

Meadow Lane Infant School



Literacy Policy

Last reviewed	March 2017
Review Cycle	3 Years

Literacy Policy

Introduction

Studying literacy develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings across a range of different situations throughout the curriculum. 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.

In the Meadow Lane Mission Statement it states that the school aims:

'To foster a love of literature, enabling children to learn to read fluently and develop their skills as writers.'

We aim to develop pupils' writing abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to experience these interrelated areas within a broad and balanced approach to the teaching of Literacy across the curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

At Meadow Lane Infant School we strive for children to become literate pupils and our aims for our pupils are as follows:

Aims:

- To enable children to develop a positive attitude to language and learning.
- To ensure that children leave our school as competent speakers, listeners, readers and writers through a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to their needs.
- To enable children to communicate orally, fluently and confidently to a variety of audiences, using the spoken word to express their responses articulately, including opportunities for drama activities.
- To enable children to listen attentively to others, responding to them appropriately, and respecting their opinions.
- To foster in children, a love of literature in all its forms, and the understanding of a variety of texts at an appropriate level.
- To encourage children to regard themselves as readers for life, not only to read for information, but also to discover the pleasure to read for enjoyment.
- To develop confident, independent readers and writers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- To encourage children to explore their ideas, take risks and believe 'I can do it!'
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
- To help children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- To enable children to understand a range of text types and genres and to be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- To develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- To encourage children to present legibly written work using a range of appropriate means of presentation with accurate or "good attempt," spelling and punctuation.
- To encourage children to regard themselves as writers for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Speaking, listening, reading and writing are closely inter-related and we recognise that: -

- they rarely occur in isolation
- their development goes hand in hand

- they are the most important means of communicating, thinking and learning.

In our school literacy is an integral part of the curriculum and children work in a supportive environment where each person's ideas are valued, respected and developed.

Organisation, Planning, Teaching and Learning

Long Term Planning for literacy is developed using The Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One National Curriculum. In Key Stage One this is used to create a long term plan, which incorporates both the compulsory programme of study, along with principles of Talk for Writing and the Creative Curriculum. Staff use these documents to create a medium term plan which details the objectives to be taught each half term, ensuring a clear progression and development of key skills. Teachers then create their own individual short term plans which detail specific activities, targets and differentiation as appropriate for their children.

In **Foundation Stage** literacy is planned and taught according to the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Ages and Stages documents. The subject is fully integrated into a creative and experiential curriculum. Children are provided with opportunities to develop their literacy skills through learning experiences in a variety of contexts, engaging in focussed teacher led activities as well as applying their skills in independent play. Teaching and learning is focussed on developing children's language and communication skills, both oral and written. Children are immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication.

In **Key Stage One** literacy is planned and taught according to the guidelines of the national curriculum. Long term planning ensures that all national curriculum objectives are covered and built upon across the Key Stage. There is equally strong emphasis on developing the technical skills of grammar, spelling and punctuation and the creative and compositional skills required to be an effective communicator, both orally and in writing. Learning is divided into termly units, which staff use flexibly to create their medium term planning. Talk for writing is an integral part of what we do. Staff aim to fully integrate literacy into the curriculum, providing cross curricular learning experiences that are relevant, creative and that build key skills. Children continue to develop their language and communication skills. They learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm.

We believe that **all** children are entitled to rich experiences in literacy and focussed, relevant teaching that builds on their own personal knowledge and understanding. Consequently differentiated learning opportunities are provided which support and challenge children at their own level. In both key stages the progression of key skills underpins teaching and learning, allowing all children to consolidate and extend learning at their own level.

At Meadow Lane we aim to create a **School Environment** which encourages and extends learning in literacy. All classes display phonics and spelling information which children are able to use to support their learning. Interactive literacy displays, including literacy working walls, provide opportunities for children to independently support and extend their own learning. All classrooms include reading areas and role play areas, as well as opportunities for the children to write independently (through a distinct writing area or by providing free access to writing materials).

More detailed general information about teaching and learning strategies is outlined in the teaching and learning policy. Below are detailed specific strategies and policies relating to the key areas of literacy.

