standard format for such planning and copies are included. Year groups meet to co-ordinate this planning and to review its implementation at the start and end of the planned period. This document also includes guidance on the content for delivery within broad year groups. As regards writing development, we will refer to the "First Steps Writing Continuum" and the POS to assist in planning future work.

The individual teacher is responsible for the teaching strategies employed within their classroom and for the tailoring of content to suit the individual needs of children according to their level of development/achievement and in accordance with school policies.

However, year group planning ensures that agreed common experiences, tasks and content are planned and delivered. Therefore, it is important that such co-operative planning contains details of these common experiences - possibly along a unit of work

format. Its purpose is to co-ordinate the learning experiences, tasks, teaching strategies and content throughout the year group. Children of similar ability should experience largely similar programmes of work which are designed to improve specific skills, enhance understanding, allow particular experience or develop empathy with characters, situations, points of view or circumstances.

Plans should clearly indicate arrangements for allowing children to work as a class, as part of a group or as individuals. The plans should not restrict themselves merely to the curriculum content but should include detail on strategy, organisation, experiences, assessment and resources. They should include the learning objectives of the activities and they should be reviewed later against the level of success achieved in relation to the objectives set. Future plans should reflect the outcomes of this assessment.

### **Assessment, Record Keeping, Reporting**

The school expects teachers to maintain a comprehensive record of work undertaken by all pupils in Literacy generally. Teachers should maintain running, informal, written records of their views on each pupil's achievement within the various elements of reading, writing and talking & listening and examples of assessments carried out at the end of a six week period. This should then influence what is taught and form the basis of guidance to pupils, target setting and reports to parents.

Teachers need the evidence for their assessments to be firmly rooted in work routinely produced by individuals. This clearly points to the need for regular evaluation of work such as spelling, handwriting, composition, comprehension, responses to reading and topic work. Continuous evaluation/assessment is best placed within the regular correction/marking process.

Assessment should, therefore, not always entail the setting of tests but be reflective of the marking approaches taken and responses made to pupils' everyday work. The main requirement is not to produce assessment tests - but to assess routine work. Tests, when necessary, should test the current teaching/learning content of a teacher's plans and not be diverse ability tests. General ability tests are conducted at the end of each year or applied in relation to a pupil's special needs.

Use of the "First Steps Writing Continuum" will be made to assist in monitoring progress in writing.

Formal reporting is arranged twice annually.

The first occasion is around Halloween and is an oral report delivered as part of parent teacher meetings. This not only allows the teacher to report to parents, but also provides an opportunity for parents to meet the teacher and to discuss matters of concern to them. *Furthermore it also provides an opportunity for teachers to guide parents on ways to assist via homework supervision and support.*

The second formal meeting is set towards the end of term three and discussion centres around a written report which will form part of each child's record. The teacher reports on the child's ability in reading, writing and talking & listening. This is based on continuous assessment by teachers and the results of standardised tests. Children are

awarded A, B or C in reading, writing and talking & listening, indicating broad ability levels of above average, average or below average respectively. Again, a brief examination of the content/quality of children's work in books, files etc. and responses made to such work will reflect the recorded grade - as will general performance in standardised tests.

The standardised tests should confirm a teacher's judgement - not replace nor overrule it. In this school, where there is disparity between test scores and a teacher's opinion, we will rely most heavily on the teacher's professional judgement based on continuous assessment. Such disparity may indicate the need for some detailed observation of a pupil's work for a time or the need for future diagnosis, but may equally reflect either inadequacy within the testing procedure or the influence of another factor such as illness. This will be a matter for teachers to determine.

We do not report on levels of achievement relating to ATs except as required at the end of each key stage. End of key stage assessment is based on assessment over an extended period of time and based mostly on pupils' work as opposed to performance on AUs. These only confirm the teacher's assessment of existing work. This means that teachers in P4 & P7 need to attribute regular levels to children's work and maintain a written record of such decisions alongside pieces of work used in the assessment process for each child, particularly during the assessment period between January and May.

### Recording children's work: Writing & written responses to reading/topics.

**It is the responsibility of each teacher to ensure that the systems used for recording the wide range of children's written work are flexible enough to cope with [and demonstrate] variety - while structured in a manner which permits progression to be monitored effectively and facilitate comparison between similar writing activities.**

**The following types of recording systems should be in evidence in each classroom.**

[Various teachers use files while others use a variety of booklets or several exercise books. There is room for flexibility in this area so long as the system meets adequately the needs outlined above. If in doubt - ask]

A handwriting book/file	A composition book/file	A structured writing file
Subject specific books/file sections	Class Books	Displays of written work
Spelling book/file		

#### 1. A handwriting book/file

*This should reflect regular activities undertaken in the development of this specific skill in line with "The New Nelson Handwriting Scheme."*



## **2. A “composition” book/file**

*This should contain work that is solely focused on compositional writing as opposed to secretarial aspects such as grammar, punctuation, spelling or syntax.*

*This book/file should contain at least one substantial piece of writing (dated) each week. This does not imply that all pieces need to be finished articles. If your emphasis was on introductions or conclusions over a period and this is the only section of the story the children have substantially worked at - then that is all that goes in. Quality of writing rather than quantity!*

*Likewise, this book should have examples of first drafts, second drafts or final drafts as appropriate. (Not necessarily concerning the same piece of writing each time) It should also contain examples of planning approaches you are using with the children prior to the composition stage. E.g. Planning formats; Beginning, middle, end; topic webs; brainstorming; notes; boxed outlines for paragraphs or separate concepts etc. It is appropriate that this book contains samples of writing undertaken in other curricular areas.*

*The work should reflect typical teacher responses to the pupils’ work and demonstrate the variety of marking/correction strategies employed within the class. This book/file should contain substantial examples of children’s writing.*

## **3. A Structured Writing File**

**This file based approach lends itself to the organisation of various examples of work completed by pupils using a range of paper types, sizes, colours and formats - including photocopied masters, borders, frameworks, decorative effects or stimulating presentations. A file can be sectioned to allow for Cloze procedure, diagrams, modelling, comparison frameworks, reading/novel based activities, word processed work, comprehension and a range of writing styles, activities and purposes such as poetry, factual writing, descriptive writing, personal writing, note-taking, collaborative pieces, newspapers, advertisements etc. referred to in the Curriculum documents.**

**A file allows these to be stored in a coherent fashion that is not subject to the constraints of the time order of the work and allows progression and development to be easily demonstrable, readily assessable and obvious to pupils, parents and teachers. It also ensures that much of the children’s work completed on loose pages does not end up scrunched under desks, lying on floors, lost or dumped.**

## **4 Class Books**

**Teachers should occasionally assemble a collection of pupils’ work on a single theme, topic, project, experience, novel, subject or style and have it presented attractively in a book form. These should be accessible to pupils so that they may read their own writing and that of their peers. It is one obvious response to the requirement to provide an audience for children’s work.**

E.g. *Our Favourite Book Reviews*      *Scary Stories*      *Our Winter Poetry*

*Our Visit To \_\_\_\_\_*      *Our Letters To \_\_\_\_\_*      *Mini-beasts*

*Me, myself and I*      *Our Class Newspaper*      *Irish Saints*

### **5 Subject Specific Books/file sections**

**My Science File**

**My Art Folder**

**My Religion Book etc.**

### **6 Display of children's writing**

The classroom environment and corridors should also reflect the children's writing across the curriculum. The English document specifically refers to work being valued, displayed and provided with an audience beyond the classroom. The "First Steps" philosophy mirrors this in its assertion that children are provided with real audiences. Older classes should work *mostly* in pen and their writing should be paragraphed and in cursive hand.

### **7 A spelling book/file**

This book should contain activities undertaken to specifically develop spelling as a secretarial skill. It should include copymasters from "Catchwords"; spelling assessment activities; dictation exercises based on spelling patterns taught; editing exercises emphasizing spelling etc.

### **8 A written homework book**

All children should be given regular written homework suited to their age and ability. This should reflect all areas of the curriculum over a period of time. This work should be responded to daily by the class teacher and point out to pupils and parents the positive aspects of work as well as setting relevant short term goals for improvement.

### **Recording children's work: READING**

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that accurate records of books read and individual progress are kept. A reading age and corresponding chronological age should be recorded annually for each child in MAY. This should be achieved using the **YOUNG GROUP READING TEST** appropriate for the age of the pupils involved. This will form part of each child's record of achievement and fit in with assessment records kept from P4 on computer. The scores for P1 - P3 should form part of the record folder kept for each child.

Information which is kept, particularly for the younger pupils, should include Alphabet knowledge - letter names, sounds and sequence: Ability to sequence days, months, seasons both by saying and using flash-cards: Keyword wall charts and 3 letter words recognition particularly consonant - vowel - consonant sequenced words which allow for analysis of initial letter and medial vowel discrimination. On this point, it is essential that young children have 3D letters available for use - wooden ones are best. This assists multi-sensory learning and can impact significantly on letter discrimination ability and confusion of letters such as b & d etc.

Progress on reading schemes needs to be recorded accurately by the teacher. Phonic work associated with the Oxford Reading Tree scheme must be followed by all children and records maintained.

Throughout the school, comprehension activities should be widely varied and planned to ensure that appropriate tasks, involving all levels of comprehension and which go beyond traditional textbook formats, are the norm. Evidence of such work needs to be kept - as suggested in this policy under records for writing.

Reading homework should be set as part of daily routine in every class. A system that informs parents of the daily expectations of reading homework and provides opportunity for response by both teacher & parent should be in place. This is best achieved by the use of a Reading/Homework Diary suited to the age of the pupils concerned.

