



LITERACY POLICY

Last Reviewed	March 2015	Next Review	March 2016
		Ratified by Governors	

Marlcliffe Primary School Literacy Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines our approach to the development of language in communication (speaking and listening) reading and writing. It is for staff, parents and governors. Review and revision will be on-going. In addition to the guidelines, it attempts to encourage further discussion and reflection. Consideration of the policy should develop an awareness of the elements that combine to ensure good practice.

Aims

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of communication, reading and writing;
- To develop in pupils an interest in and a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum but also enrich their lives;
- To value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play;
- To teach children the craft of writing, including handwriting, in order to develop in children the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audience;
- To teach the basics – spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation – to ensure accuracy within creativity;
- To foster in pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing;
- To raise the standards of communication, reading and writing so that every child makes best progress;
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Learning & Teaching

At Marlcliffe Primary we use the New National Curriculum as a basis for our planning within the subject and expect all teachers to follow this principle. Literacy is taught on a daily basis from reception to Y6 for approximately 1 hour and supported and enhanced through other curriculum areas. Guided reading is additional to this.

In Foundation stage, Literacy forms the basis of one of the areas of learning – communication, understanding and reading. Emphasis is on teaching Literacy through stories and books; through topic links; child initiated learning through play, plus adult intervention; and demonstration and use of language.

In Y1 – 5 teaching and learning usually takes place within a whole class. In Y6 children are currently grouped by ability. These groups are fluid and through continuous assessment for learning, children are allocated to different groups depending on their needs. Within all year groups children's learning is mainly in ability groups in their class, with differentiated tasks and support, but will also include independent and partner work. Good practice in reading and writing is shared and modelled in whole class teaching.

Teachers use a variety of interactive teaching methods to deliver the curriculum and achieve set learning objectives.

Communication (Speaking and listening)

Talk for Writing involves making explicit the processes and thinking involved in the writing process so that ultimately this can be internalised and applied by children in their own writing. Teachers will model the correct use of standard English and accurate speech to improve grammar in writing.

1. Talk for writing.

This is the articulation of the thinking and creative processes involved in all stages of writing; talk that helps children to think and improve what they would like to write. This is modelled by the teacher and through shared discussions with children making use of the prompts around them in the classroom.

Prior to a 'big write' assessment children in some years may take home an idea to discuss with their family in preparation for their writing, 'Big Talk.'

2. Story-telling and story making

This involves the learning and repeating/ rehearsing of oral stories (using actions) – in turn it builds children's confidence to develop and extend the stories first orally and then in writing.

3. Word & language games

Talk games and activities are used to develop vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and grammar, as well as looking at writing structures such as settings in stories, introductions in reports. Many of these games are interactive using ICT such as class whiteboards.

4. Paired talk

Children use talking partners to articulate their ideas and make focused oral responses and questions during learning times.

5. Drama

Drama form an integral part of literacy and is incorporated into the planning of units of work. This may be on a weekly basis or less frequently according to the unit of work. Drama activities can take place effectively within a classroom space but teachers are encouraged to use the drama studio. The development of dramatic skills for each pupil should:

- enhance their ability to communicate in English
- allow them to express deeper feelings and emotions
- encourage them to work collectively
- build their confidence in 'performing' in front of an audience
- hot-seating techniques help children understand the character in role

There will be drama productions each year which may include Christmas KS1 performances and a Year 6 performance at the end of the Summer Term. Other smaller performances may be planned throughout the year.

Reading

Shared reading

Shared reading takes place within the Literacy lesson; the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader, providing support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response from children and high levels of collaboration. The children join in, where appropriate with the reading of the text. The texts selected are quality texts that reflect the teaching objectives. Years 2 – 6 have whole class readers and read together as a class group in these sessions.

Guided reading

Guided reading takes place as part of a guided session at least once a week for each child within a group. During guided reading the responsibility for reading shifts to the learner. Guided reading takes place with a group of children of similar ability. During a guided reading session, the children read and respond to a challenging text with the teacher supporting. Texts of graded difficulty are carefully chosen and matched to the reading ability of the group. It is intended that guided reading provides a forum for children to demonstrate what they have learned about reading and to develop further and extend their reading and comprehension skills. The guided reading session also includes other reading opportunities and activities for children not in the teacher focus group.

Individual reading

Children have access to graded books in a reading scheme to support the development of their individual reading skills. Children start the reading scheme in FS and continue on this scheme until they become competent independent readers achieving level 4+ in reading. They can then choose from a wide variety of books from the KS2 library and their classroom library.

In FS and KS1 the children take home books from the reading scheme collections that are allocated to the classes. Parents come into school in the morning and sign books out to read with their children at home. In KS2 children are expected to continue home reading and will sign out their own readers. This is monitored by staff to ensure home reading is supporting reading at school.

Reading is not restricted to the Literacy Hour. Many opportunities are provided for children to practise and extend their reading in other subjects. Reading for pleasure and enjoyment is given a high priority and sufficient time is set aside for this. All classrooms have reading areas and initiatives to encourage further reading. Teachers also read a class novel or short story on a daily basis as part of a 'story time' session.

