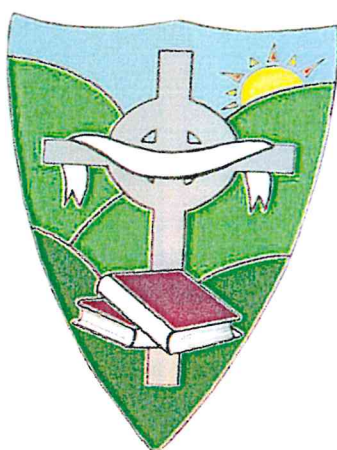


# *St. Mary's Primary School Rathfriland*



## *Language and Literacy Policy*

## **MISSION STATEMENT.**

St Mary's P.S is a Catholic school committed to the education of the whole child. We endeavour to create a happy and secure environment, unlocking the full potential of all individuals, thereby developing confident and independent learners.

### **In our school we aim to:**

- Create an ethos that actively promotes Catholic values, with the support of parents and the parish community.
- Embrace diversity and promote respect for all.
- Celebrate our self-worth and understand our individual talents and achievements.
- Develop an environment where children feel secure to express their feelings.
- Provide a curriculum which promotes independent thinkers, creativity, and a love for learning.
- Establish positive, friendly relationships with the children in our care, their families the parish and the wider community.

### **Introduction.**

At St Mary's School, we believe that a child's literacy skills, i.e. their ability to talk, listen, read and write effectively, for purpose and audience, is the key to educational progress, to social integration and to personal development and happiness.

This policy document will outline the strategies and approaches we will support and develop in order to ensure that each child becomes equipped with the necessary language knowledge, understanding and skills.

The continuity and progression in our language planning will be underpinned by the learning intentions outlined in the Primary Language Framework.

At St. Mary's, we intend that, by the end of Key Stage 2, a child will be able to:

- Speak confidently to a range of audiences with an awareness of purpose to the extent of his or her ability.
- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct.
- Have an interest in books and read for enjoyment.
- Have an interest in words, their meanings, developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms.



- Understand a range of text types and genres and be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- Develop their imagination, inventiveness, and critical awareness.

### **Statutory Requirements**

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the Northern Ireland Curriculum for English (CCEA.2007) and include:

**In Foundation Stage (Years 1 & 2)** children should be given opportunities to:

- Talk, 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.

**In Key Stage 1 (Years 3 & 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.

**In Key Stage 2 (Years 5 to 7)**, children learn to change how 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 literacy and non-literacy texts and learn how the structure of language works.

### **Child Centred Provision.**

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in St. Mary's approaches:

- Decisions on planning, resources, curriculum, and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school.
- A clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity.
- A school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability.
- Effective interventions and support are in place to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning.
- There is a commitment to involve young people in discussions and decisions on school life that directly affect them and to listen to their views.

### **Inclusion:**

In St Mary's we aim to provide for all children so that they reach their full potential in English according to their individual abilities. We will strive to identify as early as possible, those pupils or groups of pupils who are experiencing difficulties, using professional judgement and any available data. This information will also help us

identify pupils or groups of pupils who are underachieving or have special educational needs, in order to take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified, and suitable learning challenges provided.

### **Learning Experiences**

- Through observation, teachers will be aware of each child's stage of development and will build on and extend his/her learning experience.
- Where Teaching Assistants are available, consultation between the Class Teacher and the Assistant will take place, so that the Assistant will be able to support a child or group of children within the class.
- Activities will be differentiated to match the child's needs and abilities.
- Children are made aware of what they have to do through the use of the WALT and WILF boards.
- A variety of activities will be designed to help develop the child's ability to match oral/written responses to audiences/purposes through shared modelled and guided work.
- There will be planning for cross curricular activities so that language is used in different contexts, (e.g. develop spoken language as a collaborative, social and communicative tool)
- Various stimuli will be used to promote skills within English.
- Active learning experiences will be provided, recognising that children learn by doing.
- Learning experiences will be planned to deliver the Northern Ireland Primary Language Framework.
- Reading for enjoyment is promoted through timetabled Accelerated Reader time (P4-P7), foundation stage class libraries, use of local library facilities and schoolbook fairs.
- Teaching staff use various approaches so that individual needs are met through guided, shared, and modelled activities to promote learning and understanding.
- Teachers try to provide a stimulating and attractive environment to promote literacy through the use of labels, charts and word banks to support children in their writing and taking into account Dyslexia Friendly awareness for those children who experience Literacy Difficulties.

