

Saint Patrick's Academy
Literacy Policy

Literacy Co-ordinator: Diane McCausland

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a very broad concept which refers to all the ways in which pupils need to be able to use language as learners, workers, citizens, and humans in relationships with other humans. It is the ability to read, write, speak, and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world.

In St Patrick's Academy we recognise that literacy is the central means through which learning can be achieved. To be successful learners therefore, our pupils will need opportunities across **all areas and subjects** of the curriculum to develop and expand their language skills.

Pupils will be encouraged in **all subjects**:

- To talk for a variety of purposes
- To listen actively
- To read confidently for both information and pleasure
- To write to communicate understanding and present information clearly and accurately

All teachers have a responsibility for pupils' language development. This is highlighted by the following statement in most areas of the NI Curriculum.

'Teachers should be aware of the key role of language in learning. They should use opportunities provided within the programmes of study to encourage the development of all four models of language: talking, listening, reading and writing. Teachers should give attention to the quality of language and the opportunities to reinforce good practice in the use of language'

The Aims of our school:

- To promote a greater emphasis on the development of all pupils' oral skills and on their independent reading and writing abilities.
- To create an inclusive culture of achievement, high standards and high expectations.
- To promote the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of all our children.
- To develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and discuss rationally and to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to the modern World.
- To empower every child to fulfil his/her potential

OBJECTIVES

In order to develop their competence in using language, pupils need to receive consistent and explicit messages from all their teachers about how:

- To become fluent in the use of written and spoken language.
- To be able to suit their language to different audiences, contexts, and purposes.
- To become confident and independent readers for both information and pleasure.
- Self and peer evaluations, as well as teacher evaluations will lead to continuous improvement.
- Differentiated strategies are employed as appropriate to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Learning is both a challenging and enjoyable experience.

ORGANISATION OF LITERACY

Language has a vital role to play as a medium of teaching and learning. It follows then that language development should be a continuous learning process for all our pupils across both key stages.

Language skills should be taught within a variety of curricular contexts by meaningful and relevant activities.

Language skills are developed and enhanced in all curricular areas when the activities:

- Integrate the four modes of language
- Have a flexible approach
- Contain some which develop knowledge and understanding and others which develop problem solving skills
- Have a balance between those that are short and succinct and those which are more open-ended
- Use pupils' own prior knowledge, experiences and interests as starting points or as further lines of development.
- Achieve a balance between independent and pair/group work.
- Consist of a variety of experiences e.g., doing, talking, listening, discussing, reading, writing, and reflecting.

Successful teaching and learning in language will be characterised by:

- A very high expectation of success for all learners.
- Pupils being able to express themselves in an effective and appropriate manner to a wide range of audiences and for a wide range of purposes speaking clearly, fluently and with confidence.
- An apprenticeship approach to acquiring written and oral language.
- Maximum encouragement and appropriate support from staff.
- Motivation for the pupils to make sense of and acquire control over language.

PRINCIPLES INFORMING THE POLICY

At the crux of this policy are the following:

1. A whole school Talking and Listening Policy (Appendix 1)
2. A whole school Reading Policy (Appendix 2)
3. A whole school Writing Policy (Appendix 3)
4. A whole school Marking Policy (Appendix 4)

All staff must adhere to these policies to ensure their contribution to pupils' language development.

Further subject/Faculty support is always available on request.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Systematic monitoring and evaluation will be carried out by the teachers, by Heads of Faculty and by Senior Management in collaboration with the Literacy Co-ordinator.

Departments should continue to monitor and evaluate whether their departmental targets are being met in relation to Literacy though a literacy audit.

Monitoring and evaluating pupil literacy should be ongoing through homework, classwork, trackers/exams, and data derived from online assessments.

Appendix One

Whole School Talking and Listening Policy

1. Talking and listening should be promoted for both communication and learning as well as to build confidence.
2. The relationship between talking, listening, reading, and writing should be recognised and developed.
3. Teachers should create a classroom atmosphere where pupils' talk is valued
4. Pupils should experience a range of roles and contexts for talking and listening. Where possible pupils should experience different types of audience and an awareness of the role of the audience.
5. Oral activities will require detailed planning and careful management by all teachers if they are to be purposeful, challenging and enjoyable.
6. Pupils should be helped to recognise the importance of working collaboratively.
7. Oral work should be organised according to the ground rules agreed by the whole school.
8. All teachers should occasionally allow time for pupils to reflect on their achievements and performance as talkers and listeners.
9. All pupils should be supported in valuing their own dialects/accents and in using them where they are appropriate to the context and purpose. They should be encouraged to use Standard English when it is necessary to do so in talking as well as in writing.
10. Assessment through talk should inform attainment in all subjects as well as reassuring pupils about the value of talking and listening. Assessment should be in direct relation to the ILO identified at the beginning of the task.

