

St Finian's **Primary School**



Language & Literacy Policy

Approved by Board of Governors: _____

Review : _____

Mission Statement

Through the example of Christ, we as a Catholic School work together to provide a caring, safe, inclusive environment, in which we nurture the faith, knowledge and values of all children and members of the school community as we journey together and grow in love together in the Kingdom of God.

Background

- At St Finian's Primary school, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills.
- Through the Northern Ireland curriculum, we will help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners.
- We want children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.
- Literacy is at the heart of all children's learning.
- Literacy enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving these order and meaning.
- Because literacy is central to children's intellectual, emotional and social development it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

Purpose

- To promote a shared love and understanding of literacy;
- To establish an entitlement for all pupils;
- To establish high expectations for teachers and pupils
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school.

Overview

This policy consists of key paragraphs that explain how Literacy is taught and appendices that give further guidance about:

- Reading – appendix 1
- Writing – appendix 2
- Talking and listening – appendix 3
- Spelling and Phonics – appendix 4
- Characteristics of effective teaching and learning – appendix 5.

Aims of Policy

To encourage children to:

- **be effective, competent communicators and good listeners;**
- **express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts both fiction and non-fiction using appropriate technical vocabulary;**
- **foster an interest in words and their meanings, and to develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written form;**
- **enjoy and engage with and understand a range of text types and genres;**
- **be able to write in a variety of styles and forms showing awareness of audience and purpose;**
- **develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy;**
- **use grammar and punctuation accurately;**
- **understand spelling conventions;**
- **produce effective, well-presented written work.**

Expectations

- **By the time children leave our school, we expect them to communicate through speaking and listening, reading and writing, with confidence, fluency and understanding and in a range of situations.**
- **We want every child to take pleasure in reading across a range of genres and have a strong motivation to read for a variety of purposes.**
- **By the end of key stage one, the majority of children will be working above or within 10 marks of their CAT4 words score.**
- **By the end of key stage two, the majority of pupils should be working above or within 10 marks of their CAT4 verbal score.**

Teaching and Learning

Planning

- The Northern Ireland Curriculum forms the basis of teaching and learning.
- All children receive at least the minimum entitlement of a daily Literacy lesson.
- Teachers work towards independent learning and plan for different working groups with differentiated activities.
- Teachers employ a range of teaching strategies.
- Teachers use the Northern Ireland Curriculum as a starting point for creating their medium term (6 weekly approx.) literacy plans.
- These medium-term plans follow the five key aspects of Literacy teaching: familiarisation with the genre and text type; capturing ideas; teacher demonstration; teacher scribing through supported and guided writing and finally, independent writing to create a teaching sequence.
- This is used as a basis for short term planning and adapted according to the needs of the children.
- Clear learning intentions are set for each session and are shared with pupils. Teachers differentiate according to the needs of the pupils and use intervention programmes for targeted support.
- Literacy is encouraged and developed across our curriculum and links are made where appropriate.
- ICT is used where it enhances, extends and complements literacy teaching and learning.
- Additional adults are used to support the teaching of Literacy.
- They work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of children or individuals.

Inclusion

- All children receive quality first literacy teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly.
- In addition, where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support to enable them to work towards age appropriate learning intentions, intervention programmes will be implemented, including Literacy Support, Time To Read, Early Intervention Program.
- Teachers and classroom assistants plan Individual Education Plans together and monitor progress of these pupils.
- Pupils that are more able are planned for in line with our policy.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- Teachers use effective assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps.

- Group or individual targets are set accordingly.
- Marking is in line with the school marking and feedback policy.
- Analysis of assessment data (PTE) is used to set targets.
- Overall data is used to set whole school targets and focuses for school development.
- The teacher keeps records that enable them to deliver an effective, creative and relevant curriculum that builds on prior attainment and meets the needs of pupils.

Staff Development

- Teachers are expected to keep up to date with subject knowledge and use current materials that are available in school or online.
- Training needs are identified as a result of whole school monitoring and evaluation, performance management and through induction programmes.
- These will be reflected in the School Development Plan.
- The Literacy co-ordinator will arrange for relevant advice and information, such as feedback from courses to be disseminated.
- Where appropriate, the Literacy co-ordinator leads or organises school based training.
- Additional adults who are involved with intervention programmes will receive appropriate training that may be school based or part of central training.