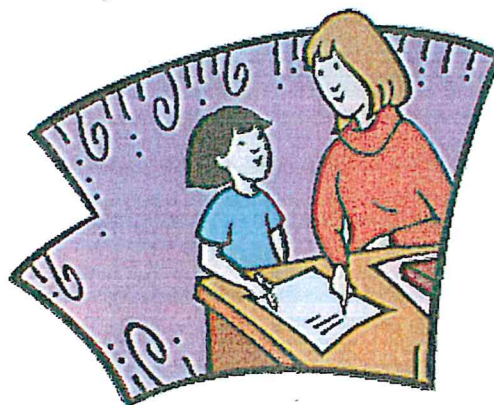




## Intervention Programmes.

We strive to identify children as early as possible so that early intervention can take place to remediate any problems before they become a major cause for concern. Children are identified through the use of:

- BVPS
- CCEA baseline data
- PM Bench Marking Kit
- Running records
- Professional judgement
- Criterion referenced tests
- Star Assessment (Accelerated Reader)
- CAT 4
- NFER Progress Test in English
- NGRT 6-14
- Spar Spelling Test
- Vernon Spelling Test



1.Children who are identified as under achieving or experiencing difficulties are monitored within the classroom and follow differentiated activities to try and address their difficulty.

2.Parents will be contacted, and concerns discussed if progress is limited.

Parental consent will be sought for children who we have been identified as underachieving to become involved in the **Reading Partnership Programme**. The Reading Partnership programme is carried out by our trained Classroom Assistants for a ten-week period. Children are base lined using Salford Reading Test X at the beginning of the period of support and then are tested at the end of ten weeks with the Y form of the test. Children are given 3 x 15-minute sessions on a one to one basis for ten weeks.

### **Equal opportunities**

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, or home background.

## **HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING:**

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in St. Mary's approaches:

- A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for the pupils.
- An emphasis on literacy and numeracy exists across the curriculum.
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school-based staff and dedicated to improving learning.
- Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom.
- Assessment and other data are used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement.
- Rigorous self-evaluation is carried out by teachers and the whole school, using objective data, and leading to sustained self-improvement.
- Teacher's reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils.
- Education outcomes reflect positively on the school and compare well, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken, against the performance of similar schools.

### **Subject organisation.**

The English Curriculum is delivered using the requirements in the N. Ireland Curriculum for Language and Literacy. As a small school we often have composite year groups. Differentiation will therefore be evidenced between year groups as well as within year groups and will be planned for appropriately by the Class Teacher.

In Foundation Stage there are two permanent Teaching Assistants who are used, at the discretion of the class teachers to support different groups/children.

Two of our Teaching Assistants are trained with the delivery of the Reading Partnership Programme and deliver this to children who are already reading but need further support to build their confidence and exposure to new texts. Children are identified through professional teacher judgement, discussion with the Literacy Coordinator and Senco and through the use of formative assessments in October.

Planning is normally for a 2-week period and learning intentions and differentiated activities are outlined at this stage. Short term weekly planning is carried out within individual Teacher Planners.

Plans are evaluated at the end of each planning period and evaluations inform the next planning period.

In St. Mary's we use modelled and guided strategies in the language model of text, sentence and aspects of word level work outlined in the Primary Language Framework (SELB).



