

Kilkeel Primary School



Language & Literacy Policy

2017

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Language and Literacy Policy Statement

In Kilkeel Primary School we believe that:

Language and literacy should focus on developing each child's ability to understand and use language as an integral part of learning in all areas in order to interact effectively in the world around them. They should be encouraged to express themselves creatively and to communicate confidently, using the four modes of language (talking and listening, reading and writing) and a variety of skills and media.

To ensure effective literacy development it is vital to know exactly what each child can do so that teachers may plan developmentally appropriate experiences which match each learner's needs. This demands an effective cycle of observation, assessment, planning and teaching. The process should focus not only on what children can do, know or understand, but also on attitudes to literacy and dispositions to learn.

On-going formative assessment is necessary to ensure that appropriate literacy experiences are provided. As teachers observe and assess children's progress they should identify specific learning and enable teachers and children to review progress and plan for future learning.

Children's language and literacy experiences should take place within a rich and stimulating environment which must at all times be challenging, enjoyable and safe. A caring environment in which children feel secure and valued will allow them to express their thoughts, feelings and understanding. Children should have regular opportunities as a whole class, in small groups or individually, to engage in modelled, shared and guided language experiences. The classroom environment should promote language as a tool for learning across the curriculum.

Language and literacy are fundamental prerequisites for thinking, learning and interacting in personal, social and work contexts throughout life.

Literacy is therefore the key to learning as well as a key to enjoyment and personal growth.

We therefore believe that it is essential that language development is at the heart of our curriculum.

AIMS

In K.P.S. it is our intention: -

- To develop children's confidence as users of language.
- To enable them to make choices about the kinds of texts they enjoy.
- To develop children's key skills in all areas of language across the curriculum.
- To link language with thinking processes and so enable the strengthening of both in children.
- To develop children's knowledge of and familiarity with a wide range of literature, both fiction and non-fiction.
- To teach all children, both boys and girls, to read fluently and with understanding, using reading strategies which are appropriate to the material and to the writing purpose.
- To carefully assess and monitor progress in reading for both boys and girls.
- To actively promote boys to become enthusiastic, fluent and effective readers.
- To develop children's ability to use information texts to locate, extract and use relevant information.
- To develop writing skills for a range of purposes and audiences, using spelling, punctuation and syntax appropriately and with confidence.
- To promote a wide use of ICT as a medium for the further development of language, both in English and across the curriculum.
- To enable children to communicate clearly and with assurance in appropriate forms of speech. They should be able to talk and listen in a variety of groupings and in both formal and informal contexts.

ENVIRONMENT

Organisation

We aim to provide classrooms for our children which are bright, stimulating and happy places. There should be as much print as possible displayed in the classroom including, labels, posters to support learning, classroom rules, instructions and wall displays - the children should feel safe and secure and able to function independently.

Children will be taught by various methods; whole class, mixed ability groups and on a paired and individual basis when appropriate. They will be encouraged to speak as well as to read and write, to find out information for themselves, show initiative, work together in teams, solve problems, be creative, enthusiastic and think about their learning. This includes all aspects of Assessment for Learning.

Our aim is always to promote language and literacy skills as enjoyable. We encourage the children to make good use of our own school library and to visit the one in Kilkeel. Children are given opportunities to do drama, take part in assemblies, concerts and to join the school choir.

We provide a wide range of texts and encourage the children to learn to write for different purposes.

Foundation Stage (P1+P2)

In the early school years' children's language is central to their ability to communicate in relationships and learning, to understand ideas and to order and explore and refine their thoughts. In K.P.S. we wish to build on the experiences and understanding of language brought from the home, pre-school and local community. This is to be valued and encouraged so that children can respond confidently to adults and other children and express their own needs, thoughts and feelings. We aim to foster a love and enthusiasm for stories, books and rhymes, to develop a curiosity about words, become familiar with the name, sound and shape of letters and the purpose of communicating through writing. Children's listening and communication skills will be fostered as they talk with adults and as they play and work with other children. They participate in modelled/ shared and guided reading and writing activities and take part in circle time.