Resources and Accommodation

- A comprehensive range of resources is available in school.
- Every class has a selection of appropriate reference books e.g. dictionaries, thesaurus, electronic devices such as iPads etc. and a class library.
- Teacher resources are located in classrooms. Guided reading books are in classrooms.
- These books are banded and levelled according to each class' needs. The school library contains a range of fiction and non-fiction books levelled for Accelerated Reading.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Principal, Literacy Co-ordinator, Assessment Co-ordinator and teachers, monitors Literacy.
- Having identified priorities, the SMT and Literacy Coordinator construct an action plan that may form part of the School Development Plan.
- This forms the basis for any monitoring activities and will clearly identify when, who and what is to be monitored and how this will take place e.g.

classroom observation, planning scrutiny, book scoops, trusted colleague networking, collegiate book discussion, etc.

Appendix 1 - Reading

Introduction

- In St Finian's Primary School we aim to encourage children to become habitual readers, using books for pleasure and to seek out information.
- We understand the importance of reading in the modern world and our aim is to make children understand the value of written text.

- Books open up a world of new experiences and children should be encouraged to understand the meaning of different texts.
- The teacher's own attitude and enthusiasm for reading will be reflected in the pupils he or she teaches.

Aims

To enable children to:

- develop positive attitudes towards reading so that it is a pleasurable and meaningful activity;
- use reading skills as an integral part of learning throughout the curriculum;
- read and respond to a variety of texts whilst gaining increased level of fluency, accuracy, independence and understanding
- develop different strategies for approaching reading and be able to orchestrate the full range of comprehension strategies and inference skills.

Entitlement

Pupils have access to a wide range of reading opportunities that include:

- guided reading
- shared reading
- regular independent reading
- home/school reading
- hearing books read aloud on a daily basis
- selecting own choice of texts including ICT texts and AR texts
- reading in other subjects including ICT texts

Additional time is provided on a regular basis for reading at other times. There is time set aside for independent reading, using the library, listening to whole class stories and research linked to other subjects.

Teaching and Learning

Teachers promote and value reading as an enjoyable activity and a life skill. Teachers plan for a range of comprehension strategies that allow pupils to engage with text in a variety of ways to suit different learning styles.

- In shared reading the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader providing a high level of support.

- Learning Intentions are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and collaboration.
- Texts are rich and challenging, beyond the current reading ability of the majority of the class.
- In guided reading, texts are chosen to match the ability of the group but still provide an element of challenge.
 - Guided reading provides a forum for pupils to demonstrate what they have learned about reading; the focus for the reading is concerned with extending strategies/objectives taught in shared reading.
- Teachers plan for independent reading activities during sessions of Literacy teaching.
 - Texts are selected so that pupils can access them without support.
 - The focus for the reading is to provide practice and develop personal response to text.

Many other opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and extend reading in other subjects. Pupils select texts under the guidance of the teacher for independent and home/school reading. Teachers monitor independent reading and discuss progress with individual pupils on a regular basis.

Accelerated Reading is used in Primary Four to Primary Seven Classes. Children complete the Star Reading Test to gain a ZPD. Teachers choose a reading level within the ZPD for the children to choose books from independently. Children complete quizzes on their books and can move up a level after three test scores over 85%. Children are retested at the end of a term via Star Reading again and reading levels are reviewed.

All teachers are responsible for providing a stimulating reading environment, promoting book ownership and recommending books to pupils. Classroom and central displays are language rich and special displays should promote authors and books.

Reading at home is regarded as an important part of reading development. Parents are encouraged to hear their children read for 15 mins a night.

At St Finian's we try to link Big Books and class reading with the topics being taught where applicable. We also try to foster high interest for hesitant readers through texts and topics (Storyworld, Project X) different from our main reading scheme. Pupils should have a wide experience of a range of fiction and non-fiction with a variety of types of print.

Reading Frequency

- All teachers are responsible for hearing children read at least two times per week and CAs hear children read weekly where possible.
- Other children will be heard daily.
- Guided reading is heard by the teacher first allowing for planning on activities.

- Tasks will relate to group reading activities or relate to work on the whole class reading activities.
- We feel it is fundamental to have an awareness of progression and building up of skills in our pupils.
- These sessions are timetabled.
- All children are heard read by an adult at least two times per week although this may be more frequent depending on need.
- We work as a partnership with our parents and we stress the responsibility of parents, as primary educators, to instil a love of reading and to nurture its development.

Classroom Management and Resources

- At St Finian's Primary school we look for the progression of pre-reading skills to reading ready.
- Emergent reading skills will have appropriate activities.
- All classrooms have a well-stocked book area with a range of fiction and non-fiction.
- Pupils will also be involved in virtual reading sessions using the internet. The school library is an important resource and pupils are taught how to use it appropriately.
- Pupils are also encouraged to use local libraries.