## Approaches to Talking and Listening

The strands of talking, listening, group discussion and interaction and drama pervade the whole curriculum. Oral language should be recognised as the *primary mode of language* and hence should receive a central emphasis and focus in all areas of the curriculum and in the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently, and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes. We aim to encourage an enquiring mind and an ability to challenge, check and modify their thinking.

In order to achieve this, we need to present children with suitable, tasks and activities in literacy and across the curriculum, where good quality oral development is the end product.

When the child enters Foundation until they leave in P.7, they will be encouraged to use oral language to express their views and opinions and to clarify their thinking. We will also pay close attention to the use of Standard English and to the impact we have as teachers as positive role models of oral language. Children will be given opportunities to enter discussions in a variety of situations e.g.

- One to one, teacher/adult/child
- One to one, child/child.
- Small group situations (Think, Pair, Share)
- Whole class situations.
- Effective questioning will be used to promote thinking and good quality responses.
- Thinking time will be given before answers.
- Children will be challenged to clarify their thinking.
- Opportunities to use drama to explore themes and help to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, and emotional development.

Paying close attention to the working memory difficulties of some children in our classes we aim to ensure that we keep our oral delivery of lessons and questioning specific and clear allowing children time for processing.



## Approaches to Reading

In helping with the acquisition of reading skills, we provide our children with opportunities to experience:

- Explicit modelling of reading, thinking and responses to text by the teacher.
- Shared reading of a text
- Guided, small group reading sessions with specific focus at instructional level.
- Guiding reading sessions with older children with explicit purpose and focus.
- Independent reading of familiar texts to reinforce and develop fluency.
- Quiet reading sessions within the school day.
- Foundation stage – whole class Story time for enjoyment and exposure to age appropriate texts that may be beyond the reading ability of the class.
- External Support is provided for children who experience Specific Learning Difficulties through the Peripatetic Service.
- Our Main Reading Scheme in FS and KS1 is PM Reading. This is supplemented with StoryWorlds and AlphaKids.
- Running Records and Standardised Reading Ages are used to ensure that pupils are reading at the correct levels.
- Comprehension skills are developed during guided reading sessions, topic based reading and AR tasks.
- Library research and dictionary skills are developed through the use of paper based copies and technology.
- Reading homework enables pupils to practise their reading skills and share books with their parents.
- Children experiencing Reading Difficulties in KS2 will read from our PM Reading Scheme at the appropriate level.



We in St. Mary's place great importance on the development of comprehension skills and strategies, which we believe need to be developed and encouraged from the beginning, without detracting from the pleasure of reading. The pleasure and enjoyment of reading should be fostered within the language lessons, across the curriculum and beyond the classroom. Involvement of our parents is critical in developing and nurturing the importance of books in and in the education of their child.

To further help with the development of key comprehension skills the school has purchased and introduced Collins Treasure House Comprehension text books, which cover a range of genre types. These are planned for using the Primary Language Framework and in all classes tasks are differentiated by the needs and abilities of the children.



Book Bands are used for all reading material in Foundation and Key Stage 1 and for some children in Key Stage 2. Children are matched with the correct instructional level of text using the PM BENCH MARKING KIT. Running records are used to establish the correct instructional level text and to verify when a child is ready to move on through the bands. It is also a good source of evidence of progression for children from Foundation to Key Stage 1.

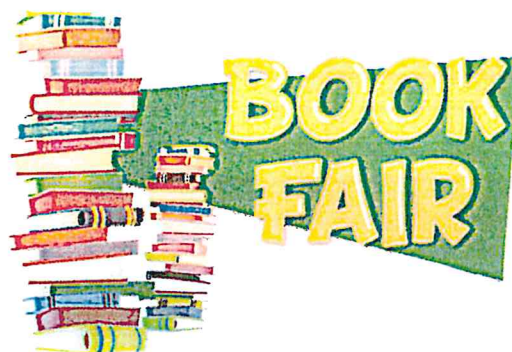
Within the book bands there is a range of genre from fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama and from different publishers, so that children are exposed to different formats and styles from an early stage.

