

Educating Together



Roe Valley Integrated Primary School

Literacy Policy

Article 28 - Children have the right to a good quality education.

Signature of Chair of Board of Governors: _____ Ratified: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Signature of Literacy Curriculum Leader: _____

Reviewed and updated: December 2025

Review due: December 2026

Shared Education – Shared Future

Definition of Literacy

UNESCO (2025) defines literacy as:

A continuum of skills, extending beyond traditional reading, writing and counting to include digital, media and information literacy. It is the ability to identify, understand, evaluate, create, communicate and compute using both print and digital materials.

As a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, we at Roe Valley IPS believe that it is the divine right of every child to receive a high-quality education, encouraging the holistic development of the pupils that are entrusted into our care. Literacy is our prime focus because it is fundamental to all future learning.

The **TransformED NI** document, '**Strong Foundations: A Literacy Framework for Primary Schools**' (DENI 2025), has outlined the following capacities of literacy:

Literacy should be understood as a broad, integrated set of capacities that enable learners to thrive across educational, social and civic contexts. These capacities span a number of dimensions:

- **Oracy skills** that support expression, reasoning, listening and participation in structured dialogue.
- **Decoding and transcription skills** that support fluent, accurate reading and secure written expression.
- **Language comprehension and vocabulary knowledge** that enable understanding of spoken and written texts across the curriculum.
- **Text-level capabilities** such as inference, summarising and structural awareness for critical reading.
- **Composition skills** for planning, drafting and refining written and multimodal texts with clarity, coherence and purpose.
- **Digital, media and information literacies** that enable learners to search, evaluate, create and communicate effectively and responsibly across print and digital platforms.

Aims and Principles

- **Coherence and consistency**

To ensure that Literacy teaching is consistently a whole school priority, aligned across year groups, with consistent routines and planned progression.

- **Inclusion**

To ensure that all pupils are provided with access to high-quality literacy instruction, regardless of background, starting point or home language. In fitting with our integrated ethos, we recognise cultural and linguistic diversity, support multilingual learners and make use of texts that reflect varied experiences.

- **Evidence-Informed Practice**

To develop teaching approaches that are guided by research and proven methods, providing instruction that is structured and explicit. All staff will be provided with relevant professional development opportunities to support this.

- **Literacy across the curriculum**

To embed Literacy within all Areas of Learning across the curriculum, recognising that literacy skills are both general and subject specific.

- **Self-evaluation and continuous improvement**

To promote self-reflection and review of current practice to identify strengths and weaknesses, compare with best practice and plan next steps.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teacher

In the teaching of literacy, the teacher fulfils a number of roles:

Model: the teacher will model the use of language, problem-solving techniques, reading skills and ways to present information, across the area of literacy. It is vital that the teacher aims to foster positive attitudes towards literacy.

Facilitator: providing a caring, supportive yet stimulating environment where children can take risks in learning and express themselves with confidence, safe in the knowledge that their contributions will be valued. Recognising and celebrating strengths and achievements and providing positive feedback. Supporting Teaching Assistants to work with the children.

Initiator: providing a wide range of differentiated resources which allow for balanced teaching activities encouraging the development of key skills in oracy, reading and writing across the curriculum.

Monitor: observing and assessing progress made by each pupil in literacy and making further provision to support or extend. Monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies and adapting accordingly.

Assessor: evaluating the development of literacy skills and reporting to curriculum leader, SLT and parents. Assessing progress made through formative and summative means.

Literacy Curriculum Leader

The Literacy Curriculum Leader is responsible, in consultation with the principal, teachers and parents, for ensuring that the aims and principles of the Literacy Policy are met, through:

- Encouraging high standards of learning and teaching in literacy across the curriculum.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching in literacy and setting targets to improve provision.
- Keeping up to date with recent curriculum innovations and ensure that all approaches used are rooted in robust research.
- Supporting, guiding and motivating colleagues and other adults.
- Auditing, purchasing and organising resources.
- Ensuring that all staff have access to high-quality professional development.

Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Oracy

Rationale

Oracy and oral language are critical to academic success, equity, well-being and life readiness. Oral Language is the bedrock upon which literacy skills are built. Evidence indicates that success in literacy relies on the secure development of language and that oral language skills are among the best predictors of educational success.

Classroom Environment

We aim to make our classrooms language rich environments where children are encouraged to experiment with talk and express themselves in a range of different situations. Class teachers facilitate oral communication and ensure that all contributions to class, small group and one to one discussions are valued.

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning

Foundation Stage

Activities for Talking and Listening are planned using the Statutory Requirements for Talking and Listening in the areas of:

- Attention and Listening Skills
- Phonological Awareness
- Social Use of Language
- Language and Thinking
- An Extended Vocabulary

We recognize that children will arrive in school at different levels of language development and our practice builds upon observations of individual children gathered in the early stages.

Through (for example) play, role play, discussions, paired and group tasks, circle time, show and tell, and shared reading experiences, children are encouraged to develop the confidence and skills to:

- express ideas and opinions
- extend their vocabulary
- take turns in conversation
- give and follow simple instructions
- listen to and value the opinions of others

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Key Stage 1

During Key Stage 1 children will continue working in a range of situations and activities and to a range of audiences in order to develop their ability. Pupils should be enabled to:

- Listen to, respond to and explore stories, poems, songs, drama, and media texts
- Listen to, interpret and retell, with some supporting detail, a range of oral and written texts
- Plan and tell their own stories
- Listen to and respond to guidance and instructions
- Take turns at talking and listening in group and paired activities
- Take part in a range of drama and role play activities
- Express thoughts, feelings and opinions
- Present ideas and information
- Think about what they say and how they say it
- Speak audibly and clearly
- Devise and ask questions to seek clarification
- Read aloud from a variety of sources
- Recognise and talk about features of spoken language, showing phonological awareness
- Use appropriate ICT resources

Key Stage 2

During Key Stage 2 the children will develop their skills and abilities in a range of areas. Pupils should be enabled to:

- Listen and respond to a range of texts
- Participate in group and class discussions
- Share, respond to and evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view and use evidence or reason to justify opinions, actions or proposals
- Participate in a range of drama activities
- Take part in a range of hot seating activities
- Describe and talk about real experiences and imaginary situations
- Prepare and give a short oral presentation to a range of audiences
- Identify and ask appropriate questions to seek information, views and feelings
- Talk with people in a variety of formal and informal situations
- Use appropriate quality of speech and voice
- Read aloud and express thoughts and feelings and emphasise the meaning of what they have read
- Recognise and discuss features of spoken language

Reading

Rationale

Reading is a learned skill that requires explicit, systematic instruction rather than developing naturally like speech. It is the cornerstone of education because it unlocks access to every subject. Pupils are encouraged to become confident, enthusiastic, critical and independent readers. They will be encouraged to read a wide variety of texts and to read for information, interest and enjoyment.

Classroom Environment

The classroom environment should stress that reading is important, that books are fun and that the acquiring of information through reading is exciting and worthwhile. Designated reading areas will supply a range of texts (with a mixture of fiction and non-fiction) that are suitable, easily accessible and well displayed, and regular visits to our school library provide children with access to a wider range of reading material. Sound wall displays will support children's phoneme-grapheme knowledge and understanding.

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning

Reading is taught using a structured literacy approach, taking into account concepts such as the Simple View of Reading (Gough and Tunmer 1986) and Scarborough's Reading Rope ((2001). We aim to build a culture of Reading for Pleasure across the school.

