

HARMONY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Language and Literacy Policy 2024

Our VISION

Our Vision is to nurture and develop aspirational, life-long learners, using core values and continually growing and embedding strong community links.

INTRODUCTION

In Harmony Primary School we value every pupil and the contribution they make to learning. As a result, we aim to ensure that every child achieves success and that they are enabled to develop their skills in accordance with their level of ability. Language and Literacy focuses on developing each child's ability to understand and use language as an integral part of learning in all areas in order to interact effectively with the world around them, to express themselves creatively and to communicate confidently (talking and listening, reading and writing) using a variety of skills and media. Language and Literacy are fundamental prerequisites for thinking, learning, and interacting in personal, social, and work contexts throughout life. Literacy is therefore a key to learning as well as a key to enjoyment and personal growth (NI Curriculum).

Language and Literacy vision: It is our vision that Language and Literacy in Harmony Primary equips all pupils with the skills and enthusiasm to become lifelong learners; whilst striving to challenge each child to reach their full potential.

AIMS

The aims of this policy are to:

- address the whole school audience.
- set out principles which aim to ensure the quality of teaching and learning.
- ensure the staff is aware of the teaching approaches associated with Language and Literacy
- identify the roles, which each member of staff has in the promotion of Language and Literacy.

GENERAL KEY PRINCIPLES FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

In Harmony Primary School we aim for all children to be able to:

- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to problem solve, self-monitor and correct;
- have an interest in books and read for enjoyment;
- have an interest in words and their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms;
- understand a range of text types and genres – be able to write in a variety of styles and forms, appropriate to the situation;
- develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness, and critical awareness;
- have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Statutory requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of Language and Literacy are laid out in the N Ireland Curriculum for English (CCEA, 2007) and include:

In the Foundation Stage children should be given opportunities to:

- talk and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication.

At Key Stage One (Years 3 and 4), children should learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage Two (Years 5-7), children should learn to change the way they talk and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

PLANNING

Through our planning structure, we ensure that we provide a broad and balanced curriculum for Language and Literacy in Harmony Primary School. Throughout the year, staff meet in Key Stages or as a whole school and discuss any necessary changes to long-term planning in relation to any new Literacy initiatives. Data also plays a key role in informing how we plan at this level.

Teachers in Harmony Primary School have high expectations for all children and strive to provide learning experiences to enable all children to achieve to the best of their ability. To this end, teachers plan thoroughly, differentiating to meet the needs of all pupils.

- Planning for the Literacy curriculum consists of work in the following areas:
 - Talking and Listening
 - Reading
 - Writing
- Teaching and Learning in each area is structured and follows a planned progression, building on what has gone before
- Whole-school planning is done collaboratively to ensure there are no gaps or unnecessary overlaps in that progression thus ensuring continuity as the children move through the school
- Planning is in place as follows:
 - **Long-Term** Yearly overviews of topics and activities are in place for each strand of Literacy, showing continuity and progression throughout Foundation, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2.
 - **Medium-Term** Teachers produce Half-Termly detailing specific learning intentions and success criteria for Literacy across all curricular areas. Evaluations of Half-Termly/monthly Literacy plans are compiled within year-groups and reviewed by the Subject Co-Ordinator and School Principal. These evaluations are used to inform future planning.

- **Short-Term** Each member of staff produces their own Short-Term Planner document (weekly plan) which outlines daily activities, resources required, and differentiation as appropriate, which are relevant to their specific class and its needs.
- Assessment, both informal and formal, allows the teacher to accurately gauge the child's present level of understanding so as to allow appropriate future work to be planned.

CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

Careful planning ensures that pupils have experiences across the four modes of communication in Literacy. Progression through the levels of attainment is ensured by using the Primary Language Framework guidance material for Literacy from the EA with the content taken from the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Continuity is ensured by the whole staff agreement on:

- Compatibility of teaching approaches;
- Development of schemes of work;
- Appropriate teaching strategies;
- Classroom organisation;
- Resources and materials;
- Assessment and recording procedures;
- Co-Ordinator Action Plans and subsequent training/dissemination.