Systems that allow children to record personal reading should also be devised. The older children will be able to maintain such records independently. Systems for ensuring the accuracy of such records and opportunity to demonstrate discrimination and individual taste (for instance when children elect not to finish a particular book or dislike a book) should be in-built to these systems. A star rating may be appropriate. Children could simply record the details of a book - author; publisher; illustrator - and complete a simple review statement or various pro-formas of book reviews available in class for each book they read. The variation in style could ensure that children are required to demonstrate differing levels of response appropriate to age/ability.

Aligned to the idea of independent reading is the recognition that class/school libraries should involve a structure that assists children in selecting books suited to their ability level. A system of colour coding, for instance, would be appropriate.

Every teacher should be familiar with the reading books used in older classes so as to avoid interference with resources needed by other teachers. Such novels should not be available or read to younger classes. The scheme includes details of current novels in use P4 - P7.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

(The Special Needs Policy refers.)

Where teachers are concerned about a child's progress, they should discuss the matter with Mrs Quinn (SENCO) and follow her advice and established routines. Mrs Quinn is reliant on specific and accurate information regarding a child's progress from the class teacher. The more specific the information, then the better everyone is placed to devise

suitable strategies to address a teacher's concerns and the needs of a child. Any assessment of a pupil should be as focused on what the child can do as much as on what the child cannot do.

While Mrs Quinn is there to help, advise and become actively involved when appropriate, the class teacher has the responsibility to ensure that the child's needs are ultimately being planned and provided for within the classroom situation where they spend at least 90% of their time in school.

## **ICT**

(The ICT Policy refers)

ICT offers a growing means of addressing many of the demands of the curriculum documents. Importantly, children should use ICT in writing at the compositional level as opposed to transcription of previously composed work. Teachers should use the word processing and desktop publishing packages available as outlined in the ICT scheme. The children should be taught how to use spell-checking, editing, formatting and graphics features of such programmes.

The growth in communication facilities should also lead to the publication of work beyond the classroom and to increased communication between the children and others.

The Internet, audio-visual materials or programmes and multi-media communication systems allow for access to many relevant sources of information across the curriculum and can assist children in the development of reading, information gathering and selection as well as the delivery of other subject content. The ICT team is available to advise on these matters.

## **KS1 classes**

While many demands are greatly reduced due to limitations of younger children to communicate in print, it is important that consideration be given appropriately to allowing children to have their thoughts, ideas, comments and experiences committed to print. Even in the youngest classes the teacher or classroom assistant should regularly act as scribe and reader for the children and their own "writing."

As soon as is practical, young children should have the opportunity to attempt to write freely, including scribble and using devices such as a stroke for words they do not have or only writing initial letters etc. to free them from over concern about their limitations regarding spelling or vocabulary. They must be encouraged to see themselves as capable communicators in the written form.

(Again, "First Steps" contains some good advice for working with children at various early developmental phases of the writing continuum.)

It is important that not all work is completed in booklets and that pupils are presented with exercise books which are suited to their age and ability, including blank, half lined and lined books. The use of ICT, particularly the concept keyboard and overlays, is an

essential method of removing restrictions on young children and should be used in all classrooms. Imaginative use of 3D materials, sand, playdough and blackboards etc. in structured play is also vital in assisting children master early writing skills.

### **Reporting to Parents and homework**

In reporting to parents teachers should refer to reading ages and supporting evidence for children's levels of achievement in reading. Each child will be given A; B or C for reading - again corresponding to above average, average and below average. Each child P4 - P7 will also be assessed using standardised tests which include reading / comprehension assessments. It is important that parents are focused on achievement as much as on weakness.

Parents' main supportive role in reading is to ensure that children retain a positive self-image and a love of literature. Advice included in paired reading is relevant. Parents should ensure reading is an enjoyable experience and not go overboard on requiring children to sound out words or repeat unknown words ad nauseam etc. **This message needs reinforced at parent teacher meetings.**

Parents, keen to help their children with reading, need guidance to ensure that they do not harm their child's self - confidence by focusing on "weaknesses." Simply telling their children unknown words that they are unable to decipher in a few seconds is better than a shouting session or creating a pressure cooker atmosphere. They also need to know that children do not have to learn reading by heart and know every word for the teacher. It is important that teachers get to know the difficulty level of any text for the child, particularly when the child is reading at the instructional level, so that the text is not actually at a frustrational level for the pupil. The Reading/Homework Diary could contain a system for rating the difficulty level of a book from a parental viewpoint. It could also reinforce messages of advice with a "Tip Of The Week" approach for example.

Similarly, each child is assessed using A, B or C in writing annually. Teachers should again ensure that parents are as focused on achievement as they are on areas for improvement. Evidence for achievement should be in children's routine writing. This should also indicate areas for short-term improvement. Considered comment in homework books can significantly impact positively in this area by focusing everyone on success and on small achievable improvements.

Parents need to understand our approaches to spelling and know the LOOK COVER READ WRITE CHECK routine. They need guidance on not over-emphasising secretarial skills when composition is the major task. They need to know how they can assist their children with spelling and grammar. Teacher responses to written homework play a key role in providing best example for parents in this complex area. Parents also need relevant information on the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. Year groups should consider the best ways to regularly reinforce such information to parents. The school will host information evenings for parents on these matters also in January 2000 and during P1 induction evenings.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

**If all pupils are to have equal access to Literacy in a way that promotes a just and equal society, then we have to address questions of classroom organisation, teaching strategies and curricular content in regard to equal opportunity.**

**We in St. Mary's, while being conscious of the underachievement of boys in Literacy both generally and in this school, will seek to ensure that all children have equal opportunity within the curriculum. Actions to promote the achievement of boys will be designed so that they do not discriminate against girls. Some points we consider important are:**

**When children are working in group situations we ensure that they have experiences of working in a variety of mixed and single sexed groupings. All pupils are encouraged to share different roles in group work and discussions so that everyone has turns at reporting back, note-taking, leading activity etc. We are conscious not to stereo-type roles or responsibilities.**

**The teachers' selection of reading material is such that it is balanced between fiction and factual material. The themes, characters and settings have a balanced appeal and relevance across the sexes over a period of time. Preferences are also catered for in the range of reading material available for individual selection in class libraries.**

**We are concerned that the activities undertaken by all pupils include both active and passive learning styles. We note the following extracts from the CCEA publication "Focus on Boys"**

*When asked to select three preferred means of learning from a set of thirteen in a recent MORI survey, more boys than girls said that they liked to do practical things (39% boys 32% girls) and that they liked using computers (24% boys 17% girls). Conversely, fewer boys than girls chose learning with a group of friends as a favourite learning method (23% boys 34% girls)*

*It seems that boys progress is more dependent on the nature and quality of their experiences in school than is that of girls, who tend in general to be more self-motivated. Girls learn by watching and listening; boys learn by doing. Boys like role-play and practical investigations. Their primary learning style is experiential. They also enjoy oral and collaborative work. Their ability to concentrate is typically lower than that of girls. (A typical 13/14 year-old boy concentrates for only four or five minutes compared to 13 minutes for a girl).*

*Optimum learning occurs for both genders when;*

*A supportive learning environment exists in which pupils feel free to express themselves  
The teacher explains clearly the purpose and relevance of the learning and connects it clearly to what pupils already know or what has gone before*

*The expected outcomes of the learning are explained and pupils are given the criteria on which work will be judged*

*The teacher explains the structure of the lesson and demonstrates new knowledge clearly*

*Pupils are actively engaged in learning with regular changes in pace and emphasis every 10 minutes or so  
Learning is reviewed at the end of the lesson and pupils have a clear idea of what is expected next.*

**The documentation issued during our benchmarking and target setting day in August '99 apply. In particular the documents "Where Do We Seek Improvement?" and "Gender Performance - A Closer Study '99" are particularly relevant to the issue of equal opportunity.**

**We in St Mary's actively consider such issues and monitor and vary our own teaching strategies and classroom organisation accordingly.**

## **Scheme of Work - Literacy**

### **Talking & listening** **Overall Aims**

**It is our aim to: -**

- **Provide opportunities regularly for pupils to listen to, discuss and respond to a variety of written sources such as stories (fictional & non-fictional), poems and media texts.**
- **Provide opportunities regularly for pupils to encounter visual and audio-visual sources such as paintings, photographs, tape recordings, CDs and multimedia materials and use these as stimuli for discussion and imaginative response throughout the curriculum.**
- **Encourage children, and develop their ability, to share and co-operate within a group setting across all curricular areas (including structured play) as an effective means of identifying and solving problems.**
- **Give pupils opportunities to share and discuss their personal experiences, interests and opinions with the teacher and others in a secure and caring environment.**
- **Use drama, music and simulation to explore poetry, stories and social issues.**
- **To provide opportunities for every pupil to read aloud (in accordance with their ability) from a variety of sources including their own work and work from their own and other cultures in a meaningful way and for a variety of audiences and purposes.**
- **Develop the pupils' abilities and skills in communicating their thoughts, feelings and ideas orally as an end itself and as a prerequisite for written expression.**
- **To develop the ability of pupils to use talking and listening as an effective and preferred means of resolving conflict or disputes and establishing codes of conduct, fair play and response.**