Appendix 2 - Writing

Aims

Children should learn to:

- write in different contexts and for different purposes and audiences
- be increasingly aware of the conventions of writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling

- plan draft and edit their writing to suit the purpose
- use ICT as a literacy medium for presenting work and manipulating text
- form letters correctly, leading to a fluent joined and legible handwriting style, giving increasing regard to presentation

Entitlement

Pupils have access to a wide range of writing opportunities that include:

- shared writing
- guided writing
- independent writing
- writing different text types and narrative styles
- writing in different curriculum areas
- handwriting practice
- collaborative writing
- writing related to own experiences and enjoyment
- writing from a variety of stimuli
- planning, drafting, editing and presenting
- using ICT

Teaching and Learning

- Teachers promote writing and look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as 'writers'.
- Teachers establish the purpose and audience for writing and make teaching objectives explicit to pupils so they know why they are studying a particular text type, the kind of writing activities they need to undertake and what the expected outcome will be.
- Links between writing styles and topics covered are encouraged.
- Pupils will experience narrative, recount, procedural report, explanation, and persuasive styles.

- Pupils will also experience writing forms of poetry.

The writing process breaks down into a number of steps that will need to be taught and practised regularly:

- Planning
- Drafting and Writing
- Evaluating and Editing
- Proof-Reading
- Reading Aloud and Sharing

Subject-specific texts that link to work being undertaken in other areas should also be used in literacy lessons to support the wider curriculum.

- Teachers use shared writing to model the writing process.
- Shared reading and writing provide a context for discussion and demonstration of grammatical features at word level, sentence level and text level.
- Emergent writing is encouraged and celebrated in Foundation stage.
- Samples of writing are displayed throughout the school, displaying progression and refinement.

Activities are differentiated through the use of writing frames, spelling banks, collaborative work and peer or adult support.

Pupils will also have experiences to exhibit writing through blogs, Newsdesk, presentations including powerpoints and video presentations, etc.

Handwriting

- It is paramount that children are rigorously taught correct letter formation from the very beginning of their time in school.
- As soon as the children are ready, they should be taught to sit properly in order to have the correct posture for writing, hold a pencil in the correct tripod grip and develop a legible and joined handwriting style.
- The school follows the Nelson handwriting programme.
- A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned for and delivered.
- It is expected that all members of staff, class teachers and teaching assistants, model the school handwriting style at all times i.e. when writing on the board or in children's books.
- By the end of key stage 2, all children should be displaying an efficient, quick, neat and legible handwriting style that is effective in recording their ideas.

Resources

- Each class has a range of materials to support the writing process.

- Writing materials are kept accessible and organised and pupils are encouraged to take care of the equipment and return it to where it belongs.
- Each class also has a set of age appropriate dictionaries, thesaurus and word banks.

Other teacher resources are kept in classrooms and shared between parallel year groups.

Appendix 3 – Spoken Language

Aims

Children need to be able to:

- Communicate effectively, speaking with increasing confidence, clarity and fluency
- Participate in discussions and debate in a variety of contexts
- Listen to the views, opinions and ideas of others with increased interest
- Articulate ideas and thoughts clearly with appropriate tone and vocabulary recognising audience
- Respond to questions and opinions appropriately
- Retell stories and poems which are known by heart

- Ask questions with increasing relevance and insight

Entitlement

Pupils have access to a wide range of speaking and listening opportunities that include:

- Talking about their own experiences, recounting events
- Participating in discussion and debate
- Talk for writing
- Retelling stories and poems
- Expressing opinions and justifying ideas
- Listening to stories read aloud
- Presenting ideas to different audiences
- Taking part in school performances
- Responding to different kinds of texts
- Talking to visitors in school
- Listening to ideas and opinions of adults and peers
- Role-play and other drama activities across the curriculum.
- Use dramatic techniques, including work in role to explore ideas and texts
- Create, share and evaluate ideas and understanding through drama

Teaching and Learning

- Teachers provide a wide range of contexts for spoken language throughout the school day.
- Teachers and other adults in school model speaking clearly.
- This includes clear diction, reasoned argument, using imaginative and challenging language and use of Standard English.
- Listening is modelled, as is the appropriate use of non-verbal communication, respecting the views of others.
- Teachers are also sensitive in encouraging the participation of retiring or reticent children.
- Spoken Language outcomes are planned for in all areas of the curriculum.
- Roles are shared amongst pupils: sometimes a pupil will be the questioner, presenter, etc.
- Learning takes place in a variety of situations and group settings.
- For example, these could include reading aloud as an individual, working collaboratively on an investigation, reporting findings as a newscaster,

interviewing people as part of a research project, acting as a guide for a visitor to school or responding to a text in shared or guided reading.

