

Literacy & English Policy

November 2021

Literacy Policy

Aims and Objectives

The study of Literacy develops children’s abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

The school's aim is that each pupil should achieve the highest level of performance of which he or she is capable in every the aspect of Literacy Language.

In accordance with the Curriculum for Excellence strategy this school believes that literate children should:

‘read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding’

The aims of Literacy are:

* to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
* to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
* to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
* to develop children’s abilities to reflect on their own and others’ contributions and the language used;
* have a suitable, technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing;
* to enable children to evaluate their own and others’ contributions through a range of drama activities;
* to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
* be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual and visual ) to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes;
* have an interest in words and their meanings and a growing vocabulary;
* understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately;
* to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
* through reading and writing, develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness;
* to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
* to know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in non-fiction, fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot;
* to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
* to understand the purposes of non - fiction
* to increase the children’s ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work;
* to have fluent and legible handwriting.

Teaching and learning style

At Aberuthven Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in Literacy lessons, as recommended by the Curriculum for Excellence. Our principal aim is to develop children’s knowledge, skills, and understanding in Literacy. We do this through a daily lesson that has a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses and phonics to support their work. Children use ICT in Literacy lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. We encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

There are children of differing ability and age in all classes in our Primary Schools. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We use classroom assistants to support some children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

# Organisation

There needs to be explicit links made between reading and writing with the features of a genre explored in high quality texts

# Teaching Method

Whole class teaching is crucial in teaching and expertly modelling all aspects of Literacy. This should involve plenty of opportunities for children to discuss responses with a partner and give their feedback on whiteboards.

Literacy Planning

Class teachers complete a weekly plan for the teaching of Literacy, which have learning outcomes and it includes details of what each group of children will be learning. The class teacher keeps these individual plans. Termly and weekly plans are drawn up by individual teachers and monitored by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher and named co-ordinators take the lead in policy development with all staff involved in the consultation.

# Talking and Listening

This is developed through a variety of activities and experiences. Opportunities are provided for children to talk and listen on both formal and informal settings. Strategies include:

* The use of drama and role-play.
* Regular story times when the teacher or other adult reads aloud to the class, and discusses the text with them.
* Class small group or paired discussions or debates.
* Design for Learning talking and learning tools including gestures which are displayed on classroom walls.
* Showing times or news sharing when children are encouraged to speak to classmates.
* Interviewing carried out as part of a topic or project.
* Children participating in class assemblies, school productions etc.
* Individual use of a variety of multi – media devices such as audio books.
* Talk Homework & Whole School Talk Topic

It is our intention to develop the pupil's ability to speak with confidence, clarity and fluency in a variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and for a range of purposes of increasing complexity and demand; and correspondingly to develop their capacities to listen with attention and understanding in a similar variety of situations and for a similar range of purposes.

The school recognises that talk is central to much learning.

# Reading

We aim to develop pupil's fluency in, and understanding of a wide range of written texts to promote confidence in themselves as readers and to become aware of reading as a source of communication, information, research, interest and pleasure.

The school believes that children become successful readers by learning to use a range of strategies to get at the meaning of a text and that these strategies can be taught at three different levels; word, grammar and text. The teacher’s guides for Story World and Literacy World provide very useful specific guidance for the teaching of reading strategies . The learning outcomes should always be shared with the children.

We also acknowledge the need for a wide range of books and so provide a variety of fiction, poetry, playscripts and non-fiction.

The school provides different types of books including Big Books and Novels for Shared reading, Guided Group Reading using Literacy World ,Story World along with Individual reading books (Oxford Reading Tree or Novel etc).

Shared Reading

This is when the whole class group (not only one year group) are taught the features of the genre that is to be taught

* All aspects of reading can be modelled by the teacher.
* The text ( short story, excerpt or novel) should ideally be slightly challenging for the class but this is not critical as the teacher is leading and the children can and should read along.
* Not simply reading out loud, specific thing such as comprehension, use of language, features of text types need to taught systematically.
* Other aspects of reading can be taught ie sentence and word level work in a real context.

Guided Reading

This is much more focussed with a very close match of ability to book. The strategies are taught to a group who are very similar in ability. This should be linked wherever possible to the genre and outcomes being taught in the shared reading and writing sessions, so the children are supported to achieve the learning outcomes shared at the beginning of the session.