## **OBJECTIVES FOR KS1**

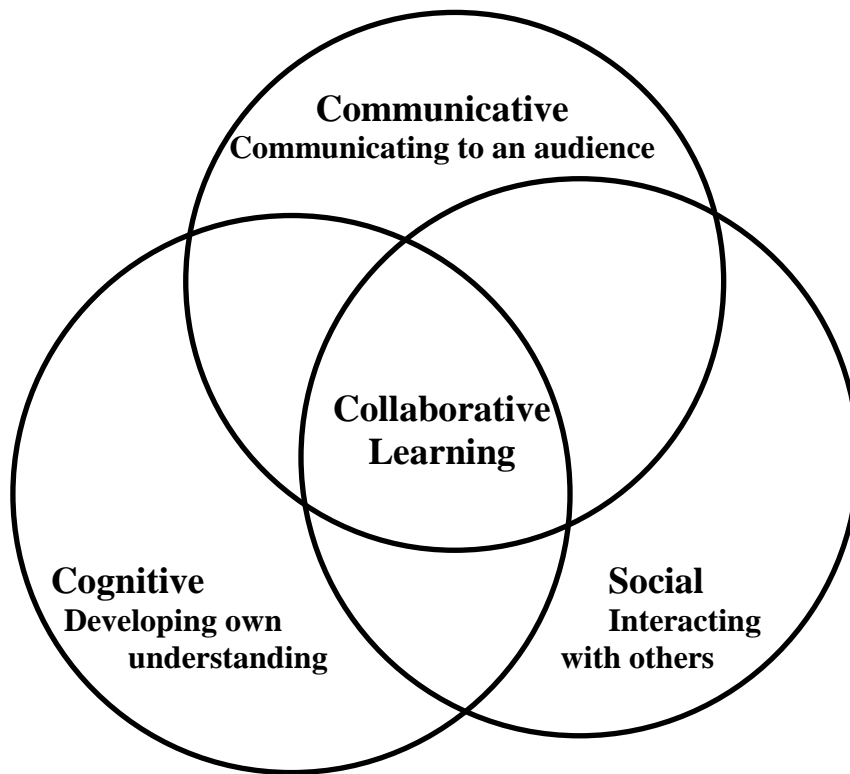
- ✓ **Arising from classroom and first-hand experience, pupils will be given opportunities to develop their talking and listening skills in a caring, secure setting as; *Individuals; Pairs; Members of a group; Members of a class: according to the nature of the task.***
- ✓ **Pupils will have opportunities to listen to an abundance of stories, poems, rhymes, songs and folk tales - both familiar and unfamiliar. The range will include examples from pupils' own work and works from other cultures.**
- ✓ **Pupils will explore stories, poems and songs across the curriculum; recreating parts of them in art, drama, music, dance and other expressive activities and discussing language features e.g. rhyming words, cadence, specialised vocabulary, dialect etc.**
- ✓ **Pupils will listen to, retell and tell stories based on personal experience, imagination, pictures, art, literature, structured play etc. Pupils will listen to, say and learn poems. (Some will be retained in special books.)**
- ✓ **Pupils will listen to/view/examine and respond to a variety of media/multimedia presentations including radio & television broadcasts, computer programs, paintings, photographs, artefacts and presentations made by visitors to the school.**
- ✓ **Pupils will co-operate in pairs or groups in activities that require them to talk and listen in every curricular area including structured play, problem solving and investigative work.**
- ✓ **Pupils will take part in conversations and discussions; elaborating, asking & answering questions, drawing conclusions, making comparisons and taking turns at speaking & listening.**
- ✓ **Pupils will listen & respond to guidance and instructions given by teachers and other appropriate adults and will give instructions, explanations or information orally to others and discuss their work with other children, the teacher & appropriate adults.**
- ✓ **Pupils will take part in drama activities including role-play.**
- ✓ **Pupils will be encouraged to use appropriate quality of speech and voice, speaking audibly and clearly, when addressing others or reading aloud, using inflection to convey meaning or create effect.**
- ✓ **Pupils with special needs involving inter-disciplinary co-operation will have those needs responded to appropriately and sympathetically by staff and fellow pupils.**
- ✓ **Pupils will see talking and listening in a non-confrontational setting as the best means of addressing conflict situations. (Circle time/ Pastoral Care/ Discipline)**

## **Objectives for KS2**

**Pupils should continue to develop their skills in line with objectives set down for KS1. Particular developments that will occur are: -**

- ✓ **Pupils will listen and respond to an increased range of fiction, poetry, drama, art and media presentations.**
- ✓ **Pupils will tell, retell, summarise, paraphrase or adapt accounts based on memories, personal experiences, literature, imagination and curricular content.**
- ✓ **Pupils will have opportunities to discuss, empathise with or oppose the views of others - including the ability to differentiate between fact, fantasy, opinion, bias and neutrality.**
- ✓ **Pupils will be able to use technology with increased independence to conduct interviews, relate stories and communicate messages or ideas and to record the outcomes of group discussion. Pupils will co-operate to formulate and respond to questionnaires that seek information, views and opinions.**
- ✓ **Pupils will develop confidence as speakers using appropriate quality of speech and voice in both discussions and short oral presentations to a familiar group or class on matters of personal interests or curricular topics.**
- ✓ **Pupils will begin to recognise, discuss and develop a train of thought.**
- ✓ **Pupils will be able to discuss how they should behave in a group situation, organising turns at speaking, listening, noting and encouraging participation in discussion. Pupils will use talk as a preparation for writing and use writing to aid talk.**
- ✓ **Pupils will collaborate with growing independence to improvise a scene based on experience, imagination, literature, media or curricular topics.**
- ✓ **Pupils will begin to demonstrate an increased understanding of colloquial expressions and appropriate language matched to formal/informal settings.**
- ✓ **Pupils will participate in group and class discussions for a variety of curricular purposes, sharing, responding to and evaluating ideas, arguments and points of view, using evidence or reasoning and justifying opinions, actions or proposals.**
- ✓ **Pupils will, under teacher guidance, use group discussion as a mechanism to address issues that arise among themselves in class, the playground or on their way to and from school and to establish codes of conduct, rules for fair play, appropriate responses to bullying or rewards for good work, behaviour or improvement.**

**We recognise the following aspects of Talking & Listening**



**Different Types of Talk**

**Explaining  
Describing  
Instructing  
Narrating  
Collaborating  
Influencing  
Discussing  
Creating  
Planning  
Arguing  
Persuading  
Responding  
Exploring  
Informing  
Questioning**

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### **Raise the status of talk**

- talk is work

### **Classroom organisation**

- furniture
- talk corner
- resources

### **Establish group rules for talk**

- involve children in making these rules

### **Organise groups**

- vary according to purpose & content

### **Use a range of strategies for group work**

- brainstorming
- jigsawing
- twos to fours
- rainbowing
- envoying
- listening triads
- group observers

## **Explanation of strategies for group work employed in St Mary's (Taken from National Oracy Project)**

### **Brainstorming**

*In this approach, children in a large group, or even the whole class, will contribute ideas, thoughts or words off the top of their heads related to a particular subject or problem. All contributions are listed without comment and then the children use the list to select tasks or topics for further work. The children can use the ideas and information that have been collected in a variety of ways. They can discuss which are the most important and need to become the focus for more work; they can cluster or categorise the ideas and allocate further work to smaller groups; they can use the ideas for story, pictorial or other representation.*

### **Jigsawing**

*This is an extremely effective form of co-operative learning if it is given the time to develop.*

*The children are organised into "Home Groups" of about six to look at a topic. These are the groups in which the children plan their initial work and to which they will be reporting what they have discovered in order to plan final recommendations and presentations. Each child in the Home Group is allocated one aspect of the topic to gain more information about and is designated an "expert."*

*Children then reform into "Expert" groups comprising all those from Home Groups who have the same task. After discussion, the experts then go back to their Home Groups to tell*

*the rest what they have found out and to plan the final display before reporting to the whole class.*

*Using the jigsaw approach enables each child to have an important role in the work of a group.*

#### **Twos to fours**

*Children work together in pairs, perhaps on a mathematical problem or science experiment. They then join another pair to explain what they have achieved and to compare it with the work of the other pair. This provides a valuable opportunity to express understanding and to respond to the views of others in a supportive context.*

#### **Rainbowing**

*A way of ensuring that children experience working alongside a range of others is to give each member of a group a colour or number. When the group has worked together, all those of a particular colour or number form new groups to compare what they have done.*

#### **Envoying**

*Often, in group situations, the teacher is concerned that s/he will be under pressure from many directions. Envoying helps children to find help & support without necessarily having recourse to the teacher. If a group needs to check something or to obtain information, one of the group can be sent as an “Envoy” to another group, the library or book corner and will report back to the group. Groups can be asked to send an envoy to another group to explain what they have done, obtain responses or suggestions and report back.*

#### **Listening Triads**

*In groups of three, children take on the roles of Talker, Questioner or Recorder. The Talker comments on or explains an issue or activity. The Questioner prompts and seeks clarification. The Recorder makes notes on the conversation and reports the conversation after a (brief) period. Next time the roles are switched. In this way children have an opportunity to take responsibility for supporting and sharing ideas!*

#### **Group Observers**

*A group member is responsible for observing the ways in which the group works together. Using a simple guideline (which the children may devise), the observer watches and listens as the children work. The group then discusses the information and reviews its work accordingly.*

## Assessment of Talking and Listening

We assess language development in order to plan future activities to improve children's learning opportunities and to ensure further development. The POS for English set out what has to be taught in Talking & Listening. The ATs should be referred to as a means of determining which level a child is at. Teachers should keep a record of Attainment to note a child's progress. We will consider assessment at the planning stage.

In St Mary's PS assessment of talking and listening will *mainly* be continuous, informal and embedded in classroom practice. Our main criterion for assessing a pupil's competence is the communicative effectiveness of what s/he has said (confidence, fluency, variety and appropriateness) or the quality of response when listening.

