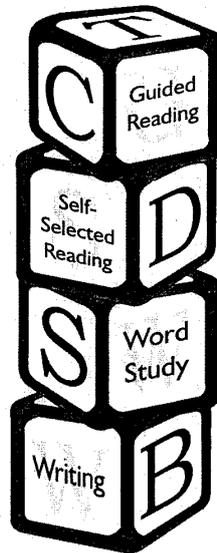


St. Mary's Primary School

Literacy Policy



Literacy Co-ordinator Mrs S Reilly

Policy Reviewed 2011

PHILOSOPHY

Language to us is the children's ability to communicate in all areas - reading, writing, talking and listening. Our philosophy is to provide opportunities to promote all of the above via our Literacy Policy.

RATIONALE

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 N 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:

³⁵/₁₇ Child centred provision

³⁵/₁₇ High quality teaching and learning

³⁵/₁₇ Effective leadership

³⁵/₁₇ A school connected to its local community.

Language is central to living and learning. St. Mary's Primary School fully support the idea that Language and Literacy play a central part in the development of '*confident, creative, articulate and flexible children*' (Every School a Good School - A Policy for School Improvement 2009).

This is reflected in the commitment of the staff to promoting language development as one of the school's main priorities, and in the development of a daily Language and Literacy time in all classes throughout the school. Every teacher will promote and support the development of children's communication, encompassing all aspects - non-verbal, verbal and written. Talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking skills will be developed as appropriate, in a variety of meaningful contexts in all curricular areas.

Language should be a source of pleasure, enjoyment and richness as well as providing a means of taking part in a range of activities in family, public, cultural and working life. Children bring with them to school a wide range of attitudes towards, understanding of, and experiences with language; and also a range of developmental and communication difficulties. This diversity in children's experiences, skills and understanding will be recognised by the staff, who will seek to work with the children, their families and other professionals in the development of each individual as a language user enabling them to take part in life.

In our school it is accepted that the effective use of language for learning is the concern of all teachers in every area of the curriculum and we recognise that each area of learning has a contribution to make through the opportunities and demands it presents. Every teacher will promote and support the development of children's communication, talking, listening, reading and writing skills in all curricular areas.

Pupils will be immersed in a stimulating environment of pictures, spoken words and gestures and be surrounded by print and other reading materials presented in an inviting and attractive way. Children will have opportunities, across all areas of the curriculum, to present ideas, experiences and understanding in ways which require a growing awareness of other people, wider audiences and various purposes.

Progression will be seen in pupils' increasing independence in communication talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking, their understanding and response to what they feel, see, hear, read and write.

Aim:

To support and develop the communication, language and literacy of the children as appropriate to the individual child.

Objectives:

- ❖ to develop a positive attitude to literacy as an interesting and attractive subject by providing a stimulating, attractive environment where encouragement, praise and reward are key factors
- ❖ to develop children's key skills and confidence in all areas of literacy and language

- ❖ to provide opportunities for pupils to view literacy as enjoyable and perceive its relevance to everyday life.
- ❖ to present children with a broad range of materials and experiences which will stimulate interest and provide pleasure
- ❖ to link language with thinking processes in a range of curricular contexts in order to apply and develop their language and cognitive skills
- ❖ to endeavour to provide for those children with special needs and strive to meet their requirements at all times, as within our means
- ❖ to enable children to communicate effectively and confidently within a variety of forms of speech and in a range of social groupings in formal and informal contexts
- ❖ to develop children's knowledge, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction text, and to enable them to develop preferences and make informed choices, through our Book Banding system and classroom and Central Library (See Appendices for Book Banding List).
- ❖ to teach children to read fluently and with understanding, using reading methods that are appropriate to the material and to the writing purpose
- ❖ to develop children's ability to use information texts and to locate, extract and use relevant information
- ❖ to develop writing skills
 - *pre writing activities
 - *tracking
 - *tracing
 - *copying
- ❖ to develop writing skills for a range of purposes and audiences, using spelling, punctuation and syntax appropriately and with confidence

- ❖ to promote a wide use of ICT and media texts as a medium for the further development of language across the curriculum

The Role of the Language/Literacy Co-ordinator

Teachers accept shared responsibility for promoting Language and Literacy throughout the school. However, the literacy co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing this work in liaison with all staff; his/her primary duties include:

- ❖ the provision of leadership and direction in promoting Language and Literacy
- ❖ the encouragement of high standards of teaching and learning, with particular responsibility for language and literacy
- ❖ the development and maintenance of a school Language and Literacy Policy in consultation with all staff
- ❖ the support and motivation for colleagues in ensuring that the needs and aspirations of pupils are met, language teaching is managed and organised to meet school aims, and that standards of achievement are monitored
- ❖ the setting of priorities and targets, in liaison with school management and staff, to improve provision
- ❖ the identification of needs in the area of language in relation to the needs of the school
- ❖ contribution to evaluation and monitoring procedures
- ❖ commitment to his/her own on-going professional development, and subsequent informing of the rest of the staff of recent curriculum innovations and research in the area of Language/Literacy

The Teacher's role is:

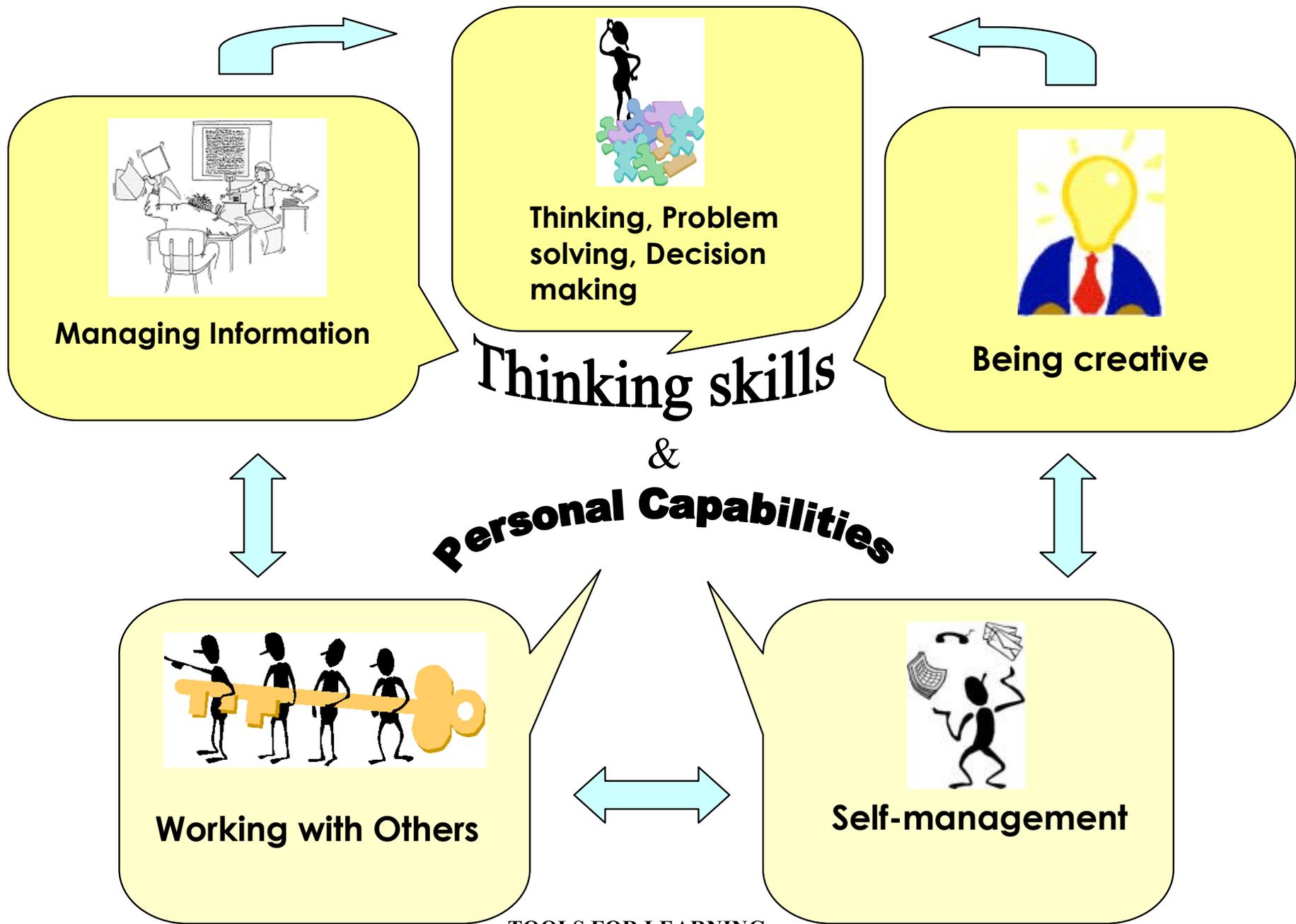
- ³⁵₁₇ to build up a caring, trusting and supportive relationship where different points of view are listened to and self-esteem is developed
- ³⁵₁₇ to be flexible in approaches and to be sensitive to differences in children's learning styles and rates of learning
- ³⁵₁₇ to be aware of own language use and position as a role model
- ³⁵₁₇ to avoid negative responses to children's contributions
- ³⁵₁₇ to use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning in Language and Literacy
- ³⁵₁₇ to be aware of the need for careful planning progressively across the curriculum, differentiating where appropriate
- ³⁵₁₇ to recognise that skills need to be taught right through the school
- ³⁵₁₇ to keep records and monitor progress
- ³⁵₁₇ to contribute to the review and evaluation of policy in consultation with the Language/Literacy Coordinator and school management
- ³⁵₁₇ to work collaboratively with Classroom Assistants and other professionals

