

Literacy & Numeracy Policy

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This policy is drawn up in consultation with all teacher, governors, parents and pupils. In creating this policy we have been guided by two important documents from DENI: Every School A Good School (June 2008) and Count, Read: Succeed, with a particular focus on improving Literacy and Numeracy outcomes.

Our central purpose as a school, is to ensure our pupils develop the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to succeed at school, in life and at work. We aim to provide a firm foundation in these skills during their time in our school. We want our pupils to be competent in reading, writing, talking and listening and in using mathematics.

“Literacy and numeracy are at best at the very heart of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Developing literacy and numeracy therefore must be central elements of a school’s delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum...”

OUR VISION STATEMENT

St Brigid’s PS is a Rights Respecting School promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child as a result, our school’s Vision Statement states:

‘It is our vision that St Brigid’s Primary is a learning school, where we wish to create a warm, welcoming atmosphere in which we show commitment to a Catholic way of life educating for the 21st century’

Article 3

‘The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all our actions’

Article 29

‘Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own cultures and the environment.’

At St Brigid's Primary School we define 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.”

At St. Brigid's Primary School we define Numeracy as:

“The ability to apply appropriate mathematical skills and knowledge in familiar and unfamiliar contexts and in a range of settings throughout life, including the workplace. It involves a development of:

- a. An understanding of key mathematical concepts and their interconnectedness;
- b. Appropriate reasoning and problem-solving;
- c. The proficient and appropriate use of methods and procedures (formal and informal, mental and written); and
- d. Active participation in the exploration of mathematical ideas and models.”

Purpose:

This policy outlines consistency of approach, a shared understanding of standards, a desire to address underachievement and to ensure that all children develop their potential. It also outlines the school's principles and practice for the promotion of Literacy and Numeracy, both across the curriculum and within the Areas of Learning.

It clarifies the responsibilities for all stakeholders ensuring the support and development of language skills as regards Numeracy and Literacy. It reflects classroom practice in relation to the statutory learning experiences within our Northern Ireland Curriculum. We endeavour to raise standards for all, close the performance gap, develop the staff, improve the learning environment and transform education management. Research has shown that where a broad and balanced curriculum is provided, there is a stronger chance of standards in Literacy and Numeracy being raised, as opposed to schools where there has been a concentration of effort in only Literacy and Numeracy.

Staff in the school are aware of the need to provide a meaningful context for Literacy and Numeracy learning through a broad and balanced curriculum.

RAISING STANDARDS

This Policy aims to reflect our Literacy and Numeracy provision in line with the four characteristics of effectiveness as set out in Every School A Good School

- i) Child-centred provision
- ii) High quality Teaching and Learning
- iii) Effective Leadership
- iv) A school connected to its local community

Practices:

a) All staff have high expectations of all pupils. In order to meet this requirement we in St. Brigid's Primary School carry out the following practices:

- Rigorous analysis of PTE and PTM (Digital testing)
- NRIT / CAT results analysed against PTE/PTM scores in term 3 by all staff
- List of low and underachievers collated based on analysis of NRIT and PTE/PTM scores (a difference of 10 or more). Target groups identified and planned for
- Staff use Assessment Manager to track pupil progress
- Planning is evaluated every 6 weeks
- Teacher evaluations identifying problems rising and progress and inform next set of planning notes
- Differentiated work is given to pupils in class and as homework
- Differentiated activities are outlined in planners
- We benchmark against NI End of Key Stage results (where available)
- A clear marking policy has been devised and staff adhere to the policy
- All children are given verbal and written feedback which outlines how to improve upon their work
- Pupil voice/involvement of children in target setting as and when appropriate
- Assessment file detailing level of progression and cross curricular skills files are collated and passed to next teacher
- Pupils' achievements are celebrated
- Sharing of good practice
- There are progressive schemes of work and these will be updated to incorporate the appropriate levels of progression for Communication and Using Mathematics.

b) There is a culture of accountability for literacy and numeracy outcomes at Senior Management Team Level and throughout the school

- Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators are clear about their responsibilities. The Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators are part of the Strategic Leadership Team

- Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators devise action plans and these form an integral part of school development planning on an annual basis
- Action plans are regularly reviewed by all staff and adjustments made to ensure that targets can be met
- All teachers take responsibility for the progress of all children in their class
- Co-ordinators evaluate progress and this evaluation is presented to Board of Governors
- Board of Governors are aware of targets and informed of achievements at the end of the academic year

c) The school Development Plan has baseline positions, clear outcomes, annual SMART targets for literacy and numeracy, linked to action plans setting out the strategies which will deliver the intended improvements.

