

# Carrick Primary School



## Literacy Policy

March 2022

## Carrick Primary School

### School Motto

Forward Together: "Ar aghaidh le cheile"

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

In Carrick Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment to realise and celebrate the academic and non-academic potential of all our pupils. We expect our pupils to work hard and encourage parents to assist us in laying the important foundations for future learning.

In our school we aim to:

- create a safe, enjoyable learning environment where effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
- implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
- value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
- encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to support and care for one another;
- equip our children with the necessary life skills to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
- develop and strengthen each pupil's understanding and love of Catholic values by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
- endorse the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention;
- involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

## CONTEXT

The stated vision of the Department of Education for N Ireland (DENI) is 'To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her potential at each stage of his or her development.' (DENI 2010).

This has been enunciated in the overall aim of the N Ireland Curriculum (DE 2008), which says, 'The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.'

The School Improvement policy document, 'Every School a Good School,' (DENI 2009) has outlined indicators of what will be recognised as effective performance under four headings:

- **Child centred provision;**
- **High quality teaching and learning;**
- **Effective leadership;**
- **A school connected to its local community.**

## INTRODUCTION

In Carrick Primary School, we believe that pupils' literacy skills, ie. 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 outlines 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.

In Carrick Primary School, 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;*
- *read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating 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 the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness;*
- *use a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.*

## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

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

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

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

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

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

## **CHILD CENTRED PROVISION**

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in the school'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**

We aim to provide for all children so that they reach their full potential in English according to their individual abilities. The role of the teacher is:

- to build up a caring, trusting and supportive relationship where different points of view are listened to and self-esteem is developed;
- to be flexible in approaches and to be sensitive to differences in children's learning styles and rates of learning;
- to be aware of own language use and position as a role model;
- to use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning in literacy;
- to recognise that literacy skills need to be taught throughout the school;
- to promote thinking skills in literacy lessons when the context lends itself to this;
- to avoid negative responses to children's contributions and facilitate learning;
- through the use of positive feedback and/or constructive criticism;
- to encourage children to reflect upon their own work and comment constructively on the work of others, when appropriate;
- to be aware of the need for careful, progressive planning across the curriculum, differentiating where appropriate;
- to keep records and monitor the progress of children in their class;

- to use data to inform decision-making and target-setting and to measure improvements and standards in literacy;
- to deploy and support classroom assistants to work with individuals or groups of pupils.

We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and those with special educational needs in order to take steps to improve their attainment. High achieving children will also be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

A number of children throughout the school have difficulties in relation to language and literacy skills. These include speech problems, specific language difficulties, poor language experience, reluctant readers/writers, attention deficit and visual and auditory problems.

The teachers in Carrick Primary School have a responsibility to identify children with language and literacy difficulties at the earliest opportunity. Pupils are identified through classroom observations and/or the analysis of literacy data. They may also be brought to the school's attention by parents themselves or by other agencies such as the Health and Social Services departments.

Diagnostic tests will be used, where appropriate, to aid understanding of specific areas of difficulty, and to inform plans for remediation. The SENCo will provide advice and support for all staff and will liaise with class teachers, peripatetic support staff (when appropriate), and other relevant professionals, particularly when drawing up Education Plans and monitoring progress. Pupils will benefit from in-class support from the teacher and classroom assistant (where applicable). The SEN teacher, working in partnership with the class teacher, will provide small-group support to those children who have been identified as needing this support. The peripatetic teacher also will provide external support to a small number of pupils, who meet the criteria for support. Parents will be regularly informed about their children's difficulties, the programme of support being provided and the progress being made.

### **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 the school'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 is used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom, in order to promote improvement.
- Rigorous self-evaluation is carried out by teachers and the whole school, using objective data and leading to sustained self-improvement.
- Teachers 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. We recognise that a sound underlying organisation and management of the classroom environment is crucial to promote and support learning.

Organisation will vary to suit the purpose, context and the children involved; a range of organisational strategies is essential.

- To help children feel confident and comfortable within the classroom, attention will be given to: the layout - freedom of movement; flexibility to work; easy access to resources of all kinds, including fiction, non-fiction, ICT and media texts; and provision of class library areas and quiet areas.
- Different types of groupings will be used where appropriate, and size, flexibility and composition of groups will be considered. These may include

independent, individual, paired and partner work, small group, ability, mixed ability, friendship, mixed age, peer, gender or whole class groupings.

- Texts and tasks in all areas of language will be differentiated according to individual ability, age, learning style, learning rate, needs and preferences (where relevant).

