

St Bernadette's
Catholic Primary
School

'Achieve, Believe, Care. ABC'

Literacy Policy

(March 2016)

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Literacy Policy

At St Bernadette's we aim to provide a Catholic Christian setting where we can live out the messages of Jesus with love, understanding and care. Providing a secure and happy environment where we can celebrate achievements at all levels is basic to all learning, not least when this learning gives children growing confidence and competence in language skills.

In order that our school ethos is evident we believe that language and literacy is fundamental to the overall development of the child and their access to the curriculum in all its aspects. We aim to deliver quality teaching of basic and higher order reading, writing and listening skills to enable children to become confident and successful in their literacy. We follow the National Curriculum and other guidance to enable quality learning and teaching to take place.

We want all our pupils by the end of Year six to be able to:

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding;
- Be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their mistakes;
- Understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately;
- Have fluent and legible handwriting;
- Have an interest in words and their meaning and a growing vocabulary;
- Have a sound grasp of English grammar;
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literacy ideas of setting, character and plot;
- Understand, use and be able to write a range of non-fiction texts;
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing;
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing;
- Be interested in books, read with enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences;
- Through reading and writing, develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Develop a positive attitude towards modern and classic poetry and to know some poems by heart.

Cross Curricular Links

Literacy skills are used across the entire curriculum, thus giving the children the opportunity to use their skills in meaningful situations and extend their knowledge and confidence as literate individuals.

Structure

Foundation Stage

We believe that communication and language with opportunities to explore reading and writing underpins children's future learning. The practice in Foundation Stage will follow the curriculum guidance and will work towards the Early Learning Goals aiming to meet the statement of the goals by the end of Reception year.

In Reception the daily routine will include planned and spontaneous activities that include:

- A wealth of opportunities to develop and experience speaking and listening;
- Experiences that develop gross and fine motor skills through play and handwriting activities;
- Sharing and enjoying a range of rhymes, songs, stories and books;
- Immersion in a print rich environment, indoor and outdoor with opportunities for oral language and written communication, eg. differentiated phonic activities;
- Focus activities that teach children early communication language and literacy skills;
- Reading activities with a specific reading and writing focus each week.

At the end of the Foundation Stage, children spend time with their new teacher and in their new classroom before they move to Year 1. Parents and carers have the opportunity to discuss transition issues so that they feel reassured how they can help their child prepare for Year 1 and feel confident in the smooth transition.

KS1

At the beginning of Year 1, the assessments from Foundation Stage will enable the planned work to follow a smooth transition.

The teaching of literacy in KS1 will include:

- Explicitly taught and planned sessions following the guidance and objectives of the New National Curriculum

- Spoken English activities, eg. role play, pair talk, drama and hot seating in order to prepare pupils for the writing process;
- Word level work with explicit teaching of phonics and spelling;
- Sentence level work led by quality texts to develop grammatical awareness and punctuation skills;
- Text level work using a range of genres will develop comprehension and composition skills and the understanding of print;
- Letter formation and handwriting taught and modelled using a cursive style;
- Immersion in a print rich environment that promotes a reading culture and develops children's oral and written communication.

KS2

At the beginning of Year 3, the teacher assessments and the statutory tests will enable the planned work to follow a smooth transition.

The teaching of literacy in KS2 will include:

- Explicitly taught and planned sessions following the guidance and objectives of the New National Curriculum
- Genre overviews to identify the success criteria of each unit of work and weekly plans tailored to the needs of our children;
- Spelling strategies and rules and phonics where required;
- Grammar and punctuation skills;
- Reading a range of genres to develop comprehension skills and scaffold writing;
- A range of text types, including cross-curricular writing, modelled to promote sustained composition;
- Handwriting and presentation skills taught and modelled
- Immersion in a print rich environment, taking account of children with specific needs including dyslexia, that promotes a reading culture and develops speaking and listening.

Phonics

Children in KS1 follow the programme 'Letters and Sounds' which encapsulates the reading review recommendations led by Jim Rose, (refer the Rose Report for further details). Phonics is taught explicitly in Foundation Stage and KS1 and where necessary in KS2. Letters and sounds is a powerful teaching tool which ensures that young children will be well-placed to read and spell words with fluency and confidence by the time they reach the end of KS1.

