

St Patrick's P.S.



Language and Literacy

2024

Introduction

We, in St Patrick's Primary School believe that Language and Literacy are fundamental to every individual's personal and social development and to life- long learning. Every teacher promotes and supports the development of children's talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking skills in a variety of meaningful contexts in all curricular areas.

This policy document will outline the strategies and approaches we will support and develop in order to ensure that each child becomes equipped with the necessary language knowledge, understanding and skills.

The overall curriculum planning reflects the Northern Ireland Curriculum (CCEA, 2007), the aims of the school and the priorities outlined in the school development plan. Continuity and progression in our language planning is underpinned by the learning intentions outlined in the Primary Language Framework (Revised 2007).

At St Patrick's Primary School, we intend that, by the end of Key Stage 2, a child will be able to understand and use language, both spoken and written, as an integral part of learning in all areas. The development of these skills enables children to interact effectively in the world around them, to express themselves creatively and to communicate confidently, using the four modes of communication (talking and listening, reading and writing) and a variety of skills and media.

The Schools Improvement policy document, 'Every School a Good School', (DENI 2009) has outlined indicators of what will be recognised as effective performance under four headings:

- Child centred provision
- High quality teaching and learning
- Effective leadership
- A school connected to its local community.

The strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy: Count, Read: Succeed (DENI 2011) aims to:

- Support teachers and school leaders in their work to raise overall levels of attainment in literacy among young people.
- Narrow the current gaps in educational outcomes.

Count, Read: Succeed (paragraph 1.7) defines Literacy as:

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

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

Statutory Requirements

Language and Literacy reflects the statutory curricular requirements (Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary CCEA 2007) and is supported by Language Framework (2007) to include:

In the Foundation Stage children should be given opportunities to:

- talk and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication;
- daily phonics lessons.

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

At key Stage Two (Years 5- 7), children should learn to change the way they talk and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

CHILD CENTRED PROVISION

The following indicators from Every School a Good School (ESaGS) will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- Decisions on planning, resources, curriculum and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school
- A clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity
- A school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability
- Effective interventions and support are in place to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning
- There is a commitment to involve young people in discussions and decisions on school life that directly affect them and to listen to their views.

Inclusion

We aim to provide a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum which is tailored to meet the needs of all the children in St Patrick's. We will identify pupils or groups of pupils who are under-achieving, those with special educational needs, talented and gifted children and take the necessary steps to improve their attainment in language and Literacy.

Pupils, on entering St Patrick's are closely monitored by the class teacher and in conjunction with parents/guardians, a profile of each pupil is built up. Baseline assessments are carried out and these results are analysed to establish whether there are underlying learning problems.

If the child requires further/more specialised assistance, the class teacher will consult with the SENCO. The special educational needs of individual children are identified in accordance with the Code of Practice and the school's special needs policy.

Those children who have been identified as having learning difficulties within Language and Literacy will be supported by:

- clear and realistic targets in an Education Plan drawn up by the class teacher, addressing the areas of improvement in Literacy;
- shared targets with the pupil;
- Personal Learning Plans monitored and reviewed regularly in consultation with SENCO/Principal, parents/guardians;
- Engaging Support Agencies and other professional where appropriate;
- Additional literacy support sessions by SENCO in school;
- Matched literacy tasks to pupil's ability level, interest level and learning style.

Intervention programmes

Intervention programmes are used to target the specific needs of individuals/groups of children, engaging Support Agencies and other professionals where appropriate. Those children deemed to be under achieving or 'at risk' re: their progress will be supported with appropriate intervention programmes.

These may include:

Booster group learning

Reading Centre support

One: one tuition

Class withdrawal

Nurture Unit

Personal Learning Plans

Intervention Programmes may be delivered by a teaching assistant, external agency or class teacher.

Under-achievement

Count, Read: Succeed, paragraph 1:13 defines underachievement as 'a situation where performance is below what is expected based on ability. It can apply at the level of an individual pupil or describe a class or school, or indeed a system.'

We recognise that assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative, diagnostic and summative tool. Progress and achievement are monitored and used to inform future planning. These include:

- ❖ Criterion-referenced tests (e.g. spelling, end of topic and comprehension tests, Linguistic Phonics Baseline.)
- ❖ Standardised tests (Primary 2 to Primary 7, S.W.R.T and S.W.S.T.)
- ❖ Cognitive Ability Tests (CATS)
- ❖ Classroom observation (by class teacher and classroom assistant)
- ❖ Oral and written feedback to pupils
- ❖ Self-assessment/peer-assessment
- ❖ Diagnostic assessment for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

In St Patrick's addressing under-achievement is based on careful analysis of standardised scores and teacher judgement. The school identifies groups of children who may be under-achieving in Literacy within the P3 - P7 year groups. The teachers then put teaching strategies in place to address the under-achievement. Parents are informed of possible under-achievement and made aware of strategies which will be employed, usually at the parent – teacher meeting in term one. There is on-going observation and informal assessment throughout the year by the class teacher. The desired outcome is the narrowing of the gap between the CAT non-verbal score and the Literacy standardised score. Records of under-achievement and subsequent evaluations are monitored by the Principal, Vice-Principals, and the Literacy Co-ordinator.