Speaking and Listening

At Meadow Lane Infant School we believe it is important to prepare children for life in the adult world where good communication skills are essential. We aim to increase pupil confidence in and enthusiasm for speaking and

listening so that they are able to speak to a wide range of audiences for a variety of purposes and so that they become confident, articulate, independent effective communicators. Speaking and listening is incorporated into all areas of the curriculum through meaningful activities and to promote the importance of speaking and listening as the pupil's main tool of communication and as a tool of learning – and especially to use speaking and listening to enhance writing and thinking skills.

Children are taught the importance of valuing each other's contributions to discussion by listening carefully and responding appropriately. They also see these skills modelled by the adults in school

Foundation Stage

In the **Foundation Stage** children are provided with ample opportunities to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings as well as to build up relationships with adults and peers. Strategies include taking advantage of each and every opportunity for talking with the children, modelling language whilst valuing their contribution, however small. Non-verbal communication is as valuable as spoken language for young children, learning to listen, take turns, maintain eye contact with the person speaking and respond with the appropriate facial expressions are the building blocks of effective communication. We aim to nurture children's self esteem, encouraging them to express their ideas with confidence. Adults model good listening, initiate, turn-take and respect children's efforts. More sustained listening is encouraged through story –telling, which forms a major part of our work in the Early Years. The needs of children with English as an additional language are met through differentiation, individualised provision and extra support where appropriate.

Key Stage One

In **Key Stage One** Speaking and Listening continues to be a major focus in school, both as part of the wider creative curriculum and as a subject in its own right. Children are provided with a variety of learning opportunities which may at times encourage them to develop their speaking and listening skills as well applying them to deepen their knowledge and understanding of related subjects.

Examples of how Speaking and Listening are used in the wider curriculum include:

- ICT is used to develop speaking and listening skills where appropriate – some examples of this are listening books, Interactive Whiteboards and group work collecting data to make a graph.
- Staff utilise the strong links between speaking and listening and PSHE through a variety of activities. For example:
 - Playing speaking and listening games, which enable pupils to agree and follow rules and to understand how rules help them.
 - Moral and spiritual development is promoted through various strategies including circle time, persona dolls, helping pupils to recognise the consequences of a character's actions and by relating pupils' own experiences and feelings to that of a character in a book.
- Reasoning and explaining help to consolidate and extend learning in mathematical problem solving activities.
- Discussions and debates in RE, history and geography to explore ideas about key issues.

A number of different teaching methods and approaches are used to develop children's Speaking and Listening skills including paired work, whole class teaching, individual work and group work. These include:

- **Circle time** discussions where ground rules are developed to promote effective talk and attentive listening and where all pupils' contributions are both encouraged and valued.

- Opportunities for **Narrative talk** including listening to, telling and retelling stories; listening and responding to an increasing range of literature; recounting and explaining experiences, both real and imaginary; reporting and summarising; talking about, planning and improving their own story writing.
- A variety of **discussion** activities including discussing work; giving opinions; listening to and commenting on other people's views; problem solving across the curriculum; working with others in a wide range of situations; leading and participating in group and class discussion.
- **Exchanging information** including questioning and responding to questions, instructing and responding to instructions.
- Children experience **presenting and performing** primarily through formal show and tell sessions, where they are asked to prepare and give a presentation to the rest of the class. There are further opportunities for participating in class assemblies; presenting opinions and ideas; engaging in; reciting and speaking aloud.
- **Drama and Role play** opportunities are provided as an exploratory learning process, as opposed to performance, which allows children to explore ideas, issues, dilemmas; to generate dialogue and to empathise with characters and situations. This can include, for example, role-play in small groups, using small world figures and puppets, hot seating, mime and tableaux. All classes contain role play areas to encourage children to develop their drama skills independently.

Reading

At Meadow Lane we believe that every child has a right to engage with and enjoy reading. We aim to teach the children the importance of reading in their lives, for learning throughout the curriculum and for working and living in society. We aim to enable all pupils to read a range of texts fluently and with understanding, to have confidence in their capacity as readers, to find pleasure in and be voluntary users of reading for information, interest, entertainment and purpose. Reading is taught discretely, in literacy sessions and during guided reading sessions using a combination of strategies.