Whole school planning makes effective use of the potential contribution of other curricular areas and ensures continuity and progression between year groups, classes and Key Stages. Regular communication takes place between staff at all levels of planning.

The EA's 'Language Framework for the Primary School' is used to help develop progression and continuity in the literacy plans for each year group and for classes. Planning is done at half-termly intervals, and individual teachers also prepare shorter-term notes which detail the day-to-day administration of the language programme. This is shared with classroom assistants where relevant. Planning may be evaluated and modified according to pupil progress. The literacy co-ordinators have responsibility for overseeing and monitoring half-termly plans and evaluations, ensuring learning intentions and thinking skills are clearly indicated. In conjunction with the Principal they will monitor the standard of children's work by means of literacy book scoops and classroom observations. Following the book scoops and classroom observations, teachers are provided with an opportunity to share good literacy practice. Through PRSD, teachers are invited to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of targets on the School Development Plan.

### **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.

Children will have opportunities to develop talking and listening skills through a range of oral, aural and practical activities. Drama and role play also provide

contexts for talking and listening. Where possible, the children will speak for a variety of audiences and purposes in class, at assemblies, school performances, the feis, First Communion, Confirmation and other religious events, parents' evenings, etc. They will develop their confidence, self-esteem and emotional development through regular Circle Time sessions and interaction with other pupils, staff members and visitors to the school.

### **Approaches to reading**

A wide range of text types and forms (fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama) will be introduced throughout Foundation Stage and Key Stages One and Two. Teachers adopt a wide number of strategies and will use a range of schemes to develop children's reading, incorporating language experience, 'look and say', phonic, contextual and syntactic approaches. Teachers will use modelled, shared and guided reading methods to develop independence and fluency. Running records are used to support the development of children's reading throughout the school. Guided reading materials are book-banded and will be supplemented with 'Easy Read' texts which are intended to promote enjoyment and independent reading skills. These may be accessed by children on a daily basis. Teachers will record children's guided reading in their Reading Record Books to promote effective home-school liaison.

An emphasis is placed on the importance of comprehension skills and strategies, which are developed and encouraged throughout the school. The pleasure and enjoyment of reading is also fostered in the language lessons, across the curriculum and beyond the classroom. Opportunities for silent and independent reading are given in all classes.

A stimulating print environment will be maintained in all classrooms and throughout the wider school environment. Charts, posters and labels will provide information for the children. Reading areas, writing areas and class libraries will be utilised appropriately within individual classrooms. A central library has also been developed for class use.

World Book Day and Readathons will be held regularly to celebrate books and authors and promote the pleasure of reading.

## **Approaches to writing**

A range of text types and styles, including commercially produced resources, teacher-made materials and the children's own work will be presented throughout the school reflecting word-processed and handwritten forms of presentation. The Nelson Handwriting Scheme will be used by each year group to provide a good model of the school's style of handwriting script. Writing will be taught through a process of selecting specific text forms and supporting the children through a process of familiarisation with the form through reading experiences, leading to a stage of problem solving to analyse the features of the form. The teacher will demonstrate aspects of the writing process through modelled and shared writing, and will then scaffold the children's own writing in guided writing sessions, until the children are confident and competent enough to write independently. The pupils will be provided with a wide range of opportunities to write with attention to purpose and audience. Teachers will remind pupils in all year groups to: *think it, say it, write it and read it aloud* when developing their writing. The links between talking and writing are recognised throughout the school and are explicitly developed, eg. reading as a writer and writing as a reader.

Spelling will be taught throughout the school using the Linguistic Phonics programme and the Egon Spelling Scheme, with other schemes being used where necessary. Teachers encourage children to make links between reading, writing and oral language to help them to become effective spellers.

## **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities/Cross curricular opportunities for literacy development**

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, to highlight this in their planning and to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired to other areas of the curriculum. They will use a range of active learning strategies in the classroom, including drama strategies. Teachers will demonstrate an awareness of different styles of learning and the need to encourage pupils to use their visual, auditory and

kinaesthetic channels for better learning. They will also implement effective questioning techniques as a means of improving learning.

### **The use of ICT**

Opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning in literacy will be planned for and used as appropriate.

We aim to make maximum use of ICT across the curriculum to promote the pupils' literacy skills, as well as developing competence in ICT skills. This involves the use of computers/laptops/iPads/Chromebooks and audio-visual materials.

Pupils will be provided with opportunities to gain confidence in the use of ICT, for example in using C2K literacy programmes, word processing programmes for drafting work, spreadsheets, databases and the internet for research and communication purposes.