A semi-formal means we will use is getting children to report back to the teacher on how they got on. They will be asked to comment on what they feel they have learned, how well they think they did and in what ways they might improve. This will help to inform teachers as to how the children perceived their learning.

We will monitor observable features such as level of engagement in tasks, interest shown, willingness to contribute and get involved, social behaviour and the quality of talking & listening.

Formal assessment will be carried out in relation to end of key stage assessment. Occasionally we will avail of other formal means of assessment such as those presented by "Listen & Do" KS1 and "The Oracy Scheme" KS2.

As regards accent or dialect we will follow the advice given in The Cox Report:

*A child's accent and dialect should in no way affect his/her assessment. Teachers need to be sensitive towards dialects to prevent "damage to self esteem and motivation which can be caused by indiscriminate correction of dialect forms."*

Assessment will be based on the performance of the child, in what s/he says and not the dialect in which it is said.

We are also conscious that silence does not mean a lack of understanding. Receptive language is always ahead of productive language. Amount of talk is not necessarily significant. A few opportune words can move a group's thinking forward very effectively.

# **Reading**

## **Introduction**

**Our approaches to teaching reading are based upon a number of assumptions about reading.**

**The ability to create meaning from a written text is one of the most important skills a child can develop during the school years. The teaching of reading is, therefore, a high priority in every class and we encourage comprehension of and meaningful response to text beyond simply “barking at print.”**

**Reading is an enjoyable experience. We encourage children to get pleasure from a wide range of literature and endeavour to make reading [& its associated activities] enjoyable, attractive and rewarding. Each teacher approaches the teaching of reading with energy, enthusiasm and an emphasis on building confidence and self-esteem.**

**Reading is a highly valuable skill and so we promote literature and the children’s responses to it in an attractive and stimulating way. This includes reading corners in each classroom, a literature/language rich environment in each classroom and prominent display of children’s work related to their reading in classrooms, corridors and to wider audiences within and beyond the school.**

**Children come to school with a variety of experiences and understandings about reading. Our early teaching of reading uses and builds upon these and offers a continually expanding range of reading experience. As children move through the school, all ability levels are catered for via careful assessment, diagnosis, record keeping, planning, grouping, the selection of suitable material and parental involvement schemes.**

**Readers do not read in only one way but rather they use a range of strategies for making sense of text. We are flexible in our approaches to the teaching of reading and seek to develop children’s competency in a wide variety of strategies across their seven years at St Mary’s PS.**

**Becoming a reader is not merely acquiring a level of skill but developing a comprehensive knowledge of texts, authors and purposes for reading. We monitor and plan for a wide variety of texts, authors and purposes for reading both within individual classes and throughout the children’s seven years at this school.**

**As readers develop, they become more able to reflect on their reading and to offer personal and critical responses to what they have read. We support children in this reflection and offer many varied opportunities for response. Such responses are widely displayed and teachers actively seek to make them available to a growing range of audiences.**

## **Guidelines for teaching reading in St Mary's PS.**

### ***A flexible approach***

**Different children learn to read in different ways and at different rates. Furthermore, the way an individual reads depends on the nature/purpose of the task at any given time. It is obvious, therefore, that we need a variety of approaches if we are to help all our children to become successful and adaptable readers.**

**This variety of approach needs to be present across key stages and in each classroom. Such flexibility is also assumed within the POS for reading. Teachers refer to the POS regularly and monitor their reading plans to ensure they provide adequate opportunity for variety of approach and purpose generally and in relation to children of all abilities. The Literacy Co-ordinator and Team also monitor reading schemes of work, plans etc. to ensure similar variety and flexibility.**

**Below are some details of the approaches and strategies teachers in St Mary's PS use as appropriate to children's ability.**

### ***Word Recognition [Sight vocabulary]***

**Whilst reading is not just a case of recognising words this can be a useful strategy. Competence in recognising words which appear in high frequency wordlists is an essential skill is monitored for children of young ages and for those older pupils requiring special needs assistance or who are continuing to struggle with a level of reading commensurate to their age.**

**It should be remembered that recognition and comprehension are helped when such words are met in the context of whole texts/sentences. This does not preclude teaching/learning in isolation [*using flash cards for instance*] but infers that work, which includes these words in context, must be used alongside and in support of isolated learning. [*Context cards for instance or placing highlighted words in sentences*]**

### ***Phonological Awareness Training***

**Most fluent readers do not rely on phonological but rather on contextual cues when reading. We do not want our children to approach reading by attempting to decode every sound (only the poorest of readers do this) but recognising letters and sounds (particularly initial sounds and final sounds) is a very important part of reading. We, therefore, have a structured approach to teaching letter recognition and then sounds through P1 - P3. Our children are familiar with the Letterland characters for example. The teachers in the infant classes systematically work through and check letter and sound recognition. This work links to spelling and handwriting also. However, while taught systematically and deliberately, the children are mostly focused on contextual cues such as pictures and whole sentence meaning in their general reading. Only special needs children continue with phonological awareness programmes beyond P3.**



### Contextual Reading

In order to become fluent readers children need to acquire a range of strategies for identifying unknown or unfamiliar words/phrases in text. When a reader uses context cues to determine the meaning of a word or phrase s/he is making intelligent guesses based on semantic cues, syntactic cues, graphophonic cues and their knowledge or experience of the text, other texts or life. They consider the meaning of the text; they study the grammatical structure; they use their knowledge of phonics or familiar letter patterns; they consider the style previously used by the author or in similar books and apply their own life experience to the situation. This is a complex set of skills and children require assistance in acquiring and applying them effectively.

With this development in mind, teachers in St Mary's systematically develop the following strategies to assist children in becoming fluent, independent readers.

### Prediction

Prediction is a basic reading skill. To assist children's development we encourage prediction by:-

Encouraging children to read on at least to the end of a sentence.

Asking simple questions such as "Does this sentence sound right to you?" or "Does this sentence make sense to you?"

Asking children to complete cloze procedures where possibly particular types of words are omitted or words are omitted at regular intervals. This is often done by children individually and then in groups to encourage discussion and considered judgement. The actual word is secondary to correct substitutions.

Asking children to sequence stories using pictures, main ideas, jumbled sentences, flow diagrams or to model familiar stories.

Encouraging children to make/consider lists of words with related meanings or classifications.

e.g. running; scampering; trotting; stealing off; edging away; gliding.

Cutlery: knives, forks, spoons and chopsticks.

Ocean, sea, lake, pond or pool.

Encouraging the use of thesauri, dictionaries, indexes, lists of contents, chapter or paragraph headings, reference sources.

Using parts of texts that lend themselves readily to prediction.

## Comprehension

**Reading is much more than simply recognising words in a text or “barking at print”**

*Comprehension implies an active search for meaning in text, a desire to receive, reflect on and respond to ideas in a text, to extend such thinking beyond the text and to take pleasure, information, new knowledge and/or an end product from interaction with the text.*

With this in mind, we in St. Mary’s do not merely view reading as a mechanical exercise but as a means to extend children’s thinking, learning, pleasure and points of view. We are conscious also that there is a line of development from learning to read; reading while assisted and reading at an independent, fluent level. This is reflected in our movement away from a basic reading scheme towards novels and informative texts of many varieties. While we use a variety of sources for comprehension and reading related activities away from the books children are reading, significant time is given to comprehension and reading extension activities related directly to their reading books.

### Reading with the teacher

In the early years children will read with their teacher daily. As children progress towards the middle and upper classes there is a movement away from daily reading with the teacher towards more regular directed silent reading. There will always be some reading with the teacher to allow judgement of the child’s ability to cope with a particular text, to assist future planning, for diagnosis, to develop the child’s ability to read to an audience or for the teacher to model their comprehension of the text for the child.

The expression “reading with” as opposed to “reading to” the teacher is significant. It implies that the teacher and pupils are sharing the reading experience and allows for the teacher to read to the child and discuss pictures and content; the teacher and pupils reading together, the child doing most of the reading and the teacher there to provide support. The child needs to feel secure, non-threatened and enjoy the experience. This is unlikely to occur if the child feels that the teacher is sitting in judgement, is going to lose their patience at any moment or is “testing him out.” If this is the advice we give to parents, how true is it for ourselves. ***Confidence and self-esteem are fostered in a warm, caring environment!***

### One 2one pupil/teacher conferencing

In the more senior classes, regular time will more likely be given for 5 – 10 minute teacher/pupil reading conferences. (Follow up on USSR). These conferences might include a number of ingredients such as:

The child reads a selected/prepared passage from their current book.

The child summarises/discusses the main events/ideas to date.

A discussion on what has happened so far and what might happen.

A discussion on “favourite parts” or “worst character” etc. to develop a child’s ability to discuss character, plot, theme, bias or setting.

A discussion on the child’s opinions of the author or book.

A discussion on the types of books a child has been reading independently/silently.

An opportunity to set new challenges, tasks or topics of investigation for the child.

A time to review the child’s personal reading diary or activity book.

### Teacher/group directed reading

This approach involves children grouped according to similar reading ability and sharing a novel read in instalments. The aim is not simply to read the text but to extend pupils' ability to use the process of reading and engage purposefully with the novel. Children are encouraged to enjoy the characters, settings and general background of the novel. They are encouraged to read for specific purposes. The books tend to be at the instructional level.