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

At the heart of the Northern Ireland Curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. Thinking skills are tools that help children go beyond the acquisition of knowledge to search for meaning, apply ideas, analyse patterns and relationships, create and design something new and monitor and evaluate their progress.

Language and thinking are mutually interdependent. The quality of a child's language will have an effect on his/her thinking abilities and vice versa. In St. Mary's we will endeavour to help children develop thinking skills and personal capabilities through the enhancement of their

communication skill.



TOOLS FOR LEARNING

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

<p>Managing Information <i>Asking, accessing, selecting, recording, integrating, communicating</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ask focused questions * Plan and set goals, break task into sub-tasks * Use own and others' ideas to locate sources of information * Select, classify, compare and evaluate information * Select most appropriate method for a task * Use a range of methods for collating, recording and representing information * Communicate with a sense of audience and purpose 	<p>Thinking, Problem Solving, Decision Making <i>Activating learning, deepening understanding, coping with challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sequence, order, classify, make comparisons * Make predictions, examine evidence, distinguish fact from opinion * Make links between cause and effect * Justify methods, opinions and conclusions * Generate possible solutions, try out alternative approaches, evaluate outcomes * Examine options, weigh up pros and cons * Use different types of questions * Make connections between learning in different contexts 	<p>Being Creative <i>Imagining, generating, inventing, taking risks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Seek out questions to explore and problems to solve * Experiment with ideas and questions * Make new connections between ideas/information * Learn from and value other people's ideas * Make ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions, outcomes * Challenge the routine method * Value the unexpected or surprising * See opportunities in mistakes and failures * Take risks for learning
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Thinking Skills

<p>Working with Others <i>Being collaborative, being sensitive to others' feelings, being fair and responsible</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Listen actively and share opinions * Develop routines of turn-taking, sharing and cooperating * Give and respond to feedback * Understand how actions and words effect others * Adapt behaviour and language to suit different people and situations 	<p>Self Management <i>Knowing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals and targets, managing and regulating self</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Be aware of personal strengths, limitations and interests * Set personal targets and review them * Manage behaviour in a range of situations * Organise and plan how to go about a task * Focus, sustain attention and persist with tasks * Review learning and some aspect that might be
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Personal Capabilities

Environment: organisation, methodology, management

We recognise that a sound underlying organisation and management of the classroom environment is crucial to support learning. Organisation will vary to suit the purpose, context and children involved. The needs of all pupils will be identified and met through effective curricular programmes and support arrangements.

The following range of organisational strategies will be employed:

- ³⁵₁₇ whole class teaching
- ³⁵₁₇ small group teaching (size, flexibility and composition of the groups will be given consideration - e.g. peer, ability, mixed ability, friendship groups, etc.)
- ³⁵₁₇ paired work - similar ability or less experienced pupil working with more experienced pupil
- ³⁵₁₇ individual - one-to-one tuition by Teacher and/or support by Classroom Assistant (see Appendices for Reading Partnership details)
- ³⁵₁₇ independent work

Attention will be given to classroom layout, wall displays, access to a diverse range of resources (fiction, non-fiction, ICT, media texts, resources from other cultures) and the provision of library areas, writing areas and listening areas with appropriate equipment.