Phonics is taught at least 4 days a week for at least 20 minutes in a fun way but also with rigorous and pace.

Spelling

Children's phonological awareness and spelling strategies are assessed and informs teaching. Dedicated time is allocated for teaching and investigating spelling, as well as word level work linking to a related text in the main literacy session. Spelling Bank investigation is used alongside individual and whole class spelling logs. Children are encouraged to practise their spellings through investigation as homework. Word banks (given and created) along with dictionaries can be used to support children's spelling at the point of writing.

Grammar and Sentence Work

This includes grammatical awareness, sentence construction, punctuation and the higher skills of grammar. This is taught directly through quality texts, modelled examples and investigation. Grammar for Writing is used alongside personal writing, children's examples and participative activities.

Reading

We believe in developing a reading culture throughout the school by creating welcoming book areas in classrooms, a school library which hosts a variety of reading clubs, and raising the profile of reading through a print rich environment, attractive book displays and promoting the written word at all times. High priority is given to word reading and comprehension in KS1. Children are placed in ability groups for reading and read a wide range of reading books. This method of guided reading ensures children are taught a range of reading skills which they practise at school and home.

Children are able to take home a reading book to read to their parent/carer several times a week. Parents make a comment in their child's home-school reading record on how their child reads and understands the text.

Reading is taught through:

1. Whole class reading that develops listening skills, a love of story and reading for pleasure.
2. Shared reading that immerses children in the pattern of story and features of text types.

This happens in literacy sessions when introducing text and prior to writing. The teacher models as an expert reader and draws out the key elements of the content.

3. Guided reading targets children's reading skills and enables them to embed their phonic knowledge.

Guided reading takes place in small groups with teacher input using a levelled text. Progress records are completed at each reading session and each group reads with an adult at least once a week.

4. Independent reading in school and at home. Books are sent home with a reading record or log for communication with parents. In Foundation Stage and KS1 children take home a book chosen from their ability band to read or look at with their parents. Books are changed on a regular basis by teaching assistants or teachers. Phonically decodable books (The Bug Club) and a wide range of other levelled texts are available. In KS2 children may be directed to choose their own book to take home from banded levels or a free reader and these can be changed regularly.

5. The reading environment

The print rich environment encourages children to interact with displays, to follow instructions and signs, promoting functional language. Within the classroom the reading area is attractive and inviting, books are clearly accessible within labelled categories, by author or by genre. Themed displays are encouraged along with opportunities to write book reviews and show homemade books. Books are also displayed and promoted around the classroom and the whole learning environment of the school.

6. The school library provides reference and reading materials for children and teachers.

Writing

We believe that writing should be a creative/developmental process both at a functional and an imaginative level. All attempts at writing are valued and we know that all children have potential to be successful writers.

The compositional and transcriptional skills are taught alongside the creative aspects. A whole school approach using Alan Peat sentence types and writing structures is used. Immersion in reading, talk and preparation for writing is essential to the writing development process.

Writing is taught through:

1. Shared writing that is modelled by the teacher as the expert writer with contributions from the children.

This is teacher-led writing with children watching and contributing ideas. Shared writing is not exclusive to literacy sessions and can be taught within Foundation subjects. The emphasis may be on the generation of ideas, grammatical awareness, spelling and phonics, compositional, transcriptional and presentational and text level skills or other key strategies needed in writing. Not all of these can be modelled in one session, but the teacher as the expert writer leads the cumulative writing process.

2. Guided writing that targets children at their point of writing.

Guided writing takes place in small groups with a teaching focus using targets and writing already modelled. Progress records are completed at each writing session and each guided group writes with a teacher at least once a week. The main part of the session is spent by the child writing with the adult intervening as appropriate. In Foundation Stage the child receives more individual support from the teacher at the point of writing.

