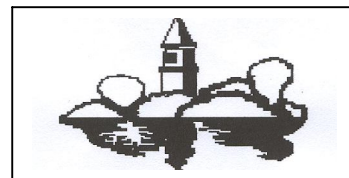


BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL – POLICY FOR LITERACY



Rationale

Language is central to living and learning. Bellaghy Primary School fully supports the idea that Literacy is part of the 'core business' of schools (School Improvement Programme, DENI , 1998). This is reflected in the commitment of the staff to promoting language development as one of the school's main priorities, and in the development of a daily Literacy time in all classes throughout the school. Every teacher will promote and support the development of children's talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking skills in a variety of meaningful contexts in all curricular areas.

Language should be a source of pleasure, enjoyment and richness as well as providing a means of partaking in a range of activities in public, cultural and working life. Children bring with them to school a wide range of attitudes towards, understanding of, and experiences with language. This diversity in children's experiences, skills and understanding will be recognised by the staff, who will seek to work with the children and their families in the development of each individual as an able and enthusiastic language user.

In our school, we will strive to have pupils immersed in a stimulating environment of print as well as other reading materials which will be presented in an inviting and attractive way. Children will have opportunities, across all areas of the curriculum, to present ideas, experiences and understanding in ways which require a growing awareness of audience and purpose.

Progression will be seen in pupils' increasing independence in talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking, their understanding and response to what they hear, read and write.

Aims:

- ❖ To develop children's key skills and confidence in all areas of language
- ❖ To present children with a broad range of materials and experiences which will stimulate interest and provide pleasure.
- ❖ To link language with thinking processes in a range of curricular contexts in order to apply and develop their language and cognitive skills.
- ❖ To enable children to communicate effectively and confidently within a variety of forms of speech and in a range of social groupings in formal and informal contexts.
- ❖ To develop children's knowledge, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction text, and to enable them to develop preferences and make informed choices.
- ❖ To teach children to read fluently and with understanding, using reading methods that are appropriate to the material and to the writing purpose.
- ❖ To develop children's ability to use information texts and 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 and media texts as a medium for the further development of language across the curriculum.
- ❖ To develop children's thinking and problem solving skills

Talking and Listening

We recognise that talking and listening are fundamental skills upon which the educational development of our children depend. Through the development of oral and aural skills, they learn about language and this equips them to demonstrate and refine their learning.

Our overall aim is for children to become efficient language users. This will be achieved by devoting time, energy and resources to the development of oral communication. Through purposeful interaction with teachers, children will be provided with experiences that develop their skills in talking and listening.

Foundation Stage

The statutory requirements for Talking and Listening in the Foundation Stage are : (The N.I. Curriculum – Page 19)

- Attention and Listening skills
- Phonological awareness
- Social use of language
- Language and thinking
- An extended vocabulary

Key Stage One

(The N.I. Curriculum – Page 50)

'Children should be given the opportunity to listen and respond appropriately and effectively to a range of stimuli, including multimedia. They should be helped to speak clearly with clear pronunciation and intonation, appropriate to the needs of their listeners. They need to learn to use language in imaginative ways. They should be helped to structure their talk, using it to develop and clarify their thinking'.

Key Stage Two

(The N.I. Curriculum – Page 51)

'Children should be helped to develop the ability to listen and respond in a range of contexts, thinking about what has been said and the language used, and to speak coherently and confidently for a variety of purposes and audiences. They should also be given opportunities to develop their ability to communicate and capture the interest of listeners.'

A Classroom Environment which promotes talking and listening

At our school we aim to establish an environment where children feel relaxed, accepted and affirmed therefore they feel comfortable to express opinions and talk openly. All children are given an opportunity to speak and we affirm to the children that all contributions are valued. We don't always use 'hands up', but other strategies like 'think, pair, share'. In Foundation and Key Stage One, all

children get an opportunity to speak at News time every Monday morning and after Activity Based Learning sessions. In each classroom we display rules for talking and listening which are referred to frequently.