In Key Stage 2 children are exposed to a range of genre during modelled and shared sessions. There is a range of novels by various authors both classical and contemporary for children from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2. Accelerated Reader is used (2019-2020) and children from P4-P7 spend 2 x 15 minutes each day reading their Accelerated reading book before completing a quiz. There is also a central Accelerated Reader library where children have access to ZPD books.

To encourage reading we regularly avail of any activities organised by the local Bronte Library.

We also have Reading Partnership which helps to stimulate and encourage an interest in reading in a relaxed and supportive one to one environment.

We organise a Book Fair every other year and encourage parents and children to participate.



### **Approaches to Writing.**

We in St Mary's want to develop a child's writing skills for a range of purposes and audiences, ensuring that spelling, punctuation, and syntax are used correctly, using shared, modelled, and guided work. To help develop grammar and punctuation skills Collins Treasure House Grammar and Punctuation text books have also been introduced in Years 2-7.

We use The Complete Spelling Programme across all classes from P2- P7. Using The Complete Spelling Programme, we develop children's orthographic knowledge. We recognise that poor orthographic awareness is a cause for long term spelling difficulties resulting in some children spelling words how they sound without the recognition that they have chosen the wrong letters. The teaching of rhyme patterns moves slowly,



particularly in Stages 1 and 2, and enables children with orthographic processing difficulties to develop awareness of orthographic patterns.

This programme is also used to support our teaching of reading as it supports phoneme to grapheme strategies. The teaching of High Frequency words and Curriculum words ensures that words taught are meaningful words used by the children to write independently. Learning is reinforced through activity books that are differentiated for differing abilities. Teachers will amend workbooks dependent on the needs of their class.

We recognise that no one programme is suitable for all our children and that we may need to use other strategies and programmes to help children acquire the phonetic code. Individual teachers may use different spelling schemes for individual children, these will include but not be limited to Alpha to Omega and the Hampshire Spelling list. Teachers look for opportunities across the curriculum to extend and support children's understanding of different genre, both fiction and non-fiction and to give them writing experience.

In Foundation children are encouraged to write during Indoor and Outdoor Learning through Play and to talk about what they have placed put on paper. This evolves into emergent writing with the support of the teacher and the teaching assistant. This can happen at any Learning Area in Play and the appropriate resources are provided for the children both indoor and outdoor.

As children progress, they are encouraged and supported in developing their writing



using modelled, shared and guided writing sessions. The teacher is important in demonstrating how he/she thinks, writes, and edits a piece of writing in a modelled session.

We aim to develop the link between talking and writing and encourage children to develop reading as a writer and writing as a reader.

Within each year group we use a range of age appropriate interactive resources to explore the different genre. The use of Treasure House Composition Skills also

supports work on the features of different genre.

Writing frames are used to support children in developing their writing skills in both fiction and non-fiction and to support them in their understanding of the different features of genre types.

We place high importance on the development of legible handwriting, with children in Primary 7 encouraged to develop their own legible joined writing style. For additional detail please see attached Handwriting Policy.

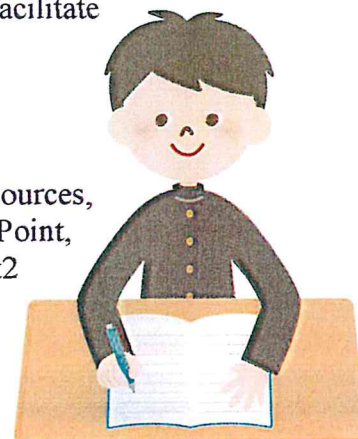
- Pupils write for themselves, for peers, for parents, for the school and audiences outside the school.
- Pupils work is displayed in their classroom and in the school corridors



- Our marking policy outlines the importance of feedback and ensures that a key part of pupils' writing experience involves editing and reformatting their work for improvement.
- Feedback is consistently given to pupils on their writing – verbal and written.
- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are shared with pupils.
- Pupils are taught to frequently read back over their writing to make sure it makes sense.
- Links between talking and writing are recognised and developed e.g. reading as a writer and writing as a reader.
- Word processing is promoted, wherever appropriate to facilitate both crafting and editing of writing and presentation.