The school provides a balanced Literacy programme across all four modes of communication (Talking, Listening, Reading, and Writing). We focus on developing each child's ability to understand and use language, both spoken and written, across all areas of learning. We aim to develop skills which will enable children to interact effectively with others, to express themselves creatively and communicate confidently. Children are engaged in active learning strategies through independent, paired and group activities. Through text, sentence and word level work, children develop a range of strategies which enable them to read and write independently for different audiences and a variety of purposes. Throughout the school, a structured Linguistic Phonics programme is in place to develop children's decoding skills for reading, writing, and spelling and the teaching and learning of High Frequency.

CULTURE OF IMPROVEMENT

A school culture of achievement, improvement, and ambition exists with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the best of their ability. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are shared in our classrooms through age-appropriate means (such as the use of WALT and WILF, etc.) so that pupils understand what they are learning and how they can succeed in their work. Work is differentiated so that pupils can feel confident completing tasks whilst also being suitably challenged within their learning where necessary. Thorough marking of work allows pupils to be praised for success and individual feedback to be given when necessary. The use of Assessment for Learning means individual targets can be set to help pupils strive for personal goals. Motivational rewards are also used to encourage children to reach their full potential.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and it is a continuous process. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to assess all pupils in their class on an ongoing basis. Teachers use formative, summative, and diagnostic assessment methods. In Harmony Primary School, we are continually assessing our pupils, and recording progress, thus allowing us to match the correct level of work to the needs of the children.

Information for assessment is gathered in the following ways:

- Pupil Observations;
- Communication with Pupils;
- Marking Work;
- Weekly 'Check Up';
- Lexia baseline assessments;
- Accelerated Reader Data;
- Running records;
- PTE/CAT

We use data compiled from GL Assessment packages from PTE and CAT diagnostic tests to inform our future planning. Assessment in Foundation Stage involves regular observations and written records being made on each child by the teacher and classroom assistant. The adults are looking for how the child's knowledge, understanding, and skills are developing through practical and written Literacy activities. On a daily, weekly, and six-weekly basis these observations are reviewed and action is taken to ensure future planning supports the learning for each child. Throughout the year informal phonics and key word testing is carried out to monitor progress further.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In Harmony Primary School, teachers are aware that pupils have different experiences, interests, and strengths, which will influence the way in which they learn. We believe that all children can learn in Language and Literacy and endeavour to use a wide range of teaching strategies to suit individual needs as they arise. We use a range of strategies to help children with difficulties in Literacy lessons.

Once teachers have identified pupils with specific difficulties within Literacy that require special help, they must employ reasonable adjustments within their own classroom setting. Then, working alongside the SEND Co-Ordinators, teachers should establish targets for individual children. The SEND Policy applies to all areas of Literacy and the individual learning needs of each child must be reflected within the Personal Learning Plans (PLPs).

Harmony Primary School places a strong emphasis on 'pupil voice' where they are involved in the discussions surrounding their teaching and learning and can provide input to their future targets and attainment goals.

We are committed to meeting the needs of gifted and talented children through specific differentiation and extension groups in the classroom setting.

Teachers must utilise Classroom Assistants or extra adults in their classrooms to provide support and help where appropriate to these pupils.

Early and effective interventions and support are in place to meet the additional needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning. In Harmony Primary School, we recognise the

need to cater for children with Special Educational Need. These needs are reflected within PLPs set by the child's teacher and discussed with the SEND Co-Ordinator and the child's parents. Tasks are approached in such a way that all children have achievable goals. Work is differentiated to assist all children in terms of:

- Expected Learning Outcomes
- Tasks
- Teaching Methods
- Resources.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs may be identified by:

- Class Teacher Observations;
- Standardised Test Scores/Data Analysis;
- Difficulties with General Classwork;
- Reports from Transferring Schools.

Under-achievers and low achievers receive one-to-one or small group interventions appropriate to their needs. Where appropriate or relevant, these include:

- Use of Lexia Programme;
- Reading Partnership;
- Learning Support Withdrawal Groups.