ROLE OF THE LITERACY CO-ORDINATORS

In K.P.S. the Literacy Co-ordinators should: -

- Provide leadership and direction in all areas of literacy;
- Ensure that language teaching is managed and organised to meet school aims and objectives;
- Encourage high standards of teaching and learning, including the promotion of language and thinking across the curriculum;
- Play a major role in school policy development in relation to language and learning as members of the SLT.
- Support the staff in seeing that the needs and aspirations of pupils are met and that standards of achievement are raised;
- Support, guide and motivate colleagues and other adults; this may require the provision or organisation of in-service training for staff;
- Help to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning;
- Help to set priorities and targets in order to improve provision in consultation with SMT;
- Contribute to the monitoring process;
- Identify needs in the area of language in relation to the needs of the school in co-operation with the whole staff;
- Keep up-to-date with recent curriculum innovations, relevant research and advise colleagues appropriately;
- Ensure the continuing of personal professional development.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ISSUES

A. Research tell us that children learn best:

- When learning is connected.
- When they are active and involved.
- When learning is enjoyable.

- When they can make choices and decisions.
- When they can learn in different ways - by listening, seeing and doing.
- When they can demonstrate their learning in different ways.

B. Children's Skills need to be developed so that they can:

- Learn for themselves.
- Learn to work together.
- Find out about themselves.
- Investigate and solve problems.
- Think about their learning.

These are personal, interpersonal and thinking skills which need to be highlighted across every curricular area.

Bearing in mind that A and B should drive our teaching in the classroom and that language permeates all learning.....

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY WILL BE DEVELOPED THROUGH THE CONTEXTS OF: -

English by talking and listening, and by modelled/shared and guided reading activities using a wide variety of genres and texts.

Creative, Expressive and Physical Development

by talking and listening, reading and writing about their own work and the work of others in Art and Design, Music and P.E. and by using role-play, drama and ICT to further enhance their work.

Mathematics and Numeracy

by using Mathematical language to express ideas and explain their thinking e.g. By reading and interpreting numerical data in factual reports and newspapers. To be able to explain to their teacher and peers how they solved a particular problem/process mathematically.

Personal Development for Mutual Understanding

by talking and listening, circle time, reading and writing and using ICT in exploring Personal Development Issues - (aspects of children's emotional, health and safety and community understanding. Also includes Religious Education).

The World Around Us

By talking and listening, reading and writing about aspects of science and technology, history and geography and using role play, drama and ICT.

This cross-curricular approach will give opportunities for children to connect their learning through-

- A topic based approach.
- Group discussions/collaborative activities.
- Provision of a more extensive range of texts.

- Exposure to different reading strategies appropriate to texts and purposes.
- Using writing frames for non-literacy writing tasks.
- Working independently on drafting, proof-reading, editing.
- Development of research/study skills, when children choose which texts or resources to consult.
- Practice in the surface skills of spelling, punctuation, grammar and general presentation of work.
- The further development of thinking through language.
- The inclusion of Assessment for Learning in class including being involved in planning and evaluating their own work.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In P1 we use the WELLCOMM Programme as part of our baseline assessment, to identify language difficulties. A programme is then provided to address these issues. P1 teachers/SENCO meet with the nursery school principal in June so they are aware of those with any special needs.

As a means of early intervention P2 classroom assistants have been trained in Reading Partnership and are fully involved in the teaching of reading and the use of running records to assess progress in P2.

Three I.E.P.s and their outcomes are drawn up each year, one per term. Pupils are identified as needing an I.E.P. through CAT/PTE scores as well as teacher observation. These pupils are then added to the S.E.N. register. Literacy co-ordinators and the SENCO liaise with each other to ensure all children are identified. This information is passed to each teacher as the child progresses through the school.

PTE/CAT scores are also used to identify children who will need further intervention from external agencies - The Literacy Service providing peripatetic support for the children who meet the criteria, Educational Psychology Service and Speech Therapy Service can also be contacted.

