



Sherborne Abbey CE VC Primary School
Policy for Developing Literacy Skills.

Introduction

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Co-ordinator. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff and will be monitored by the Co-ordinator and the Headteacher.

Aims

We aim to develop the ability of our pupils to communicate effectively in speech and in writing and to listen attentively to others. We also aim to develop enthusiastic, responsive and fluent readers. We recognise the fact that writing, reading, speaking and listening constantly and naturally relate and wish to emphasise that our approach to literacy is holistic rather than fragmentary.

With regard to speaking and listening, we aim to develop in our pupils the ability to:

- Listen attentively, understand and respond appropriately to others;
- Adapt their speech to a widening range of circumstances and demands;
- Formulate, clarify and express ideas;
- Use the vocabulary and grammar of Standard English when appropriate.

With regard to reading, we aim to develop our pupils' abilities to:

- Read accurately, fluently and regularly with understanding and enjoyment;
- Respond thoughtfully and sensitively to the texts they read;
- Read a wide range of texts of differing genres including both fiction and non-fiction, poetry and literature from other cultures and traditions;
- Use effective research skills to locate and extract information from a variety of sources.

With regard to writing, we aim to teach:

- A range of Compositional skills. These will include developing ideas and communicating meaning to a reader; using an increasingly wide ranging vocabulary and an effective and appropriate style; organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently and using appropriate editing strategies.
- Presentational skills that showcase accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting.
- A wide range of genres, both fiction and non-fiction.

Cross Curricular Links

We believe that the teaching of Literacy cuts across all subject boundaries and those opportunities for developing literacy skills will be found in most areas of the primary curriculum. Obvious links will be forged and planned for whenever appropriate and the skills learnt in literacy lessons will be exported into other subjects. Equally, content from other subjects can be imported into literacy lessons to suit a unit being taught and act as a stimulus.

Writing

Most children, on entering school, will be aware already of the importance of writing. They live in a world dominated by print. It is our aim, therefore, to build upon this awareness and to encourage our pupils to write from their very first days in school.

It is our intention that, by age eleven, our pupils will be able to communicate in writing effectively and correctly and use a range of styles appropriate to different purposes.

Underpinning this aim are some assumptions, which lie at the heart of our philosophy of the teaching of writing.

- Play/emergent writing is an important developmental stage, which needs to be encouraged.
- Children need time to reflect on their writing and to fashion and edit it. This time is built into lessons, when children will be able to “edit and improve” work marked with “tickled pink” and “green for growth”. (See the school marking policy for further information). In short, they need the confidence to experiment and make mistakes, aware that ‘real writers’ don’t usually get it right first time.
- However, children also need to be aware that there are occasions when they will have little time to redraft their writing. They need to be trained to write at speed and as correctly and neatly as possible when the occasion demands it. These two assumptions are not mutually exclusive. Children need regular experience of both types of writing.
- Children require models for writing. These models often will take the form of suitably stimulating texts, which are used in shared reading sessions. However, we want our pupils to be actively involved in the writing process. They need to experience writing of all types being modelled by the teacher who can demonstrate how the task may be undertaken. Modelling may work well at either text, word or sentence level. Shared writing activities, when the class may contribute to the construction of a text, are also very valuable.
- Regular exposure to the language of a variety of texts is important, as it is through experiencing language in use that children assimilate sentence grammar and vocabulary which they can then deploy in their own writing.
- Language and language learning are social activities; they flourish best in situations, which encourage reflective discussion and the sharing of knowledge and ideas. Pupils need plenty of opportunity to read, listen and respond to each other’s work.
- Writers need constant encouragement and a sense of success and achievement.
- Children take greater care and enjoy writing more when they are writing for an audience who may respond or have a genuine use for their work.
- Opportunities will be found to identify real purposes for their work and to enable children to develop a strong sense of ownership.

- The teaching of grammar can contribute to the improvement of writing skills but is best taught in a meaningful context.
- Knowledge about language and linguistic terminology will be taught both implicitly and explicitly throughout both Key Stages.
- Children will be encouraged to become 'independent' writers from an early age. They will be taught to use their own initiative and to utilise available classroom resources. They need to be introduced to strategies to help them with spelling and with drafting and editing.
- Spelling and reading are taught through the 'Letters and Sounds' programme (daily phonics teaching) in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. By the end of Year 1 the expectation is that most children will be secure at stage 5. At this point, the DCSF publication 'Support for Spelling' can be used as a basis for teaching. In Key Stage Two, spelling is taught through literacy lessons using 'Support for Spelling' and the 'Spelling Bank' (DCSF) as a guide. We use a mixture of 'Spelling Made Easy', 'Support for Spelling' and the 'Spelling Bank' for our weekly spelling lists in Key Stage 2.
- The school uses 'A Hand for Spelling' as the core handwriting scheme which teams joining techniques with spelling patterns.

