

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL
MAGHERAFELT



LITERACY
POLICY STATEMENT

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Rationale

At Holy Family Primary School we aim to provide a supportive, stimulating and secure environment where children are encouraged to express themselves and where their contributions are valued. We will provide for the language development of pupils and will develop their ability to use language to think, to explore, to recognise and communicate their ideas.

Principles

- At Holy Family Primary School we see literacy as a right for all pupils.
- It is the responsibility of all teachers for the development of literacy.
- As teachers we develop literacy across all areas of the curriculum.

Aims

- To raise the standard of literacy
- To enable pupils to express and communicate meaning in spoken language, listening to and interpreting what others say and matching style and response to audience, context and purpose.
- To provide pupils with a range of relevant and purposeful opportunities to develop their ability to read, understand and engage with various types of texts for enjoyment and learning.
- To enable children to communicate using written language effectively, making and shaping text appropriately, according to context, purpose, reader or audience.
- To encourage the use of ICT to support the teaching of literacy.
- To encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning.

Role of the teacher

- **Model:** as a skilled user of language, the teacher's role is the central element in fostering positive attitudes towards literacy.
- **Facilitator:** providing a supportive and stimulating environment, organising purposeful activities and enabling children to develop literacy skills.
- **Initiator:** providing a variety of resources and opportunities for a wide range of balanced activities to encourage the development of skills in talking, listening, reading and writing.
- **Monitor:** observing and recording the development of skills in literacy.
- **Assessor:** evaluating and assessing the development of skills in literacy.

TALKING AND LISTENING

Rationale

At Holy Family Primary School we aim for our children to become efficient language users where they can speak fluently, clearly and with confidence. Talking and listening are fundamental skills upon which the educational development of our children depends. Through purposeful interaction with teachers and other children, opportunities will be provided for children to talk about and share their experiences that develop their thinking.

Classroom Environment

At Holy Family Primary School we aim to provide a stimulating classroom environment where children will feel happy and relaxed. Children will be encouraged to listen attentively and to respect the opinions and views of others.

Aims

- To encourage children's active engagement in their learning through problem solving, extending use of language and promoting independence.
- To encourage children to speak fluently, clearly and with confidence.
- To help children to listen attentively and with understanding.
- To provide children with the opportunities to talk about their experiences and share these experiences with other children and their teacher.
- To encourage children to share their feelings with other children.
- To help children to listen attentively to and respect the opinions and views of others.
- To learn to use language in ways appropriate to different situations.
- To ensure that children are challenged to talk for different purposes and audiences.
- To interact with children to promote the development of their skills and their thinking.

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

In order to facilitate pupil's various learning styles a variety of approaches are used at Holy Family Primary School.

- Teachers ensure a well resourced classroom with a happy atmosphere for talk.
- Teachers model oral language.
- Different types of talk are planned for in all areas of the curriculum.
- A range of experiences and activities are provided to promote different types of talk.
- Talking and listening for social, communicative and cognitive purposes is valued.
- Classroom organisation and management ensure use of pairs, small and large groups with varying composition and roles.
- Talk is stimulated through T.V., radio, ICT, book displays, interest tables etc.

READING

Rationale

Our aim at Holy Family Primary School is that children will learn to read, will enjoy a wide variety of texts and will become independent, critical, life long readers and learners.

Classroom Environment

Each classroom has a library corner/area where a wide variety of texts are attractively displayed. Soft seating areas close to the library corner/area will be provided, where appropriate, to make children feel relaxed and comfortable when reading. Children's own work, individual and class made books will be displayed in the class library. Teachers will endeavour to display a wide range of books – both fiction and non-fiction, big books, magazines, leaflets and posters making the class library a place where all children feel inspired to read.

Aims

- To foster and develop an interest in reading by providing a variety of fiction, non-fiction and poetry books.
- To provide a wide range of reading materials both fiction and non-fiction designed to develop the children's reading abilities and to encourage choice from an early age.
- To assist children to enjoy reading.
- To help children to develop fluency in reading.
- To use a variety of strategies to assist children in the development of pre-reading and reading skills necessary to be competent readers.
- To assist the children to develop their comprehension skills at a level suited to their age and ability.
- To encourage the children to develop their study skills and learn to utilise books and other resources as sources of information which can assist learning.