### **Resources**

Resources for writing include Microsoft Word, role play resources, whiteboards and markers, Spell Check, writing frames, PowerPoint, dictionaries, thesaurus, word banks, Collins Treasure House, Just2 Easy computer program



### **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.**

We will seek to take advantage of opportunities to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and to make cross-curricular links. We will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through language lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

We as a staff are aware of the fact that there are different styles of learning within a classroom and the need to encourage pupils to use their visual, auditory and kinaesthetic channels for better learning.

We will use of a range of active learning strategies in the classroom, including drama strategies to enhance children's understanding.

We will ensure effective questioning by the teacher and pupils to encourage and develop thinking skills. In our questioning we will be aware of how to lead the child towards clearer thinking and expression, using thinking time after a question has been posed, maintaining strategies, restructuring questions, maintaining eye contact, avoiding (when appropriate) yes and no answers. Adequate time will be allowed for thinking and talking about tasks before asking for a more formal response, varying audience where appropriate.

## The Use of ICT

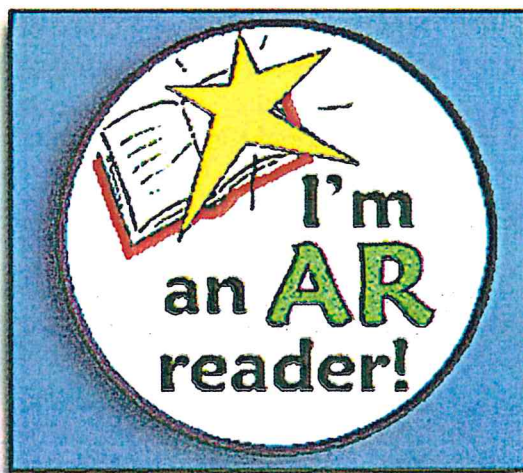
We in St. Mary's Primary School believe that ICT can contribute to language development. We encourage children from an early age to become computer literate and use the computer to consolidate and enhance their learning. The children are made aware of programmes on the C2k system and how to access them across the curriculum. Using ICT children are made aware of the various means we have of communicating in the World Around Us.



Each classroom has an interactive board and access to laptops, iPads, Chromebooks and PCs, which are used to engage children in the learning process and the acquisition of language and literacy skills.

Staff are encouraged to share good practice and useful resources they have found to help enhance the delivery of literacy in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to include or add in suitable ICT resources to their medium-term planning and to assess their suitability.

- Online Star Reading tests are carried out in Years 4- 7 to provide teachers with pupils' Reading Age and ZPD scores. Star Reading Tests take place at the beginning of each term.
- Following Star Reading tests, pupils in Years 4-7 read AR Books at their ZPD Level and then take part in Accelerated Reading quizzes.
- The use of ICT supports the teaching of Literacy at word, sentence and text level. ICT is used in the whole class, group and independent level.
- The Interactive Board is used to model writing as well as enabling pupils to interact and engage with the writing process.