- In collaboration with all the stakeholders the School Development Plan is drawn in a three year cycle
- A whole school meeting is held at end of summer term to evaluate previous SDP target and a whole school meeting is held at beginning of new school term to set new SDP targets
- The Board of Governors are involved in evaluation of school development targets annually
- Targets are devised in consultation with staff
- Clear action plans for literacy and numeracy are devised by literacy and numeracy co-ordinators
- There are scheduled timetabled meetings based on numeracy and literacy with teachers, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators and The Strategic Leadership Team
- We benchmark against NI end of Key Stage results (where available)
- Impact on children's learning is clearly monitored through booklooks, classroom observations and whole school feedback
- Principal, Strategic Leadership Team and Co-ordinators gather evidence of children's work to ensure progression

d) Every teacher has annually reviewed development objectives, linked to the School Development Plan (particularly, where appropriate, the Literacy and Numeracy targets)

- Teachers will use Literacy and / or Numeracy targets as part of their PRSD objectives every year.

e) Teacher undertake robust tracking and monitoring of pupils' work with particular focus on Literacy and Numeracy, using statutory and other assessment tools alongside their own professional development

- PTE / PTM / CATS / NRIT assessment tests are used throughout the school from Primary 3 onwards

- P1 baseline is carried out
- P2 MIST is administered early in term 3
- Running records are administered, analysed and used to identify low, stagnant readers
- CBA analysed and used diagnostically
- Diagnostic tests – Salford Reading, Spar Spelling and WRAPS
- Numeracy Support Programme
- Specific Literacy Interventions to include Toe by Toe, Spelling Support, Paired Reading.
- IEPs drawn up and reviewed regularly by teachers and SENCO.

f) In conjunction with the Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators, there are opportunities for teachers to share and learn from good practice

- Teachers of Shared classes plan together and this is timetabled
- Teachers discuss their planners sharing concerns or good classroom practice during directed time.
- Planners are available electronically
- Coordinators provide feedback from monitoring of planners
- Teachers disseminate the good practice from courses and provide staff training
- School newsletter
- In Primary 1 an Induction Meeting and booklet is arranged, explaining the homework and expectations for P1 year
- Primary 7 transition Programme
- Parent Interviews
- Shared Education Programme
- Reporting pupil progress on a termly basis, two Parent Teacher meetings and one written formal report
- Homework diaries for comment exchange
- Consultation / consent for intervention programmes
- Liaison with outside agencies
- Use of the local Library (P4-P7)
- Competitions
- Local authors visit the school for story telling sessions
- World book day events
- World Maths Day
- LASCO Maths challenge
- Cahoots drama group – “Math ‘a’ Magic”
- Education Authority Mobile Library and project services
- C2k Curriculum Officers
- Assemblies and visitors
- School concerts and participation in local community events
- School trips
- Joint activities with other local schools
- Extra-curricular activities including After School Clubs

- Book Fairs
- Parent volunteers
- School website and social media (Facebook and Twitter)
- School calendar of events
- School premises used for events
- Parent workshops
- Parent Teacher Association
- An open door policy
- Parent Survey

g) Arrangements, which include pastoral support and special educational needs, are in place to provide support as early as possible to pupils that need additional help

- Baseline assessment in Primary 1
- Induction programme for Primary 1 and new pupils
- Transition programme for Primary 7 children
- Reading Partners, Reading Recovery style individual programme and Toe By Toe programmes in place
- Stand Out Boys Programme
- Parent Interviews in October and February including IEP review meetings
- Meetings are arranged for the parents of children with additional needs as necessary
- Liaison with Multi-Agency Support Teams (MASTs)
- Liaison with Educational Psychologists
- Liaison with staff from the Literacy Teaching Support Service (LTSS)
- Liaison with Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS)
- Teachers regularly liaise with SENCO on relevant issues
- Circle Time and Class Council meetings
- Active School Council
- Peer Mediation training
- Buddy System & Peer Mediators in place

h) The school develops effective links with the families and communities it serves