Teaching Approaches to promote T & L

- Talk is planned in many areas of the curriculum
- Experiences and activities are planned to promote a wide range of types of talk eg class discussion, role-play etc
- T & L is promoted as a social, communicative and a cognitive process
- We use pairs, small and larger groups, varying the composition and roles within groups
- The teacher consistently models oral language
- Resources and displays are used for T & L
- In Foundation and Key Stage One, we have a 'Talk Box' which is opened once a week and contains an interesting object or a question to promote talking
- In Key Stage Two, we have 'The Big Question Door' which offers two questions weekly to encourage the children to discuss and debate
- Talking is promoted during shared and guided reading lessons
- Teachers are constantly working on their questioning technique to encourage deeper thinking and improved talking
- Drama strategies are used to encourage children to engage in a range of creative and imaginative role-plays

Reading

'Children should be encouraged to develop a love of books and the disposition to read.' (N. I. Curriculum)

We strive to teach all our children to read and to enjoy a variety of texts so that they will become independent, critical, life-long readers and learners. We believe reading is a vital skill and this belief underpins the huge emphasis we place on the teaching of reading in our school.

A Classroom Environment which promotes reading

We aim to provide a classroom environment which promotes a love of books and reading where children feel inspired to read. Each classroom is a language rich environment with lots of environmental print, labels, posters, information, children's work etc. Books are given their rightful place throughout the school. Each room has a class library where books are displayed in a variety of ways. Frequently a display of topic books are easily accessible to the children. We have a library area for Foundation/Key Stage One and one for Key Stage two where we ensure there is a wide variety of suitable texts including fiction, non-fiction, comics, magazines, newspapers, leaflets etc.

Teaching Approaches to promote reading

- We ensure children are exposed to a wide range of reading material across the genres, including print and digital media
- In P.1, children will move from non-ability groups to emergent groups towards guided reading groups
- Books are levelled in Foundation and Key Stage One to provide a breadth of reading
- Children in Foundation Stage read to Level 8-9 before picking up the school's reading scheme at Stage 4
- Reading is supplemented by levelled texts to promote independent reading at home
- Children who we have identified as under achieving in reading, read from either levelled books or an alternative reading scheme – advice is sought from LTSS teacher
- Children are read to frequently in all classes

- Phonics are taught through the Jolly Phonics scheme in Foundation and Key Stage One as a key strategy to develop reading ability
- Modelled, shared and guided reading are used throughout the school
- We encourage independent reading from P3 and above
- In Key Stage Two, we have Silent Reading times
- We visit Bellaghy Bawn for regular story telling sessions and poetry sessions
- A range of novels are read from P4 and above
- Reading boxes are available for children in Foundation and Key Stage One - levelled according to ability - to encourage reading during 'spare time'
- We use classroom assistants to support reading

Reading for information

Reading for the purposes of study requires specific skills. It is linked to the skill of managing information (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities) whereby pupils access, select, record and communicate information.

We encourage children in Key Stage Two to:

- Extract information from books using the contents page or index
- Use dictionaries
- Use a search engine on the internet
- Use reference material eg encyclopaedias, atlases etc
- Scan a text to search for specific information
- Make notes, selecting what is relevant and appropriate
- Distinguish between fact and opinion

Writing

'Children should learn to communicate meaning through enjoyable writing activities, whereby they express themselves in writing both imaginatively and factually and including digital resources'

(N.I. Curriculum)

Children write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions and to present evidence of research. By developing these skills, we can equip our children to use writing across a range of curricular activities in which they are involved.

We aim to develop within our children an ability to write effectively in various forms according to purpose and audience. They will be encouraged to develop as independent writers, learning over time to use conventional spelling, punctuation, grammatical organisation and handwriting.

A Classroom Environment which promotes writing

We strive to provide an environment where children are inspired to write. We have a writing area in the Foundation/Key Stage One Playroom and writing is encouraged during play not only in the writing area but in the role play area. Word banks, dictionaries and thesauri are available for the children in all key stages. Classroom displays also contain language which children may require in their writing. Each classroom in fact is a 'writing rich' environment where teacher's writing is displayed alongside children's writing. Books are compiled of children's writing and these are displayed and used in library areas. Anthologies of poems and stories are put together and frequently Key Stage Two children write stories for Foundation children.

