



Saint Norbert's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

Literacy Policy *(2021)*

LITERACY POLICY

“To Live, Love and Learn in the Footprints of Jesus.”

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

As a Rights Respecting School, our English and Literacy curriculum aims to ensure, in particular, that:

- children enjoy the right to be educated
- children have the right to be treated fairly
- children have the right to be heard

Aims

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others, and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across the 6 years of primary education form part of the National Curriculum. These are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

Early Years Communication and Language

We recognise children's communication and language skills are extremely important, and are the foundations for reading and writing. Children are given the opportunity to develop their communication skills through all parts of the curriculum. They are given opportunities to engage in child-initiated play in an environment rich in language, print and possibilities for communication. Children will be taught to listen attentively in a range of situations. Communication and language skills are developed using a range of methods, such as nursery rhymes, songs, role play and encouraging the children to discuss their ideas and engage in conversations. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a wide range of situations, to listen carefully, respond to each other appropriately and extend their range of vocabulary through child initiated, purposeful play.

Before children enter our setting, we work with parents, and other professionals as necessary to ensure that children have the correct support in speaking and listening. At entry, children are assessed against the Early Years Outcomes which are separated into age bands. Following this, they are assessed once each term. These assessments highlight the children who come into the setting developmentally below in any area, and allows us to monitor their progress and plan interventions where necessary. The children are given their 'next steps' based on these assessments. For example, if a child has come into the setting below age-related expectations in speech, we will set them a target based on that and work through the Speech and Language Toolkit with them. At the end of Reception, children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals using all information gathered in their EYFS profile throughout their time at school

In addition to the vital opportunities offered in the play provision, all Early Years children take part in a whole class Communication and Language activity each week.

Spoken language- years 1 to 6

Pupils should be taught to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

Our school actively enhances spoken language development through the participation of public speaking, performances, child and class-led liturgies, speech and drama festivals, bible reading in church, PSHE, School Council, Leading Lights, child-led conferences, exhibitions, presentations and all cross-curricular links.

Phonics

Read Write Inc. is the primary resource employed by the school in the Early Years and Key Stage One to provide lively and vigorous teaching of synthetic phonics.

As children enter the Early Years, their abilities and prior knowledge of letters and sounds are assessed as their auditory and sound discrimination skills are practised. In Nursery, the children are assessed using the 'Phonics Wheel' and 'Initial Sounds Sheet'; this is repeated termly until the children can be assessed using the Read Write Inc. Phonics Assessment. The Letters and Sounds programme is used for teaching the auditory and sound discrimination skills in Nursery to ensure children have a good grounding to build upon prior to the Read Write Inc. programme.

Children in Nursery are taught early phonic skills using the Letters and Sounds programme. These lessons are delivered for 15 minutes daily, with children grouped when necessary according to ability and stage in their development. This programme concentrates on activities to promote speaking and listening skills, phonological awareness and oral blending. Using Letters and Sounds, children are taught the auditory and sound discrimination skills to ensure they have a good grounding to build upon prior to starting the Read Write Inc. programme.

These skills are embedded within daily RWI lessons. By focussing on the teaching of reading in the Early Years and KS1, using a synthetic phonics scheme, children learn to read unfamiliar printed words by blending (decoding) and speedily recognise familiar printed words by sight. We want all children to enjoy and experience early success in learning to read. We are committed to developing children's love of reading and to help them to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know.

Reading

The programmes of study for reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 consist of 2 dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher and other adults, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world they live in, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.

It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.

Reading in Early Years

All children in Early Years take part in a shared story time daily as a class with a member of staff which provides children with the opportunity to develop their speaking, listening and comprehension skills through a range of story books.

Reception children take part in guided reading sessions once a week as part of a carousel of fine motor and comprehension-based activities. The aim of these sessions is to provide children with the opportunity to apply their phonic skills, and continue to develop their comprehension. For these sessions, children are split into smaller groups according to reading ability. These sessions are taught using 'Bug Club' e-books and other resources.

In Nursery, children take a story book home each week to share with an adult to encourage the sharing of books and a good routine at home. In the Early Years, children are heard to read individually by the Class Teacher (or another member of staff) for a minimum of twice a week. Children not yet working at the expected standard are heard to read daily. Once a week, children take part in a small group guided reading session with the teacher using 'Bug Club' e books and resources. A record of reading is kept in the child's individual beige reading record.