Appendix Two
Whole School Reading Policy

1. Pupils should be given the opportunity to read widely with the aim of becoming autonomous readers.
2. Pupils should read and discuss material which will challenge or extend them as readers.
3. Teachers should encourage pupils to respond creatively and critically to what they read in a range of ways.
4. Pupils should be given the opportunity to read aloud, to read silently and to participate in shared reading.
5. Pupils should be encouraged to talk and write about what they are reading.
6. Pupils should be given the opportunity to complete research, select information from texts they are working with and re-order and re-work it for a specific purpose and audience.
7. All subjects should include visits to the library throughout the year.
8. Teachers should encourage pupils to increasingly adopt the appropriate reading skill for the purpose in hand, for example, skimming, scanning etc.
9. Pupils should be encouraged to derive pleasure from reading.
10. Teachers with concerns in relation to reading strategies should see the Literacy Co-ordinator.

Appendix Three

Whole school Writing Policy

Writing Principles:

- Opportunities should be provided across all subject areas for pupils to experience a wide range of writing forms.
- Wherever appropriate, real audiences should be provided occasionally for writing both inside and outside the classroom to motivate pupils into realising the relationship between writers and readers.
- Teachers should provide examples of the type of writing required.
- Pupils should have a variety of planning strategies demonstrated for and to them.
- Drafting should be seen by pupils as an integral part of the writing process and as an opportunity to improve their work.
- Collaboration, mutual support, and constructive criticism between pupils over their writing is desirable if they are to understand the relationship which exists between writers and readers.
- Pupils will be encouraged to proofread their work for the secretarial aspects of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.
- Pupils should receive consistent messages from all teachers on the agreed standard of presentation of their writing.
- Overall, the teacher's main response to a piece of writing should be to direct the pupil about how to improve what is being presented by the writer (in direct proportion to the ability of the writer.)
- The correction of errors should follow the agreed marking system and be shared with pupils.
- Word processing should be promoted, wherever appropriate, to facilitate both the crafting and editing of writing. Pupils should be encouraged to use spell check.
- Subject departments may, if necessary, adapt to specific needs.
- Teachers should consult with the literacy Co-ordinator, D McCausland, for guidance should they experience any difficulties.

Appendix 4

MARKING POLICY – WHOLE SCHOOL

Rationale

Quality indicators 1.1 Improvement in performance

Effective marking improves pupil motivation and raises standards of pupil performance. It fosters a sense that marking should be fair and just. The focus of the marking scheme should be on the building of confidence and the skills of the child in order to highlight success.

- Formative – helping pupils to see how their mark can be improved and developed
- Diagnostic – identifying weaknesses and uncertainties as a basis for remedial action
- **N.B. – Marking must be for improvement**

GUIDELINES

- All work to be corrected in green ink
- Assessment for Learning – Formative Feedback must take place at least twice per term. This feedback must be linked to the formal homework task which will have used, Agreed Success Criteria to scaffold pupils' responses. Teachers should provide formative feedback using the "Two Stars and a Wish" method at the end of the task. For Key Stage 3 only.
- Work should be marked for content value and **constructive** comments relating to this should be made.
- Mistakes should not be over-marked as pupils can become discouraged by the **quantity** of correction.
- Positive marking is important for the pupil. Errors should, of course, be pointed out in a careful and systematic way but teachers must look for the strengths in a piece of work e.g. in English the spelling could be quite poor but the attempted vocabulary and the imaginative content could be very good. This should be pointed out and the pupil encouraged. The positive comment also offers proof to the pupils that the work has been read, **and they are valued members of the learning community.**

- Staff should try to use comments which praise the achievements, individual qualities and the uniqueness of each child's piece of work.
- Comments must highlight whether or not the skill outlined in the ILO has been met or not (where appropriate). Guidance should be offered on how work could be improved as staff and pupils work towards a shared educational excellence for all.
- Each department should have a grading system e.g. in English marks out of 10 at Key stage 3, or out of 20 at key stage 4, for class work and homework as required.
- Use marks and grades appropriate to examination level in Years 11 and 12 or levels if assessing particular pieces of work for recording. Pupils should be made aware of the grading system within each department.
- All homework/assignments should be returned to pupils promptly.
- Each department should follow agreed correction symbols (marking policy) and should ensure that pupils understand these, especially when abbreviations are used e.g. N.P. = New Paragraph, P = punctuation error, word circled = spelling mistake, word(s) underlined = grammatical error. The key should be displayed within classrooms and in the back of pupils' books and explained to pupils.
- Learners should be encouraged to become actively involved in their own learning and development through proof reading and peer assessment.
- A system of rewards for good efforts/most improved work is to be encouraged.

DOCUMENTATION

- Teachers should retain homework records until the end of the Key Stage. They should be used at Parents' Consultation Evenings.
- Spelling mistakes and grammatical errors should be corrected in all subjects.
- Pupils should retain and complete homework records for every subject.

Literacy policy updated by D McCausland October 2022