Organisation will vary to suit purpose, context and children involved; a range of organisational strategies is essential. There will be provision of library areas, computer facilities, listening areas, play areas (Foundation Stage) and an interest area as need arises, with appropriate items within these different 'environments'. The majority of displays in our school will be children's own work. The Central Library will have a variety of both fiction and non-fiction for Foundation Stage, Key Stage I and II.

Progress is enhanced when teachers are sensitive to differences in learning styles. Since children learn in different ways and at different rates, a flexible approach which encourages children's active engagement in their learning through problem solving will extend the pupils' use of language and promote independence. Teachers will have realistically high expectations and will ensure that all children understand what is expected of them by making children aware of the intended learning

intentions and the success criteria. This may be supported by the WALT and WILF (Learning) boards.

Adequate time will be allowed for thinking and talking about tasks before asking for a more formal response - varying audience and purpose when appropriate.

In our questioning we will be aware of how to lead the child towards clearer thinking and expression, restructuring questions, maintaining eye contact, avoiding (when appropriate) yes or no answers.

The curriculum provides the context for literacy development, hence cross-curricular opportunities will be used to the best advantage to develop all aspects of talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking.

Children will have opportunities to develop talking and listening skills through a range of oral and practical activities, including drama and role play. Teachers will employ a range of teaching approaches which will meet the needs of individual pupils, groups and whole classes.

The following methods will be used:

- ³⁵₁₇ modelled talking, reading and writing
- ³⁵₁₇ shared talking, reading and writing
- ³⁵₁₇ guided talking, reading and writing
- ³⁵₁₇ joint construction of meaning by teachers and pupils during modelled and shared work
- ³⁵₁₇ provision of scaffolds or frameworks
- ³⁵₁₇ involvement of the pupils in peer and self-assessment

The emphasis will be on promoting children's learning through the provision of quality concrete and active experiences across the curriculum. Planning for cross-curricular activities and the use of a variety of stimuli will ensure that language is used in different contexts, for a range of purposes and audiences. All tasks will have clearly identified outcomes and will be matched to pupils' abilities and interests. Differentiation will be by input, output and by task, not all tasks will have a written outcome. Talk is valuable and has merit in its own right -debating, school play, assemblies, class presentations.

Planning

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 thus takes place between staff at all levels of planning.

Progression and continuity between year groups will be tracked through the use of Assessment Manager. Planning can be done within Key Stages and should outline both long term and medium term goals. These targets can then be finely tuned by teacher's who need to write Individual Education Plans (I.E.P's). The Teacher has responsibility for planning and will monitor progress through six-weekly/half-termly planning, which will identify specific learning intentions for any children with special needs.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:

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

- ³⁵/₁₇ An effective school development plan is in place, providing clear and realistic targets for improvement based on a sound vision for the school.
- ³⁵/₁₇ 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.
- ³⁵/₁₇ 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.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Teachers are given the opportunity to share in the leadership of the school.
- ³⁵/₁₇ The resources at the disposal of the school are managed properly and effectively, with appropriate arrangements in place for inimal management, attendance management, and working relationships

³⁵₁₇ School leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan itself.

Assessment and target-setting

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment Policy. In addition to this the children's progress and achievement is measured using a range of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment procedures, which both monitor progress and inform future planning.

These include:

- classroom observation
- individual assessment and teaching
- screening and diagnostic tests
- NRIT
- Suffolk
- NFER
- MIST
- End of Key Stage Assessment
- InCAS

Monitoring and Evaluation

Individual records of progress are kept by each class teacher and forwarded to the subsequent teacher. Progress reports are kept by the Principal. Progress is reported to parents verbally and in written form annually. Children will be encouraged to assess and evaluate their own performance throughout the school. Their work will be marked positively and constructively in relation to their own previous performance.

Children's progress will be monitored in relation to the specified learning intentions. Plans may be modified according to pupil progress. Staff meetings may include discussions of general progress, approaches to planning and analysis of samples of children's work. We aim to provide for all children so that they reach their full potential in English according to their individual abilities. 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. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided (see Special Needs Policy)

CHILD CENTRED PROVISION:

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

³⁵₁₇ Decisions on planning, resources, curriculum and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school.

³⁵₁₇ A clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity.

³⁵₁₇ 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.

³⁵₁₇ 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.

³⁵₁₇ 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.

Resources and their deployment

The guiding principle for the deployment of resources is one of ensuring full access to the curriculum for all pupils. Materials will be provided which will be appropriate to the range of children's interests and abilities. Appropriately designed resources and extension materials will be available to meet the needs of the individual pupil. We aim to ensure that all pupils are confident in the use of a wide range of resources, e.g. audio-visual aids, audio and moving image texts, computers and relevant software and printed materials.