In Reception and Key Stage 1, to support the Read Write Inc. approach of using a synthetic phonics base for learning to read, the school has invested in the RWI Book Bag Books so that each child is reading a book directly matched to their RWI assessment. We have also incorporated the use of 'Floppy Phonics' and 'Songbirds' books into the decodable 'Oxford Reading Tree' books as an additional home reading book. These books have a comprehensive range including fiction, poetry, non-fiction and plays. These books are of graded ability and are matched to the child's individual reading levels. They have a cumulative vocabulary, sensible grammatical structure and a lively and interesting content.

Children are encouraged to develop and apply their reading and writing skills in the classroom environment, by writing for purpose throughout the play provision. Children are provided with a range of opportunities through the outdoor and indoor play provision to inspire and encourage high quality, purposeful writing in a range of contexts.

Both reading and writing skills are also developed through a range of subjects using cross-curricular learning. Children are encouraged to demonstrate their independent writing skills through RE, religious stories and scripture.

In Reception, homework is used to reinforce literacy skills taught in school.

Reading in Key Stage 1

At Key Stage 1 the emphasis is on developing pupils' interest and pleasure as they learn to read independently and with confidence. They focus on words and sentences and how they are put together to form texts. They bring meaning to the texts they read and say what they like or dislike about them.

All children in Key Stage 1 take part in daily shared story time, small group reading and partner reading. The aim of these sessions is to foster a love of reading and to enable pupils to build speed, reading stamina and to practice learnt strategies. We believe that reading to children regularly demonstrates positive role models, models fluency and exposes children to high quality texts. The children have access to a wide range of books immersed within the learning environment. Displays are accessible by

Enlarged texts, Bug Club or RWI books selected from the appropriate range of texts – fiction and non-fiction – are used for whole class reading/guided reading at Key Stage One. A VIPERS approach to the teaching of reading is used. Teaching is planned with a specific focus on Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Summary. The teacher models VIPERS strategies as well as the identification of sentence structure and the function of punctuation marks and gives pupils opportunities to practise phonic skills and word recognition in context. Reading skills are taught and modelled across the wider curriculum, especially through the reading and comprehension of scripture during RE.

Reading in Key Stage 2

Following assessment, the teaching of phonics continues according to need and ability. In Key Stage Two, children work in reading groups completing a carousel of activities each week. These activities include guided-reading of challenging texts appropriate to the children's age and stage. We use 'Bug Club' as the main source of our guided reading materials. Children apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes, which is developed through further spelling activities each week. We use 'Nelson Spelling' resources to facilitate this work.

Throughout EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, home-school link Reading Records are kept to promote a partnership between parents and staff. These are differentiated throughout the Key Stages, allowing opportunities for parents and staff to comment. Parents are asked to hear children read daily at home. Detailed individual school reading records are also kept to monitor the progress of skills, levels and types of reading material covered. We use a wide range of incentives such as reading merits, challenges, themed days, visits and visitors to promote a love of literature.

Comprehension

The weekly reading group activities include comprehension work based on texts which cover a wide range of diverse genres and styles. Children are taught comprehension either as part of a guided group or on an individual basis. Texts are often explored together before children complete comprehension work individually. Every week, children are taught retrieval skills; to understand vocabulary and both inference and deduction. Depending on assessment outcomes, children further develop these skills by working with additional texts. We use 'Nelson' reading resources to support our delivery of the National Curriculum programmes of study. These resources provide systematic opportunities to revisit key skills in each new lesson. Comprehension work takes place across the wider curriculum; this is a prominent feature of our RE work, for example.

Writing

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these 2 dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary

The two statutory appendices – on spelling and on vocabulary, grammar and punctuation – give an overview of the specific features that should be included in teaching the programmes of study.

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. References to developing pupils' vocabulary are also included in the appendices.

Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. A non-statutory glossary is provided for teachers. Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.

Early Years Writing

In Foundation Stage, emphasis is placed upon early mark-making and the delivery of a comprehensive phonics scheme: 'Read Write Inc'. This prepares children for emergent writing, where their skills are encouraged to grow and develop in creative ways.

Literacy lessons are taught regularly throughout the week either as stand-alone lessons or through cross curricular learning. These lessons focus on teaching children to apply phonic skills taught in 'Letters and Sounds' and 'Read Write Inc' in a range of contexts and genres of writing. Literacy topics are closely linked to children's own interests and the class topic to ensure lessons are engaging and fun for all children.