Equal opportunities

In St Patrick's Primary School, we ensure the provision is open and accessible to all children, regardless of identity, background and in a manner that takes

account of their abilities. We are very mindful of the learning needs of all of our children and those with Special Educational Needs are supported via effective planning, teaching and assessment, differentiated activities, as necessary, high, realistic expectations, suitable resources and recording formats.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

The following indicators from Every School a Good School (ESaGS) will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for the pupils.
- An emphasis on literacy and numeracy exists across the curriculum.
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school-based staff and dedicated to improving learning.
- Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom.
- Assessment and other data are used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement.
- Rigorous self-evaluation is carried out by teachers and the whole school, using objective data and leading to sustained self-improvement.
- Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils.
- Education outcomes reflect positively on the school and compare well, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken, against the performance of similar schools.

Teaching and Learning

Classroom organisation will vary to suit the purpose, context and children involved. The following range of organisational strategies will be employed:

- Whole class teaching
- Small group teaching (size, flexibility and composition of the groups will be given consideration – e.g. peer, ability, mixed ability, friendship groups. etc.)
- Paired work – similar ability, less experienced pupil working with more experienced pupil
- Individual- one-to-one tuition by teacher or classroom assistant
- Independent work

- Team teaching.

Attention is given to classroom layout, wall displays, access to a diverse range of resources (fiction, non-fiction, ICT, media texts, resources from other cultures) and the provision of library areas, writing areas and listening areas with appropriate equipment.

We are aware that progress is enhanced when teachers are sensitive to differences in learning styles. Since children learn in different ways and at different rates, a flexible approach which encourages children's active engagement in their learning through problem solving will extend the pupils' use of thinking and language and promote independence.

Teachers will have realistically high expectations and will ensure that all children understand what is expected of them by sharing the learning intention and success criteria with them (WALT and WILF).

Planning

Effective planning for purposeful learning and teaching activities provides opportunities to develop children's thinking and communication skills.

The long term planning (Northern Ireland Curriculum document and Language Framework) ensures that the programme of learning for each child is broad and balanced and promotes continuity and progression in children's learning.

The medium term planning results from year group discussions, identifying learning intentions, differentiation, assessment opportunities, resources, integration of ICT to enhance and support children's learning and provides teachers with opportunities to reflect on classroom practice. Teachers evaluate plans and children's learning to inform future planning. Children have opportunities to contribute to the planning process and to peer and self-assess.

The short term planning highlights weekly/daily targets, states specific learning outcomes, differentiation, lists activities to be employed and resources to be used.

Teaching Approaches

An appropriate range of learning and teaching strategies, which are active and practical in their nature, motivate the pupils and engage them purposefully in their work both collaboratively and independently.

Approaches to Talking and Listening

The strands of talking, listening, group discussions and interaction and drama permeate the whole curriculum. We recognise oral language as the primary mode of language and place a central emphasis and focus in all areas of the curriculum and in the life of the school. Children are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes.

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

- Play based learning in the Foundation Stage
- Shared and Guided reading
- Story sacks
- Show and tell sessions
- Activity based learning in Key Stage 1
- Pair and group work – think, pair, share;
- Role-play, hot seating, freeze frame, conscience alley
- Assemblies
- Christmas plays/school productions
- Speech and drama festivals (local Feis)
- World Book Day

- Listening games
- School council
- Circle time
- KWL grids
- Plan-do-review
- School trips
- Visitors to school
- Discussions linked to WAU topics, literacy topics, e.g. stories dealing with issues such as race, bullying, etc.
- Thinking time
- Nurture Unit

Children are provided with opportunities to interact with teachers, other adults and with peers through the use of grouping strategies such as snowballing and jig sawing.

Approaches to Reading

Children are encouraged to develop a love of books and the disposition to read. They have the opportunities to listen to a range of interesting and exciting genre and share a range of books with adults and other children. The ability to read is fundamental to pupils' development as independent learners. In order to read across the curriculum with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment pupils need to orchestrate the range of strategies:

- Phonic knowledge and skills
- Contextual knowledge
- Grammatical understanding
- Word decoding and recognition
- Language comprehension

Children throughout all Key Stages will engage in modelled, shared, guided and independent reading. The reading scheme used in St

Patrick's is Oxford Reading Tree Tops and Oxford Treetops. Novels are used in P4 to P7 as well. Pupils also have access to class libraries. The Mobile Library Service provides the teachers with the opportunity to change, as well as acquire new reading materials, twice a year. Pupils visit the local library (Shantallow Library) regularly for story telling sessions and to participate as active members of the library.

