

Literacy Policy



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St. Oliver Plunkett's School Literacy Policy

PHILOSOPHY

We at St. Oliver Plunkett's believe that literacy is a life-long process that is essential to the development of the reflective capacity both as an individual and as a community. It is concerned with the development, use, shaping, refining and enjoyment of language – spoken, heard, written and read and the capacity for reflective thought.

We therefore see and take opportunities throughout the day for developing literacy in children, both formally and informally.

GENERAL AIMS

Our literacy policy aims to develop the children's knowledge and understanding, concepts and skills in all four modes of language: talking, listening, reading and writing. In doing so we will enable children to interact effectively in the world around them, to express themselves creatively and to communicate confidently.

SPECIFIC AIMS

AT1 Talking and Listening

Our aims are to develop each child's ability to:

- ◆ *listen to and take part in discussions, explanations, role-plays and presentations:*
- ◆ *contribute comments, ask questions and respond to others' points of view:*
- ◆ *communicate information, ideas, opinions, feelings and imaginings, using an expanding vocabulary;*
- ◆ *structure their talk and speak clearly so that ideas can be understood by others;*
- ◆ *adapt ways of speaking to audience and situation;*
- ◆ *use non-verbal methods to express ideas and engage with the listener.*

We will provide the children with contexts for the development of talking and listening skills: personal, factual, imaginative, and social

AT2 Reading

We aim

- ◆ *to develop in the children a positive attitude to and enjoyment of reading*
- ◆ *to develop the children's independence in reading at increasing levels of difficulty*
- ◆ *to develop the children's efficiency in the use of books and other written sources to obtain information*

To these ends, we aim

- ◆ *to provide a wide range of stimulating reading material*
- ◆ *to develop decoding skills*
- ◆ *to develop comprehension skills*
- ◆ *to develop skills in finding and using appropriate sources of information*
- ◆ *to develop an appreciation of the use of language: aesthetic, persuasive, informative etc.*
- ◆ *to develop in the children a critical faculty towards reading matter*
- ◆ *to make the children aware of published writers, by meeting authors, journalists, editors etc.*
- ◆ *to provide different contexts for reading:*
 - *sustained, silent*
 - *aloud to another individual / group*

AT 3 Writing

We aim to

- ◆ *develop the children's interest and competence in writing as a form of communication*
- ◆ *to develop their awareness of the audience and context for which they are writing*
- ◆ *to develop their skills in a range of forms of, and purposes for, writing*

To these ends, we aim to develop

- ◆ *increasing independence in writing*
- ◆ *the ability to plan, organise and structure their writing*
- ◆ *a critical attitude to their own writing which leads to the ability to edit, redraft and refine their writing*
- ◆ *an awareness of different forms, styles and language appropriate to different contexts and readerships*
- ◆ *legible and aesthetically pleasing handwriting*
- ◆ *accuracy in spelling*

- ◆ *correct use of grammatical conventions*
- ◆ *an ability to use word processing*

ENVIRONMENT, ORGANISATION AND METHODOLOGY

Environment

The school seeks to provide an environment where literacy skills are positively promoted and developed by providing

- ◆ *opportunities to communicate formally, informally, socially, with authority in a range of scenarios to teachers, management, peers, visitors and invited guests*
- ◆ *opportunities to listen to and interact with a range of presentations: live, taped, electronic, televisual, broadcast*
- ◆ *opportunities to engage with good, varied, stimulating reading materials in a range of genres and at an appropriate range of levels*
- ◆ *opportunities to write in a range of styles for different purposes, for a range of audiences, for formal and informal “publication”*

Organisation

The planning booklets seek to ensure coherence within year groups and continuity and progression through year groups. Literacy occupies at least one hour per day of teaching time, apart from the additional incidental cross-curricular opportunities that arise.

Talking and listening skills are developed by whole class, group and individual activities and encourage the participation of every child.

The teaching of reading skills may be organised on a whole-class, group, paired or individual basis, with tasks set to reinforce concepts and extend the children. Activities range across instructional teaching, reading for information and reading for enjoyment.