- Spoken Language will be a focus across the curriculum and across the school day in a variety of settings.

Resources:

Teachers have access to a range of resources for Spoken Language activities. These are kept in classrooms or in staff folder on C2k.

Appendix 4 – Spelling and Linguistic Phonics

Aims

Children should be able to:

- Blend and segment sounds easily
- Learn that segmenting words into their constituent phonemes for spelling is the reverse of blending phonemes into words for reading
- Spell words accurately by combining the use of grapheme-phoneme correspondence knowledge as the prime approach, and also morphological knowledge and etymological information
- Use a range of approaches to learn and spell irregular words.

Entitlement

Pupils have access to a range of phonics opportunities that include at FS and KS1:

- Whole class teaching of specific spelling patterns
- Daily discrete phonics teaching
- Using phonics knowledge in real life contexts
- Applying skills in cross curricular contexts

Pupils have access to a range of phonics opportunities that include at KS2:

- Whole class teaching of specific spelling conventions and rules
- Discrete phonics teaching as part of an intervention group where gaps in phonological knowledge have been identified
- Using phonological knowledge in real life contexts
- Applying skills in cross curricular contexts

Teaching and Learning

- Teachers provide a wide range of contexts for reinforcing spelling patterns and tricky words throughout the school day.
- All teachers use multi-sensory phonics materials based on Linguistic Phonics as a basis for their planning for the teaching of spelling.
- Learning takes place in a variety of situations and group settings.
- For example, these could include working independently to practise tricky words, possibly using ICT; working collaboratively on an investigation and participating in short, focused whole class activities.

Children are expected to spell high frequency words correctly and the word lists for their particular year group.

Spelling Homework

- Spellings may be taken from Linguistic Phonics, the differentiated lists from Weekly Spelling Lists or based on spelling patterns being learnt in class.
- It must be stressed that spellings should be based on prior attainment and phonological need and children's learning should be tested regularly to ensure that spellings are fit for purpose.
- There has been whenever possible an attempt to link sounds between classes.

Resources

- Linguistic Phonics
- Weekly Spelling Lists

- **Jolly Phonics Spelling Programme**
- **Read Write Inc**

Appendix 5 - Some Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Spoken Language

Children:

- **Feel their ideas and opinions are valued**
- **Listen to verbal instructions which are clear**
- **Offer ideas and opinions which may differ from others**
- **Verbalise ideas in a variety of situations**
- **Ask and answer questions appropriately**
- **Think before they speak – plan out**
- **Appreciate opinions of others**
- **Speak aloud with confidence for the appropriate audience**
- **Communicate collaboratively**

Teachers:

- Plan for speaking and listening
- Speak clearly
- Listen
- Consider oral outcomes
- Encourage discussion, debate and role play
- Value and build on pupils' contributions
- Understand how to develop skills progressively
- Use resources effectively
- Set realistic goals
- Use different approaches

Reading

Children:

- Are motivated to read a variety of genres for a range of purposes
- Have access to a range of stimulating books
- Enjoy reading at their level
- Talk about reading and reading material
- Use a range of comprehension strategies to engage with text

Teachers:

- Offer a range of reading opportunities
- Encourage independence
- Read to children daily
- Teach the full range of reading strategies
- Understand the progression of skills in reading development
- Plan for shared and guided reading
- Monitor independent reading
- Promote reading for enjoyment and as a life skill
- Use reading in other subjects to consolidate skills
- Maintain home/school links

Writing

Children:

- Take pride in their writing and know when different writing styles are appropriate
- Understand why they are writing
- Experiment and draft ideas
- Talk about what they are going to write (mentally rehearse)
- Are confident to share ideas with others
- Write for different audiences and purposes
- Use a variety of sentence types and structures
- Plan effectively
- Use support materials effectively
- Use ICT as a tool

Teachers:

- **Make clear links between reading and writing**
- **Offer a wide variety of writing opportunities, including handwriting practice**
- **Are confident in modelling the writing process**
- **Know key features of different text types and narrative styles**
- **Use modelling/scribing and supported composition**
- **Plan outcomes and clarify audience and purpose**
- **Provide equipment to allow children to achieve their best results**
- **Clearly outline objectives and targets**
- **Encourage children to self-correct and redraft work**
- **Identify and use cross curricular links**
- **Plan to use ICT in writing activities**
- **Provide prompts and scaffolds to support independence**