



# HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

## LANGUAGE AND LITERACY POLICY

### Definition of Language and Literacy

Language and Literacy is inclusive of the 3 strands - reading, writing, talking and listening which are inter-related and are equally important. The full acquisition of the language and literacy skills can only be achieved by the delivery of a broad, balanced curriculum, inclusive of appropriate cross curricular themes.

At Holy Family Primary and Nursery School we base our school policy document on the premise that all language and literacy is:

- to do with discovery
- holistic in nature, the elements of reading, writing, talking and listening are inextricably interwoven
- developed by acquiring new skills and developing familiar skills

### Aims:

Each pupil will be helped to:

- a. communicate effectively, appropriately and accurately in speech and writing.
- b. understand and respond imaginatively in speech and writing to what they hear, read and experience in a variety of media.
- c. read fluently, expressively and confidently from a wide range of reading material.
- d. use study and research skills for locating information.
- e. use text to develop skills of communication, prediction, inference, evaluation and comparison.
- f. examine work critically.
- g. use the skills of reading, writing, talking and listening across the curriculum, to the best of the his/her ability.
- h. develop a legible style of handwriting and appropriate standards of spelling, syntax, punctuation and usage.
- i. listen with concentration.

### Teaching and Learning Styles

In order to secure learning across all identified intelligences and in a manner that will meet the learning styles of our pupils, we will encourage the use of drinking water as appropriate as well as 'warm up' or 'waken up' brain gym activities. A range of VAK activities will be included in lessons. These will be reviewed regularly to ascertain whether or not there is a balance of VAK learning taking place. Clear learning outcomes will be communicated to the pupils as appropriate. We will engage with the children, encourage all to become involved, value their contributions and offer constructive, supportive feedback as required.



A wide range of teaching strategies will be employed which will include:

- Practical activities, group, paired and individual.
- Whole class activities.
- Problem-solving activities.
- Group discussion.
- Pupil led activities.
- Activity based sharing.
- Topic-based activities.
- Team-teaching.
- Educational visits/visitors.
- Circle time.
- Differentiated questioning techniques.
- Target Setting

These will be backed up by appropriate reinforcement. Realistic, high expectations in a variety of situations will be maintained. Activities will be well-paced and challenging. Our teaching strategies will also facilitate the early identification and support for children with learning difficulties.

While all of the above strategies will be addressed to secure the development of language and literacy, the core foci in our efforts within language and literacy will be to:

**1. Develop a positive attitude.**

- a. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to succeed. Targets will be set which are realistic for the individual child, irrespective of the activity.
- b. Pupils will be provided with a variety of activities which they will find stimulating and interesting.
- c. Pupils will have the opportunity to work collaboratively and independently.
- d. Pupils will have the opportunity to visit a variety of places.

**2. Develop language and literacy knowledge, skills and understanding.**

- a. Pupils will have the opportunity to take part in a range of language and literacy activities.
- b. Pupils will investigate activities to increasing depths as they progress through the key stages.
- c. Pupils will be supported appropriately according to their individual needs.

**3. Develop pupils' ability to think clearly.**

- a. Pupils will be given opportunities across all curricular areas to solve problems and convey their solutions in oral and written form.



## **Cross Curricular Themes**

Language and Literacy is the vehicle for the development of understanding in all curricular areas and themes. It will permeate all themes and curricular areas.

## **Continuity and Progression**

Continuity and Progression can be ensured if all teachers adhere to the language and literacy scheme. Continuity and progression will also be ensured via close collaboration of principal, co-ordinators and all staff, as well as effective monitoring and evaluation.

## **Differentiation**

Pupils progress at different rates and have different strengths. Such differences will be taken into account when delivering the curriculum. All pupils will have access to the same broad and relevant curriculum with a different emphasis and pace being provided for the range of ability groups.

