



St. Mildred's Primary Infant School

Literacy Policy Statement

Spring 2021



Introduction

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of all literacy skills taught and learnt at St. Mildred's. The school's policy is based on the requirement of the National Curriculum Programme of Study for English and the EYFS Framework, as well as drawing on many cross-curricular links.

Intent - The Early Years

In the Foundation Stage we follow the EYFS curriculum for Communication and Language, Speaking, Reading at word level and comprehension of what they have read and Writing.

We will empower and enable pupils to:

- Listen and respond to what they hear asking relevant questions.
- Give comments and ask questions to clarify their understanding when in a discussion.
- Develop two way conversations with both peers and teachers alike.
- Extend their vocabulary and encourage them to use it in small group, class and one to one discussions.
- Offer explanations of why things might happen, using newly acquired vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, poems and rhymes
- Express their ideas and feelings about their personal experiences using past, present and future tenses whilst using conjunctions.
- Retell stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Identify key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently acquired vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and during role-play.
- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least ten digraphs.
- Read words using their blending skills at an appropriate level for them.
- Read aloud sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.
- Write recognisable letters most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in the words and using letters to represent the sounds.
- Write simple sentences that can be read by others.



Intent - National Curriculum - Years 1 and 2

At St. Mildred's we aim to provide a language rich environment where we will provide engaging and interactive learning experiences to promote high standards of language and literacy. We will do this through developing both the spoken and written word, as well as a love of literature and reading for pleasure, as well as celebrating both achievements and positive learning attitudes.

We will:

- Teach the children to read confidently and fluently developing a good understanding of what they have read.
- Provide many reading opportunities to develop the enjoyment of reading both fact and fiction.
- Teach the children to appreciate our varied and wide literacy heritage.
- Ensure our pupils develop a vast vocabulary and be able to use the correct sentence structure when speaking and writing.
- Enable our children to become capable writers using a variety of language and structures whilst writing for different purposes and audiences.
- Foster a confidence in pupils to speak clearly and coherently, building their desire to express their views and opinion.

Implementation of Literacy Skills in the Early Years

In Reception, the children will experience Communication, Language and Literacy as part of the seven areas of development from the Foundation Stage Guidance. Communication and Language skills are a prime area of learning and are vitally important as they underpin all learning at this early stage. The EYFS Programme of study ensures children build on and develop the language skills that they bring from home. Development of these skills is encouraged through talk and discussions in all areas of the curriculum, and activities such as listening to stories and poems, joining in with rhymes and songs, participating in drama and imaginative play, responding to simple instructions and talking to accompany play. For children needing additional support in this area we will provide a speaking and listening intervention called NELI.

Knowledge and a love of books is developed through activities such as retelling a familiar story in their own words, reading big books with the teacher, focussed guided reading sessions, paired reading, independent reading, watching stories on the interactive whiteboard and listening to stories on a CD. After the initial engagement with picture books pupils will begin being taught to read via a more formal approach as they embark on key skills as they follow the school's reading system of colour banded books in guided reading.



Emergent writing is encouraged through role-play and children are encouraged to write in role both indoors and outside. The local environment provides purposes for writing e.g. shopping lists, signs, instructions and recounts. Children participate in daily Letters and Sounds sessions which introduce new phonemes through the focus of blending, segmenting, phoneme manipulation and letter formation. Weekly Write - Dance sessions will develop gross and fine motor skills. They also have daily focussed handwriting sessions where we follow the school's Handwriting Booklet for the progression of skills starting with patterns and moving onto letter formation. As the year progresses they will encounter daily Super Sentence time which develops writing a written word and simple sentences through layered progression.

Transition

Our carefully revised **transition policy** allows for a smooth transition from the Foundation Stage into National Curriculum in Year 1; mirroring a Foundation stage routine initially and gradually following a structure more similar to Year 2 as the year progresses. This is reviewed and individualised based on the needs of the class. Please see Transition policy for details of each Phase.