Teaching Approaches to promote writing

- Modelled, shared, guided and independent writing sessions take place across all age groups and all genres of writing
- Children write for themselves, for peers, for a parent, for the school web site, etc
- Children enter writing competitions
- From P4, children are encouraged to redraft their writing
- Children are encouraged to have a go and try and spell words for themselves

- Children are taught to frequently read back over their writing to make sure it makes sense
- Spelling is taught from P.2 through learning lists and also through teaching various strategies eg onset and rhyme
- Feedback is consistently given to children on their writing – usually verbal feedback

Handwriting

'From the earliest mark-making, children are showing an understanding that messages can be recorded. As they realise that print carries a constant message, they recognise the need for more conventional forms of handwriting which other people can read.'

(Handwriting in the Foundation Stage)

Children progress through a variety of developmental stages before they have the necessary hand eye co-ordination, fine motor skills and visual discrimination to produce a conventional handwriting style.

At our school, we aim to promote handwriting which develops from an early print to a joined style to an individual writing style which is neat and legible. Handwriting should demonstrate knowledge of lower and upper case letter formation, size and spacing.

A Classroom Environment which promotes writing

Throughout the classroom, we aim to have a variety of handwriting displayed. PLEASE NOTE - NOT ALL COMPUTER GENERATED. Children need to see examples of good handwriting so teachers, classroom assistants should model suitable handwriting at every opportunity. Children need to experience different fonts so that they recognise letters in different styles, so when computer generated signs, posters and labels are being produced a variety of fonts should be used.

Teaching Approaches to promote handwriting

- In P.1 children are given plenty of opportunities to develop gross and fine motor skills, hand eye co-ordination and visual discrimination through practical activities
- A good pencil grip is modelled and taught
- Letter formation is taught in a fun way - children at our school do not write rows of letters in their books!!
- Children are encouraged to form all letters correctly
- Neat handwriting is encouraged at every opportunity with focus on formation, size and spacing
- Children begin to join letters in P.4
- An individual handwriting style is encouraged by P.7

The Role of the Literacy Co-ordinator

All teachers in our school accept shared responsibility for promoting Literacy throughout the school. However, the literacy co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing this work in liaison with all staff; her primary duties include:

- ❖ The provision of leadership and direction in promoting Literacy.
- ❖ The encouragement of high standards of teaching and learning, with particular responsibility for language and thinking across the curriculum.
- ❖ The development and maintenance of a school Literacy Policy in consultation with all staff.
- ❖ The support and motivation for colleagues in ensuring that the needs and aspirations of pupils are met, language teaching is managed and organised to meet school aims, and that standards of achievement are raised.
- ❖ The setting of priorities and targets, in liaison with staff, to improve provision.
- ❖ The identification of needs in the area of language in relation to the needs of the school.
- ❖ Contribution to evaluation and monitoring procedures
- ❖ Commitment to her own on-going professional development, and subsequent informing of the rest of the staff of recent curriculum innovations and research in the area of Literacy.

The role of the class teacher

The teacher's role is to:

- to build up a caring, trusting and supportive relationship where different points of view are listened to and self-esteem is developed
- to be flexible in approaches; and to be sensitive to differences in children's learning styles and rates of learning
- to be aware of own language use and position as a role model
- to avoid negative responses to children's contributions
- to use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning in English

- to be aware of the need for careful planning progressively across the curriculum, differentiating where appropriate
- to recognise that skills need to be taught right through the school
- to keep records and monitor progress
- to review and evaluate policy and progress regularly
- to direct classroom assistants to work with individuals or small groups

Environment: organisation, methodology, management

We recognise that a sound underlying organisation and management of the classroom environment is crucial to support learning. Organisation will vary to suit the purpose, context and children involved. The needs of all pupils will be identified and met through effective curricular programmes and support arrangements.