We recognise the prime importance of developing comprehension skills from the outset. Children are encouraged to understand the purpose of reading as something useful in their lives, but also as a source of pleasure. Children develop their oral comprehension skills through listening and exploring a wide range of texts. Whole class story sessions take place on a regular basis. Children are taught to expect reading to make sense and how to construct meaning where they don't understand. Teachers develop fluency by re-reading texts, developing phrasing and using expression to make reading sound like talking. Children learn to visualise, to ask and answer questions, make predictions and work out 'the gist' of what they read.

Shared Reading

Children are regularly able to enjoy a wide range of books during shared reading in whole class or small group situations. During this time teachers model reading skills as appropriate to the ability of their children.

Guided Reading

All children have at least one teacher led reading session per week in which they work on a specific reading target. This session is recorded for parents in the children's reading diaries with the date, the target the child is working on and notes on their progress. Teachers record children's progress in guided reading in their own notes and use these to inform assessment and further teaching.

Home Reading

In reception children are invited to choose a story book from the classroom to share at home. In addition children take home the book they have shared in guided reading that week. Texts provided begin with no words before moving on to simple sentences with CVC words and finally more difficult words and complex sentences. The reading book children take home is strongly linked to their progression in phonics.

In Key Stage One All children are provided with an individual reading book. Following assessment class teachers select the appropriate level of text for each child. These are organised according to reading ability, see below. For the majority of children the appropriate text is one where they are able to read ninety to ninety five percent of the words easily. Parents are invited to record when their child has read, along with any comments/concerns in their reading diary.

Additional Support

Children who are finding reading difficult or who are unable to read regularly at home are supported in school through 1:1 reading with literacy volunteers, phonics intervention (see below) and Better Words, an intervention focussed on reading key words. In addition a number of children each term are selected to take part in the Better Reading Partnerships or Lets Read programme. These intervention focus on improving the reading skills of children of any ability who are on the cusp of a level with the potential to make accelerated progress. In the Autumn and Spring terms this is available for year 2 children, with the focus shifting to year 1 in the summer term.

Resources

In each classroom there is a book area with a range of high quality texts to be used in story time and read independently by the children. Where possible these books reflect the children's interest. A range of books is also made available to support topic work in the class.

The school library is currently being developed and contains a range of fiction and non-fiction books and magazines for the children to be enjoyed. Classes are encouraged to use the library in story times and quiet reading times as well as to borrow the books for their shared reading sessions. A lending library operates twice a week. It is run by school librarians and literacy volunteers.

For foundation stage children a variety of reading books are stored in the corridor outside class 4. In Key stage one reading books are found on the shelves beside the office and in the book trolley in the library. All reading books are banded using the *Book Banding for Guided Reading* scheme, with coloured bands corresponding to national curriculum levels:

Band	Colour	Band	Colour
1	Pink	7	Turquoise
2	Red	8	Purple
3	Yellow	9	Gold
4	Blue	10	White
5	Green	11	Lime
6	Orange	12	Black

Yellow/Blue is the expected level for the end of Reception. Turquoise is expected for the end of Year 1 and Gold for the end of Year 2. Children working on lime books may be considered to be working at greater depth, with those on black working considerably beyond Key Stage One expectations.

Reading Assessment

In the Foundation Stage teachers assess children using Foundation Stage assessment three times per year. Records from guided and individual reading, along with observations of individual children are used to inform judgements.

In Key Stage One reading is assessed termly using assessment criteria for each year group. Objectives are rated red, amber or green to show to what extent they have been met. Teachers can also record if an objective has been exceeded. This is used to make a judgement as to where a child is working on the school's seven point assessment scale, with point four representing Age Related Expectations. To make judgements staff use information recorded during guided reading. Teachers will also listen to children read individually to gather more information on their decoding and fluency. In assessing the children's decoding skills teachers also take into account the level of the individual reading book the child is currently reading. In the spring term each year a more detailed assessment takes place. A miscue analysis is undertaken for every child using a book at an appropriate level, along with related comprehension questions. In Year Two all children undertake the SAT reading tests.

Spelling and Phonics

Phonics

Phonics is taught throughout school according to the guidance provided in the *Letters and Sounds* document. Children are assessed termly and grouped according to the phase at which they are working. Teachers use whole school phonics planning for the appropriate Phase. Planning uses the recommended sequence below in each phonics lesson:



Teaching and learning of phonics is supported through use of the Jolly Phonics materials. The children are taught that each letter has a name and a sound. Children are taught through stories, actions and pictures. A phonics display linking each phoneme to a picture and word is displayed in every classroom. Children are taught the terms phoneme, grapheme, digraph and trigraph and these terms are used throughout school.