## **Dyslexic Friendly Approaches**

As a school and a staff, we recognise the specific challenges that dyslexic pupils encounter when trying to access the curriculum. In order to ensure that such pupils have the best learning opportunities as possible, we will at all times endeavour to implement strategies that will facilitate this access. The strategies that we will implement will include some of the following:

- WALT is displayed and discussed at the beginning of lessons
- The classroom environment is airy, well lit, well organised and movement is minimised as much as possible
- There will be consistent links to previous lessons
- Sufficient work space will be created for all pupils
- Multi-sensory approaches will be utilised during lessons
- Collaborative working will be encouraged ( study buddies)
- Dyslexic pupils will be given clear and singular instruction
- Dyslexic pupils will not be required to multi -task
- All lessons will be logical in nature and regularly linked to previous learning points
- Visual aids, colour and preferential seating arrangements will be utilised
- Additional time will be available to dyslexic pupils for task completion
- Feedback will be positive and constructive
- Plenary sessions will be held at the conclusion of lessons

## **Reading**

By the end of Year 7 pupils should be able to read fluently, expressively and confidently from a wide range of reading material, read with understanding any material appropriate to their ability, derive joy and excitement from reading material suitable for their age group, and use the library effectively to develop study and research skills.

The Commercial Reading Scheme GINN READING 360 will be the 'Core' readers in Key Stage 1 and 2. However, this scheme will be supplemented with parallel reading books from other commercial schemes



as well as books selected from the class library and our well-stocked library. As well as using the Ginn Reading scheme, the children will have access to the Longman Reading scheme and from P3 to P7 each class will have SRA reading laboratories.

Children from P2 to P7 will also be enrolled in our Accelerated Reading Programme.

#### Primary 1

Shared reading will take place daily and guided reading will take place twice a week beginning in the second term. Duration of lesson 15 to 20 minutes. The majority of pupils will be reading Ginn Level 2.

#### Primary 2

Shared reading will take place daily. Guided reading will take place five times a fortnight. Duration of lessons 15 to 20 minutes. The majority of pupils will be reading Ginn Level 4

#### Primary 3

Shared reading will take place daily. Guided reading will take place three times per week. Duration of lessons 20 to 25 minutes. The majority of pupils will be reading Ginn Level 6

#### Primary 4

Shared reading will take place daily. Guided reading will take place three times per week. Duration of lessons 20 to 25 minutes. The majority of pupils will be reading Ginn Level 8

#### Primary 5

Shared reading will take place daily. Guided reading will take place three times per week. Duration of lessons 30 to 40 minutes. The majority of pupils will be reading Ginn Level 10

#### Primary 6

Shared reading will take place daily. Guided reading will take place three times per week. Duration of lessons 30 to 45 minutes. The majority of pupils will be reading Ginn Level 12

#### Primary 7

Shared reading will take place daily. Guided reading will take place three times per week. Duration of lessons 45 to 50 minutes. The majority of pupils will be reading novels.

#### **NB**

- SEN children will be heard daily in all primaries.
- Capping does not take place in any primary e.g. an able child in P5 may read beyond Ginn Level 10

Parents are encouraged to become involved with their child in learning to read through the "Paired Reading Scheme" being actively encouraged within this school. Parents are encouraged to assist their children with reading nightly. Parents are requested to sign their child's reading record book. Pupils will continue to use the commercial reading scheme named above but they will also be encouraged to move away from the basic reading scheme in Key Stage 2 and become more independent and selective in their choice of personal reading material. Teachers will monitor systematically the books pupils read to ensure that the child is selecting appropriate reading material, that the text is sufficiently challenging and that the child is successful. The Accelerated Reading Programme serves as an excellent tool in this monitoring.

#### **Establishment of Reading Groups**

In P1 teachers will assess how children have performed in pre-reading activities. At this early stage it is expected that there will be continual movement between groups throughout the year.



In P2 to P7 teachers will have discussions with the previous teacher and will also use the results of standardised scores. Movement from one group to another can take place at any time, depending on performance.

Class size/ability will determine group size. In P1 and P2 teachers will aim for 3/4 groups. In P3 to P7 teachers will aim for 3 groups.

### **Writing**

In primary 1 the children will have daily opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills leading on to developing knowledge of letter shape and orientation. The children will experience modelled writing daily and shared/ guided writing on a weekly basis. By the end of primary 1 the children should, after discussion, be able to write a three word sentence.

In primary 2 the children will experience modelled writing daily and shared/guided writing on a weekly basis. By the end of primary 2 the children should be able to write a simple sentence using basic punctuation.