The following range of organisational strategies will be employed:

- whole class teaching
- small group teaching (size, flexibility and composition of the groups will be given consideration – e.g. peer, ability, mixed ability, friendship groups, etc.)
- paired work – similar ability, less experienced pupil working with more experienced pupil
- individual – one-to-one tuition by teacher or classroom assistant
- independent work
- due to the nature of the composite class, eg a weak P4 may work with P3

Attention will be given to classroom layout, wall displays, access to a diverse range of resources (fiction, non-fiction, ICT, media texts, resources from other cultures) and the provision of library areas, writing areas and listening areas with appropriate equipment.

We are aware that progress is enhanced when teachers are sensitive to differences in learning styles. Since children learn in different ways and at different rates, a flexible approach which encourages children's active

engagement in their learning through problem solving will extend the pupils' use of language and promote independence. Teachers will have realistically high expectations and will ensure that all children understand what is expected of them by making children aware of the intended learning outcomes.

As literacy permeates all areas of the curriculum cross-curricular opportunities will be used to the best advantage to develop all aspects of talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking. Children will have opportunities to develop talking and listening skills through a range of oral and practical activities, including drama and role play. Teachers will employ a range of teaching approaches which will meet the needs of individual pupils, groups and whole classes.

The following methods will be used:

- modelled reading and writing
- shared reading and writing
- guided reading and writing
- provision of scaffolds or frameworks
- involvement of the pupils in self-monitoring of achievements.

The emphasis will be on promoting children's learning through the provision of quality, concrete, active experiences across the curriculum. Planning for cross-curricular activities and the use of a variety of stimuli will ensure that language is used in different contexts, for a range of purposes and audiences. All tasks will have clearly identified outcomes and will be matched to pupils' abilities and interests. Differentiation will be by input, output and by task.

Planning, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation:

Whole school planning makes effective use of the potential contribution of other curricular areas and ensures continuity and progression between year groups, classes and Key Stages. Regular communication thus takes place between staff at all levels of planning.

Planning is done at six-weekly intervals, and individual teachers also prepare shorter term weekly notes which detail the day-to day administration of the language programme. The Literacy Co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing planning, and will monitor progress through six-weekly planning, which will identify specific learning outcomes.

The children's progress and achievement is measured using a range of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment procedures, which both monitor progress and inform future planning.

These include:

- Criterion-referenced tests

- Standardised tests
- CCEA Baseline Assessment on entry to P1
- Screening and diagnostic tests
- Statutory end of Key Stage Assessment
- Classroom observation

Individual records of progress are kept by each class teacher and forwarded to the subsequent teacher. Attainment in standardised tests and end of Key Stage Assessments are recorded and filed in the office. Progress is reported to parents verbally and in written form twice annually. Children are encouraged to assess and evaluate their own performance throughout the school. Their work will be marked positively and constructively in relation to their own previous performance (*see Marking Policy for further details*).

Children's progress will be monitored in relation to the specified learning outcomes. Plans may be modified according to pupil progress. Staff meetings may include discussions of general progress, approaches to planning and analysis of samples of children's work.

Resources and their deployment

The guiding principle for the deployment of resources is one of ensuring full access to the curriculum for all pupils. Materials will be provided which will be appropriate to the range of children's interests and abilities. Extension materials will be available for the more able, while reinforcement of core skills and concepts will require appropriately designed resources for the less able. We aim to ensure that all pupils are confident in use a wide range of resources effectively, e.g. audio-visual aids, hardware for information and communications technology and printed materials.

The variety of resources available include:

- A wide range of book and non-book materials and tasks to suit pupils of differing abilities and interests
- A range of ICT resources, including Interactive White Boards
- An adequate stock of books, magazines and other materials in the school library which reflect the interests and needs of all pupils.

- A variety of appropriate games and activities which will be integrated into day-to-day teaching and learning – many of which are home made
- Commercially-produced graded reading scheme materials
- Levelled Reading Material
- An appropriately stocked Special Educational Needs resource base.

All resources will be well-designed and kept in well-managed storage and retrieval systems. Children will be able to gain easy access thus ensuring the promotion of autonomy in the children's use of resources.