- We promote and encourage strong links with parents in order to support pupil learning. These include:
 - There is a phonological awareness programme developed from P1 children
 - There is a phonics programme devised from P1-P4
- Key Stage 2 phonic programme being developed

i) In St Brigid's Primary School, there is a systematic programme of high quality phonics

- Teachers share resources
- Displays used to share practice
- Coordinators observe teachers and provide opportunities for feedback and support

- Staff meetings are set aside for sharing of practice in Literacy and Numeracy etc.)

ASPECT 1: Provide high quality teaching for all pupils

Teachers in St Brigid's Primary School are committed to providing high-quality teaching for all pupils:

Approaches to Teaching and Learning in Literacy and Numeracy

In order to ensure optimum learning can take place in Literacy and Numeracy lessons, teachers use a range of classroom organisation structures such as whole class teaching, teaching in mixed ability groups, differentiated groups, paired and individual sessions as is appropriate to each lesson

The teachers reflect on the individual learning styles of the children and are aware of kinaesthetic, visual and auditory learners. Children's learning styles are identified (P4-P7) and the pupils and teachers use these learning styles to ensure each child achieves to their full potential.

A wide variety of practical materials are used in Numeracy lessons and a central Maths store houses shared and large equipment and apparatus.

In Literacy, practical equipment such as Phonic and word building games are used to inspire children and reinforce learning

Teachers use modelled, shared and guided approaches in both Literacy and Numeracy. Modelled, shared and guided teaching occurs throughout the school in both Literacy and Numeracy.

Assessment for Learning Strategies

Assessment for Learning strategies are promoted in Literacy and Numeracy lessons. This is carried out through sharing the learning intentions, outlining the success criteria and having plenary sessions.

All teachers discuss with the children how to work independently and what to do if they are stuck. Different methods of self-evaluation are used by the children, for example, traffic lights or thumb tool.

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities are infused within Literacy and numeracy lessons. The children are encouraged to discuss the learning that has taken place and the new skills that have been acquired. Teachers take time to make the skills explicit and to suggest possible connections to future learning.

In Numeracy many activities are open-minded investigations. The children are expected to plan how to go about the task as independently as possible. The level of teacher intervention is carefully judged.

Teachers also allow dedicated thinking and discussion time during each stage of the learning process so that learners become aware of the skills in thinking and solving problems collaboratively and independently. This enables the children to realise that these skills can be transferred to other situations. The teacher also helps children make connections with prior learning so that pupils are better placed to apply that learning to the new situation.

Child Centred Provision

In St Brigid's Primary School whole school planning takes place to ensure the needs of the pupils are met. This planning includes:

- Implementing planners in Literacy and Numeracy that fully reflect the CCEA lines of Progression in Communication and Using Numeracy.
- Analysing data to identify the specific needs of a whole class and specific children and implementing plans to target these needs.
- Providing targeted provision through additional adult support (both team teaching and withdrawal)
- Opportunities for children to contribute to planning outlining what they want to learn.
- Homework to support and reinforce learning, differentiated to the needs of the child.

Culture of Improvement

In ensuring our high expectations are realised the teachers endeavour to create a culture of achievement. This has been developed through:

- Effective data analysis
- Target setting for Literacy and Numeracy which informs the SDP
- Leading to improvement in Standardised Scores (Refer to Rainbow Charts)
- Code of Practice – adequate provision for SEN children to access the curriculum within a mainstream setting, i.e. support assistants, outreach support, learning support for children on the SEN register, Education plans and reviews and effective liaison between the SENCO and class teacher
- Marking for improvement with the child – identifying the area for development.
- Pupils of the month, Merit Assembly reward system, for children who have excelled or made good progress in an area they have been working hard at.

Self Evaluation

Teachers self-evaluate in order to bring about improvement in teaching and learning. Continual informal evaluation of teaching is ongoing. Teachers evaluate the success of their teaching by how and what the children have learned. There is also a focus on ensuring that evaluations influence plans. Feedback from others is considered when appropriate e.g. Learning support teacher, outreach support, ASCET, pupils, classroom assistants or parents.