The following is the suggested structure around such sessions:

➤ **The preparation of reading/comprehension activities for each group.**

These do not have to be exclusively related at all times to the novel but frequently should allow children to continue to read the novel for purposes set by the teacher. E.g. Book reviews, character study, summary, cloze procedures, sequencing main events/ideas, compare/contrast frameworks, written response to events or viewpoints expressed, illustration, modelling, pupil designed questions, crosswords, word searches, related topic work/study/projects, evidence gathering, restructuring text, comparing books, authors, story-lines or versions, written response to teacher designed questions etc. Such work should be done in children's novel workbooks and reflect true engagement with the novel.

➤ **Teacher/group session**

Again the purpose is not merely to hear children read but to foster purposeful reading. The session should not be prepared in advance at home. (Who is teaching reading?)

Appraise title, heading or other cues to determine what the instalment is going to be about;

Making predictions about characters, events, actions or problems;

Agreeing purposes for reading, teacher/pupils set questions or specific tasks;

Reading and gathering evidence;

Sharing and comparing evidence, predictions and responses;

Teacher/pupils asking questions;

Set tasks related to novel for the group to work at independently.

Prepare/set reading homework.

➤ **Check on independent groups and re-focus as necessary.**

➤ **Next teacher/group reading session.**

➤ **The teacher decides how many sessions will be held but it is unnecessary to work with every group daily.**

(It is essential that the teacher is familiar with the text in advance of pupils.)

### Teacher questioning

Whether questions are employed singly or in clusters, orally or in writing, the following guidelines should be considered:

Questions should systematically range over all dimensions of the texts - character, setting, themes, places, objects and language use.

Questions should be balanced over the literal (factual), inferential (thoughts), evaluative (judgement) and appreciative (personal response).

Responses can be improved in quality and length by allowing pupils a few seconds to reflect before answering, by not assessing every response, by not answering the question for the pupils, by requesting their evidence for the response given, by passing the same question to several pupils and by listening actively to pupils' responses.

### Pupil questioning

The aim of this strategy is to develop higher level thinking. The pupils, having read the text, ask the teacher anything they wish about the content. The teacher answers all questions using evidence from the text, knowledge and experience as appropriate, modelling for pupils the way to reflect and interpret at inferential, evaluative and appreciative levels. In addition, the teacher praises pupils who ask questions above the literal level.

### Restructuring text

Activities that involve children in restructuring text are the best example of true comprehension. The purpose of many texts is to present descriptions of things, people, places or processes. The reader's task is to visualise what is offered. When engaged in restructuring text the child must use his understanding combined with the evidence in the text to create an alternative version of what s/he has read. Examples of restructuring of text include:

Framework completion. (When children complete a framework for character analysis, object comparison, sequencing of events or main ideas.)

Construction of labelled diagrams.

Cartoon strips.

Flow diagrams. Venn diagrams. Graphs. Tables.

Illustrations.

Modelling exercises.

Summarising.

Recounting from an alternative point of view.

Pupils should be asked to produce a faithful alternative visualisation of the original text, identify detail, make inferences and have evidence from the text to support their thinking. When they are asked to compare their work with that of others or explain it to the teacher, they are required to clarify and improve their reading, thinking and discussion skills.

### *Reading for Information*

**In many areas of the curriculum (including English) children engage with texts of an informative nature. The process of reading information texts involves many important skills. It also brings the children into the realm of specialised vocabulary. We in St Mary's recognise this and address it by:**

- **Ensuring that children of all ages have access to information literature, reference materials and non-fiction reading books.**
- **Ensuring that major topics are supported by extended reading material in the classroom from mobile libraries, local libraries and project ordering.**
- **Ensuring that children of all ages have access to commonly found environmental literature such as directories, newspapers, magazines, take away menus, advertisement literature, catalogues and teletext.**
- **Ensuring that big books of non-fiction material are used in shared reading activity when children are working beyond their independent reading level with teacher support.**
- **Using multi-media reference materials suited to the age and ability of children and working towards the use of the Internet.**

**Particular focus is placed on skills required in handling information texts. E.g. Alphabetical order, using content pages, indexes, headings, sub-headings etc.**

**The skills of skimming, scanning and note-taking are particularly useful when reading informative material as is the identification of key words/phrases, main ideas and structure.**

**As well as developing these skills in isolation, children complete "projects" within the classroom on topics emanating from their reading or from work in other subjects. Teachers will move from a teacher guided approach, where the teacher leads and models the work for the pupils, towards group work and finally towards individual independence, when the teacher will give feedback to the pupils on completed work. It is only envisaged that such independent work will exist in the older classes. Children need gradual development as opposed to simply having a project demand placed on them. Teacher guided work is crucial if children are to successfully master the necessary reading, organisation, selection and presentation skills. They need good example shown to them and the necessary underlying skills and decision-making processes modelled rather than being left to deduce them personally.**

We guide children through the following stages and develop their ability to use the associated strategies when using information texts for reading and writing

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Defining the subject</b>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Locating information</b>
<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Selecting information</b>
<b>Stage 4</b>	<b>Organising information</b>
<b>Stage 5</b>	<b>Evaluating information</b>
<b>Stage 6</b>	<b>Communicating information</b>

**Stage 1      Defining the subject**

Deciding on a topic or aspects of a topic about which to search for information. Dividing the topic into manageable parts.

**Stage 2      Locating information**

Searching for information in libraries, reference books, newspapers, computer databases or the Internet. Use of contents pages, indexes, appendices, encyclopaedias, atlases, directories, timetables, sections of newspapers and using search engines.

**Stage 3      Selecting Information**

Clarifying purposes for acquiring information, formulating questions/queries which require a search for information; interpreting information, deciding on relevant information.

**Stage 4      Organising information**

Deriving headings from questions and purposes. Defining important terms. Taking notes under headings. Arranging notes in suitable system.

**Stage 5      Evaluating information**

Understand what information means. Distinguish between fact and opinion, fact and fiction, relevant and irrelevant, essential and non-essential. Apply values to information such as accuracy, fairness and currency. The children are encouraged to form concepts, draw conclusions and generalise.

**Stage 6      Communicating information**

Pupils are then assisted to structure the information for presentation to others using main ideas and related details. Outline the order of ideas or events. Outline causes and effects. Outline descriptions or accounts. Use a variety of types, matrices, frameworks, diagrams, circles and arrows to present information. Write essays or accounts, explanations or descriptions, summaries or instructions using appropriate language, styles and forms. Make presentations and display work.

### **Reading and working with poetry - Poem of the Week**

**This school views poetry as an important form of writing and believes that children should meet poetry frequently and regularly in their reading activities across the curriculum. Poetry is a primary source of imaginative thinking/writing that can broaden a child's conceptual understanding of any theme, subject or topic. It inspires children's responses and can dramatically influence written or oral contribution.**

**As such we aim to include one "new" poem per week for the children to discuss and respond to. Each teacher is free to decide what curricular subject or theme the "poem of the week" relates to. Over any six week planning period, a teacher may wish to concentrate on a particular style of poetry, individual poet or theme for study within English. Alternatively, "poems of the week" could be chosen randomly over a six week planning period to relate to work in areas other than English. For example, the poem "My Shadow" by Robert Louis Stevenson may be used in relation to light in science or "The Tyger" by William Blake may be used in association with symmetry in maths and/or art. "To Autumn" by John Keats or "The Solitary Reaper" by William Wordsworth may be used in topic work about the season by older children. "The Eagle" by Alred Tennyson may be used in work associated with a topic on birds of prey or**

### **Parents and reading**

**Before a child starts in St Mary's PS, parents are invited to a meeting at which the school policy is explained and advice given to parents regarding their role in assisting their child with reading at home. This advice includes the suggestion that they enrol their child in the local library and take them to it on regular occasions. They are asked to simply tell their child any word that is proving difficult and not to have confrontations over the child's attempts to read. They are asked to play a significant role in building confidence through positive reinforcement and active interest. They are encouraged not to draw comparisons, favourable or unfavourable, between their child and any other child – including siblings. They are invited to bring matters of concern to the attention of teachers. Fathers are asked to play a lead role with sons in support of our efforts to improve the achievement of boys in Literacy.**

**Alongside our two scheduled meetings between teachers and parents, there is an open invitation for parents to arrange a meeting with the class teacher if they have a concern or query.**

**In P2, after the application of the MIST tests, the parents of any child who is struggling with reading are invited to a series of meetings to assist them further in helping their child at home.**

**In P3 we run a Paired Reading programme for all children and their parents. Often, in cases where older children continue to struggle with reading, parents are asked to continue the Paired reading approach in an informal manner.**

**Any child who has special needs in reading is picked up by our special needs programme and their parents are kept regularly informed by the SENCO as required under the Code of Practice.**

**Homework diaries keep parents informed of the expectation regarding reading in all classes and provide parents with the opportunity of communicating directly and conveniently with class teachers.**

**The school runs an annual book-fair when parents are invited to choose suitable reading material for home use. The school uses money raised by this event to improve reading resources in the classrooms. The event is popular and well supported by parents.**

**The parent/teacher fund-raising committee has also begun to raise money for a central library provision in the school. The intention is to refurbish a vacant "temporary" classroom for library use. Parents have been generous in their support of this venture.**



# **Aims, objectives and activities in reading P1 – P7**

## **Pre-reading programme in P1**

**“Where there is no love there is little hope of learning.”**

**The aims of our pre-reading programme are:**

- 1? To bring children to a stage of reading readiness**
- 2? To build up language experience for reading development**
- 3? To provide opportunities for each child to develop socially & emotionally**
- 4? To nurture the physical health of each child and to raise awareness of any special needs in this area.**