Independent Reading

This is when children practise their reading skills and can be done in school with an SLA or parent helper or at home with parents.

**Spelling**

We feel it is important to pay close attention to punctuation, grammar and spelling to enable children become more fluent and confident in all aspects of their Literacy work. It is vitally important that children are able to express their ideas and information coherently and fluently.

A deep understanding of phonics is needed by all children to ensure there is clear progression and the teaching of all of the phonemes should be carried out in a very pacy, clear and systematic way. The Single Word Spelling Test is used from Primary 1 upwards. Children are assessed formally using this scheme twice a year, an initial assessment in August and again in January. The recognition and spelling of High Frequency words is also taught systematically and are incorporated where possible into pupils weekly Spelling words.

All pupils receive 10 words for spelling homework each week. Pupils are then assessed on the depth of the knowledge of these words on the following Friday, through a test or dictation exercise.

Tricky words need also to be taught in a systematic and interactive way, so that children are able to understand and practise these.

The use of correct spelling is developed and taught through specific marking of work, regular learning of spelling lists according to ability and the encouragement of dictionary use.

Every child at Aberuthven Primary School will be encouraged to use **Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check** as a methodology to help with the learning of spelling. Other methods will be employed according to need.

# Handwriting

Younger children and those less confident are encouraged to refine their fine motor skills using sand, finger paint, a variety of media as well as daily practise of pattern flow and letter formation. This should be linked to spelling and phonic work when possible and should involve short, sharp teaching sessions.

They are taught to hold a pencil correctly, to consider writing from left to right, starting and finishing letters correctly and letter size, shape and spacing. Children in the Early Years class are taught to form their letters according to the Jolly Phonics scheme and older pupils (from P3) are given the opportunity to develop legible handwriting in a joined up cursive style.

There is a school handwriting Policy available to all teachers.

# Writing

We aim to encourage pupils to write in different contexts for a range of purposes and audiences, and to organise the content of what is written in ways appropriate to the purpose, and to use spelling, punctuation and syntax accurately and with confidence, as well as insuring continued support in developing mature, fluent handwriting.

Writing is developed through the provision of a wide range of contexts for writing, including book-making activities. A process of drafting and redrafting for a purpose, incorporating the use of the word processor is encouraged and opportunities for collaborative writing are provided.

We use Write to the Top as a tool to help children practise vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation aspects of their writing and further guidance is provided in the teaching file.

We use the following colours when marking and moderating children’s work.

* Red – Connectives
* Yellow – Punctuation
* Blue – Vocabulary
* Green – Openers

**Grammar**

Pupils take part in at least one Grammar lesson each week to further their understanding of sentence structure, use of tense, types of vocabulary, writing techniques etc using the Jolly Grammar Scheme from Primary 1-3 and the Collins Primary Grammar Scheme from Primary 4 onwards.

By the end of each School year pupils have been taught how to:

P1- Form all letters and have an awareness of sentence structure.

P2- Use Capitals, Full Stops, be aware of different parts of speech, be aware of more complex punctuation and construct simple sentences.

P3-Reliably construct more complex sentences, showing awareness and use of openers and connectives, punctuate simple sentences and attempt the use of more complex punctuation.

P4- Identify types of words eg. Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Prepositions, confidently use variety of punctuation, structure their writing in paragraphs, identify the singular/plural of a word, use adjectives to add description. Identify all types of punctuation and state how they are used correctly within a piece of writing.

P5- Use various types of punctuation in their writing and begin to experiment with this, identify minor sentences, use direct speech correctly and write using the correct tense.

P6-Add a variety of techniques successfully to their writing, including similes and metaphors. Use a variety of more complex punctuation in their writing and use more sophisticated vocabulary.

P7- Use confidently techniques such as simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia and personification in their writing. Use of more sophisticated vocabulary, connectives and openers. Varied sentence structure and awareness and use of emotive language.

**By the end of the Second Level children should be able to…**

* Plan pieces of writing
* Edit own work in terms of sense, vocabulary, meaning, punctuation, spelling
* Extend sentences by using a range of connectives or clauses
* Write sustained stories with appropriate structure
* Develop characters in own writing
* Develop setting in own writing
* Use writer techniques and devices
* Organise own writing into paragraphs
* Choose and use appropriate styles for audience / genre
* Present work appropriately
* Have had access to working within the full range of genres – as highlighted in the curriculum map.