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

In order to facilitate pupils' various learning styles, a variety of approaches are used at Holy Family Primary School:

- Regular reading to children in all classes P1-P7
- Modelled reading by the teacher
- Shared reading with big books – both commercial and class made
- Guided reading
- Group novels
- Developing phonological awareness through rhyme
- Developing awareness of picture, reading, textual and phonic cues
- Periods of uninterrupted, sustained, silent reading
- Regular visits to the local library

WRITING

Rationale

We, the staff, at Holy Family Primary School believe that writing is an essential tool in the learning process. 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 the range of curricular activities in which they are involved.

Our aim is that our children will develop the ability to write effectively in various forms according to purpose and audience.

Classroom Environment

The classroom atmosphere is one where children are motivated to give of their best. Writing areas are set up in foundation and key stage one classrooms where children can experiment and use a variety of pens/pencils/markers and crayons to write with. At the same time children are encouraged to share their writing with others, to draft and redraft their work through positive discussion with the teacher and/or others. The children are encouraged to work in groups to complete written work.

Aims

- To provide a writing area where children can write freely using a variety of materials.
- To help children to develop writing as an effective means of communicating with others.
- To help children to write for a purpose.
- To assist children to write in a variety of forms.
- To encourage children to write for different audiences.
- To develop the conventions of writing within the context of the children's written work.
- To develop and encourage accurate spelling through the use of try pads, personal word banks, dictionaries and the use of a word processor.
- To enable the children to enjoy writing and to share their writing with others.

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

In order to facilitate pupils' various learning styles, a variety of approaches are used at Holy Family Primary School:

- Modelled writing
- Shared writing
- Children write for a variety of audiences - themselves, their peers, the school
- Learning intentions are displayed so that children know the purpose of their writing
- Discussion and planning for writing tasks
- Various forms of writing are displayed and discussed e.g. letters, diaries, lists etc.
- Drafting and redrafting
- Collaborative writing
- Constructive marking to encourage improvement

Continuity and progression

Children in foundation stage and K.S.1. read from a variety of books from different reading schemes. Each book is levelled and children move from one level to the next after testing – teachers take a running record using a bench mark book on the level the child is reading at to test their ability before moving them to the next level. Teachers in foundation stage and K.S.1. keep running records of children's progress and record their level of reading.

Children in K.S.2. are grouped for reading, each group of children reading from a novel appropriate to their level of ability. Teachers in K.S.2. keep a record of novels read by the children and assess each child's reading regularly.

Different forms of writing are taught in each year group to ensure continuity and progression of writing.

Standardised tests are used in both key stages and assessment units are used in years 4 and 7.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Monitoring and evaluating are integral parts of the teaching and learning in our school and are the responsibility of all members of staff. The literacy co-ordinator oversees this, both formally and informally using the following:

- Book scoops – feedback given to teachers by co-ordinator
- Curriculum team meetings
- Inter year group meetings
- Wall displays
- Weekly planning by each year group
- Six weekly planning and evaluations by the teacher
- Standardised reading test scores
- End of key stage assessment results
- Team teaching
- Informal chats with colleagues

Use of ICT in supporting and developing literacy

We aim to make maximum use of ICT across the curriculum to promote literacy skills in our pupils as well as developing competence in ICT skills. This involves the use of computers and also the possibilities offered by the wide range of high quality audio-visual materials, graphics, radio and television broadcasts now available.

Pupils will have ample opportunities to gain confidence in the use of ICT, for example, in using word processing for drafting and redrafting, using spreadsheets and databases, using CD-ROMS and the internet to research and discuss their work.

The following list indicates the variety of ICT resources that we have at our disposal:

- A range of C2K software which contributes to language development
- Internet access
- Word processors
- CD-ROMS
- Databases
- Spreadsheets
- Audio visual materials
- A range of texts available in electronic form

Parental Involvement

At Holy Family Primary School we believe that parents play a vital role in the education of their children. It is important that they are kept up to date with the many changes in literacy within our school. This is firstly done via newsletters. It is also important that parents play an active role in the development of literacy. They are made aware of any literacy developments through parent evenings, where teachers and outside speakers outline changes in literacy or new teaching approaches. All parental involvement is for the children's benefit and is greatly welcomed within our school.

Equal opportunities

We, the staff, at Holy Family Primary School are aware of the research that suggests boys under achieve in literacy and are less likely to achieve the higher levels in end of key stage assessments. We will endeavour to provide more appropriate resources to avoid stereotyping and will give equal access to materials, teacher time and attention. Teachers are also very aware of our EAL children whose first language is not English. We aim to raise standards among all children equally.