Writing skills are introduced on a whole-class basis and then developed through small group work and / or individual guidance. Writing tasks are differentiated by the nature or scale of the task. Presentation varies depending on the task but involves a range of hand written and ICT based forms.

Methodology

- ◆ **Listening:** *lessons are designed to allow the children to listen to and respond to teachers, classmates, visitors, performers, TV, recordings, radio broadcasts, themselves (recorded).*

- ◆ **Talking:** *the children will be required to speak*

AS a member of a group, a spokesperson for the group, an individual;

TO teachers, to classmates, to visitors, to members of the community;

ABOUT personal experiences, feelings, events, what they have read or heard, opinions, hopes and aspirations, work they are doing.

- ◆ **Reading:**

Comprehension skills are developed using materials at instructional level, in class and for homework;

Library and study skills are developed through work on reference books, the class library, weekly visits to the school library, computer programmes, and through the preparation of projects;

Reading for enjoyment is encouraged through use of the class, school and mobile library resources; daily sessions of silent reading (to be considered); provision of stimulating reading material of interest to different abilities and genders;

Teachers “model” good reading practice.

- ◆ **Writing:**

Independent writing skills: the children are encouraged to become independent writers, using planning, drafting and editing techniques where appropriate. Lessons start with an examination of examples of appropriate writing, showing different styles for different purposes and audiences. The children are taught to emulate these examples in “real” writing tasks. Instruction is given on the conventions of writing: spelling, grammar, punctuation, handwriting;

Teachers “model” good writing practice.

PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Teachers plan for Literacy to cover periods of approximately six weeks. A planning programme is completed for each of the 3 Attainment Targets, allowing for target setting and Assessment to be drawn up. The use of ICT, where appropriate, is included.

At present the planning programmes are submitted to the Principal and to the Literacy Co-ordinator for monitoring, coherence within each Year Group and for progression through the Key Stages.

At the end of each planning period, teachers submit an evaluation to the Principal. The issues raised in the evaluation are then addressed in the subsequent planning period.

ASSESSMENT

The aim of assessment is to monitor the progress of each pupil. In this way, individual achievements and weaknesses can be identified and can inform future learning programmes.

Assessment may be formal or informal. Informal assessment takes place on a daily basis through teacher observation of children's talking and listening, reading and writing, in various forms and scenarios.

Year Group assessments take place twice per year in class based tests.

P3 to P7 – Accelerated Reader tests take place at the beginning of each term.

P3 to P7 - Standardised reading tests take place in May each year.

P1 – regular testing on High Frequency words, Running records and Salford.

P2 – regular running records and Salford.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

“It is vitally important that children with SEN are identified as early as possible and that an awareness of their possible difficulties is clearly communicated between all the professionals involved with their development.” (COP 1998 2.14)

“Children with SEN should be identified as early as possible and assessed as quickly as is consistent with thoroughness.” (Paragraph 5.12 supplement to the COP)

Pupils who have a significant weakness in Literacy are withdrawn from class and further assisted by staff through withdrawal groups. The main responsibility for teaching pupils with special educational needs lies with the class teacher, who incorporates differentiation into his / her planning and teaching. Withdrawal groups will provide extra support and assistance to address special educational needs in Literacy.

Additional special needs support:

Additional Literacy support is given when available.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Class Teacher

- ◆ *to facilitate the development of Literacy*
- ◆ *to promote the skills of reading, writing, talking and listening at every opportunity*
- ◆ *to identify the different needs of different children*
- ◆ *to identify children with Special Needs & inform LSC*
- ◆ *to differentiate the level of work to suit different needs*
- ◆ *to monitor and assess children's progress*
- ◆ *to keep parents informed, formally and informally*
- ◆ *to participate in meetings and training on Literacy*
- ◆ *to make use of the structure which supports the development of Literacy in the school*

The Literacy Co-ordinator

- ◆ *to promote Literacy throughout the school*
- ◆ *to ensure the provision of appropriate resources and materials*
- ◆ *to ensure continuity and progression in planning*