Implementation of Speaking and Listening Skills



Speaking and Listening is taught through a variety of snappy, interactive sessions on a daily basis. At St. Mildred's we use engaging teaching strategies to appeal to all learning styles encouraging children to develop effective communication skills. It is important to provide planned opportunities for a range of spoken language tasks in all areas of the curriculum. This encourages children to develop as fluent, confident and competent speakers who are also able to listen with sustained interest and understanding. It also encourages children to work cooperatively and listen to the views of others.

Implementation of Reading Skills



Children at St. Mildred's are encouraged to become confident, enthusiastic, critical and independent readers. They should be comfortable with print in a variety of forms and for different purposes. We aim for pupils to read for enjoyment, information and interest. We do this through providing a range of opportunities:

- **Shared Reading** - whole class or small group sessions which are adult led, using questioning and discussion to respond to the text.
- **Guided Reading** - daily sessions with children grouped by ability. The main focus for these sessions is discussion and interpretation. Texts are clearly differentiated and are chosen to suit particular targets and objectives. Children who are not reading with an adult will participate in independent reading activities.
- **Independent Reading** - children are given the opportunity to read independently, drawing on phonic and grammatical knowledge and respond to own texts.
- **Paired Reading** - children work through a text together to find out specific information or to discuss their personal views or opinions of a text.
- **Home Reading** - children take home differentiated texts which are colour banded. We encourage free choice from within these bands to promote reading for enjoyment. We aim for books to be changed at least twice a week. The main reading of these books will take place at home but will also occasionally be read at school with an adult.
- **Wider Reading** - where possible we encourage children to experience reading for enjoyment and information through as many opportunities as possible. These include; listening and responding to a class story at the end of the day, assembly stories, reading for a range of purposes through other areas of the school curriculum.



At St. Mildred's we feel that it is important for children to develop as independent, enthusiastic and expressive writers, who are able to write for a variety of purposes in a meaningful way. We want all children to regard themselves as writers and value their own work and that of others.

Physical skills for writing:

- **Write Dance/Squiggle Whilst you Wiggle**

Both programmes use gross motor movements to music to support fine motor formation of letters. The children will experience Write Dance from Reception through to Year 2.

- **Fine Motor**

Each day the children will experience Fine Motor activities through focussed sessions and opportunities in the environment.

- **Patterning, Cursive Script and Handwriting**

At St. Mildred's we teach cursive letter formation from Reception, this is because research suggests that this; supports reading skills, helps to support the direction, supports spelling patterns and supports left-handed writers. Progression of patterning is modelled and taught through the school to support the teaching of the cursive script. It models direction of patterns/letter formation, co-ordination and pencil grip. We use character pater rhymes to support the teaching of the letter shapes. Our **handwriting progression booklet** outlines the development of these skills.

Writing at St. Mildred's will include the following:

- **Oral retelling** of a text with actions for both, fiction or non-fiction, whether it be a familiar story or poem, or a non-fiction text such as, an organised set of instructions.
- **Story Mapping** – This is a useful tool to enable children to plan out the text or story to support them with their retelling. This may be modelled by the teacher, or it could be created in small groups or individually. The map will include pictures and possibly some key text.
- **Writing Genre Skills Progression (see separate skills sheet)** – This breaks down the key skills for each genre within year groups. So there would be a list of a set of skills for Reception, Years 1 and Year 2 for Traditional Tales or Letter Writing. These skill sets will outline the progression throughout the school. When working on a text whether fiction or non-fiction the relevant skills for that year group will be covered.

Implementation of Writing Skills continued



Children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop their writing skills:

- **Modelled Writing** - whole class or small group work, teacher as the expert, demonstrates the writing process.
- **Shared Writing** - whole class, small group or paired activities where appropriate, the teacher takes children's ideas and scribes. Children have opportunity to discuss ideas, revise and consolidate work. This is a great way to model Super Sentences in class.
- **Guided Writing** - children in same ability groups, working with an adult being supported during the different stages of writing. Guided Writing would normally follow on from shared writing. The aim is to help children to improve their writing and work with increasing independence. This may also take the form of '**Switch on Writing**' which is used as an intervention.
- **Independent Writing** - children use all prior knowledge and understanding to produce an unsupported piece of work. This can be a planned opportunity or can happen by chance through other activities or in the environment. Children will also access regular opportunities each week to write their own Super Sentences applying skills/phonics.
- **Writing Inventors** - the children will have independent writing time at the end of their focus on a particular genre unit. This will be done in a quiet, calm environment using any story maps or key words that they can access independently.