3. Opportunities for developmental writing.

In Foundation stage children should experience writing in a range of settings and opportunities for developmental writing should be available through all areas of learning and throughout the learning environment. Children's own attempts at early writing should be celebrated and promoted, alongside the direct teaching of the key skills that will enable the children to progress through the stages of writing development. In Foundation Stage and KS1, children's writing that needs interpretation must be scribed by a teacher or adult working with the group. Ideally this is during the literacy session.

4. Independent writing.

Throughout the school, children need opportunities to develop their confidence and practise their writing skills. All writing activities should have a purpose and quality should be promoted through book making, publication or presentation to another audience. Writing is modelled and supported from immersion to quality writing. Independent writing is supported through the use of dictionaries, word banks, writing frames or plans and alphabet cards.

5. Writing Environment.

The school environment celebrates quality writing through displays of work in both handwritten and typed form as well as signs and labels.

All classrooms should have attractive and well-equipped resources for writing that children can access through a writing area or table.

Opportunities for writing are planned for and accessible throughout the learning environment and school day. Functional and creative writing are demonstrated and promoted by staff and visitors.

Handwriting

Handwriting and letter formation is explicitly taught throughout the school. A dyslexia friendly cursive style is used. The correct way of forming letters joining flicks is modelled by the teacher and patterns of letters are taught where appropriate in KS2. Children have a separate handwriting book and there are frequent sessions dedicated to demonstrating and practising handwriting. Children need to have adult interventions when handwriting to ensure incorrect formation is not practised. Good presentation is emphasised at all times and through all forms of writing.

In Foundation Stage children are taught to write their name through tracing, copying and writing from memory. Support is given to those with poor pencil grip through triangular pencils and pencil grips. Left-handed writers should be sat on the left hand side of the table. Sand trays, plasticine and other opportunities are given for children to develop their gross motor skills. Pupils are taught a pre-cursive style which is dyslexia friendly.

In KS2 writing is on lined paper or with line guides and pens are introduced in Year three for children with clear, fluent cursive writing. Children need to be aware that handwriting is not just for that lesson but to use throughout the whole curriculum.

Spoken Language

In line with the New National Curriculum, we believe that speaking and listening is fundamental to children's development and that confidence in this area is essential to be successful in all areas of literacy.

These oral skills are directly taught, modelled and sensitively encouraged in whole class and small group settings. Opportunities across the whole curriculum are planned for and developed. The play an active part in presentations, performances, topic talks, group discussions, debates and drama activities. Children are taught to recognise Standard English and use the appropriate register.

We follow the guidance and ideas from the New National Curriculum.

The Subject Leader

The Literacy Co-ordinator works in conjunction with the Headteacher. The role of the subject leader involves:

- Modelling good practice;
- Being responsible for the upgrading and ordering of resources and arranging for their storage;
- Keeping informed about developments and new initiatives to support the teaching of language and literacy and ensure staff are informed;
- Auditing needs and organise staff training;
- Training staff in teaching and learning of literacy;
- Monitoring planning on a termly with the head teacher; scrutiny of books and lesson observations with constructive feedback;
- Supporting teachers in planning and using resources;
- Organising school themed book events in collaboration with other staff;
- Updating the school policy when necessary.

Assessment

At St. Bernadette's we use Staffordshire Assessment Grids for Writing to level children's writing each half term. Targets are set and discussed with children so that they are clear how they can make progress across the next half term.

Progress in reading is recorded during the guided reading sessions on record sheets, observations and notes. Rising Stars PIRA tests (progress in reading assessments) are carried out at the end of each term. Both these assessments are used to inform planning and to target teaching to the needs of the children as well as to track progress.

Progress in spelling is measured at Key Stage 2 through an end of term test using Single Word Spelling Test (SWST) scheme. At Key Stage 1 phonics skills are tracked half termly.

Formal assessments across the school are monitored regularly by the Headteacher to check assessment is happening and to record results for tracking. The Literacy Subject Leader monitors this data as literacy assessments, to check they are meaningful, relevant, show progress, to match to the policy and planning and for evaluation of learning and teaching.

Informative marking of children's writing is also completed by the teacher (see marking policy) providing a positive comment that is specifically linked to the WALT, and a target is set in order to move children on in their writing.