**In order to fulfil these aims our Primary 1 teachers provide:**

**A happy, relaxed atmosphere to help each child feel secure in school**

**An inviting classroom with a comfortable reading corner**

**Opportunities for talk which draw on each child's own life & new experiences**

**Lots of books and freedom to handle them**

**Daily opportunities for enjoying books being read to children**

**Experience of seeing as well as hearing the teacher read**

**Written language around the room in labels and sentences**

**Lots of music and movement activities**

**Opportunities to work with shapes, colours and jigsaws**

**Opportunities to watch TV, listen to radio broadcasts or taped stories**

**Repetitive enjoyment of rhymes and poems**

**Dressing up, playing house, playing shop, playing with puppets**

**Painting, drawing, copying**

**Cutting and sticking activities**

**Providing sand and water play using vocabulary needed for play & discovery**

**Encouraging children to notice differences in the room from day to day including seasonal displays, calendars, displays of children's work and festivals or special occasions or events.**

**The children are encouraged to “read” from their own experiences using the following strategies:**

**Child talks**

**Child does**

**Child draws/paints**

**Teacher writes**

**Child talks**

**Child talks**

**Child reads**

**Teacher write**

**Teacher writes**

**Child reads**

**Child reads**

**This environment is intended to encourage and prepare children for reading. When children are assessed as being ready they are entered onto the structured reading scheme.**

## **Objectives and activities for reading in P1**

**The children will:**

**Become familiar with simple rhymes & jingles**

**Know where a book begins, where to start reading and acquire left to right orientation**

**Follow a story being read**

**Re-tell stories they have enjoyed**

**Sequence stories to tell a story**

**Understand the relationship between the spoken word and the printed word by listening and responding to the teacher reading aloud**

**Participate in whole class and group discussions as well as role play & drama to develop talking & listening skills in context of stories read**

**Participate in a variety of activities to develop word-tackling skills and build on vocabulary e.g. ladders; mix & match; 1, 2, 3 and away; Story Bingo sentences; snap; sentence shuffle; "I Spy" word sound games**

**Develop visual memory through practical and written activities e.g. Kim's Game; Odd One Out; Spot the Difference**

**Read silently progressing from reading pictures to reading words. (only a few minutes at first and gradually increasing)**

**Discuss story content and recreate stories by means of illustration, drama, art.**

**Complete workbooks relating to the stories they have read. This will include simple cloze procedures, picture-word matching, sequencing activities etc.**

## **Aims, objectives and activities in reading P2**

### **Aims**

**To encourage further interest in books and increase awareness of how books work**  
**To develop children's skills in using new words in spoken & written sentences**  
**To develop awareness of the difference between a letter, a word and a sentence**  
**To develop knowledge of the alphabet, upper & lower case letters, alphabetical order and initial letter sounds**  
**To build on existing vocabulary and develop a sight vocabulary of the first 100 high frequency words**  
**To extend vocabulary and develop understanding of appropriate ORT material**  
**To provide opportunities for children to browse and select books to read for pleasure, understanding and informative purposes**

### **Objectives and activities**

**The children will:**

**Understand and use the structure of books; orientation; titles etc. through listening to the teacher read aloud as well as using their own reading books**

**Participate in teacher led discussions which will introduce them to new word to be used in context**

**Complete oral and written activities to reinforce alphabetical knowledge, sequence and letter sounds**

**Examine, collect and make use of words from wordlists and wordbanks available in the classroom**

**Complete, unscramble and make sentences using capital letters and full stops correctly through use of a variety of resources including concept keyword, cutting & sticking activities and Breakthrough literature**

**Engage in a variety of activities to build on sight vocabulary of the first 100 high frequency words e.g. matching words, Odd one out, simple cloze, wordsearches etc.**

**Discuss relevant stories and complete corresponding oral and written activities including ORT workbooks**

**Read silently for pleasure and under teacher guidance seeking information relating to class topics**

### **Aims, objectives and activities for reading P3**

#### **Aims**

**To further foster an interest in literature and increase awareness of how books work.**

**To provide opportunities for children to interpret the mood of a story or poem or make predictions and anticipate endings**

**To introduce children to the study of word structure and letter patterns**

**To encourage children to read and understand environmental print in labels, notices and written instructions**

**To enable children to use their understanding of alphabetical order in using simple dictionaries and wordlists and develop their concepts of sounds, letter blends and long & short vowel sounds**

**To build on existing sight vocabulary and develop recognition of the first 200 high frequency words**

**To extend vocabulary and understanding of relevant ORT material**

**To provide opportunities for children to browse through and select books from the library that they will read for pleasure, interest and entertainment**

**To develop skills and encourage children to use books as sources of information to support aspects of classroom work**

**To provide opportunities for children to select reading material of interest for independent and instructional levels of difficulty**

#### **Objectives and activities**

**The children will:**

**Through teacher led reading and discussions and through their own contributions, know the structure of books and associated vocabulary such as author & illustrator**

**Participate in a Paired Reading programme that harnesses parental support**

**In whole class & small group discussions and activities, examine the beginnings/endings of stories/poems and make predictions, discuss characters and dramatise such works. Use knowledge gained in their own writing.**

**Sequence orally, pictorially and through cutting and sticking exercises.**

**Read aloud from familiar material including their own writing**

**Read aloud from graphs, poems, charts, newspapers, comic strips, labels, simple written instructions and notices both within their own classroom, throughout the school and in the local environment**

**Make use of simple wordbooks and dictionaries and apply their knowledge of alphabetical order to locate pages for words required**

**Know initial letter sounds, common blends and vowel sounds, making use of these in relation to television programmes, tapes and the Letterland scheme.**

**Engage in a variety of activities to extend sight vocabulary to 200 high frequency words**

**Discuss relevant stories/poems and complete corresponding oral and written activities including ORT workbooks**

**Read silently for 10/15 minutes daily**

**Initially under teacher guidance and later independently, select and make use of resource materials in relation to class topics in individuals, pairs and groups**

**Similarly use computer databases and CD ROMs to access information on topics**

## **Aims, objectives and activities in reading P4**

### **Aims**

**To provide opportunities for children to read a wide range of literature including novels, poetry, information books, newspapers, computer generated literature and environmental literature.**

**To show children how to apply contextual cues in order to identify and understand unfamiliar words or phrases in text.**

**To further develop comprehension skills and so assist children to make sense of their reading**

**To highlight the purpose of question marks, commas, capital letters and full stops in the material they are reading**

**To develop understanding and knowledge of sentence construction**

**To develop the children's ability to read with clarity of speech, pace and expression**

**To consolidate and extend their use of alphabetical order and allow them to apply this in using dictionaries, thesauruses, directories, indexes and reference materials.**

**To provide opportunities for the purposeful reading of signs, labels and environmental print.**

**To provide opportunities for children to read silently and purposefully for increasing periods of time daily**

### **Objectives and activities**

**The children will**

**Read a variety of novels including books from the Young Puffin selection (subsequent to bridging texts in some cases)**

**Read a selection of non-fiction materials and books for the purposes of class/group topics including multi-media texts**

**Read a range of poetry and plays**

**Read extracts from newspapers, magazines and catalogues**

**Learn and apply a variety of cues to identify and understand unfamiliar words/phrases in texts**

**Complete cloze procedures, sequencing activities and prediction exercises to promote understanding and contextual cueing**

**Dramatise stories and poems they have read including the imaginative use of music, movement, mime and dance**

**Discuss and notice the use of question marks, commas, full stops and capital letters in the reading and punctuate simple passages for understanding**

**Examine the construction of sentences and realise the importance of pausing appropriately in response to punctuation when reading aloud**

**Read aloud to the teacher and peers and listen to the teacher reading aloud with appropriate expression, pace and voice control**

**Apply their understanding of alphabetical order when using dictionaries, directories, indexes, catalogues etc.**

**Recognise the effect of an author's choice of words and emphasis when reading labels, signs, instructions, advertisements or when they are listening to the teacher read poems or stories**

**Select and read books from the class library for the purposes of meaningful silent reading and keep a record of what they have read and their reactions to it**

**Visit the local library and become familiar with its systems**

**Investigate the format of non-fiction books/ materials and make use of contents pages, indexes and categories – including CD ROM and teletext media.**



## **Aims, objectives and activities P5**

### **Aims**

**All the aims of P4 and in addition by the end of P5**

**To ensure that children have opportunities to read from a wide variety of fictional and non-fictional texts**

**To further enhance the children's understanding and use of library classification systems**

**To promote advanced/ different strategies for recognising and understanding unfamiliar words/phrases in texts**

**To develop competence in recognising main ideas in sentences, paragraphs and whole texts**

**To help children recognise and understand the difference, significance and order of nouns, verbs and adjectives in stories & poems**

**To further emphasise the importance of punctuation in reading**

**To develop clear understanding of the difference between statements and questions**

**To provide daily opportunities for the children to read silently and purposefully for periods up to 20 minutes**

## **Objectives and activities P5**

**The children will:**

**Read a range of novels and become acquainted with the work of a range of authors as individuals, in pairs, groups and at whole class level**

**Participate in teacher guided group topic work and be given opportunities to seek and select information from a range of sources within the classroom and in the local library for use in such work - including computer based information**

**Study and use the Dewey Decimal System**

**Complete a variety of activities designed to enhance word-tackling strategies**

**Examine words in context and make use of dictionaries & thesauri to assist in word identification and comprehension**

**Complete a range of activities to develop understanding of nouns, verbs and adjectives**

**Read, and keep a record of, an extensive range of texts during purposeful silent reading and be given opportunities to demonstrate and discuss their preferences, interests, opinions and findings.**

**Review books they have read individually or in groups, completing and maintaining various pro-formas designed to encourage and extend such review. This will include character study, cause/effect relationships, fact and opinion, sequencing and thematic content**