## Assessment and Target Setting.

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment Policy. In addition to this the following arrangements for assessing pupils are in place:

CLASS	TERM	TESTS	TERM	
P.1	AUTUMN FORMATIVE	CCEA BASELINE ASSESSMENT BVPS-RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE	SUMMER  SUMMATIVE	BPVS P.1 HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS LETTER AND SOUND RECOGNITION
P2		HIGH FREQUENCY WORD LIST SALFORD (READING PARTNERSHIP) PM RUNNING RECORDS		HIGH FREQUENCY WORD LIST MIST NGRT test 1 PM RUNNING RECORDS
P.3		HIGH FREQUENCY WORD LIST NGRT 2A VERNON SALFORD (READING PARTNERSHIP) PM RUNNING RECORDS		HIGH FREQUENCY WORD LIST NFER PTE 7 NGRT 2B VERNON PM RUNNING RECORDS
P.4		CAT 4 NGRT 2A VERNON SPAR SPELLING SALFORD (READING PARTNERSHIP) STAR ASSESSMENT PM RUNNING RECORDS		NFER PTE 8 NGRT 2B VERNON SPAR SPELLING STAR ASSESSMENT POM RUNNING RECORDS
P.5		NGRT 2A VERNON SPAR SPELLING SALFORD (READING PARTNERSHIP) STAR ASSESSMENT		NFER 9 NGRT 2B VERNON SPAR SPELLING STAR ASSESSMENT
P6		CAT 4 NGRT 3A VERNON SPAR SPELLING SALFORD (READING PARTNERSHIP) STAR ASSESSMENT		NFER 10 NGRT 3B VERNON SPAR SPELLING STAR ASSESSMENT
P7		NGRT 3A VERNON SPAR SPELLING SALFORD (READING PARTNERSHIP) STAR ASSESSMENT		NFER 11 NGRT 3B VERNON SPAR SPELLING STAR ASSESSMENT
NEWCOMER CHILDREN -BPVS AND CEFR RECORD Wellcomm – P1 – Speech and Language Difficulties READING PARTNERSHIP - SALFORD				

All data generated by standardised tests is placed on SIMS Assessment Manager. This information is then used to identify children who may need additional support from SENCO and the classroom teacher.

### **Effective Leadership.**

Each year the Literacy Co-Ordinator draws up an action plan which targets a specific area for development and improvement. This action plan and its targets are clearly identified in the SDP each year. The Literacy Action Plan is reviewed for each year.

Staff are given opportunities to share and learn from best practice and discuss any concerns they may have over the implementation of new programmes or teaching approaches in an open and supportive environment.

### **Role of the Literacy Co-Ordinator.**

The Literacy Co-Ordinator is responsible, in consultation with the Principal, teachers and parents, for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through: Monitoring and evaluating: -

- pupil progress
  - management and analysis of relevant data
  - provision of Literacy (including Intervention and Support programmes)
  - the quality of the Learning Environment.
  - the deployment and provision of support staff
- 
- Taking the lead in policy development
  - Purchasing and organising resources
  - Keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments
  - Maintaining contact with all concerned: Principal, SENCo, teachers, other staff, parents, and pupils
  - Ensuring channels of communication are open and active with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, EA, CCMS, CCEA, etc.

### **The Board of Governors**

An annual report is made to the Governors on the work of the Co-Ordinator.



### **Literacy in the Local Community.**

We believe that the education of our pupils is a partnership involving teachers, parents, pupils and the wider community.

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include:

- From P.1-P.7 children are encouraged to make use of the local library facilities.
- Children regularly visit the Library to select their own books. They also participate in any activities arranged by the library.
- World Book Day and National Storytelling Week are celebrated
- School Performances
- School Website
- School Trips
- Visitors to school – Storytelling groups, theatre groups etc.



### **The Role of Parents.**

We aim to involve the parents of our children as much as possible in their children's education.

Children's achievements and progress are reported to parents in several ways, through displays, comments on their work and twice-yearly reporting 1 of these being a meeting and 1 being a written report. Parents are also made aware that they can speak to their child's class teacher, by appointment, at any time throughout the year. Parents are also consulted and advised about any concerns we may have with regard to lack of progress or under achievement and of any interventions we may wish to put in place to help their child achieve their full potential.

#### Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis in line with any statutory curricular changes.

Reviewed by St Mary's Board of Governors on \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. G.', written over a horizontal line.