Classwork and Homework are differentiated to meet the individual needs of these children. Some pupils may also receive support from external agencies to assist with their specific educational needs. The school has strong lines of communication with parents. This communication exists through consultations with class teacher(s), SEND Co-Ordinators, and Learning Support teachers.

ICT

ICT should be seen as an integral part of Language and Literacy and should be used to help enhance our pupils' learning as per the ICT Policy.

ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CO-ORDINATOR

The Literacy co-ordinator is responsible, in consultation with the Principal, Literacy Team, teachers, parents and governors for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- Monitoring and evaluating literacy:-
 - pupil progress;
 - management and analysis of relevant data;
 - provision of literacy (including intervention and support programmes);
 - the quality of the learning environment; and
 - the deployment and provision of support staff
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Maintain a Co-Ordinator's file of evidence/minutes of meetings
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent literacy developments

- Maintaining contact with all concerned: Principal, the senior leadership team, teachers, other staff, parents, and pupils
- Ensuring channels of communication are open and active with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, EA, CCEA, etc.

HOMEWORK

Homework is used to support the learning process through the school's homework policy and to reinforce work completed in school or to allow children to further investigate a topic or concept.

RESOURCES

Teachers draw upon a variety of resources to support Language and Literacy. 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;
- Commercially-produced guided reading scheme materials;
- Collins Treasure House Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation pupil activity books;
- School-produced booklets, linguistic phonics materials and other phonological, key word and social sight word spelling and vocabulary lists;
- Interactive whiteboards, flipcharts, whiteboards, markers;
- Magnetic letters and boards;
- A range of ICT resources (see ICT policy);
- Audio-visual materials;
- An adequate stock of books, and other materials in the school library which reflect the interests and needs of all pupils;
- Accelerated Reading books;
- A variety of appropriate games and activities which will be integrated into teaching and learning;
- Dictionaries and thesaurus;
- Displays in classrooms, corridors and assembly hall.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Teachers are encouraged to develop and disseminate good practice in the teaching and learning of Language and Literacy through:

- PRSD
- Observations
- Whole School and Key Stage Staff Meetings where 'in-school' training is provided
- Local Schools within 'Cluster Groups'
- Through annual appraisals with the Principal and the PRSD process, teachers are given the opportunity to discuss their own personal development and receive feedback where good practice is identified and encouraged.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

Monitoring and evaluating are fundamental parts of the teaching and learning in our school and are the responsibility of all the teachers. The Literacy Co-Ordinator and SLT oversee the progress made towards meeting the targets set out in their Action Plans. Progress is monitored through:

- The Co-Ordinator carrying out 'book scoops'
- Displays of work

- Informal discussions with staff
- Formal discussions with staff through Literacy Curricular Teams
- Discussions with pupils
- Staff Meetings with a Literacy focus
- Review of teachers' planning by Co-Ordinators and SLT
- Examining Standardised Assessment Data (PTE/CAT)
- Reviewing Whole-School Progression, ensuring that continuity, development, progression, and differentiation are evident.
- Parents'/Pupils' Questionnaires

The Literacy Action Plan is evaluated at the end of each academic year and used to establish future areas for school development.

We acknowledge and appreciate the support of the Board of Governors in all aspects of school life. They are kept up to date with standards of achievement in Literacy through annual meetings with Co-Ordinators.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We believe that the education of our pupils is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents, pupils, external agencies (where appropriate) 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 assessment policy (see Homework and Assessment Policy for details).

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include:

- Information sessions (e.g. P1 intake, parent/teacher meetings, newsletters);
- School events, e.g. Christmas show, Carol Service, P7 Show;
- Involvement in World Book Day and the annual Book Fair;
- PTA;
- Parent reading partners
- Supporting homework, reading and talking to children at home;
- School trips;
- School website;
- Visits from storytellers, authors, drama groups;
- Links with pre and post-primary schools for transition;
- Connecting to local businesses, the local library, school nurse, dentist, the PSNI, Fire Service, etc; and
- Staff development/information sessions, e.g. by peripatetic services, Educational Service, Speech and Language.

Language and Literacy Team – Led by J. Hughes
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