In Foundation Stage phonics is taught for 20 minutes every day using the *Jolly Phonics* materials. Children in foundation stage are taught to blend and segment at first orally and then in reading and writing. They are given lots of opportunities to apply their phonic knowledge independently. After phase three has been taught the children are split into smaller groups with those who are secure moving on to phase four and those who need consolidation repeating phase three.

In Key Stage One phonics is taught for 1 hour per week, either as three twenty minute sessions or four fifteen minute sessions. Children are assessed termly and grouped according to the phase at which they are working. They are moved to the next stage when they can say the sound for approximately 65% of the phonemes in the previous stage. The majority of children in Year One will be working comfortably within phase five by the end of the year. The majority of Year Two children will be working comfortably within Phase 6. Further intervention is available for children who struggle with phonics, whether through 1:1 sessions such as Toe by Toe or small group booster sessions in the summer term. Individual children with specific needs are accommodated through individual differentiation or adult support.

Teachers informally assess children's progress throughout phonics lessons to inform their provision. Children are assessed formally for the stage they are working on three times a year. Assessment takes into account whether children are able to recall the phonemes/graphemes that have been taught as well as their ability to apply them in reading and writing. Assessment information is used to inform teaching as well as being shared with the literacy co-ordinator through the use of visual maps.

Children in Year One also undertake the phonics test as outlined by the DfE in the summer term. This test is also taken the following year by Year Two children who did not meet the required mark in Year One.

Spelling Practice in Home and School

At Meadow Lane Infant School we believe that the ability to recall the spellings of frequently encountered words is a key aspect in developing confidence and fluency in writing. Spelling strategies are taught during phonics lessons throughout school when learning the spellings of tricky words and also in a discrete spelling lesson at least once a week. From Summer term in reception onwards Spellings Books are provided for children to practise spellings at home. These spellings are provided weekly and are taken from the appendices of the English National Curriculum. A weekly spelling test is used to monitor who is practising at home and to assess progress. Children are given the opportunity to practise using their spellings book in the classroom at least once a week. In addition spelling in longer writing is assessed termly as part of writing assessment procedures.

Writing

It is important for pupils to develop as independent, enthusiastic and expressive writers, who are able to write in a meaningful way. At Meadow Lane children are taught to use a range of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences and to be confident in their choice of genre and language style for a specific purpose. We strongly believe in fostering an 'I Can Do It' attitude to writing in all pupils. We encourage pupils to regard themselves as writers and value their own work and that of others. In our teaching we aim to provide children with both the technical skills of writing as well as the confidence to be creative and explore their ideas. The teaching of writing in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One is focused on teaching these key skills and attitudes within a meaningful curriculum as well as providing opportunities for children to apply them independently.

Foundation Stage

At the Foundation stage children are engaged in both focussed and independent writing activities. Children are encouraged to write through providing materials such as clipboards, white boards, an interactive white board, computers and by providing varied types of writing pencils and pens. These will be available where children are learning through play, for example in the role play area, by large construction equipment, small world activities etc. This gives children the opportunity to begin to emergent write independently. Although this may not be decipherable to an adult, children are encouraged to convey the meaning of what they have written. As children's knowledge of phonics develops they are encouraged to represent these sounds in their writing, before beginning to form simple statements and sentences.

Children have the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes, such as recounts, stories, instructions, diaries, captions, labels and letters. They listen to a variety of poems and rhymes and experiment with writing their own using similar structures and formats. Narrative writing is taught, using a variety of stimuli. The Talk for Writing principles detailed below are used to support the development of writing.