Cross-curricular Issues

A central concern of all our teaching is to develop pupils' abilities to think, explore, organise and communicate. The effective use of language is crucial to successful learning in all subjects and is detailed in policies and planning in the other areas of study. Each area of the curriculum offers different opportunities and challenges for extending children's experiences. Many of the requirements of the Literacy and Language curriculum can be approached through other areas of the curriculum. Children will learn to be literate through encounters with a rich diversity of texts. Children will develop increasingly sophisticated understandings about the nature, structure and purpose of texts if they are presented with opportunities to engage with a range of different genre and forms across the curriculum.

In addition to the opportunities provided in Literacy lessons, children will observe, generalise, theorise and test their hypotheses about language across all curricular areas. They will also have opportunities for purposeful engagements with those who are relative experts and peers. Children will therefore be encouraged to use their literacy skills actively and independently in a range of relevant and meaningful contexts.

The Role of I.C.T. in Supporting and Developing Literacy

We aim to make maximum use of I.C.T. across the curriculum to promote the pupils' literacy skills, as well as developing competence in I.C.T. skills. This involves the use of computers, the Interactive White Board and also the possibilities offered by the wide range of audio-visual materials, graphics, radio and television broadcasts available.

Pupils will have ample opportunities to gain confidence in the use of I.C.T., for example in using word processors for drafting, using spreadsheets and databases, and using CD-ROM and the Internet to research and communicate.

The children's work will be used to enhance the school's website.,
www.bellaghyps.co.uk

The range of I.C.T. resources available include:

- Desktops and Laptops with access to C2K network
- Interactive White Boards
- CD-ROMs
- Internet access
- C.D. players with variety of spoken texts
- T.V., Video, D.V.D. player with variety of material

ICT will be used to enhance literacy skills, not just within the programme of study for Literacy and Language, but as an integral feature of all programmes of study.

Special Educational Needs

(For specific details refer to School Policy for Supporting Children with SEN)

Pupils who are thought to have Special Educational Needs are identified children at the earliest opportunity through the use of the CCEA Baseline Assessment and other diagnostic testing eg PM Benchmarking. . Classroom observation by teaching staff, however, will be the primary means of identifying pupils. They may also be brought to the school's attention by parents themselves or by other agencies such as the Health and Social Services departments.

A small number of children throughout the school have difficulties in relation to language and literacy skills. These include speech problems, specific language difficulties, poor language experience, reluctant readers/writers and visual and auditory problems.

All teachers have responsibility for identifying and providing for children with Special Educational Needs in their classes. Diagnostic tests will be used appropriately to aid understanding of specific areas of difficulty, and to inform remediation. The SENCo will provide advice and support for all staff and will liaise with class teachers, Peripatetic support staff (when appropriate), and other relevant professionals, particularly when drawing up Education Plans and monitoring progress. Parents will be regularly informed about their children's difficulties, the programme of support being provided and the progress being made, as detailed in the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (1998).

Parental and Community Involvement

We believe that the education of our pupils is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents, pupils and the wider community. Regular and positive communications will be made between teachers and parents, on a formal and informal basis.

We aim to harness the support of the home and to stimulate greater support in order to enhance the pupils' literacy development. Homework is seen as an integral and co-ordinated element of the school's practice. (*see Homework Policy for details*).

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include:

- Parent meetings - pre-school and early Key Stage 1
- Information/ workshop sessions (e.g. at intake)
- School performances, e.g. Christmas show, assemblies, other religious events
- Visitors to the school, e.g. storytellers, visiting theatre groups, poets, writers, school nurse, dentist, fire service, etc.
- School trips

Equal Opportunities Statement

All staff will aim to treat every child as an individual, and will respect their individuality, regardless of gender, academic or physical ability or socio-economic background. The staff will be aware of stereotyping in their selection of resources. They are also aware of gender needs in the context of the current focus on the underachievement of boys, and will seek to monitor the situation within the school.

Policy Review

This Literacy Policy will be reviewed annually by the staff.

MLR - March 2009

***Reviewed by the
School Board
of Governors in
October 2009***