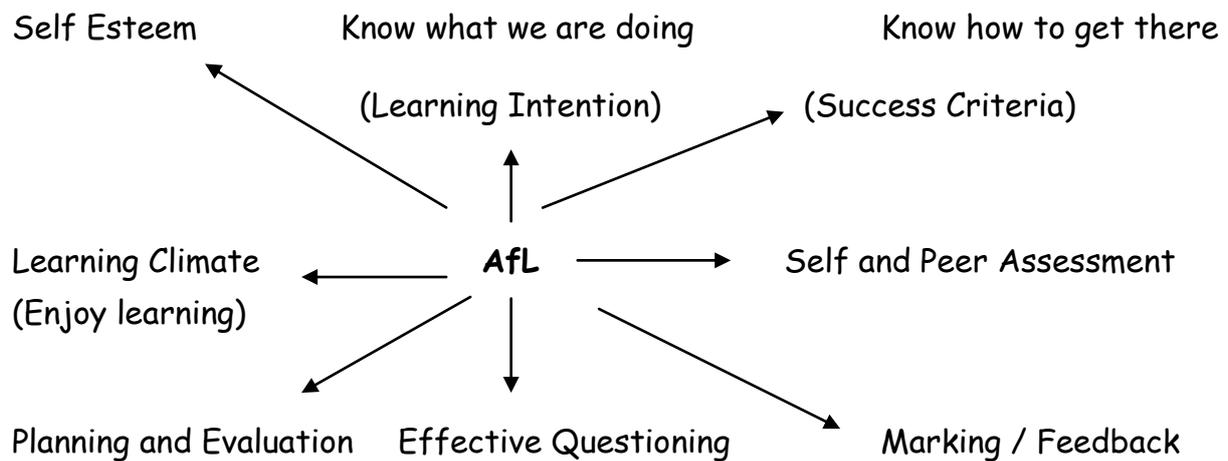
The range of ICT resources available include:

- Computers, laptops, tablet, iPads and Chromebooks;
- Interactive White Boards;
- My School and Newsdesk (via C2K);
- Internet and e-mail (via C2K);
- CD players, headphones;
- DVD players;
- Cameras - digital/video/web cam;
- Scanners/photocopiers;
- Dictaphones;
- Microphones;
- Websites including the school's website ([www.carrickprimaryschool.com](http://www.carrickprimaryschool.com)).

Staff will be given opportunities to access continuing professional development and the use of ICT will be planned and evaluated in line with the requirements of CCEA's ICT curriculum and assessment guidance.

### **Target-setting, assessment, monitoring and evaluation**

Teachers begin each new learning experience by sharing learning intentions and success criteria. The Assessment for Learning principles are outlined below:



The children's progress and achievement is also measured using a range of summative assessment procedures, which both monitor progress and inform future planning and teaching. These include:

- PiE standardised tests (P4 - P7);
- Statutory End of Key Stage Assessments (P4 and P7);
- NRIT (P4 and P6);
- Vernon spelling assessment (P4-P7);
- Half-termly class assessments (sent home, signed by parents and returned to school);
- Running records;
- Screening and diagnostic tests (where appropriate).

All teachers are required to set literacy targets for their class at the beginning of each school year, based on data from the previous year (where appropriate). Individual records of progress are kept by each class teacher and forwarded to the subsequent teacher to assist in the target-setting process. Records of attainment in standardised tests and End of Key Stage Assessments are kept by relevant teachers and the Data Team, which comprises of the principal, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, assessment co-ordinator and SENCo.

Children's work will be marked positively and constructively in relation to their own previous performance. Pupils are also encouraged to reflect upon and evaluate their work and that of their peers, when appropriate (see Marking For Improvement Policy for further details). Progress is reported to parents verbally and in written form annually by class teachers.

Staff meetings regularly include aspects of literacy such as dissemination of good practice, approaches to planning and analysis of samples of children's work.

## **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- An effective school development plan is in place, providing clear and realistic targets for improvement based on a sound vision for the school.
- Governors understand their responsibilities and provide clear strategic direction as well as support and challenge to the Principal in carrying forward the process of improvement.
- School leaders demonstrate a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for staff, particularly teachers, and promote a readiness to share and learn from best practice.
- Teachers are given the opportunity to share in the leadership of the school.
- The resources at the disposal of the school are managed properly and effectively, with appropriate arrangements in place for financial management, attendance management, and working relationships.
- School leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan itself.

