

MERE SCHOOL

English Policy

Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Statement

‘Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing and critical thinking. It includes the cultural, which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. Literacy allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question, which helps them to become more aware of the world and empowers them to participate more effectively in society.’

UNESCO 1990

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at Mere School.

Main Principles

- Speaking and Listening is at the heart of language development.
- Activities, where possible, should be linked to the thematic curriculum. This will ensure a rich stimulus and inspiration for writing.
- Children learn from good models.
- Children learn in situations where they feel confident, with high self esteem.
- A rich language environment is needed for developing learners.
- Activities should always be real and purposeful.
- Teachers need to be readers and writers too.
- ICT should be used to enrich the teaching and learning experience.

The language policy is underpinned by the schools’ teaching and learning and assessment policies.

Speaking and listening

Speaking and listening are the foundation and cornerstone of children’s language development. As such it is important that parents understand the priority it needs and support speaking and listening at home. In the Foundation stage and Year 1 much literacy work will be strongly focussed on speaking and listening. This could involve role-play where teaching assistants or teachers provide models in imaginary

situations, and where the role-play area has high profile. Role-play naturally leads into drama, another significant area where children will experience improvisation; polished performances (sometimes as part of their experience of assembly) school plays at Christmas, as well as theatre visits.

Listening

The development of children's hearing skills is acute. Children need to understand what makes good listening behaviour. This helps with the teaching and learning of phonics, which is critical to the child's acquisition of literacy skills. Musical and listening activities contribute to the early stages of this skill. Structured listening activities based on taped books and children's tapes, constructed for communication are valued.

Links with reading and writing

Speaking and listening are vital in the preparation for and follow-up of writing and reading. For writing, children need to gain ideas, rehearse what they intend to say as well as use drafting partners for re-working and proof-reading. In reading, preparatory oral work helps with understanding of vocabulary, context, audience, and framing questions to further comprehension and extend higher order skills such as inference and deduction.

Talk also extends children's range of vocabulary and style, as they need to use language for so many different purposes in a pair or group activity. In this way it develops expression and is an aid for provoking thought. Solo activities such as the sharing and telling of stories are also important. Children experience visiting storytellers as well as listening to each other.

Assessment

Children are assessed formally and informally.

Reading

We believe in providing a dynamic and interesting text-rich environment. This involves lively displays in classrooms, including a reading corner. We also promote the use of the library; resources from the Wiltshire Learning Resource, and participation in the PACT scheme. As well as this, the school has an annual Book Week with active and stimulating workshops for children and parents.

Beginning readers start with the 'Look and Say' method, which runs alongside the teaching of phonics with grapheme correspondence. KS1 follow the Progression in Phonics scheme as part of the literacy hour.

Children are encouraged to interrogate text by moving from modelled to shared reading, then through to guided and independent work. In doing this, children work in a variety of ways – with the teacher, in pairs and groups as well as independently. Children's progress is monitored carefully through their work in guided and independent sessions.

Teachers provide a role model as readers by talking about books they have read, using assemblies as a platform to refer to their own reading or in other ways: for example, in RE talking about books which are special to them.

We value range in children's reading experience and ensure that children experience a wide and varied diet of different types of fiction and non-fiction material.

We encourage parents to listen to their children daily and we liaise closely through the PACT book. Reception children are heard daily in school and some targeted children will be heard daily in other classes.

Assessment

Children are assessed formally and informally. This is through twice yearly sight reading tests, termly teacher assessment following APP guidelines, and informal assessment during class discussion etc.

Writing

Oracy is a vital skill, which underpins writing. It provides stimulus for writing in terms of role-play, drama, and discussion. Children can gain confidence in experimenting with different registers and levels of formality in drama and role-play. As well as this, work in pairs or groups gives children vital preparation opportunities for writing in terms of planning and brainstorming, and closer to writing, they can rehearse what they want to say before committing pen to paper. After writing, drafting partners provide valuable opportunities for reviewing and improving work and embedding the principles of the drafting process.

Children become more committed as writers if they are given opportunities for writing with real purposes and specific audiences (for example, publications, play scripts and leaflets). We value writing as an integrated part of children's literacy activities. Writer visits (both male and female) also support children's understanding of how writing matters in the adult world.

The text-rich environment we endorse plays an important part in raising the status of writing. Children need to see ample examples of a range of texts. As with reading, children are taken through a steady process in which they start with text, and then writing is modelled by the teacher, shared with teacher and class before moving to guided and independent work. Our theme-based curriculum, and ICT, provides purposeful and stimulating opportunities for writing across the whole curriculum.

We value emergent writing as a way of developing children's confidence as writers. Alongside this, we give emphasis to phonic skills so that children's ability in spelling accuracy increases as they become more confident as writers.

Whole school layered targets for writing ensure progression in the teaching of key skills.

Assessment

Tracking of progress at least once a term, following APP guidelines.

Foundation Stage Profile.

SAT's in Year 2 and Year 6

Whole school writing targets

C.A.T's test in Year 5.

Spelling (See Spelling Policy)

Handwriting. (See Handwriting Policy)

Equal Opportunities

We, at Mere, take into account childrens' differences in terms of race, ability, gender, class and disability. Texts and resources are selected from a range of countries and traditions. Opportunities are provided for gifted and talented children to take part in additional activities, such as at Gillingham Secondary School.

Courses

The school is committed to extending links with parents through projects such as the Family Literacy and Share Project.

Autumn term 2009

Review: Autumn 2010