**TEACHING SEQUENCE FOR WRITING**

1. Shared reading
2. Sentence level work and defining principles
3. Shared writing

* demonstration
* teacher scribing
* supported composition

4. Independent writing and guided writing

1. Review

**SHARED WRITING**

A classroom process where the teacher models the writing process for children. Free from the physical difficulties of writing, children can observe, and subsequently be involved in, planning, composition, redrafting, editing and publishing through the medium of the teacher. Shared writing is interactive in nature and is appropriate for teaching all forms and genres.

**WHAT IS SHARED WRITING?**

It is a sequence of whole-class teaching, beginning with exploring published texts; moving on to relevant features of grammar, punctuation or style; and culminating in Shared Writing. There are three levels of Shared Writing:

**Demonstration**, when the teacher demonstrates how to write particular sort of text or in particular style, giving a running commentary on what he or she is doing, and why. The teacher

* rehearses each sentence orally before writing, voicing and discussing choices about vocabulary, word order, and so on – demonstrating to pupils that composition requires reflection
* writes the sentence, drawing attention to features like punctuation and how they contribute to the effect
* reads back what she has written to check how it sounds – and perhaps amend the piece as it progresses.

**Scribing**, when the teacher involves the pupils in word choices and composition. Using the same technique of **rehearse**-**write**-**reread**, she scribes their suggestions and shares the running commentary with them.

**Supported writing**, when each pair of pupils has a whiteboard and marker. Every so often the teacher throws responsibility for a sentence or so to the class, to have a go on their whiteboards. In their pair, the children **rehearse-write-reread**, then hold up the board for the teacher to see. On the basis of what the class produces, the teacher can decide how much more shared work is necessary.

Once pupils have been given a thorough grounding in *how* to write through the Shared Writing lesson, they’re ready to move on to independent writing, while the teacher works more closely with a group.

**MODELLING WRITING**

Teachers can model writing by ‘thinking aloud’ to show how writers make decisions about such things as:

* what to write
* how and where to start
* spaces between words and paragraphs
* how to revise and edit writing
* how to choose information which is relevant to the audience
* how to present information and ideas
* use of word banks, wall charts, references
* how to experiment with writing
* sentence manipulation
* word modification

**KEY FEATURES IN SHARED WRITING**

During Shared Writing it is important to:

* agree how the audience and the purpose of the writing task determine the structure, grammatical features and content;
* use specific objectives which are limited;
* rehearse sentences orally before writing them down, thus giving children insights into how to compose sentences;
* encourage the automatic habit of incorporating basic elements, e.g. capital letters and full stops;
* constantly and cumulatively re-read to gain a flow from one sentence into another;
* explain why decisions have been made – why one choice is preferable to another;
* keep the session well paced and focused by using questions to seek information and to consolidate and verify children’s understanding;
* check for misconceptions and deal with them by directing discussion to promote action and enquiry;
* occasionally make deliberate errors so as to allow focus on tackling common errors or on errors related to a specific teaching objective;
* model metalanguage (i.e. language used to talk and think about language;
* provide opportunities for children to respond by:
  + offering waiting time for individual thinking;
  + building in brief paired discussion;
  + encouraging non-verbal responses (e.g. ‘show me’ activities).

**GUIDED WRITING**

A classroom activity in which pupils are grouped by writing ability.

The teacher works with each group on a task carefully selected to offer an appropriate level of challenge to the group.

Usefully thought of as a ‘mini-lesson’.

The challenge may be in terms of spelling, letter formation, simple punctuation, language and vocabulary, or sophisticated aspects of generic structure, planning and editing, use of imagery and so on.

**All the following (and many more) can be the focus of guided sessions…**

* Different genres – e.g. Letter writing

Instructions

Reports

* Constructing sentences
* Adding grammatical features
* Punctuation
* Sequencing an account or a story
* Writing captions
* Work directly related to text – e.g. Write a letter to William Beech’s mother ‘Goodnight Mr Tom’
* Sentence extension
* Introducing specific vocabulary – e.g. time words… later, after, suddenly, before

**Points to remember when planning a guided writing session…..**

Pupils within the group…

* May work in twos and fours collaboratively on a large piece of paper
* Can benefit greatly from using individual whiteboards
* May work through the teacher acting as a scribe
* Need the opportunity to make decisions for themselves
* Should work on a variety of tasks

**Shared, Guided or independent?**

**Shared** is best when pupils need access to expert modelling, knowledge and explanation, and the teacher needs plenty of ideas and suggestions.