In primary 3 children will continue to complete daily writing activities. By the end of P3 the aim is that the children will be independent writers.

Similarly in P4 the children will complete daily writing activities and by the end of key stage 1 the children should be able to produce written work which is logical ( beginning, middle, end ) with correct punctuation and an improved vocabulary e.g. adjectives.

In key stage 2 writing activities will continue to take place on a daily basis. Our aim is that the children become independent writers and that they experience a variety of writing opportunities. These various types of writing are set out for each year group ( cf. laminated sheets ).

By the end of key stage 2 pupils should be able to: -

Express their thoughts in writing fluently and in a sensible, logical, grammatical and imaginative way, use the conventions of writing effectively and correctly, present written work legibly and use the skills of writing across the curriculum.

Pupils will be encouraged to write freely, constructing sentences with the teacher's help, only where necessary. A variety of stimuli will be used to enable children to write creatively. Pupils will be given opportunities in Key Stage 1 and 2 to re-draft their stories when appropriate and all teachers will adopt the positive response approach to marking. Children will engage in the writing process to help them develop the ability to work towards an effective piece of writing.

Grammar, spelling and punctuation will be taught mostly within the context of an individual's writing and also by formal lessons.

The skills of writing will be applied across the curriculum in all subjects and in project work. The development of writing skills will be fostered through the use of ICT

### **Talking and Listening**

Children are given opportunities every day to engage in talking and listening activities, both with their peers and with adults. These opportunities come from a wide variety of sources, based both on the pupils' experiences and imaginings.

They include opportunities to :

plan and predict  
organise and sequence



negotiate and mediate  
question and challenge  
report on past and present experiences, real and imaginary  
make decisions  
develop logical thought  
criticise and evaluate  
narrate, recount and persuade  
argue, justify and defend a point of view  
take account of audience and register

The children's depth of experience of these activities will be reflected in their ability to engage in them as they move through the school.

By the end of key stage 1 children should be able to perform before their peers e.g. assemblies, Mass, feis.

By the end of key stage 2 children should be able to perform their own work in public e.g. public speaking, storytelling. They should also take an active part in our annual school show.

### **Phonics**

Presently the Linguistic Phonics approach published by the Belfast Education and Library Board is under review. At present the Linguistic Phonics approach operates in P1, P2 and P3.

### **Spelling**

**The Nelson Spelling Scheme is our main spelling programme and runs throughout the school.** In addition teachers have drawn up lists of spellings which they feel are appropriate in each year group. ( cf laminated sheets ).

Daily spelling tests will take place in each class.

When pupils leave Holy Family Primary School we expect that they will have been given opportunities to develop the ability to :

1. spell, from memory, words that they use frequently in their writing
2. apply strategies which enable them to spell unfamiliar words correctly
3. locate the correct spellings of words that they need to use in their writing through dictionaries and thesauri

As they progress through the school they should begin by spelling common and familiar words plausibly or recognisably, continue by spelling familiar, important and regularly - used words accurately, and eventually, spell more complex words correctly.

There are many and varied ways spelling can be 'caught' or taught and strategies will include :

'look - cover - write - check'  
recognising words within words  
recognising letter patterns e.g. - tch, tion, ssion  
recognising prefixes and suffixes  
syllabification



using the dictionary and thesaurus

### **Handwriting**

**The school uses the Nelson Handwriting Scheme throughout the school.**

In key stage 1 handwriting practice will take place daily. Lessons will last 10 to 20 minutes. At the end of key stage 1 the children should be using the linked script.

In key stage 2 handwriting practice will take place 3/4 times per week. Lessons will last 20 to 25 minutes.

The aim of the school is for each child to write in a swift legible hand at the end of key stage 2.

Stepping stones towards the production of each child's highest standard of handwriting will include:

- the pupil's control of the size, shape and orientation of letters
- the pupil's use of upper and lower case letters
- accurately formed and consistently sized letters

The expectation is that pupils will transfer this skill to all areas of the curriculum as they progress through the school. Good handwriting is to be expected in all written activities.

To celebrate and encourage development in handwriting there is an annual intra-mural competition for which certificates are awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, highly commended and most improved categories within each class (P4 - P7).

