



Literacy Policy

2022-23

Ballysillan Literacy Policy

# The Role of Literacy in Ballysillan Primary School

The staff of Ballysillan Primary School are committed to meeting the requirements of the programme of study in literacy as set out in the N.I. Curriculum. 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.

In Ballysillan, we aim to ensure that every child within our care has the opportunity to succeeded and fulfil their potential. The stated vision of the Department of Education for N Ireland (DENI) is *‘To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her potential at each stage of his or her development.’* (DENI 2010). This has been enunciated in the overall aim of the N Ireland Curriculum (DE 2008), which says, *‘The N Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.’*

# Overall Aims

* Children will recognise themselves as active learners in literacy.
* Children will have the ability to read, understand and engage with various types of text for enjoyment and learning.
* Children will experience a wide range of texts in shared and guided reading contexts including poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction
* Children will develop their interest in reading through exposure to a range of reading experiences
* To promote continuity and coherence across the school.
* Children will use a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, and contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes
* Children will understand the sound and spelling system and apply a range of strategies to enable them to read and to spell words correctly.
* Children will know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres and understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot
* Plan, draft, and revise and edit their own writing
* Children will have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand their reading and writing
* Children will know that talk is central to learning and, through active listening acquire, explore, develop and express knowledge and understanding
* Children will be able to access information from a range of sources and record information in a variety of ways.

# How this will be achieved?

These aims will primarily be addressed by focusing on the three attainment targets in literacy as set out in the N.I. Curriculum:

A.T.1 - Talking and listening

A.T.2 - Reading

A.T.3 - Writing

In addressing the three attainment targets, we recognise that literacy is holistic and that each attainment target has equal weighting.

## A.T.1: Talking and Listening

Through a wide range of activities and use of various stimuli, including group/ class discussions, circle time, class assemblies, role play/ drama and oral presentation, all our children will be encouraged to develop the ability to express and communicate meaning in 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**

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. 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. Listening is modelled, as is the appropriate use of non-verbal communication, respecting the views of others. 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.

## A.T.2: Reading

In Ballysillan 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
* 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 most 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 also use these guided reading sessions to implement a “little and often” learning approach whereby children can be provided with an activity to develop a particular literacy skill.

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.

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 regularly and respond to their child’s reading through reading homework.

At Ballysillan, 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, e.g. reading books which are attractive to males, the effective use of story sacks. 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 1-2 times per week and CAs hear children read where possible. Guided reading is heard by the teacher and classroom assistant. CAs will provide feedback to the teacher so as they have an awareness of progression and building up of skills in our pupils. These guided reading sessions are timetabled. All children engage in reading or reading based activities with an adult at least 3-4 times per week although this may be more frequent depending on need. Through the government initiative “Getting Ready to Learn” our parents, within the early years, are provided with reading workshops which outline the importance of reading, the need for frequent reading sessions and ideas to develop a love and passion for reading.

**Classroom Management and Resources**

At Ballysillan 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.

**Primary 1 – 3**

Literacy links

Song Birds

Oxford Reading Tree

Ginn

Engage literacy

Reading Champions

**Primary 4 – 7**

Ginn

Novels

Oxford Reading Tree

Oxford – Tree Tops

Oxford – All Stars

DK Find Out!

A Shakespeare Story

**A.T.3: 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 with evidence of the processes monitored and collected by the coordinator. 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:

1. Planning

2. Drafting and Writing

3. Evaluating and Editing

4. Proof-Reading

5. Reading Aloud and Sharing

During these processes, children will have opportunities to develop key writing skills, familiarise themselves with a particular genre and develop creative ideas. 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. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils will be presenting level 1 or 2 pieces of writing. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils will be presenting level 3 or 4 pieces of writing. 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.

In Ballysillan Primary, all teachers will use our whole school writing scheme which focuses upon the development of levelled writing skills (1-5).

**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. 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. In Ballysillan Primary School, we use the Nelson Handwriting scheme. We are working hard to support the development of our children’s handwriting and we aim to progress our KS2 children onto cursive handwriting, where appropriate.

**Spelling and Linguistic Phonics**

**Also see Phonics Policy**

**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 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 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.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of Literacy with Ballysillan Primary School**

All teachers are responsible for planning the delivery of literacy, the monitoring and evaluation of literacy within the curriculum for all the children in their class. The Literacy coordinator will complete “Book Looks” once a year and the feedback will be provided to the key stage teachers as a group. The collegiate “Book Looks”, lead by the literacy coordinator, will take place twice a year. The literacy coordinator will also observe one 30min lesson per year group. The feedback for this observation will be on a one to one basis.

**Assessment for Learning**

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 of 2 stars and a wish and constructive advice linked with the shared success criteria.

Teachers will use their professional judgement to assess pupil’s learning and will complement these judgements by using the following:

* End of term class testing
* PTE (Progress through English)
* Other standardised tests e.g. WRAPS
* Pupil Writing Portfolios (3 pieces of ‘cold writing’ per child per year).
* End of year testing to transition children into the next class.

These are used in turn to inform the teachers planning for literacy and to ensure that individual strengths and weaknesses are being catered for. The 3 pieces of writing will be documented within the children’s books to demonstrate progression throughout the year. These pieces of writing will also be “cold” to provide an accurate picture of the child’s ability.

Records will be kept in the format of;

* Annual Reports
* Running records
* Spelling tests
* Standardised test scores
* Teacher’s observations

**The role of the Special Needs Co-ordinator (S.E.N.C.O.)**

* To train staff in the use of The Code of Practice.
* Assess children with specific problems in literacy through a range of diagnostic tests.
* To provide timetabled withdrawal support for pupils with specific needs.
* To support class teachers with advice and support regarding children with S.E.N.s.
* To advise and liaise with class teachers in ensuring the children with S.E.N.s are being catered for.
* To attend relevant Inset Courses and disseminate good practice to staff.
* To keep parents of children with S.E.N.s informed and up to date with the progress of their child.

**Planning Literacy in Ballysillan Primary School**

In Ballysillan Primary School, 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 six weekly planners will outline sentence/grammar work and writing. Teachers will then create weekly literacy planners (rota, writing, phonics, guided reading). Within these planners, 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.

**Review**

The Literacy Policy will be continuously reviewed by the literacy coordinator.

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