A language support teacher provides extra support for readers from P3-P5 who are not making progress at the expected rate. 2-3 short sessions per week are given for 8 weeks/1 term. Running records are used to assess progress.

The SENCO and two other assistants who have been trained in Reading Partnership run an 8-10 week reading programme with children from P4. Children are selected through use of data and teacher observation. All children participate in a Paired Reading Time in P4.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout our provision of language and literacy the teaching staff will be aware of the need to provide equal access across the curriculum. We recognise that we must be aware of any or all of the following factors -

- physical disability
- gender

- underachievement in boys
- culture
- socio-economic background

This should influence our overall approach to classroom teaching and the provision of resources.

Newcomers - Pupils who are learning English as an additional language

Pupils for whom English is an additional language have diverse needs in terms of support necessary in English language learning.

Careful monitoring of each pupil's progress in the acquisition of English language skills and of subject knowledge and understanding will be necessary to confirm that no learning difficulties are present. After being in our school for at least 18 months' newcomer children can be placed on an IEP.

Progress is recorded on the European Framework sheet.

The ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the National Curriculum may be ahead of their communication skills in English. Teachers should plan learning opportunities to help pupils develop their English and should aim to provide the support pupils need to take part in all subject areas.

Teachers should take specific action to help pupils who are learning English as an additional language by:

- (a) developing their spoken and written English
- (b) ensuring access to the curriculum and to assessment

PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In K.P.S. we believe that it is essential that parents are informed and involved in children's language development, both at home and in school. We welcome their support.

Each child's progress is reported to parents in an annual written report.

Parents are also involved in the following ways: -

- parent interviews (on an individual basis).
- parents are informed about whole school issues and provided with an outline of the work to be covered and how they can support their child. Language plays an important role here.
- Invited speakers providing guidance on language and literacy when available and appropriate.
- Homework - to reinforce language/literacy.
- Parents with special areas of expertise, may be invited to share their experience and to participate in interviews with children e.g. local business people, doctors, pharmacists, opticians, firefighters and members of the emergency services etc. This will help to develop understanding of the roles

people play in the local community and to deepen knowledge and language in chosen topics.

- Displays of work and coverage in local press.
- Induction meetings for new P1 parents.
- Paired reading programmes.
- Annual Book Fair in school.
- Monthly information newsletter from the principal.
- Parents' attendance at annual Christmas service, school concerts and PTA events.
- Information is given on our Website and Social Media.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

In K.P.S. teachers evaluate the work of pupils on a day-to-day basis in order to: -

- Identify children needing extra help and guidance.
- Identify more able children.
- Diagnose specific special needs.
- Distinguish between what has been taught and what has been learnt.
- To help children understand what they have achieved and to plan the next steps.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies.
- Record pupils attainment and progress during a key stage.
- Report to parents (parent interviews and annual report).
- Monitor standards.
- Predict future needs in terms of resources, etc.

FORMAL ASSESSMENT

- Assessment must be diagnostic, formative and summative.
- It must direct future learning targets and planning.

Children's achievements are assessed by: -

- P1 Baseline Assessment - WellComm (GL Assessment).
- P2 Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST).
- P3-P7 PTE testing.
- P4 CAT testing (Please see KPS Assessment Policy).
- Running Records throughout the school.

P3-P7 carry out PTE assessment as a formative assessment of their ability in literacy at the end of a school year. This data is used by the class teacher to identify areas for development and by the next class teacher as a baseline for their teaching in the next year and to ensure a smooth transition. Data from PTE assessments will be monitored and evaluated by the SMT and SLT and used as guidance to plan future targets in the School Development Plan.

Children's' PTE results are compared with their CAT scores and where there is a significant discrepancy in performance, much lower than expected (MLE), appropriate targets will be set by the class teacher to address the problem. On the basis of PTE and CAT scores, the literacy co-ordinator will liaise with the SENCO to identify children with PTE results below 85 and to ensure that these children have Individual Education Plans set with appropriate targets.