The variety of resources available include:

- a wide range of books and story telling materials and related tasks to suit pupils of differing abilities and interests
- a range of ICT resources (*see ICT policy*).

- an adequate stock of books, magazines, newspapers and other materials in the school library and in classrooms which reflect the interests and needs of all pupils.
- a variety of appropriate games and activities which will be integrated into day-to-day teaching and learning.
- a wide selection of commercially-produced banded reading scheme materials.
- an agreed commercially produced handwriting programme
- a selection of magnetic letters, small white boards and pens, letter, word and picture cards, play dough, sand, paint, toys

All resources will be well-designed and kept in well-managed storage and retrieval systems. Children will be able, as appropriate, to gain easy access, thus ensuring the promotion of autonomy and independence. Schemes of work and six-weekly/half-termly planning will indicate a planned use of available resources and show progression and continuity within the curriculum (see Appendices for Yearly Planners Overviews).

Cross-Curricular Issues

The intention of all teaching is to develop pupils' abilities to learn, think, explore and communicate, as well as to offer a wide and varied range of experiences. While the English 'lesson' is still useful and necessary for pupils, many language and literacy skills can be promoted/delivered through other areas of learning and cross-curricular themes.

The Role of ICT in Supporting and Developing Literacy and Language

We aim to make maximum use of ICT across the curriculum to promote the pupils' literacy and language skills, as well as developing competence in ICT skills. All pupils will have the opportunity to access computers and other appropriate technology. For instance, children will have the opportunity to use word processing programmes such as MS Word, Clicker and Writing with Symbols to develop concepts such as capitalisation and sentence structure, as well as spelling and drafting work. There are many software packages that encourage reading and discussion, as well as C2K software titles that support reading schemes such as Wellington Square and Oxford Reading Tree.

The Internet opens up a whole new world to our pupils, and it can be used to develop and foster skills such as reading, listening, thinking, writing, and researching. For further details of programmes used and list of Websites for each class see Appendices for ICT Programmes/Websites.

Homework

Homework is seen as an integral and co-ordinated element of the school's assessment policy and practice and will reflect currently class work as a means of reinforcement and revision as appropriate (*see Homework Policy*).

Parental and Community Involvement

The education of our pupils is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents, pupils and the wider community. Regular and positive communications will be made between teachers and parents, on a formal and informal basis.

A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY:

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

³⁵/₁₇ Good relationships that facilitate engagement and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serves.

³⁵/₁₇ The school and its teachers are held in respect by parents and the local community who in turn actively support the work of the school.

³⁵/₁₇ The school uses its involvement in particular programmes (for example Extended Schools or Specialist Schools) effectively in meeting the needs of the community and nearby schools.

³⁵/₁₇ Good relationships and clear channels of communication are in place between the school and the education agencies that support it.

³⁵/₁₇ The school works closely with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies whose work impacts on education, especially Health, Social

Services, the Public Library Service and, where appropriate, local Neighbourhood Renewal groups.

Opportunities to promote parental and community involvement can include:

- ³⁵₁₇ Information/ workshop sessions
- ³⁵₁₇ School performances, e.g. Christmas show, assemblies, other religious or cultural events
- ³⁵₁₇ Sports events
- ³⁵₁₇ Open days/coffee morning
- ³⁵₁₇ Prize Giving/Celebration Event
- ³⁵₁₇ Book fairs
- ³⁵₁₇ Visitors to the school, e.g. storytellers, visiting theatre groups, poets, writers, school nurse, dentist, fire service, etc.
- ³⁵₁₇ School trips
- ³⁵₁₇ First Communion
- ³⁵₁₇ Confirmation
- ³⁵₁₇ Parents Committee

We aim to harness the support of parents/carers and to stimulate greater support in order to enhance the pupils' literacy development, through the introduction of Reading Partnership scheme with parents.

Equal Opportunities Statement

All staff will aim to treat every child as an individual, and will respect their individuality, regardless of gender, academic or physical ability or socio-economic and cultural background.

Policy Review

This Literacy Policy will be reviewed annually under the co-ordination of Mrs S Reilly and the Literacy team. Language and Literacy has been identified as a priority area for development and resourcing and in-servicing training for Literacy will therefore continue to be provided.