Teaching Approaches used:

- Modelled Reading – teacher provides a demonstration of reading aloud.
- Shared Reading – where the teacher encourages participation while taking the lead role. Teacher support means that children can work on texts beyond their independent reading level. Focus is on text, sentence and word level activities.
- Guided Reading – where the teacher groups the children according to developmental stage or needs. The teacher provides the opportunity for the children to use their knowledge and skills as independently as possible while they provide support. Group/ individual discussion of strategies for decoding words or discussing aspects of the text is used.
- Independent reading – where the teacher provides the opportunity for independent reading of a wide variety of texts.
- Phonics (Jolly Phonics in Primary 1 followed by a Linguistic Phonics approach in P2-7).
- Accelerated Reading Programme (P4-7).
- Paired Reading (P4).
- Story Sacks.
- Use of class library, our school library, Library Services for topic books to be used in the classroom and visits to Limavady library.
- Silent Reading / Audiobook time.
- Class novel studies.
- All teachers will read regularly to the class from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Reading across the curriculum from a range of sources, including the Internet.

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Reading for Pleasure

We aim to build a classroom reading culture to encourage children to read for pleasure.

Some of the ways in which we do this are:

- Daily independent reading time (either books or audiobooks)
- Maintaining a well-chosen, varied, inclusive and representative, high-quality stock of books (both in our school and class libraries). All children are given input when new books are purchased.
- Regular reading aloud from the class teacher and children (e.g. from the class book, poetry, jokes, newspaper reports)
- Reading surveys
- Peer recommendations (displayed in the library)
- Reading Champions team who take on responsibilities such as helping to organise reading events in school, helping look after the school library and running reading clubs with the younger children.
- Celebration of reading achievements through awards in assembly.
- Celebration of special days and events that celebrate reading and involving parents with these (e.g. World Books Day)
- Book fairs and Author visits

Home Reading

Reading books are sent home to foster a love and enjoyment of reading as well as practicing the mechanics and developing comprehension skills.

Reading sent home is as follows...

Foundation Stage: 1-2 decodable books and at least 1 library book per week.

Primary 3: 1 decodable book and 1 main scheme book per week as well as at least one library book.

Primary 4: 1 decodable book and/or main scheme book depending on ability per week as well as an Accelerated Reading book from within their ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development).

Key Stage 2: 1-2 main scheme books per week (or decodable books depending on ability) plus an Accelerated Reading book from within their ZPD.

Writing

Rationale

It is important for pupils to develop as independent, enthusiastic and expressive writers. Our aim is that children will develop the ability to write effectively in a range of forms for a variety of purposes or audiences. They should be encouraged to develop as independent writers, learning over time to use conventional spelling, punctuation, grammar, organisation and handwriting.

Classroom Environment

From the moment a child starts school at Roe Valley, they are given the opportunity to 'mark make'. This first step of written communication is celebrated and children are supported in the refining of their initial written skills. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are given opportunities to write through structured play activities including writing areas within the role play area as well as across the curriculum. Across year groups, children are inspired to write through the provision of stimulating materials and purposeful activities. Pupils are provided with materials and stimuli to support writing, including sound walls, word banks, dictionaries, thesauri and ICT.

Teaching Approaches and Organisation of Learning

- Writing is linked to Shared Reading to expose children to various forms of writing so they become familiar with the structure and language of a range of text types
- Use of Modelled, Shared and Guided writing as teaching strategies
- Move children through the writing process using Familiarisation, Problem Solving, Modelled, Shared, Guided, and Independent stages
- Children are given opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Children are given opportunities to write in a wide range of genres
- Writing used as part of structured play in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to encourage children to write for a purpose and to develop interest in writing
- Planning boards, writing frames, writing scaffolds used and children given time to plan their writing
- Success criteria agreed at the start of the writing activity
- Children are given feedback about their writing. This may take a range of forms including verbal feedback, stickers, 2 stars and a wish giving targets for improvement and/or future writing activities
- Children in Key Stage 2 are given time to draft and redraft their writing with input from teacher/ classroom assistant/ peers
- Children work collaboratively during the writing process
- Pupils are given opportunities to compose writing on screen using a range of ICT software

Handwriting

Handwriting is not just an important motor skill, it is also a cognitive tool that supports literacy more broadly, having positive effects on both learning and memory.