Reading

Most children will start school having engaged in pleasurable reading experiences with their parents. It is our aim to build upon these valuable pre-school experiences and to develop in our pupils those skills which will enable them to become fluent, independent readers.

For those children who have little pre-school reading experience, our immediate aim is to demonstrate that reading is an enjoyable and valuable activity. To this end, we need to have access to a wide variety of resources, which will enable us to develop initial reading skills.

At Key Stage One, children are exposed to print in a variety of ways. They are helped to understand the spelling and sound system through the 'Letters and Sounds' DCSF materials and via the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme. Phonics will be taught as part of literacy lessons in Key Stage Two and in discreet lessons in Key Stage One, 15-20 minutes a day will be timetabled, additional to Literacy lessons. Phonics activities can also take place during guided reading if appropriate.

We aim to provide a carefully balanced programme of guided reading. On entering the school, children are introduced to a selection of 'real books' from the class library. Our core scheme is 'Rigby Star Phonics' but this is supplemented by other schemes including: 'Oxford Reading Tree'. In addition to these schemes, our pupils will be exposed regularly to other texts, as required by the 'Framework'. Guided reading is timetabled for an hour a week (split into 3 x 20 minutes or 4 x 15 minutes as appropriate) and is an opportunity for the teacher to spend quality time with a focus group, analysing text and supporting the children whilst they read independently.

The sharing of stories forms an important part of the infant reading experience and children are encouraged to listen to stories carefully and to offer personal responses. Even at this early stage, we plan to develop our pupils' abilities to reflect more deeply upon various aspects of the texts.

Pupils are encouraged to take their reading books home and to share them with their parents. We want parents to take an active role in their child's reading and to encourage a dialogue between home and school. Parents are always welcome to come into school to discuss their child's reading and they are encouraged to make any responses on the reading records which accompany the reading books their child takes home.

Our pupils are encouraged to be resourceful in their use of reading cues. We recognise that reading is a complex process and do not regard it as a set of isolated skills, which can somehow be bolted together. Equal importance is attached to the development of phonic, graphic, syntactic, and contextual clues.

At Key Stage Two, as our pupils become more confident, independent readers, they will experience an increasingly wide variety of texts from their class libraries, school or town libraries, or from other available sources such as books downloaded onto the school's Ipads and the Internet. Teachers will ensure that regular opportunities are provided during the week, outside Literacy lessons, for private or shared reading activities. Guided reading should take place outside the Literacy lessons, split over several sessions adding to 1 hour, and should be carefully planned. Conferencing sessions, when pupils discuss the texts they are reading either with their peers or with the teacher, are very valuable in formulating responses and sharing opinions.

Although many different genres will be introduced during Literacy teaching, time will be made available outside this for teachers to read regularly to their classes. Whether this is a class novel, a short story or a poem a day, children enjoy listening to texts being well read and can benefit from being exposed to enriching language in a relaxed and informal manner.

Pupils at Key Stage Two will be taught how to locate, extract and evaluate information from a wide variety of sources. They will become familiar with the organisational structure of books and be taught how to recognise features of layout. They will learn to:

- * use reference aids;
- * use an index and a table of contents;
- * read and interpret diagrams, charts, tables and graphs;
- * use pictures and captions; to recognise sub headings;
- * identify main ideas;
- * make notes;
- * select suitable reading strategies e.g. skimming and scanning when appropriate, and recognise fact from opinion.

We aim to present reading as a pleasurable and valuable activity. Children are encouraged to read regularly at home but it is important that, during this Key Stage, the pupils develop into more discerning readers who are taught how to analyse and evaluate texts so that they may comment critically upon them. By Year 6, they should be able to recognise the key features of a wide variety of genres.

Speaking and Listening

We aim to ensure that our pupils can express themselves confidently, clearly and fluently in a variety of situations, adjusting to the needs of the audience. We aim, also, to develop our pupils' listening skills so that they may listen carefully and sensitively to the thoughts and opinions of others, making appropriate responses when necessary. We recognise the importance that speaking has to play in developing writing skills by crystallising our thoughts aloud before committing to paper.

Foundation Stage and the start of Year 1 follow a programme of narrative therapy designed to enhance speaking and listening skills. This can depend on the needs of the cohort, though.