Children in each year group will also complete appropriate assessment in order to level and moderate their progress in literacy.

Teachers are encouraged to use running records to assess reading progress and to ensure that each child reads at an instructional level. Benchmark assessments in reading (based on Reading Recovery techniques), have proved to be a very useful tool to accurately assess reading progress and to choose appropriately levelled and book banded reading materials.

PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The planning of future learning targets must always depend on the teacher monitoring and evaluating what has already been taught. What has been learnt so far and what should the next steps be?

Planning in language and literacy in K.P.S. is based on the Language Framework previously provided by the EA.

The overall structure of our K.P.S. literacy framework is based on a model of language which describes Text, Sentence and Word Level knowledge, Understanding and Skills.

Text level: Comprehension and Composition:

Text level is concerned with the type, organisation and structure of texts. In both reading and writing, the children's attention is drawn to what the text is about and how to take account of purpose and audience when constructing text. Genre and form of text are discussed within fiction and non-fiction.

Sentence level: Grammar and Punctuation:

Sentence level is concerned with the sense and structure of texts. Attention is focused on how language works, how meaning is achieved and how language is described.

Word Level: Phonics, spelling and vocabulary:

The work here is concerned with developing children's knowledge of the sounds of spoken language, phonological awareness, phonics, patterns of spelling, word recognition and vocabulary extension.

The main features are:

- A variety of fiction and non-fiction genres for each term.

- Progression in grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary.
- Learning intentions based on knowledge and understanding.
- A linguistic phonics approach to promote reading/writing and spelling skills.

The teaching strategies include a balance between modelled, shared, guided and independent work, while learning strategies should take account of different learning styles; children should be encouraged to use a variety of learning strategies. These approaches form part of a balanced literacy programme where opportunities across the curriculum allow for extension and further development. A close link is made between language and thinking skills.

The K.P.S. Literacy Framework identifies learning intentions and progression in literacy and language skills from the Foundation Stage to P7; to help teachers plan for teaching and learning and to prepare children for literacy assessments.

Teachers in year groups work together and use the framework to plan their work throughout the year. Half-termly plans are handed in to the principal. Literacy co-ordinators use the plans to monitor literacy provision. Class workbooks are also monitored by co-ordinators.

Teachers review planners to review what has been taught, how effective it was and how to incorporate future needs based on assessment.

Teachers in year groups work together and use the K.P.S. Literacy Framework to plan their work for the year. (We have five plans each year).

SETTING WHOLE-SCHOOL LITERACY TARGETS

In K.P.S. the monitoring and evaluation of children's progress in language and literacy is on an ongoing basis. DENI Benchmark Guidance, the evidence of standardised tests and continuous teacher assessment all influence future targets. These will be listed on the School Development Plan.

USE OF ICT -

ICT contributes to language development in a variety of ways across the curriculum. In an ever changing world teachers and pupils will use a variety of media to produce and display written work and to reinforce literacy skills. This includes use of PC's, laptops, iPads and Interactive Panels. (Please see K.P.S. ICT policy). ICT will be incorporated into English planners.

RESOURCES

- Substantial investment has been made in establishing book banding in P1-4 with a huge range of extremely attractive, wide ranging texts.
- In K.P.S. we are extremely fortunate in having a classroom assistant who is in charge of the central resources room storing a range of fiction and non fiction texts. We all have access to a photocopier and laminating machine.

- We also have a lovely school library and a librarian. A wide range of all kinds of books provide stimulation. Many have been chosen to appeal especially to boys.
- Various classroom assistants provide literacy help throughout the school.
- To promote a love of reading each class provides a wide range of reading material carefully matched to the age, needs and ability of the children. These include: - fiction, non-fiction, poetry, newspapers, magazines, posters, ICT, displays and labels.

Resources are allocated on an annual basis to each year group when teachers may add to language materials.

When necessary extra materials are chosen and ordered by the literacy co-ordinator/s e.g. provision for remedial readers, new resources for book banding etc

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the staff and updated when necessary.

B.Stevenson and S.Henderson October 2017