## **Role of the Literacy Co-Ordinators**

The literacy co-ordinators are responsible, in consultation with the principal, teachers, parents and governors for improving the standards of teaching and learning in literacy through:

- Monitoring and evaluating literacy: -
  - pupil progress
  - management and analysis of relevant data;
  - provision of literacy (including intervention and support programmes)
  - the quality of the learning environment
  - the deployment and provision of support staff

- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent literacy developments
- Maintaining contact with all concerned: Principal, the leadership team, teachers, other staff, parents, and pupils
- Ensuring channels of communication are open and active with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, EA, CCMS, RTU, CCEA, Educational Psychology Services, etc.

### **The Board of Governors**

Regular reports are made to the governors on Literacy provision and on the standards being achieved by the school.

### **A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY**

The following indicators from ESaGS will be reflected in the school's approaches:

- Good relationships that facilitate engagement and communication between the school, its parents, the governors and the wider community that it serves.
- The school and its staff are respected by parents, by governors and by the local community who in turn actively support the work of the school.
- The school uses its involvement in particular programmes effectively in meeting the needs of the pupils and the community.
- Good relationships and clear channels of communication are in place between the school and the education agencies that support it.
- The school works closely with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies whose work impacts on education, especially Health and Social Services and the Public Library Service.

## **Parental and Community Involvement**

We believe that the education of our pupils is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents, pupils, external agencies (where appropriate) and the wider community. Regular and positive communications will be made between teachers and parents, on a formal and informal basis.

We aim to harness the support of the home and to stimulate greater support in order to enhance the pupils' literacy development. Homework is regarded as an integral and co-ordinated element of the school's assessment policy (see Homework and Assessment for Learning Policy for details).

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement include (where possible):

- Information sessions (e.g. P1 Induction Meetings, Parent/Teacher Meetings, newsletters, curriculum evenings for parents, Safeguarding events)
- School events, e.g. Christmas concerts, First Communion, other religious events
- Warrenpoint Feis
- Involvement in World Book Day and the annual Book Fair
- Friends of Carrick
- Supporting homework, reading and talking to children at home
- School trips
- School website
- Visits from storytellers, authors, drama groups
- Links with pre and post-primary schools as part of our transition programme
- Connecting to local businesses, the local library, school nurse, dentist, the PSNI, Fire Service, etc.
- Staff development/information sessions, e.g. by Peripatetic Services, Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapists.

## **Resources**

All teachers will aim to ensure full access to the Northern Ireland curriculum for all pupils. Materials will be provided which will be appropriate to the range of children's interests and abilities and differentiation may be by task and / or outcome. Extension materials will be available for more able pupils, while

reinforcement of core skills and concepts may require appropriately designed resources for the less able.

Resources will be stored, when possible, in ways which allow the children easy access thus ensuring the promotion of autonomy in the children's use of resources. The children will access a wide range of resources (including ICT, audio-visual aids, and printed materials) so to improve levels of independence and confidence.

The variety of resources available include:

- A wide range of book and non-book materials and tasks to suit pupils of differing abilities and interests;
- Commercially-produced guided reading scheme materials;
- Big Books and pupil activity books;
- Boxes of 'Easy Read' texts in each class, graded according to difficulty;
- School-produced booklets, linguistic phonics materials and other phonological, key word and social sight word spelling and vocabulary lists;
- Interactive whiteboards, flipcharts, whiteboards, markers;
- Magnetic letters and boards;
- A range of ICT resources (see ICT policy);
- Audio-visual materials;
- An adequate stock of books, magazines, newspapers and other materials in the school library which reflect the interests and needs of all pupils;
- A variety of appropriate games and activities which will be integrated into teaching and learning;
- Dictionaries and thesauri;
- A school-produced Poetry Anthology for each year group;
- School-produced "Seasons" poetry anthologies;
- Displays in classrooms, corridors and the assembly hall;
- Half-termly planning will demonstrate the planned use of available resources and will show progression and continuity within the curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

This policy should be in line with other school policies, including:

- Teaching and Learning Policy;
- Assessment for Learning Policy;
- Marking for Improvement Policy;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;

- ICT Policy;
- Equal Opportunities Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy

## REVIEW OF POLICY

The Literacy Policy has been compiled in accordance with the school's Teaching and Learning and Assessment for Learning policies. It will be reviewed in March 2025, or sooner if required, and updated in consultation with staff, pupils, Board of Governors and parents.

Signed: Mrs A Cassidy (Principal)

Signed: Mr G Murdock (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: March 2022

Review date: March 2025