- ◆ *to ensure that effective evaluation takes place and is an important element in subsequent planning*
- ◆ *to identify training needs among staff and to ensure that these needs are responded to*
- ◆ *to co-ordinate, with the LSC, in the provision of special support*
- ◆ *to meet with teachers to give guidance and support, to answer questions and to deal with issues*
- ◆ *to keep staff informed of developments which affect Literacy*
- ◆ *to ensure that assessment instruments are appropriate*
- ◆ *to monitor and act on the results of assessment instruments*
- ◆ *Upkeep of Accelerated Reader Programme*

The LSC assists the class teacher:

- ◆ *to consult with the class teachers regarding individual children's needs*
- ◆ *to evaluate the results of screening assessments*
- ◆ *to take action to provide for children with special needs*
- ◆ *to liaise with teachers*
- ◆ *to decide on the need for outside assistance (Educational Psychologist, Peripatetic support, Outreach support)*
- ◆ *to assist the teacher with appropriate materials*
- ◆ *to assist the teacher with the preparation of IEPs, where necessary*
- ◆ *where appropriate, to withdraw children for more intensive tuition*
- ◆ *to monitor the children's progress and keep records*

CROSS-CURRICULAR ISSUES

Literacy is relevant throughout all the primary subjects and the Cross-curricular themes: Opportunities to develop the skills of talking, listening, reading and writing are availed of on a formal and informal basis. In anticipation of full implementation of the Northern Ireland Revised Curriculum we will develop literacy through the context of:

- ◆ *Mathematics and Numeracy*
- ◆ *The Arts*
- ◆ *The World Around Us*
- ◆ *Personal Development and Mutual Understanding*
- ◆ *Physical Education*
- ◆ *Religious Education*

ICT

Children are encouraged to develop their Literacy skills through the use of ICT. All classes have a white board and computer in their own room. Pupils are timetabled to use the computer suite and their research, reading and writing skills are developed through the use of specially designed educational packages and through the closely supervised use of the internet.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

St. Oliver Plunkett's has a policy of equal opportunities for all its pupils, irrespective of colour, race, class, gender, ability or disability. We ensure that teaching methods and materials are non-biased and reflect a range of backgrounds and interests. We provide activities and materials that are motivating and stimulating to children.

PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We seek to involve parents actively in the promotion of literacy skills. In every year there are parent teacher meetings in Term 1 to inform parents on the range, value and context of the curriculum, class work and homework for their child in each year group.

Parents are contacted when there is any cause for concern over their children's development. They are closely involved in discussions about special provision by the LSC or by the Peripatetic or Outreach services.

In all cases parents are asked to promote literacy skills at home, including making use of the local library, and to monitor their children's reading, through the signing reading records.

We have links with the community: through school concerts; quizzes and challenges; participation in book fairs; visits by writers, story-tellers, dramatists; Shared Education activities; nominated charity work and fund-raising events.

THE ROLE OF HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to support the teaching and learning in the classroom. Homework is set Monday to Thursday.

There is normally a reading element, a writing element and spellings, learnt through the multi-sensory method, i.e. LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, CHECK.

Parents are asked to be involved and are encouraged to monitor homework closely and to sign completed work. They are asked to be positive and supportive, to praise what the children can do, to expect mistakes and to help the children learn from them.

Members of staff ensure that the homework is set appropriately and is marked. Parents are encouraged to inform the class teacher if there is a problem with either the level or the timing of homework.

A further purpose of homework is to allow parents to see the nature and level of schoolwork. Homework set is a reinforcement of classroom learning.

It is emphasised that children need as much practice in reading as possible if they are to improve their literacy skills. Alongside the set reading, which the children are given for homework each night, we actively encourage our parents to read to, and with, their children, to encourage their children to read for pleasure and to seek out a wide range of reading material, not only books, but magazines, electronic and other reading materials, which relate to hobbies and interests.

SETTING OF WHOLE-SCHOOL LITERACY TARGETS

In line with the drive to raise standards in literacy we set targets for the performance of our children in each class.

Results are monitored and evaluated in May and new targets are set for the following year based on these results.

Children's results are compared to CAT and NRIT results.

REVIEW OF POLICY

The Literacy policy is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect new statutory requirements and to incorporate best practice and recommendations from educational research.