

St. Anne's Primary School
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School Literacy Policy

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St. Anne's School Literacy Policy

PHILOSOPHY

We at St. Anne's believe that literacy is a life-long process. It is concerned with the development, use, shaping, refining and enjoyment of language – spoken, heard, written and read.

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, 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 a 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, plus the 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 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.

Methodology

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

- ◆ **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 organised visits to the local library and visits from librarians to the school, computer programmes, and through the preparation of projects;*
 - Reading for enjoyment is encouraged through use of the class, school and local libraries; daily sessions of Enjoying Reading In Class (E.R.I.C.); 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. 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

Each Year Group meets and plans for Literacy to cover periods of approximately six weeks. A planning sheet is completed, which shows the planned programme for each of the three Attainment Targets and for Assessment.

The planning sheets are submitted to the Literacy co-ordinators and to the Heads of Key Stages for monitoring for coherence within each Year Group and for progression through the Key Stages.

At the end of each planning period, there is a year-group evaluation meeting and report sheet. 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.

- ◆ *Formal assessment with reference to the three Attainment Targets takes place at the end of Key Stage 1 and of Key Stage 2.*
- ◆ *Year Group assessments take place once per year.*
- ◆ *In P1 there is Baseline Assessment*

Reading Assessments

P1 – regular testing on unseen passages, based on their reading books

P2 – regular running records

- ◆ *P3 to P7 - Standardised reading tests take place in May and October each year.*

For selected children, the “Diagnostic Reading Programme” assessment is used by the Special Needs teachers.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In line with the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998) and the Supplementary Code (2005), the school recognises the importance of identifying, as early as possible, those children who have special educational needs. The school follows the 5-Stage approach, as set out in the Code.

Children who have special educational needs are normally identified by the class teacher, who informs the SENCO and consults the child's parents. At stage one, the pupils are entered on the Special Needs Register and the class teacher will provide special help within the normal curriculum framework. A larger proportion of children will be helped by stage one procedures, with smaller proportions at stages two and three.

At stages two and three, Education Plans are written by the classroom teacher, in consultation with the SENCO. Only when children do not progress, even with the additional support of specialists from outside the school (stage three), will it be considered that they may require a statutory assessment (stage four), which may lead to a Statement of Special Educational Needs (stage five).

Pupils who have a significant weakness in Literacy are further assessed and a diagnostic test may be carried out by members of the school's Special Needs team [see Assessment]. The main responsibility for teaching pupils with special educational needs lies with the class teacher, who incorporates differentiation into his / her planning and teaching. Members of the Special Needs team will provide extra materials and assistance to ensure that provision is in place to address special educational needs in Literacy.

Additional special needs support:

Some children from P2 to P6 are given specialised literacy support through tuition in small withdrawal groups.

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 SN Team*
- ◆ *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-ordinators

- ◆ *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 Special Needs Team, 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*
- ◆ *to assist with the CCEA "Quality Assurance Moderation" process*
- ◆ *to support the teachers involved in the "End-of-Key-Stage Assessment"*

The Special Needs Team

- ◆ *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 and parents*
- ◆ *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*

ICT

Children are encouraged to develop their Literacy skills through the use of ICT. All classes have a 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. Anne'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 of different genders and abilities.

PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We seek to involve parents actively in the promotion of literacy skills. In P1 there are parents' information meetings to give advice and guidance on their role and on suitable reading material. In every year there are parents' curricular meetings in September/October to inform parents on the range, value and context of the curriculum, class work and homework for their child in each year group.

In the month of November, there are one-to-one meetings to inform parents of their child's progress.

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 Special Needs team 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.

We have links with the community: through school concerts; quizzes and challenges; participation in Speech and Drama festivals; organised school visits to libraries and visits to the school by local librarians, bookshops and book fairs; visits by writers, story-tellers, dramatists, librarians; EMU 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 and in the End-of-Key-Stage Assessments in P4 and P7.

Results are monitored and evaluated and new targets are set for the following year.

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.