Once a term, children are taught a text using a 'Talk for Writing' approach to provide them with high quality scaffolding which develops spoken language and introduces a range of genre and features of narrative. Literacy inputs are delivered using a whole class teaching approach which is then followed up with children completing activities with the class teacher, as an individual or a small group.

All children in Early Years take part in 'Dough Disco' once a week which includes a series of hand and finger exercises to develop both gross motor and fine motor dexterity, hand eye coordination and self-esteem.

The Big Write also offers the opportunity for children to write independently on a regular basis, working towards their individual writing targets. Superstar Writers are identified and rewarded.

Key Stage 2 Writing Transcription

Pupils are taught to use adapted letter formation from the Early Years; we continue to teach cursive script throughout KS2. Spelling is taught weekly and on a two-year programme; children are taught the spelling rules and patterns contained in English Appendix 1 using the 'Nelson spelling' textbook scheme and via a carousel of activities to ensure full coverage for each of our mixed year groups.

Composition

Writing composition is cross-curricular and children write at length in a range of subjects and for a range of purposes and audiences. Extended writing is also a prominent feature of the RE curriculum, particularly. Whole-class novels provide further stimuli for writing and Assessment for Learning is used to identify areas to develop on both a whole-class and individual basis. A range of writing tasks, developed locally with our 'Isle Collaborative Trust', is used to facilitate writing across a range of genres and subsequent moderation of outcomes.

Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Children are taught the statutory concepts in English Appendix 2. 'Word' level concepts are taught predominantly through the morning Reading activity sessions. Discreet English lessons focus on 'Sentence' and 'Punctuation' concepts, while reading comprehension work develops 'Text' level concepts. Homework is used to reinforce spelling, punctuation and grammar concepts taught in school.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, we continue to use a range of starting points to scaffold independent and collaborative writing. Children have opportunities to explore works by established authors, ensuring that our mainly White British School has a range of diverse, inspirational authors and stimuli before writing themselves. They evaluate their own and others' work before editing. There is significant emphasis on the requirements of the Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar elements of the curriculum, which are routinely assessed.

The 'Big Write' offers the opportunity for children to write independently on a regular basis, working towards their individual writing targets. Following the 'Big Write', 'Superstar' Writers (children who have made best progress since the last writing assessment) are identified and rewarded.

Assessment

Work is assessed using the 'Feedback and Marking Policy', together with 'O-Track' or 'Early Learning Goals', to ensure that children have appropriate focused targets.

Early Years

At the beginning of their time in our Foundation Unit, all children complete a series of assessments to form a baseline in their third week. These assessments are:

- Phonics Wheel
- Initial sounds
- Pencil Control
- Cutting Skills
- Name Writing

These assessments are then repeated termly throughout Reception to demonstrate progression and next steps. Once children progress to the 'Read Write Inc'. programme, they are assessed using the RWI assessment tools rather than the phonics wheel and initial sounds.

Once a term, children take part in a 'Big Write' which is an independent writing session. This writing is then assessed using the 'Big Write Criteria' and filed in the child's individual Big Write folder.

Summative assessment in the Early Years is informed using incidental 'Tapestry' observations, which is an online learning journey. These assessments are made through observation of children in the play provision and are linked to 'Development Matters' outcomes. These observations are then used alongside practitioner knowledge to form formative assessments each half term. These formative assessments are then recorded on 'O-Track'.

Assessments are routinely moderated through the Local Authority cluster groups and between staff in the Foundation Unit. 'Big Write' folders and Literacy books are regularly moderated as a whole staff.

Reading Assessment

- New Group Reading Test (NGRT) From reading age of 5 years.
- Guided Reading Records with groupings and book levels
- Individual Reading Records
- Testbase
- National Curriculum Word Lists
- Phonic Screening Y1/Y2
- SATS Y2 and Y6

Writing, Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary

- Big Write marking scores
- Big Write 'portfolios'
- Y5/6 Teacher Assessment Framework
- Year 2 Teacher Assessment Framework
- Spar Spelling Tests
- National Curriculum Word Lists
- Year group Common Exception Word Lists
- Testbase - Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling
- Teacher Assessment Framework.
- Read Write Inc. phonics
- SATS Y2 and Y6

Writing Assessment Reception - Y4

During the year, children produce an assessed piece in writing which is levelled and kept in their 'portfolio'. These assessments take place in October, December, March and June. The 'Big Write' portfolios demonstrate progression from Reception to Y4. We use the 'Big Write Criterion Scale' up to Y4.