Pupils may also take part in external handwriting competitions. Regular recognition of good practice in handwriting will be given by the class teacher, co-ordinator, vice principals and principal in line with our positive marking approach.

### **Special Education Needs**

Pupils with learning difficulties in English will be identified through the use of various tests (eg standardised tests, spelling tests) as well as teacher observation.

A programme will be planned to suit the individual needs of these children and they will be withdrawn from the classroom to be supported by the Special Needs Teacher. Further data in respect to our special needs provision is available in our Special Educational Needs Policy.

### **Underachievers**

In each primary from P3 to P7 a group of underachievers will be identified. This group will receive extra tuition in small groups.

## **PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

### **Planning**

Planning for the development and support of language will take place at three levels:



- a. Whole school - requiring the development of a three year development plan and also including yearly development plans. This will involve the development of action plans and the setting of targets yearly.
- b. Year group - requiring a detailed plan every half term.
- c. Individual class - requiring individual class planning.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Principal, Vice-principals, the Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator will be responsible for the overall system of monitoring and evaluating of language and literacy development throughout the school. Evidence used to inform such evaluations will include:

- a. Children's work (class/homework books).
- b. Teachers' planners.
- c. Interviews with teachers, children and parents.
- d. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work.
- e. Levelling of children's work, twice per year.
- f. Standardised reading tests (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> term).
- g. Pupil profiles.
- h. Exchange of books by teachers.

### **Curriculum Feedback**

Staff will receive feedback on the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum at a year group and individual level at least once a year. In addition the targets associated with PRSD may have a literacy focus and feedback on the success of these targets will be provided.

### **Homework**

Homework will be used to support literacy development and will include the three strands of Language and Literacy - Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Homework is an important link between home and school and affords parents the opportunity to make a major contribution to their children's learning. A homework exercise will reflect and reinforce the day-to-day work carried out in the classroom. Homework tasks will include reading, spelling, comprehension and research activities.

### **Assessment/Record Keeping**

Assessment will take place from Nursery right through to P7. At P1 the British Picture Vocabulary Scale will be used particularly to identify children who are not progressing as they should. Standardised Tests will be carried out from P1 to P7 and will include the Progress in English Test, the Edinburgh Reading Test, Burt Reading Test and the Vernon Spelling Test. Children enrolled in the Accelerated Reading Programme ( P2 - P7 ) complete the Star Reading Test in September and June of





each school year. Results will be collated on class screens and passed on from year to year. The class screens will also be used by the SENCO to identify children requiring special help.

The recording of pupils literacy work will obviously occur across all curricular areas but mainly in either:

- Pupils' literacy book
- Pupil's creative writing book/folder

### **Marking**

Teachers will employ a variety of marking strategies depending on the purpose of the work. Generally marking will be of a positive nature, commending worthwhile work and advising children how to improve their work or presentation.

### **Time Allocation**

Language and Literacy permeate almost all parts of the curriculum naturally. Talking and listening, reading and writing are activities associated with nearly every curricular area. Accordingly, language and literacy work will make up the majority of the school day.

### **Resources**

Resources for Language and Literacy are organised at 3 levels:

#### 1. Centrally held resources

##### Library

- fiction and non-fiction texts
- audio-visual materials
- ICT materials
- KS1 Ginn/Longman Resources - Shared Area A
- KS2 Ginn/Longman Resources - Shared Area E
- Novels - Shared Area E
- Trolleys in shared areas B, D and F containing Accelerated Reading books.

#### 2. Year group resources

- text books
- audio-visual
- photocopiable resources
- dictionaries and thesauri

#### 3. Class resources

- text books



- library books (fiction/non-fiction/poetry)
- ICT resources

4. Most recently purchased resources (Focus on Literacy) have been distributed to each year group. Additional supporting texts are in shared Area E. SRA reading material are now in P3 - P7 classes.
5. Children from P2 to P7 have been enrolled in our Accelerated Reading Programme.

### **Co-ordination**

Responsibility for co-ordinating Language and Literacy lies with the Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator. This is done through a Language and Literature Cluster Group, meetings between the co-ordinators and various year groups/key stages, and meetings between the co-ordinators and individual teachers.

### **Review**

Responsibility for review of this policy rests with the Language and Literacy Co-ordinators. The next formal review will be held in February 2012.