We aim for pupils to:

- use a functional pencil/ pen grip
- form letters correctly
- use upper and lower case letters appropriately
- begin to use a joined style by the end of Primary 4
- present their work neatly

Phonics and Spelling

Spelling is a critical literacy component that supports reading, writing fluency and vocabulary growth. It must be taught explicitly and systematically. At Roe Valley, we have a school-wide approach to spelling that incorporates phonics, orthography, etymology and morphology. Phonics provides the foundation, which is enhanced by morphemic awareness and understanding of common spelling generalisations.

Teachers follow a scope and sequence that begins with oral language, is underpinned by phonological awareness and is taught through meaningful contexts, beginning with initial sounds and progressing through to multi-syllable words with orthographic diversity.

Teachers ensure that phonics and spelling lessons are well paced and interactive and differentiated to meet the needs of the children. Children will make use of decodable reading books and texts that match the scope and sequence of our phonics programme for as long as they are required to support them in becoming confident in their knowledge of the alphabetic code.

Foundation Stage:

Children begin Primary 1 with phonological awareness activities and progress to phonemic awareness, developing their knowledge of initial sounds and some consonant digraphs using the Jolly Phonics programme. In Primary 2, children consolidate their knowledge of initial sounds and consonant digraphs and progress, using a Linguistic Phonics approach supported by teaching of simple spelling rules, to learn how to split words into syllables to spell, and that some letters can represent more than one sound.

Key Stage 1:

Children will consolidate their knowledge from Foundation Stage and work their way through the alphabetic code. By the end of Key Stage 1, it is expected that children will have covered the majority of sounds in the English language and, through continuing the Linguistic Phonics approach and learning a variety of spelling generalisations, will be able to spell many multi-syllable words with orthographic diversity.

Key Stage 2:

Children continue to use a Linguistic Phonics approach in Key Stage 2, supported by work on morphology and etymology to become confident and independent spellers.

Use of ICT

ICT is used to enhance teaching and learning in Literacy where appropriate.

Opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning will be planned for, monitored and evaluated. In Roe Valley, we aim to make maximum use of ICT resources across the curriculum to promote the pupils' literacy skills, as well as developing competence in ICT skills and making use of Assistive technology to support children who are having difficulties. The role ICT plays in Literacy may include:

Talking and listening:

- Use of recording devices to record their own voices and listen back to what they have recorded.
- Listening activities involving stories, sounds, music etc on a range of resources.
- Use of interactive texts, talking stories and recordings of spoken words.
- Presenting their work using ICT resources.

Reading:

- Use of phonic, word recognition, spelling and other interactive software.
- Use of Activ Panels and software with interactive texts, big books and enlarged texts.
- Use of the Internet to investigate a range of topics and develop skills associated with reading for information.

Writing:

- Use of desktops, laptops and a range of iPad Apps to compose on screen.
- Use of multi-media iPad Apps to showcase a range of writing skills.
- Use software such as J2E or Microsoft Office Apps to develop a range of presentation and writing skills.
- Composing on screen and use of tools such as spell check when editing their work.

Planning for Progression:

Effective planning for purposeful learning and teaching activities provides opportunities to develop children's thinking and communication skills. In Roe Valley we aim to provide:

- Detailed and thorough planning for each year group within the areas of Oracy, Reading and Writing.
- Planners that identify learning intentions using the school's Literacy scheme, linking to the levels of progression and the Primary Literacy Framework.
- Planning that considers the needs and abilities of all children.
- Planners that are evaluated regularly by the class teacher to inform future planning.
- Children with opportunities to contribute towards planning and to peer and self-assess literacy work.

Assessment

Continuous assessment across the area of literacy ensures that we carefully monitor the progress of all pupils. This assessment is used to inform future planning both in class and at a whole school level.