Following the 'Big Write Criteria', new targets are provided. Children know and understand their targets; these are set regularly and updated. Target cards are shared with parents at parental consultation meetings, thus facilitating an effective home-school link.

Writing Assessment Y5-6

Y5 and Y6 have planned assessed 'Big Writes' and 'Superstar Writer' awards like the other classes (at least two per term.) The 'Big Writes' are independently written and recorded in 'Longer Writing Books'. Assessment for both Y5 and Y6 is levelled against the latest 'Teacher Assessment Framework for Writing.' A copy of the Framework is highlighted to show where evidence has been presented in that particular piece of work. The Teacher Assessment Framework for writing is displayed in the front of the books and dated to show when the collection demonstrates the required evidence. For year 5, this will be predominately 'Working Towards the Expected Standard' for the Year 6 it will be 'Working at the Expected Standard' and possibly 'Working at Greater Depth within the Standard' for some. This is a summative record, completed termly for example. Each piece of writing is marked using two stars and a wish. The wish will be a target for children to work on in their next piece.

Work is assessed within school and moderated between staff; moderated from time to time with the Isle Collaborative Trust; our Year 5/6 teacher is a trained writing moderator.

Inclusion

We provide appropriately-differentiated work and challenge for children so that all make progress according to their individual abilities. We identify pupils who are under-achieving through regular assessments, pupil progress meetings and a range of observations to take steps to improve their progress and attainment. Intervention programmes are tailored to meet individual children's needs.

Equal opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

Resources

All teachers provide a language-rich environment in classrooms with a variety of diverse, stimulating, organised and well-maintained resources:

- A reading scheme that is varied, appealing, cared for and organised.
- English comprehension and spelling books
- E-books (Bug Club)
- DB Primary- email, blogs, message forum, homework uploading/editing work, displaying work
- Read Write Inc. Book Bag Books
- Read Write Inc. Get Writing
- School library – fiction and non-fiction, poetry, reference
- Cross curricular reading materials
- Individual bible for each child
- A range of high-quality books on class shelves
- SEND intervention programmes
- Dictionaries
- Thesauruses
- Media links – TV programs, newspapers, magazines, internet access
- Microphones for speaking, listening and editing
- Cameras with videoing facilities
- iPads
- Computing links – SMART board, word processing (computers in class and netbooks), internet access
- Early Years – story bags for 'homework'
- Visits and visitors

Homework

We encourage parents/carers to ensure that children's homework is completed to further enhance our partnership and for children to achieve their literacy goals.

In Early Years, we encourage parents to support children's learning at home. Workshops, 'Stay and Play' resources, simple homework activities related to Literacy work, high frequency words reading/sharing books are all activities to promote home-school links.

In KS1 and KS2, we encourage daily reading, a written focus linked to current class work, grammar punctuation and spelling.

Role of Subject Leader

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- monitoring and evaluating Literacy
- pupil progress
- ensuring 'Big Write' takes place
- ensuring moderation takes place
- ensuring the policy is being adhered to
- monitoring the quality of the Learning Environment
- taking the lead in policy development
- supporting the Headteacher in auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- supporting the Headteacher in purchasing and organising resources
- keeping up to date with current Literacy developments
- updating the website to show policy changes

The role is jointly-led by Sadie Tonge (Writing) and Tiffanie Belton (Reading). Both Leaders have oversight of Speaking and Listening.

The Governing Body

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of English provision and to our Literacy Governors, Mrs Freda Robinson and Helen Fowler. Mrs Margaret Robinson is Link Governor for Early Years. This policy will be reviewed annually or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

Role of the Headteacher

- to ensure the policy is being adhered to and that good teaching practice is taking place throughout the school
- to ensure that the whole school has taken the policy on board
- to provide the policy to any supply/temporary/new member of staff
- auditing and supporting colleagues' CPD
- the deployment and provision of support staff
- provision of Literacy intervention programmes in consultation with the Literacy/SEND Leader
- to be available for discussion
- to provide the necessary funds for the budget to cover replacement of resources

Policy reviewed: LGB March 2021