Whenever possible, 1-1 extra reading is provided, especially to boost basic reading skills for children who are working below age related expectations. We have a team of reading volunteers who give additional support to identified children.

Phonics

As part of the Literacy lesson, children are taught the principles and practice of phonics following the guidance of Letters and Sounds, the new National Curriculum and the school spelling scheme. The Foundation Stage starts at Phase 2 and continues to Phase 3; Year 1 continues with Phase 3 up to Phase 5 and Year 2 continues with Phase 5 to Phase 6. The children work through the phases quickly and do not have to achieve every aspect before moving on.

The teaching of phonics is key to children developing their reading and will be continued into KS2.

Assessment:

Children in Year 1 have to undertake a national phonics assessment in the summer term. If they do not reach the required level at the end of Y1, they can repeat the test at the end of Y2.

Level descriptors for reading are used to record the National Curriculum levels or steps that each child is working at - guided reading is used predominantly to assess specific learning focuses on these descriptors so contributes to these decisions.

More formal testing using SATs style papers from Y2 also forms part of the teacher assessment as well as giving children practice at writing answers to questions.

Writing

Shared and guided writing

This is an integral part of the literacy lesson where teachers and children construct a piece of writing together, giving opportunities for the teacher to model writing using the children's ideas. This modelling covers basic skills such as handwriting and presentation, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and grammar, as well as content such as creative and imaginative ideas or factual writing.

Basic Skills

Literacy lessons cover and reinforce the basic skills of spelling, handwriting, presentation, grammar and sentence structure both in discreet teaching slots and as part of other writing.

Writing for a purpose

Literacy lessons explore the purpose of writing and differences in styles of writing. This includes non-fiction and fiction genres such as instructions, report, diary, suspense, parody, persuasion, poetry and recount, as well as considering the audience. Learning is differentiated according to the needs of children who work in ability groups so that each child can make good progress. Use of 'talk for writing', which has actions to match retelling a story or piece of non-fiction, supports children by encouraging them to verbalise their ideas and improve the language, before putting it on paper.

Writing across the curriculum

Writing is explicit in foundation subjects such as history, geography, RE, science and PSHE and this is a good way of seeing if children are applying the skills taught in literacy lessons to other areas.

Handwriting

Foundation Stage use and practise basic letter formation, using 'flicks' as a lead to the next letter. Y1 to Y6 follow a handwriting and presentation scheme which teaches joining. Teachers expect high quality presentation in written work, line guides are used for most pieces of writing.

Assessment: A summative assessment of writing takes place 6 times a year, at the end of each half term. The assessments are formulated using level or step descriptors for writing and also include examples of writing from across the curriculum and in class literacy books.

Assessment for learning is continuous and shapes future teaching and planning.

Analysis of writing assessments feed into pupil progress meeting which allows for targeted, precision teaching within the classroom so that children are learning what is needed to help them to progress. Pupil progress meetings also enable teachers to analyse gaps in learning and focus on the next steps needed for progress.

Moderation of writing assessments is carried out several times a year, guided by the SLT and literacy team.

Spelling

With the introduction of the new National Curriculum, we have adapted our school spelling scheme using the 'Topical Resources' spelling scheme

Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2 are using lists composed of Letters and Sounds words and phonemes, words and key spelling patterns from the new National Curriculum, and other high frequency words.

Spelling is taught throughout the week in many ways including; games and activities, the spelling words within the context of a text and in topic where relevant. It is always most successful to put words within a context, rather than just teach them as isolated words.

Assessment: Spelling is included in the new SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) national tests at the end of both KS1 (in 2016) and KS2 (the first was last year), through school progression is very important to build up to the high standards in the new test. Baseline and in-year progress assessments will also take place.

Spellings are sent home to practise and then tested in school on a weekly basis.

The standardised scheme is used to ensure continuity and progression.

Punctuation and grammar

These areas are also very specific in the new National Curriculum, and teachers follow the guidelines for their year group/groups. Punctuation and grammar are taught in context at sentence and text levels. We use Alan Peat structures throughout school, such as 2A sentences, which support use of good quality punctuation and grammar in writing.

Assessment of SPAG: Children in Year 6 now have to take a written test which covers Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar. Teachers are working from new guidelines to ensure that children cover the necessary areas in KS2 and are well prepared for the test. Year 2 children will also have a national KS1 SPAG test from 2016.

SEND

Literacy lessons, tasks and materials are differentiated by the class teacher to meet the needs of individual children. A number of intervention strategies are used to develop children's specific learning needs in Literacy. These include many programmes designed to support classroom learning, as well as specific programmes for dyslexia and other special needs.

Reading Recovery is an intense programme that supports children, mainly in Y1 and 2, who need additional support in reading.

Identification of children with SENDs in literacy complies with the new SEND code of practice. (See SEND policy.)

Target setting

Target setting in reading and writing is used to focus teaching and move learning on for all children. These are in two forms:

- 1) predicted levels for each child at the end of the academic year based on entry levels and expected progress- the regular use of assessment allows teachers to track children against their end of year targets.
- 2) descriptive learning targets that indicate gaps in learning and next steps- children are aware of their learning targets.

Parents are informed of targets and attainment at parent evenings and on reports; they are encouraged to help children work towards and meet them.

Appendix

New national Curriculum. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>