We aim to use efficient assessment methods which provide purposeful feedback to pupils and allows for future planning. Assessment takes place in each lesson. Learning intentions and success criteria are shared with pupils, allowing them to be involved in their learning; pupil work is marked in accordance with these. Throughout the year groups, pupils are given opportunities to self and peer assess. Other forms of assessment include class tests and diagnostic tests. Summative assessments, such as end of key stage tests are also used to track pupil performance.

Primary 1: WELLCOMM

Primary 2: MIST, SWST

Primary 3: PTE, SWST

Primary 4-7: PTE, SWST, STAR

Analysis of outcomes

The results of summative and statutory assessments are carefully analysed in turn by class teachers, Literacy Coordinator, SENCO, Principal and Senior Management Team.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Monitoring and evaluating are integral and crucial parts of the learning and teaching in our school and are the responsibility of all members of staff. The curriculum leader will assist the Principal in overseeing the progress we are making towards fulfilling our aims. This will be achieved through:

- Sharing effective practice amongst staff
- Internal standardisation and evaluation of pupils' work
- Pupil, parent and staff voice
- Literacy displays throughout the school
- Collegiate book discussions
- Informal and formal meetings with staff
- Regular reviews of the literacy policy

The evidence gathered through these monitoring procedures will be evaluated and feedback given to staff to inform future planning.

Additional Needs

Children experiencing difficulties with Literacy are identified by class teachers' observations and through analysis of screening tests. At Roe Valley, we universally screen for dyslexia using the Nessy Dyslexia Quest Screener in Primary 2 and the GL Dyslexia Screener in P4-7 to assist with identification of difficulties. It is the responsibility of the class teacher, in collaboration with the SENCO, to draw up Individual Education Plans / PLPs for those on the Additional Needs register. In class literacy support and/or 1-1 or small group withdrawal for children requiring it is provided by the Learning Support Teacher.

Additional adjustments in place for some children include:

- Nessy Reading and Spelling programme
- Reading Partnership programme
- Use of Assistive Technology

Provision is also made for children with English as an Additional Language.

(See Additional Needs policy for further information)

Homework

Literacy homework is set to consolidate teaching and learning carried out in class. This consists of a range of reading (shared reading books, reading scheme books, group and individual novels), spelling and phonics and written homework activities consistent with the age and abilities of the children.

(See Homework Policy for more detail)

Equal opportunities

All pupils regardless of gender or ethnic background will be given equal access to materials, teacher time and attention. Progress will be monitored throughout year groups as we aim to raise standards among all children equally.

Parental and Community Involvement

The children are at the heart of Roe Valley and building relationships are vital in maintaining high standards within our school. 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, positive interactions will be made between teachers and parents, on a formal and informal basis.

Opportunities to promote parental and community links include:

- Information sessions
- Parent/teacher meetings
- Class newsletters/planners
- School events
- World Book Day and the annual Book Fair
- School trips
- School website and Facebook page
- Visitors from outside agencies
- Links with pre and post primary schools for transition
- Staff development sessions
- Connecting to local businesses such as the local library, school nurse, dentist, the PSNI, Fire Service etc

Board of Governors

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of Literacy and the standards being achieved by the school. We have an appointed Board of Governor Literacy Link Tutor for support and guidance.

Organisation and Management of Resources

Roe Valley IPS is resourced with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts and reference books which are updated annually. We also have a selection of story sacks. We make use of a range of reading schemes and associated materials, including Collins Big Cat, Phonic books Dandelion Launchers, Readers and Catch-Up Readers, Scholastic Connectors, Nessy Phonics and Songbirds Phonics.

Each class is provided with a wide selection of literacy games, practical resources and textbooks. Pupils have access to iPads and desktops with a range of literacy software.

Literacy resources are regularly audited and updated.

Policy review

The Literacy Policy will be:

- Regularly reviewed and updated
- Presented to the Board of Governors regularly
- Available to parents
- In line with whole-school policy