Throughout both Key Stages, pupils will be given opportunities to talk for a range of purposes including:

- * telling stories, both real and imagined;
- * imaginative play and Drama;
- * reading and listening to a variety of texts and responding to them;
- * exploring, developing and explaining ideas;
- * planning, predicting and investigating; arguing and persuading;
- * reporting and describing;
- * making presentations to audiences either live or on film/tape. Many of these opportunities may be found in any number of curricular areas.

We aim to teach our pupils how an appropriate manner of speaking may be determined by the context. Pupils will be taught that formal contexts require particular choices of vocabulary and greater precision in diction and grammatical structures. Pupils will also be given opportunities to develop their understanding of the similarities and differences between the written and spoken forms of language and made aware of regional variations in accent and dialect.

Drama

The types of drama, which we are keen to develop, should not be confused with theatre. They will not, in most cases, lead to polished performances but will be improvised, essentially spontaneous, open ended, creative and original.

We do not regard Drama as a fringe activity. Rather it is to be regarded as an integral part of the literacy programme and other curricular areas because it may:

- Help to develop pupils' reflective processes. In improvised drama, children become involved in making decisions, hypothesising, and problem solving.
- Help to develop social awareness. In the very act of articulating their ideas, children have to take into consideration the thoughts and feelings of others.
- Contribute to personal growth by enabling pupils to express their emotions, helping them to make sense of the world and preparing them for adult life.
- Developing self awareness and self-confidence.

- Provide a forum where children can listen to others and make appropriate responses.
- Provide opportunities to use language in a variety of ways and in meaningful contexts. Pupils can practise speaking and listening in a range of styles and for different purposes e.g. arguing, complaining, sympathising, organising, controlling, persuading, justifying, berating, enquiring, etc.
- Enable pupils to come face to face with situations and experiences, which they may encounter in real life. Through role play, pupils can learn to understand different view points and become more tolerant of others.
- Stimulate further reading and writing activities.
- Enrich other curricular areas by providing opportunities for empathetic engagement with people from different cultures.

ICT in Literacy

We believe that ICT:

- Supports and enhances many aspects of Literacy teaching and learning and should be a significant part of every child's experience of learning to be literate.
- Is a powerful tool in motivating and empowering boys to write well (visual literacy).
- Adds a new dimension to Literacy, allowing children to explore and create different kinds of text i.e. multi-modal texts, documentaries, hyperlinked stories etc.
- Should be an entitlement for all children.

Equal opportunities

We will try to ensure that English is equally accessible to all pupils regardless of sex, race, class and physical learning disabilities.

The statutory inclusion statement sets out 3 principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Every effort should be made so that activities are of interest to both genders and pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds.

Planning

This school year, 2012-2013, staff have agreed to start using new literacy planning templates. There is one designed for use in Key Stage 1 and one for use in Key Stage 2. Both planning templates describe:

- * Lesson objectives;
- * The key skills that are being taught in a particular session;
- * How lessons will be appropriately differentiated; and

* Success criteria

Literacy is taught through the school's Creative Curriculum, with teachers adapting planning to fit in with the topic they have chosen. However, it is the expectation that, over the course of a school year, children will engage with a range of fiction and non-fiction topics. The fiction topics include work on poetry and stories. The non-fiction topics include work on Discussion texts, Instruction texts, Persuasive texts, Explanation texts, Non-Chronological Report texts and Autobiographical and Biographical texts. In addition to this, especially in upper Key Stage 2, children will be taught to identify and write a range of hybrid texts, for example a persuasive report.

Teaching Styles

In order to deliver lessons, teachers will need to vary their teaching methods and adopt the appropriate strategies which will include: directing, demonstrating, modelling, scaffolding, explaining, questioning, initiating guided exploration, investigating, discussing and arguing, listening and responding.

Lessons will have a clear introduction, include a balance of whole class and group teaching and a plenary. It is perfectly acceptable to alter the balance depending on the aim of the lesson. For example, the whole class activities may be shortened to provide more time for individual or group work. It is also acceptable to lengthen a session to carry out extended writing.

Time Allocation

An hour a day for the teaching of literacy is the bare minimum although Foundation Stage children will obviously be unable to concentrate for this amount of time initially and literacy periods will be increased in length over the year. Certainly, at Key Stage Two and towards the end of Key Stage One, more time will be needed for certain activities, for example, reading to the class, guided reading, independent reading, extended writing, speaking and listening, and drama.