Spelling Punctuation and Grammar

Children should develop as independent spellers who are confident to tackle new and adventurous words in their reading and writing. They should have a range of spelling strategies which they can use to attempt unknown words. They will also learn relevant 'tricky words', 'high frequency words' and 'common exception words'.

In Year 1 and 2 children will begin to bring home specific words to learn based on either the Phase they are working on or the common exception words. They will be exposed to regular SPAG activities and lessons.

We use a variety of '**Rising Stars Spellings**' activities, memorable videos on the **Sirlinkalot.org** app, and '**Tricky Word Songs**' to support in the teaching of spelling.



The Teaching of Phonics

Children at St. Mildred's experience daily Letters and Sounds sessions to support them on their reading and writing journey. Through these sessions they are taught grapheme, phoneme correspondence and the skills of blending, segmenting and phoneme manipulation. Children should develop as independent readers and spellers who are confident to tackle new and adventurous words when both reading and writing. They should have a range of spelling strategies which they can use to attempt unknown words. As well as a sound knowledge of irregular high frequency words for use in their daily work. Year groups work through the Letter and Sounds phases at the relevant phase and pace.

Alongside this we use a multisensory approach to support in their phonic journey. We sing and teach the actions to learn the 'Jolly Phonics' songs. We also use cued articulation to help children recognise where the speech sounds are formed.

Assessment

Children are continually assessed in Literacy in a variety of ways.

Foundation Stage: Children are assessed against the EYFS profile. This may be by observations (through tapestry) photographic evidence, looking at work or by answering questions and other verbal feedback.

Key Stage 1:

Reading and writing skills are assessed termly using the school's tracking systems. There is the Year 1 phonics check in June and retakes in Year 2.

See the school **assessment policy** for further information.

Impact - Reading

By the end of Key Stage 1 children should be able to work at the expected standard in reading by:

- reading accurately most words of two or more syllables
- reading most words containing common suffixes
- reading most common exception words.

In age-appropriate books, the pupil can:

- reading words accurately and fluently without overt sounding and blending, e.g. at over 90 words per minute
- sounding out most unfamiliar words accurately, without undue hesitation.

In a familiar book that they can already read accurately and fluently, the pupil can:

- check it makes sense to them
- answer questions and make some inferences on the basis of what is being said and done.

Impact - Writing

By the end of Key Stage 1 children should be able to work at the expected standard in writing by:

- Writing a narrative about their own and others' experiences (real and fictional), after discussion with the teacher:
- demarcating most sentences with capital letters and full stops and with some use of question marks and exclamation marks

Impact – Writing continued

- using sentences with different forms in their writing (statements, questions, exclamations and commands)
- using some expanded noun phrases to describe and specify
- using present and past tense mostly correctly and consistently
- using co-ordination (or / and / but) and some subordination (when / if / that / because)
- segmenting spoken words into phonemes and representing these by graphemes, spelling many correctly
- spelling many common exception words
- spelling some words with contracted forms eg. won't, can't
- adding suffixes to spell some words correctly in their writing e.g. -ment, -ness, -ful, -less
- using the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters in some of their writing
- writing capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- using spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Supporting SEND in Literacy

At St Mildred's we believe that all pupils are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and teachers match the learning to the needs and abilities of all of the pupils. We use a range of strategies to develop the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Where appropriate, materials are modified or support is provided to enable pupils with SEND to access the learning. In every PE lesson there are a range of strategies used to ensure inclusion of all pupils. These include:

- Quality first teaching to ensure the way lessons are planned and delivered meet the children's needs
- Differentiated levels of challenge for children in class
- Practical activities/ elements to each lesson
- Smaller groups
- Visual aids
- 1:1 support
- Adaptation of materials for specific needs
- Pre teaching to share the skills prior to the lesson
- Specific interventions - such as, NELI, Better Reading Partnership, Snappy Phonics.
- Peer support

The Nuffield Early Learning Programme (NELI)



This is an evidence-based oral language intervention for children in Reception and will continue into Year One. It works with children who show weakness in their oral language skills and who are therefore at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading. It is delivered over 30 weeks by teaching assistants in groups of four to six children.