ASPECTS 2 & 3:

We in St. Brigid's Primary School address underachievement as soon as it emerges and address continuing underachievement with support with other staff in the school

Tracking Pupils' Progress

The data is used to track individual pupil performance and inform planning on a subject, Key Stage and class basis. Underperforming pupils, whether with high, average or low ability, are identified and differentiated learning is devised for them.

This tracking is reviewed in February and at the end of the school year.

Once identified as making insufficient progress the teachers:

- Liaise with the SENCO if necessary
- Review what next steps are needed for supporting the child along with SMART targets for realistic achievement
- Ensure differentiated planning
- Provide quality oral and written feedback which informs the child of their progress and next steps in learning
- Review resources – are additional or different required?
- Encourage self-reflection
- Use open ended questions to encourage understanding
- Consider additional work which may be required for home support
- Introduce extra support programmes provided by classroom assistants or other adults.

Early Intervention

In St Brigid's Primary School to meet the additional needs of pupils various interventions and support are in place

- A Learning Support teacher and assistant are employed to provide support through team teaching and/or withdrawal, with particular focus on underachievement in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 including the delivery of a Reading Recovery style programme
- We are a MASTs school and refer pupils who experience difficulties with two of the following; Speech & Language, Behaviour, occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy
- Through the Code of practice – referrals are made to the appropriate agencies and outreach support services
- Educational Psychologist referrals are made as soon as needs are identified
- During Term 3 a new Non Reading Intelligence Test is used to identify children with a low IQ and compared with NFER Assessment scores to identify underachievers
- In addition to Parent / Teacher Consultations in terms 1 and 2, P3 and P6 do CAT. Teachers also meet when necessary, with parents to discuss the individual difficulties their children are experiencing
- SENCO also meets with parents for SEN review meetings and IEPs are agreed
- Parental Involvement is discussed and agreed at IP meetings.

Assessment

Class teachers use data analysis to set appropriate and realistic targets. These are monitored and tracked for individual pupils,

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to include differentiation to care for Underachievers, Low Achievers and Newcomers where appropriate.

Underachievers are identified and targeted on planners. Individual circumstances are taken into account when making provision for these pupils. Support is sought from both parents and pupils involved and targets are shared with them. New resources will be used where appropriate to stimulate or challenge these pupils. They are given plenty of positive reinforcement to foster self-esteem and encouraged to self-evaluate their progress.

Low achievers are supported and encouraged to reach their full potential through differentiated class teaching. Literacy and Numeracy support is also provided by the school Learning Support Teacher through team teaching and withdrawal group. Some pupils will also be entitled to LTSS support. Classroom Assistants provide support for statemented pupils.

Effective Leadership

School Development Planning

Priorities for Literacy and Numeracy are identified in the School Plan through a process involving co-ordinators, Management Team and whole teaching staff. Assessment Data is analysed. Audits are carried out and Action plans are evaluated. This information is passed on to the Management team for consideration and prioritising. External influences from DENI may also affect their judgement.

Professional Development of Staff

Opportunities for appropriate professional development in Literacy and Numeracy are offered to co-ordinators through Education Authority training. Co-ordinators inform staff of new developments in their subject area.

SENCO and class teachers support Classroom Assistants in their use of Literacy and Numeracy in the classroom.

Classroom Assistants are included in all appropriate staff training and their professional development needs are catered for, when possible.

Curriculum meetings are held to share good practice amongst teaching staff. Co-ordinators monitor and evaluate effective practice through classroom observations, Team Teaching and Modelled Teaching, Book looks and planning. New teaching strategies and resources are disseminated by co-ordinators. Teachers choose an aspect of Literacy or Numeracy each year to focus on for their PRSD.

Monitoring and Evaluating

This Policy will be regularly reviewed (every 2 years) in consultation with staff, particularly the Strategic Leadership Team, Co-ordinators for literacy and Numeracy and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO, Board of Governors and parents.

The Board of Governors are kept informed of standards and achievements in Literacy and Numeracy through these evaluations and also Principal's termly report.