**Prepare short talks on their favourite books, characters, passages or authors.**

**Choose a character from a book and place them in new situations and dramatise events in a poem or book.**

**Engage with environmental print media – including teletext and computer media programmes - to inform themselves or investigate a topic or issue emanating from other curricular areas. E.g. Weather Study, environmental issues, animal rights, poverty disasters, sports, health or current affairs**

## **Aims, objectives and activities P6/7**

### **Aims**

**To provide opportunities and actively encourage and enable children to read often for pleasure, entertainment, interest, information and learning across the curriculum using a wide range of fictional and non-fictional texts**

**To develop children's ability to use study skills in different reading situations**

**To develop children's ability to respond effectively to all five levels of comprehension – literal; re-organisational; inferential; evaluative; appreciative – both orally and in writing.**

**To send forward, to second level education, children who are enthusiastic, capable and active readers and who have a wide experience of literature on a personal level**

**To enable children to read aloud to an audience with confidence so as to effectively communicate the sense of a familiar text**

**To promote children's knowledge and experience of a variety of authors, their styles, genres and themes – including novelists, poets and playwrights.**

**To stimulate interest and encourage a positive response among children to literature whether prose, poetry, drama, news media or informative, educational, personal or environmental text.**

**To further develop children's understanding of the difference in fact/opinion particularly in persuasive literature and the media.**

**To enable children to apply reading skills effectively in real contexts to follow a series of instructions, directions, explanations or questions found in everyday literature such as recipe books, instruction leaflets, forms, guidance leaflets and problem setting texts.**

**To enable children to use their reading skills in handling/accessing data via multi-media presentations including television, teletext, the Internet, audio-visual presentations and newspapers.**

### **Objectives and activities in reading P6/7**

**Children will:**

**Frequently read silently for many purposes over a variety of sustained periods**

**Locate information from a variety of sources including booklets, pamphlets, timetables, catalogues, brochures, newspapers, databases, the Internet, directories, dictionaries, thesauri, atlases, encyclopaedia and special interest magazines**

**Read a variety of fictional and non-fictional books of various levels of difficulty and become aware of a wide variety of authors, exploring their work through oral and written review, discussion and opinion sharing.**

**Organise their reading in order to focus, gather, select, use and present findings to others.**

**Become increasingly aware of and able to use classifications applied to information**

**Use skills of skimming & scanning to locate information, be involved in note-taking to make the information their own and evaluate information and its presentation in order to best communicate findings.**

**Read in groups and discuss what they have read, complete related comprehension activities to demonstrate and enhance understanding and apply these skills in other areas of the curriculum to enhance understanding and learning**

**Complete cloze procedures, sequencing frameworks, main/subsidiary idea frameworks, prediction activities etc. to enhance their ability to recognise, and comprehend the meaning of, unfamiliar words or phrases in texts**

**Respond to what they have read using various proformas which assist and develop character analysis, comparison, evaluation and personal response to literature of all types and critically review their reading in a structured manner which forms a running record of what has been read and responded to.**

**Other activities will include imaginary interviews with characters, setting characters in other situations, addressing situations faced by characters from a personal viewpoint, discussing and exploring issues arising in novels such as bullying, greed, pollution, violence, animal rights, human rights, hobbies, emotions and school.**

**Children will be encouraged to investigate and discuss features of the literature they use such as the quality or weakness of presentation, illustration, story lines, slant or usefulness of the material for its intended purpose. They will compare/contrast authors, publications, versions of the same stories, illustrations and points of view.**

**Children will read, discuss and respond to environmental literature including information pamphlets, menus, television schedules, recipes, instruction leaflets, directions, advertisements and newspapers readily available in homes, school and locally. Children will apply what they have learned to their own writing also.**

# **Writing**

**We in St. Mary's Primary School recognise the process of writing involves the compositional aspect and the secretarial aspect. The compositional aspect includes the selection, ordering and organisation of ideas and the expression of feelings and beliefs, while the secretarial aspect involves spelling, syntax, punctuation and handwriting.**

**We are committed to the concept that language acquisition is holistic and it develops in relation to the context in which it is used; that is , it develops according to the situation, the topic under discussion and the relationship between the participants. This is as valid in written language as it is orally.**

**We are committed to the concept that language develops through the active engagement of learners and that learning takes place through interactions in meaningful events, rather than through isolated language activities.**



### **Overall aims for Compositional Writing**

**To enable pupils to write simple, compound and complete sentences in a variety of lengths and structure these sentences into suitable paragraphs.**

**To help children express their thoughts and desires in written forms.**

**To help children recall and write about their personal experiences.**

**To assist children during the drafting process so they can produce effective pieces of writing.**

**To provide opportunities for them to use a variety of writing forms to pass on information.**

**To show them how to take notes and make notes efficiently.**

**To enable them to accumulate information from a variety of resources which they can use in their writing.**

**To help them understand the difference between fact and fiction and use both in their writing.**

**To help children vary their writing to suit purpose and/or audience.**

**To enable children to write in narrative using sequence, climax, pace, setting and characterisation.**

**To provide opportunities for children to use imagery in their writing.**

**To help children compose instructions that are capable of being followed.**

**To provide opportunities for children to co-operate with one or more other children to produce a piece of joint writing.**

**To help children to take pleasure from their writing, using it as a means of building self-confidence and self-esteem.**

**To assist children to meet the literacy requirements of other subjects across the curriculum i.e. they learn through writing as well as learning to write.**

## **The Developmental Writing Continuum**

**In order to assist teachers to assess children's writing development and to then plan for suitable teaching and learning to take place - we have chosen to adopt an approach similar to that outlined in the "First Steps - Developmental Writing Continuum" materials. We are aware of the need to adapt this to meet the requirements of the POS for English by ensuring the content is linked to our culture and our curriculum. We are not suggesting that specific activities be undertaken literally. We are recommending the approach not the specific content.**

**This approach identifies 6 broad phases of writing development.**

**Phase 1      Role Play Writing**

**Phase 2      Experimental Writing**

**Phase 3      Early Writing**

**Phase 4      Conventional Writing**

**Phase 5      Proficient Writing**

**Phase 6      Advanced Writing**

**We will assess children's writing using this continuum and use it to highlight teaching strategies, literary features and form introduction and development. We accept that various children in all classes will be at different stages of development and our approaches to planning and setting activities will be differentiated to allow for this variation using the suggestions given in "First Steps".**

**No one scheme is all embracing and we will seek alternative sources for teaching strategies and learning activities, including - Scholastic Workshop material, 100 Literacy Hours material, the NGFL material, Literacy Hour documentation, Stanley Thorne material, Reasons for Writing and Brainwaves. *(This list is not meant to be either prescriptive or exhaustive.)* Essentially, alternative strategies and activities will be chosen to reflect our holistic and developmental view of language development and our curricular content.**

## **Classroom Organisation**

*An environment conducive to writing is essential. (NICC Guidance P10)*

**In much the same way as we advocate setting up a specific area for successful talking & listening and reading to occur, we recommend organising writing resources within the classroom.**

**Writing resources should include:-**

**A range of different types and colours of paper**

**Alternative media for writing on such as acetate sheets, card, home-made paper, various fabrics, carbon paper, tracing paper etc.**

**A range of writing tools such as pens, pencils, markers, crayons, quills, scissors and rulers.**

**Editing tools such as rubbers, non-toxic correction fluids, spell checks.**

**Writing machinery such as word-processors. (Bright Ideas 1998 Developing Children's Writing Scholastic P48)**

**The writing area should also include:-**

**Classroom word lists**

**A range of suitable dictionaries/thesauri**

**Books of ideas for writing i.e. possible endings, beginnings, characters etc.**

**Aids to stimulate writing e.g. pictures from which children have to tell the story, gossip book, joke books, information texts, newspapers, magazines, timetables, menus, brochures.**



## Writing Across The Curriculum

*If children are to work within a language rich environment, covering all areas of the curriculum, there should never be any shortage of material that can be the topic of writing.*

**(Developing Children's Writing P166)**

**Writing is not confined to the 'English Lesson'. It should be incorporated into every subject within the curriculum. The following are examples of how writing can be developed through other subject areas.**

### **History.**

Historical skills and concepts should be developed and reinforced as integral parts of the writing process as well as delivering the thematic content.

### **KS1**

Pupils should have opportunities to develop communication skills by:-

- Retelling stories about the past e.g. The Legend of Finn Mc Cool.
- Describing events, photographs, objects and people e.g. St Patrick.
- Using appropriate words, phrases, captions or simple sentences and ICT as appropriate.
- Using diary formats e.g. describe important events in their life, achievements or write entries for a week in their life.
- Sequencing events in an historical story or a local/national/seasonal event e.g. Christmas, Sports Day.
- Recount a first hand experience/visit.

## **KS2 (History)**

Pupils should have opportunities to:-

- Construct narratives of what happened and attempt some reasoning e.g. The Great Famine.
- Complete a diary to show past life e.g. A log diary of a Viking sailor's voyage; a day in the life of a chimney sweep in Victorian times; a flow diagram/model of the story of "Deirdre & The Sons of Usna"
- Compare and contrast life past and present e.g. working and living conditions of the Victorians and today.
- Describe objects and photographs e.g. a Stone Age weapon.
- Compare two accounts of the same events and note contrasts and similarities
- Write an account of a past event in terms of cause and effect supported by evidence e.g. Why Vikings left their homeland and travelled the world.
- Respond in verse, prose, narrative to a visit to Gortin History Park, The Ulster American Folk Park, Springhill.