Better Reading Partnership



Better Reading Partners (BRP) is a targeted, time-limited, 1:1 intervention that aims to improve the way children read.

Over ten weeks, children improve their problem solving skills, becoming more fluent and phrased readers. This intervention is aimed at making every child a reader. It is a proven model of good practice. Each session takes place with a TA and is approximately 20 minutes, three times a week. This is an intervention used in Year 1 and 2.

Snappy Phonics

This is a synthetic phonics programme that is fast paced and engaging. Sounds are taught, reinforced and repeated regularly. The frequent sessions aim for fluency and mastery of learning. The children are taught to actively recall the sounds. The teaching is interactive, fast-paced and multi-sensory.

This intervention is TA led and would happen approximately four times a week with a group size of four to six children.

Talk Boost



Talk Boost KS1 is a targeted intervention for 4-7 year old children with language that is delayed, including children in Reception classes. The programme is delivered in primary schools by TAs and provides a structured programme that boosts children's progress in language and communication by an average of 9 - 18 months after a ten week intervention.

Children who are selected to take part in the intervention will attend three sessions per week in small groups, each lasting 30-40 minutes delivered by the teaching assistant. The sessions include activities that cover the key elements of language: Attention and Listening, Vocabulary, Building Sentences, Telling Stories and Conversations.

How to help your child at home

We value parental involvement in children's development of English and promote a home/school partnership.

How you can help at home:

- Share a range of books with your child. Bedtime stories don't just have to be fiction. It is important to give children exposure to a variety of different books.
- Always allow time to hear your child read or support them in their learning. This should ideally take place in a calm, conducive environment.
- Provide opportunities for your children to write, for example, mark making, shopping lists, letters to relatives, postcards, either by hand or using the computer.
- Allow your child to practise their handwriting, making it fun by using a variety of tools for example, gel pens, chalk, paint or writing their letter shapes in oats or shaving foam.
- Provide opportunities to strengthen your child's fingers to support the writing process by allowing them access to playdoh, pegs, cutting with scissors or squirting with a spray bottle.
- Take your child to the library.
- Here are some useful websites to look at with your child:

www.ictgames.com

www.bbc.co.uk/schools

www.topmarks.co.uk

www.oxfordowl.co.uk

Please see our website for other ideas under '**How to Help at Home**'. Here you will find our Handwriting Policy and Pater Rhymes to help your child with their pattern and letter formation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the standards in English is undertaken by teachers, subject leaders, SLT and Governors. The English subject leaders construct an action plan that meets the aims and the vision of the School Improvement plan. This forms the basis for any monitoring activities that might take place. These will include; classroom observation, learning walks, pupil voice, planning scrutiny, book looks and reviewing of data. Management time is given to allow opportunity for monitoring and evaluation.

Role of the Subject Team

The subject team should work together to:

- Lead and manage English within the school.
- Secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and the highest standards of learning and achievement of all pupils.
- Demonstrate good practice.
- Keep the policy up to date and keep under review the planning and teaching of English in line with the National Curriculum.
- Encourage and support all staff in the implementation of the agreed procedures and closely monitor the progression and consistency of approach across all year groups.
- Manage the English budget effectively and purchase and organise all resources, ensuring that they are readily available and well maintained.
- Monitor standards and pupil progress across the school.
- Identify clear targets to improve and sustain pupil achievement.
- Keep up to date with recent subject developments, attend appropriate courses and training and disseminate relevant information to the rest of the staff.
- Further parental involvement and knowledge by facilitating support and advice through curriculum evenings and Parent Workshops.
- Submit feedback on standards and achievements to SLT and Governing body.

Role of the SLT

- Monitor the implementation of English including monitoring teaching plans and the quality of teaching in the classroom.
- Scrutinise tracking and evaluate standards across the school.
- With the subject leaders, identify areas of strength and areas for development, assessing levels against school and national targets.

Review

This policy will be reviewed according to the school's strategic plan.

Signed.....Date.....

Chairman of Governors

Signed.....Date.....

Headteacher