**Guided** is best when pupils need support to apply principles in their own work, and the teacher needs to address some, not all the pupil’s class

**Independent** is best if pupils can reasonably be expected to work it out for themselves

Digital Learning

Incorporation of digital learning enables children to use and apply their developing skills in Literacy in a variety of ways and can be used to enhance pupil learning.

# Drama

We recognise the important role Drama has to play in the context of Literacy Language and aim to develop it, not only to promote standards within Literacy, but to encourage personal and social development.

Teaching Literacy to children with Additional Support Needs

We continue to consider the individual needs of pupils and recognise that certain children will require small group and additional teaching support when necessary.

At Aberuthevn Primary School we teach Literacy to all children, whatever their ability. Literacy forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in Literacy takes into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

* using texts that children can read and understand;
* ensuring that any gaps in their basic understanding of phonics or sentence construction are quickly identified and a clear plan with measurable impact put in place.
* using visual and written materials in different formats;
* using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials such as Co -writer
* using alternative communication such as signs and symbols
* Any interventions such as Wave 3 must not take place instead of any Literacy or Numeracy lessons, they are to be undertaken in addition to this.

Assessment and Recording

Throughout the year, assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils in Literacy. It involves identifying each child's progress, determining what they have learned and what therefore should be the next stage of learning. Much assessment is carried out by teachers in the course of their teaching through a variety of means such as guided reading and writing sessions, listening to group discussions, giving short tests (e.g. spelling, dictation), setting specific assignments, individual discussions in which children are encouraged to appraise their own work and progress and, of course, their marking of children's work. We use the criterion scale as part of our Write to the Top (VCOP) activities. This helps to give children clear next steps for how to improve their writing.

# Continual teacher assessment involves observation, discussion and assessment tasks. Assessment is for Learning is used extensively to inform teacher’s planning and enables them to give feedback to children on their next steps.

This is in the process of development in the light of Curriculum for Excellence assessment approaches. We are also involved in moderating writing across the three schools and will extend this into Cluster working in the coming months.

The SNSA assessment system is now used once during the academic year in P1, P4 and P7. This will give very detailed information about children’s attainment in Reading and Spelling.

# Record Keeping

* Annual Report to Parents
* Teachers Reading Record File
* Individual Jotters
* Learning Logs

All staff are expected to assess each child continuously.

# Reporting to Parents

There are two parent evenings in the Autumn and Spring Terms when parents discuss their children's progress with their teacher.

Parents receive two Interim Reports and at the end of the academic year, an annual report goes to all parents.

Resources

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of Literacy across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate small apparatus. Each classroom has access to a listening centre with a tape recorder and a range of audio texts. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through computers in their classroom. Audio-visual aids are also available from the central storage area. The library contains a range of books to support children’s individual research.

New guided reading scheme involving Storyworld and Literacy World is an excellent resource to be used across the school.

# Literacy as an Additional Language

Children who have Literacy as a second or additional language are integrated into regular school activities from the start.

A variety of activities are used to try to foster language development they include:

* role play
* discussion
* drama
* audio stories
* painting
* model making/craft work

The aim of these activities is to promote speaking and understanding.

To aid children in their development as readers a variety of materials are available including:

* fiction
* non-fiction
* comics
* pupils own stories
* material which involves practical outcomes

Children gain experience of reading in different ways:

* silent reading
* reading in pairs
* individual reading aloud
* reading onto tape
* teacher reading
* reading plays

Children are encouraged to develop their writing skills simultaneously. A number of learning aids are available including wordbooks, dictionaries, and games. Children are encouraged to produce writing in their mother tongue also.

All the methods of supporting bilingual learners are equally important for monolingual children.

Teachers should consult with the Support for Learning Teacher to access suitable resources and gain advice.

# Staff Development

The active participation of all staff is necessary for the successful implementation of school policy. This includes support staff who work with individuals and groups to aid the development of language skills.

Staff can identify a need to gain training or staff development in a particular aspect of teaching through the Professional Review and Development Process.