## **Geography**

The Geographic skills are meant to be developed and reinforced as an integral part of work undertaken via themes - which also easily allow opportunity for the development of literacy.

## **KS1**

Pupils should have opportunities to:-

- describe what they see hear and smell e.g. school building, Warnock's hatchery
- record and present information in written form, including the use of ICT as appropriate. e.g. a table to represent different forms of transport with appropriate descriptions.
- compare the shapes of buildings and the materials used
- write about the people who help in school and the services provided.
- write letters of invitation and thanks to visitors or significant adults
- list, name and describe plants and animals found locally.
- Prepare written questions for visitors/service providers
- write their own address, the school address, familiar street and road names
- draw and describe the journey to school, the journey of a letter, directions
- compare types of homes in various locations - locally & abroad

## **KS2 (Geography)**

- Use a word processor to write descriptions of places, geographical features and processes.
- Observe, record and present appropriately fieldwork data and information from other sources e.g. a survey of house types in the local area, a flow diagram showing the process involved in manufacturing crisps from potatoes with appropriate descriptions of each stage.
- Compare and contrast different weather/climatic conditions e.g. Tundra and desert regions and discuss the effect of these on the inhabitants.
- Investigate and describe different occupations and services e.g. Tourism in NI - produce a brochure/poster to advertise local places of interest.
- Describe the effects of a natural disaster and the effects on peoples' lives cause and consequence.
- Persuade an audience/government body/organisation to address local or global environmental issues - rain forests, landfill, pollution, litter, recycling
- Write letters of complaint/appeal - design questionnaires - leaflets etc
- Create poetry in response to seasons, weather, places, people, events and the wonder and beauty of the natural, animal & plant kingdoms.
- Present and justify their own views in relation to the environment and local issues such as hospital closures, public transport, leisure facilities, development, employment, hazardous waste etc.

## **Maths**

Pupils should communicate in oral, pictorial and written form, progressing at their own pace from informal personal language to mathematical language and from personal recording to mathematical representations and symbols throughout KS1. Pupils in KS2 should use and extend their mathematical language by discussing, describing, comparing and explaining all aspects of their mathematics, progressing from the use of informal personal language to effective use of appropriate mathematical language.

## **Writing in mathematics**

### **KS1**

Pupils should have opportunities to;

write simple mathematical problems for their peers  
keep a diary or formulate a flow chart of their daily routine  
compose simple instructions for use with the number line  
devise shopping lists with corresponding prices for use in money activities  
write simple instructions for Roamer  
use their knowledge of 2D & 3D shapes to write short descriptions  
analyse and interpret pictograms, block graphs, bar charts in written form  
extract information from charts, diagrams and tables to answer written questions  
write predictions and estimations  
write a series of rules or instructions for mathematical games (shared writing)

### **KS2**

Pupils should have opportunities to

describe the properties of shapes  
write directions using appropriate language including compass points  
sequence & write instructions for mathematical games/ investigations  
make lists of products and their corresponding values using catalogues  
record and evaluate practical investigations  
make written interpretations of various forms of information - tables, charts, Venn/Carroll diagrams, graphs  
set problems for their peers - including group problem-setting  
give instructions e.g. How to draw a regular hexagon using a compass & ruler  
write instructions for a younger child explaining how to make a cube  
explain how to reach a solution to a complex, mathematical process eg. How to measure the height of a tree or determine the average speed of a stream or how to cost the recovering of an assembly hall with tiles  
create and interpret statements of account e.g. Bank statement or electric bill  
design/use decision trees/classification diagrams.

## **Science and Technology**

Pupils should communicate their ideas and findings in Science and Technology through writing, models and simple chart-making in KS1. Pupils in KS2 should be encouraged to use appropriate scientific language to communicate their ideas and findings to the teacher and other pupils and have experience of a wide range of report presentations including the use of given formats, self-devised formats, flow-charts, diagrams and graphical representation.

### **KS1**

Pupils should have opportunities to:

describe objects in a feely box

write menus of healthy foods

label the external parts of the body

keep a diary of food they eat over a period of one week

draw and name living things in and around school or on a school visit

label the main parts of a plant or bird

make posters with suitable captions persuading people to look after their environment

describe/classify the properties of materials according to shape, colour, texture and behaviour

write simple records of observations made during experiments

formulate word banks associated with science topics

recount a first-hand experience or visit

explain how a simple device was made or works.

## **KS2 (Science & Technology)**

Pupils should have opportunities to:

record and present data in written form e.g. A table recording substances which do/do not dissolve in water

recount/evaluate an experiment e.g. On absorbency properties of various paper types

draw and label flow diagrams e.g. The process of digestion/the water cycle

design, complete and interpret data recording devices for use in surveys e.g. Litter, traffic flow, personal preferences, polls on local issues

use ICT to record and manipulate findings

investigate and describe local habitats/mini-beasts

design/use classification keys

list factors contributing to a healthy lifestyle

write persuasively on health issues e.g. Smoking, pollution, animal rights

design posters, brochures and slogans e.g. To warn of dangers of electricity/ encouraging energy-saving/healthy lifestyles

describe how to make a model car

plan and conduct a scientific investigation safely and fairly

make a table of comparisons for substances.

## **Religion**

Pupils should explore and respond to religious topics through writing and drawing, communicating their views and opinions to the teacher and each other.

### **KS1 (R.E.)**

Pupils should have opportunities to:

- compose their own prayers in response to themes e.g. Peace, feast days and special times of the year
- make lists e.g. Ways we can be a 'good friend' / ways we can help at home
- recount a time when they helped a friend/said 'sorry'
- recreate a biblical story in pictorial form
- design a poster to show the beauty of God's world.

### **KS2**

- compose a prayer
- make lists e.g. Third World countries
- recount a biblical story from the point of view of a character e.g. The Shepherds' version of the First Christmas
- create poetry in response to the wonder of Creation
- write explanations of good and bad choices and give advice
- set class rules for standards of behaviour, inclusion & friendship qualities
- portray a miracle/parable in comic strip form or in model format
- write a letter of thanks or appreciation to a person or organisation that contributes positively to the local community
- write persuasively to the government/charitable organisations concerning world events.

## **Creative and Expressive Studies**

Pupils should have opportunities to:

examine the methods and approaches used by graphic designers, artists, journalists, advertisers and craft-workers and use these imaginatively to develop and enhance their own ideas including the use of simple multi-media packages to control and manipulate graphics and print.

write a short play and make puppets to perform it for younger pupils

paint pictures or write creatively using poetry and prose in response to music, painting by an abstract artist or a dramatisation

describe how they have applied various techniques or experimented with colours and/or textures to create a collage, painting or display.

give written instructions on how to .... E.g. Make a puppet, create an image or make a pop-up card

use appropriate artistic and descriptive language when responding to paintings, songs and ballads

write creatively in response to photographs or illustrations e.g. An eviction scene or a Christmas card

compare and contrast photographs of modern day life with those of the past.



## **Cross-Curricular Themes.**

Pupils should have opportunities to:

investigate and describe the culture and lifestyle of people in other countries and differing traditions

write to request information from agencies which care for the environment and humanitarian issues

list qualities they value in themselves and each other

suggest and write possible solutions to conflict/problems

write letters to friends in other places

recount of a visit to another school or a 'shared' educational visit

make table of comparisons to show different cultures

compare possible reasons for conflict in N.Ireland with the possible reasons for conflict in other areas of the world

record ways in which the people in the local community depend on each other

explain the nature of issues raised by the developed world's response to the developing world

describe how the use of some natural resources can have a harmful effect on the environment

respond in writing to a variety of games, rhymes, music, dance, customs, myths and legends of their locality

explore artefacts to investigate their way of life and that of others

write instructions for Road Safety for a younger child

describe the benefits of exercise, recreation and relaxation.

## **Information & Communication Technology.**

The correct use of the ICT can facilitate the exploration and development of different aspects of language - reading, writing and talking & listening.

Pupils should have opportunities to:

read for pleasure using ‘talking books’

use adventure and activity programmes

use the concept keyboard to write creatively

compose and edit a piece of writing, using spell check facility/inserting a picture or changing the colour of text

order and classify information using a database

work collaboratively to produce a piece of writing

locate and send information using the Internet

## **Media Studies.**

The programmes of study for Literacy advocate that children should have access to a wide variety of forms of media

E.g. Radio, T.V., photographs, computer programmes, story tapes, video, newspapers and magazines, leaflets, catalogues and brochures.

We in St. Mary’s believe these forms of media can be used to enhance children’s talking and listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum. Television and video can be used to consolidate and reinforce knowledge and can form the basis for individual/group discussion. Photographs allow children to extend their imaginings to predict what is happening. Radio develops listening and stimulates creative skills as well as enabling children to develop an appreciation of dialects and accents. The use of the CD ROM enables children to explore and investigate topics and world-wide issues independently.

### **Television/Radio/Video**

Pupils should have opportunities to:

respond orally and in writing to documentaries/ Television programmes  
compare and contrast novels with the film/cartoon versions  
use Teletext as a means of extracting information  
create their own pages for Teletext.

### **Newspapers**

Pupils should have opportunities:

study and devise advertisements  
write stories to match photographs  
create their own headlines  
write letters to the editor  
design their own and enter competitions  
write reports of sporting events  
create their own newsletter.

### **Brochures/Leaflets/Magazines/Catalogues.**

Pupils should have opportunities to:

use catalogues and magazines to locate information, work within budgets  
study the format of brochures/leaflets in order to create their own.  
use leaflets in relation to Health & Safety, Child Protection, Visits & Trips etc.  
select from a menu, design menus for special occasions