The Accelerated Reader Programme – P5 – P7, World Book Day and Annual Book Fairs are used to foster a love of reading as well as promote and support learning and teaching.

Parents play a vital role in developing their child's reading skills and reading records are used in P1 – P7 to inform parents of the work that needs to be carried out at home, in order to reinforce the learning in school. Parents can enquire about their child's progress at any time if they have a concern.

A consistent approach to the teaching of phonics is implemented throughout the school. Through the Linguistic Phonics approach children gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become competent readers and spellers.

Approaches to Writing

Writing should be seen as an enjoyable, purposeful and creative experience. It is taught within the wide context of literacy which underpins the whole curriculum. Children have opportunities, throughout the school day, to write for a range of purposes and audiences. They have regular opportunities, as a whole class, in small groups or individually to see modelled writing and to participate in shared writing. As they progress, they have opportunities to write individually, with a partner or in small groups with teacher/classroom assistant's guidance, where appropriate. Teachers promote the strategy

'Think it, Say it, Write it, read it aloud.' The reciprocal nature of reading and writing is made apparent to pupils in order for them to "read as a writer and write as a reader".

Teachers also encourage on-going improvement in the children's learning through self –reflection and monitoring/evaluation of progress. Children's work will be marked positively and constructively in relation to the learning intention and the success criteria (WALT and WILF). (*see Marking Policy for further details*).

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

- New treasury
- A way with words
- Reading Zone
- Spelling Shed

Writing frames are used to develop pupils' creative writing skills in Key Stage 1 and 2 and they are exposed to a range of genres both fiction and non-fiction when writing. In all classes, the children write for a wide range of audiences, including their peers and other classes. They participate in writing competitions, e.g. Short Story Young Writers Competition.

TS and PCs/Cross curricular opportunities for literacy development

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

The following aspects should be considered:

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

The use of ICT

All pupils in St Patrick's have access to the C2k school computer system and use their own username and password to log on when working. The use of ICT is a vital means of developing language in the context of the modern world.

Pupils will have opportunities to:

- compose text on screen
- save their work in the school system
- use word processing techniques to develop writing skills
- check for accuracy using grammar and spell check facilities
- use wide range of software to present work and enhance learning, e.g. Microsoft Word, Clicker 5 and Accelerated Reader.

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

All classes have access to interactive whiteboards and I-pads which enhance the teaching of literacy. Spelling Shed– which provides opportunities for the teaching of spelling can be used from P2 onwards. Search engines such as Bing are also used by the pupils. The C2K News Desk facility is another tool within the school to encourage pupils to improve their literacy skills through ICT.

Effective Performance Data Management

Data generated from standardised tests, CAT₄ and statutory assessment is analysed for a range of purposes:

- To track pupil progress
- To track complete classes
- To identify individual children's cognitive strengths and weakness
- To inform planning for teaching and learning
- To identify underachieving pupils for further support
- To set targets for individuals, groups or entire class
- To compare progress between groups/schools
- To make meaningful comparisons between scores from more than one test.

The following assessment procedures carried out in literacy each year are listed below.

Primary	Formal Assessment Procedure	Month
Primary 2	Single Word Reading Test Single Word Spelling Test (A) Progress Test in English 6	May
Primary 3	Single Word Spelling Test (B) Progress Test in English 7	May
Primary 4	Single Word Spelling Test (C) Progress Test in English 8 CAT ₄	May Jan
Primary 5	Single Word Spelling Test (D) Progress Test in English 9 NGRT	May September
Primary 6	Single Word Spelling Test (E) Progress Test in English 10 CAT ₄ NGRT	May May September
Primary 7	Single Word Spelling Test (F) Progress Test in English 11 NGRT	November December September

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:

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

- An effective school development plan is in place, providing clear and realistic targets for improvement based on a sound vision for the school.
- Governors understand their responsibilities and provide clear strategic direction as well as support and challenge to the Principal in carrying forward the process of improvement.
- School leaders demonstrate a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for staff, particularly teachers, and promote readiness to share and learn from the best practice.
- Teachers are given the opportunity to share in the leadership of the school.
- The resources at the disposal of the school are managed properly and effectively, with appropriate arrangements in place for financial management, attendance management, and working relationships.
- School leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan itself.