Assessment and Target setting

We believe that the aim of our Literacy assessment and target setting is:

- To help children learn more effectively by providing them with clear "next steps" in their learning.
- To help teachers evaluate what is taught to therefore continue to drive up standards in the teaching of literacy in our school; and
- To provide information for other people, such as parents, governors and other outside agencies.

We will achieve these three aims by:

- Offering all children the opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do in a wide range of contexts;
- Helping children to understand what they can do and what they need to do next. We will do this by using strategies such as success criteria and regularly marking their work using tickled pink and green for growth, in accordance with the school's marking policy;

- Sharing learning and assessment objectives in lessons;
- Developing children's use of self-evaluation techniques, allowing them to peer mark against agreed success criteria where appropriate;
- Supporting children's sense of achievement, self-esteem and motivation;
- Recognising the full range of children's development;
- Using assessment information from School Pupil Tracker to plan what children should learn next;
- Using assessment information from School Pupil Tracker to help children with target setting;
- Using group and individual targets so the children recognise the next steps to success;
- Recognising the effect of learning styles on children's achievement;
- Using assessment information to review the effectiveness of curriculum objectives and delivery;
- Relating children's attainment to national standards consistently and accurately when appropriate.
- Involving parents in the process, through questionnaires and literacy initiatives, such as World Book Day.
- Providing useful and meaningful information to other parents and schools.
- Having regular internal and external moderation meetings where pupils' work from across the school is assessed against APP standards.

Individual teachers may build up their own formative assessments of pupil's progress and record them as they wish.

Teachers will ensure that evidence of assessment is available whether this is kept in pupils' exercise books or files. In addition to this, the following assessment procedures will be conducted:

Assessing Pupil progress

APP writing was introduced into the school in the spring term of 2009. At the beginning of each year, every teacher chooses six pupils from their class (representing 2 lower ability, 2 middle ability and 2 top ability) to assess in depth. Six to eight pieces of independent writing will be collected over each term in Key Stages 1 and 2 and levelled against APP criteria. The rest of the class will be placed in one of the three bands according to their comparable ability. APP reading, which follows the same lines, was rolled out in the spring term of 2010. APP information may be monitored by the LA and the SMT.

Other means of assessment

Writing

In the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage One, children will write independently in an Assessment Book, formally known as their First-of-the-Month Book. Reception children will also have their language proficiency recorded in their Foundation Stage Profile.

At Key Stage Two, children will write independently for assessment purposes regularly across a range of curriculum subjects. In a term, it is expected that between 6 - 8 pieces of this unsupported writing will be carried out to be used of the purpose of assessment. This writing will be kept in an Assessment Book, formally known as the First-of-the-Month Book.

SATS

At the end of Key Stage One, Year 2 children will undergo teacher assessment in reading and writing and the information passed to the LA and parents.

At the end of Key Stage Two, the children will sit the statutory tests in reading and grammar; the papers being marked externally and the results sent to the LA and parents. Writing is assessed by the Year 6 teacher and externally moderated by colleagues from local schools at a group meeting. It may also be moderated by external agencies who may request to see evidence of levels.

At Key Stage Two, Year groups three to five will do the non-statutory SAT tests in reading: the results used as a tool to monitor progress.

Reading and spelling

Reading Ages will be established once a year in the Summer Term, using a whole class reading task throughout the school. This will be from Year 2 onwards. In Year 1, children will undertake the National Phonics Screening Task. Children resit the task in Year 2 if they do not meet the standard in Year 1. If in Year 2 children once more fail to meet the required standard, having received additional support, measures are put in place to support them throughout Key Stage 2.

Spelling Ages (Vernon test) will also be determined at this time. The results are entered by class teachers in School Pupil Tracker. Phonic knowledge and tricky words will be assessed in Foundation Stage, and high frequency words tested regularly in Years 1 and 2 throughout the year.

Tracking

At the end of each term, teachers will complete class tracking, recording the National Curriculum level at which pupils are working, in Reading and Writing using evidence from APP reading and writing records. This will be recorded on School Pupil Tracker. This evidence will then be used to set new targets for children for the next term.

Special Educational Needs

Children who experience difficulty in particular aspects of literacy will – according to their stage on the Special Needs Register – receive support as outlined in their Individual Education Plan.

In order to make progress, a child may only require differentiation of the plans used for the whole class. This differentiation may involve modifying learning objectives, teaching styles and access strategies.

Some children may require specific interventions and these are managed by the SENCO in collaboration with the Class teacher. Interventions may be in small groups or one-to-one and may be delivered by Teaching Assistants or Teachers. The aim of all interventions is to help the child make progress and to address any specific learning difficulties.

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