Talk For Writing

We believe that in order to become confident writers children need opportunities to explore and develop their ideas and to plan what they are going to write. Therefore a key part of the teaching of

writing throughout school is in providing quality talk for writing opportunities prior to children creating their own compositions. Teachers provide talk for writing activities that draw on a range of strategies including reading, speaking and listening and drama activities (see above) as well as within the wider curriculum. Through these activities children are encouraged to:

- Link writing to reading, recognising good writing and understanding what makes it good.
- Build awareness of the key features of the genre they are studying, using models and ideas from what they have read in their own compositions
- Build up and explore new vocabulary
- Have ‘something to say,’ for example by deepening understanding of the non-fiction topic they are going to write about or by fully exploring the settings, events and characters in a story that they are going to retell.
- Have opportunity to plan and prepare for writing, including having the opportunity to clarify their and develop their ideas and to orally rehearse what they want to say.

In planning for teaching and learning in writing teachers follow these guidelines:



As suggested in this model, writing composition is taught, following talk for writing, through the teaching of ‘shared,’ ‘guided’ and independent writing. This enables the compositional skills essential to independent writing to be broken down and ‘scaffolded’ in a progressively structured approach. In addition it allows discrete technical grammar skills to be taught and applied in writing tasks.

- **Shared Writing** - Good quality writing is modelled to the children through shared writing. This may take the following forms:
 - modelling – teachers demonstrate how to write a particular text, thinking through and editing the process aloud
 - scribing – teachers compose a text through discussion and the pupils’ contributions
 - supported composition – pupils write a small amount of text individually, in pairs or groups with a teacher or teaching assistant, sharply focussed to a specific objective.
- **Guided Writing** – The children are grouped according to writing ability with one or more groups writing within a teacher led session focussed on a key writing skill or target focussed to their needs.
- **Independent Writing** – Children are provided with opportunities to apply their compositional skills independently.

Handwriting

It is important for pupils to be able to write clearly and develop a fluent and legible handwriting style. We aim for pupils to be able to:

- form letters correctly
- use upper and lower case letters appropriately
- begin to use a joined style consistently by the end of year 2
- use a comfortable and correct pencil grip.

In the Foundation Stage handwriting is taught as part of the daily phonics lesson. In addition children are provided with activities that allow them to develop their pencil grip and form simple patterns. In Key Stage One handwriting is taught discretely on a daily basis, with extra practice sessions provided as appropriate for individual classes or children. Children practise handwriting in their writing books in order to make the link between this practise and their independent writing. Children are taught to joining

their handwriting from Easter in Year One. Teachers encourage children to apply their handwriting skills in their independent writing and there is an expectation that children take care with their presentation skills in their work. Where consistent errors are being made children are asked to correct incorrect formation and to practise at the bottom of the page.

Throughout school the Elaine Cowley programme and dough disco is used to aid the development of gross and then fine motor skills, anticlockwise movements and ultimately handwriting.

Grammar and Punctuation

Developing the key skills of grammar and punctuation is crucial in teaching children to become good writers and therefore forms an integral part of teaching and learning. At Meadow Lane children are taught grammar and punctuation both through discrete key skills lessons and through seeing it modelled in shared and guided writing. In addition grammar and punctuation lessons form part of the preparation for longer pieces of writing. In teaching grammar and punctuation staff follow the learning objectives outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage and English National Curriculum. 'Rainbow Grammar' is used to support the development of Early Grammar Skills.

Assessment

Writing is marked using teacher, peer and self assessment using the target symbols displayed in the front of literacy books. Children in Key Stage One are taught to read back and in Year Two to edit their work using the marking symbols as support. For more information see Marking and Presentation Policy. Children are given individual writing targets which are reviewed by teachers and children regularly.

Writing is assessed formally on a termly basis. In the Foundation Stage the Foundation Stage Profile is used to assess the children's writing skills. In Key Stage One the children's independent writing is assessed against national curriculum expectations using the agreed yearly objectives.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in Literacy is the responsibility of the Literacy subject co-ordinator. The work of the subject co-ordinator also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of Literacy, being informed about current developments in the subject and providing strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject co-ordinator reports to the Headteacher regarding the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. The co-ordinator regularly reviews samples of the children's work and undertakes drop ins of Literacy teaching across the school. The subject co-ordinator evaluates the subject regularly and reports regularly to the SLT and annually to the Governing Body as part of the Head Teacher's Report.

End of Key Stage One Targets for Reading and Writing are set annually and reviewed by the Literacy co-ordinator and Headteacher.

Staff reviewed:

Date ratified:

Date for review:

Signed : Head teacher

..... Chair of SDC committee