All teachers in St Patrick's Primary School accept shared responsibility for promoting Literacy throughout the school. However, the Literacy co-ordinator has responsibility for co-ordinating the development of language and literacy. There is a school development plan in place which has been contributed to and agreed and is supported by appropriate action planning for language and literacy. The Literacy co-ordinator is supported by a curriculum development team.

Role of the Literacy Co-ordinator

1. To draw up, implement and review a Literacy policy for the school in consultation with the principal and staff.
2. To order and organise resources in Literacy.
3. To ascertain and utilise the strengths and expertise of staff
4. To deal with the needs of individual teachers in the areas of Reading, Writing, Talking and Listening.

5. To organise school based Literacy INSET during directed time or 'Baker' days.
6. To prepare and review a Yearly Action Plan.
7. To compile and maintain a history of Literacy in-service courses attended.
8. To organise and participate in staff meetings relating to Literacy.
9. To support colleagues in their CPD.
10. To assist in monitoring the Literacy activities in all classrooms and pupil progress.
11. To assist with the diagnosis of children's learning difficulties and with their remediation.
12. To work alongside teachers in classrooms when appropriate or necessary.
13. To prepare and disseminate up-to-date bibliography on relevant English publications and thinking.
14. To maintain an up-to-date inventory of resources.
15. To liaise with all other relevant co-ordinators e.g. Assessment, Library, Special Needs, etc.
16. To undertake, if necessary, the role of Year Group Leader.
17. As a permanent member of the School Management Team, to undertake such tasks as will assist the Principal in the efficient running of the school

Monitoring

The quality of children's learning is carefully monitored throughout the school. Evidence used to inform the evaluation of language and literacy includes:

- Monitoring 6 weekly planners
- Samples of children's work including their books
- Displays and photographs
- Discussions with teachers, children and parents
- CDT meetings/ staff meetings
- Observations by Principal, Management Team
- School Development Plan

The outcomes of the monitoring process are used to inform future planning and evaluation.

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors have access to the school development plan, and through the literacy action plans are aware of the contribution made by the literacy co-ordinator and literacy team to this plan. Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of the language and literacy provision and the standards being achieved.

A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS COMMUNITY:

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

- Good relationships that facilitate engagement and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serves.
- The school and its teachers are held in respect by parents and the local community who in turn actively support the work of the school.
- The school uses its involvement in particular programmes (for example Extended Schools or Specialist Schools) effectively in meeting the needs of the community and nearby schools.
- Good relationships and clear channels of communication are in place between the school and the education agencies that support it.
- The school works closely with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies whose work impacts on education, especially Health, Social Services, the Public Library Service and, where appropriate, local Neighbourhood Renewal groups.

Parental involvement

In St Patrick's Primary School parents are encouraged to become actively involved in promoting their child's learning. Parents receive clear information about policies, the curriculum and ways in which to support their children:

- Attending information sessions
- School Open Days
- Topic newsletters are made available to parents
- School newsletter
- Text alerts
- Linguistic Phonics workshops/phonic games
- Parent/teacher meetings
- Verbal and written reports on child's progress
- Breakfast club/Early morning club/Homework club
- Accelerated Reader
- Induction programme
- School website/Facebook/Instagram
- Class assemblies
- Grandparent's Day/St Patrick's day celebrations
- Primary 4/7 Religious Programmes
- RSE Programme
- Liaison through the reading record books/homework diaries
- School performances, e.g. Christmas plays, other religious events
- School trips
- School Fairs
- Nurture Unit

We aim to harness the support of the home and to stimulate greater support in order to enhance the children's language and literacy development. Homework is seen as an integral and co-ordinated element of the school's assessment policy and practice (*see Homework Policy for details*).

Community Links

Contacts with the local community, including other schools, are established to help foster positive attitudes and valued among the children. For example:

- Annual school book fairs

- Visitors to the school, e.g. theatre groups, school nurse, PSNI, fire service, dental hygienist, deaf/blind community
- Visits to Shantallow Library
- School trips, e.g. Lurgybrack farm, Magilligan Field Centre, W5, Redcastle
- Visits to local places of interest, e.g. post office, Tower museum
- Chinese community
- Derry City Council
- Young enterprise
- Reading Room Verbal Arts Centre
- Links with feeder schools – visits to and from the local secondary schools e.g. St Patrick's and St Brigids, St Mary's College, Thornhill Grammar, St Columbs College and Lumen Christi
- After school's programmes

Effective links are maintained with statutory agencies including educational support services, e.g. Psychology, Behaviour Management Team, ASD Team, Speech and Language Therapists, SPLD (Reading Centre).

Conclusion:

This policy should be in line with other school policies, including:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Marking Policy
- Special Educational Needs' Policy
- ICT Policy
- Homework Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to statutory requirements.

June 2027