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Literacy

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1.0 Rationale

1.1 The study of Literacy develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

2.0 Aims

2.1 The aims of teaching Literacy are:

- To enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- To encourage children to listen with concentration in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- To enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- To develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- To enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama activities;
- To develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
- To help children enjoy writing, and recognise its value;
- To enable children to write with accuracy, style and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- To increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.

3.0 Teaching and Learning Style

3.1 At Berkeley Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles through a creative curriculum approach in our Literacy lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding in Literacy. We do this through a daily lesson that has a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching. During these lessons, children can experience a whole-class shared reading or writing activity, a whole-class focussed word, phonics or sentence activity, a guided group or independent activity and a whole-class session to review progress and



learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries, word walls, tricky and high frequency word lists and thesauruses. Children use ICT in Literacy lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and in using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

- 3.2 There are children of differing ability in all classes at Berkeley Primary School. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated class and group work, while in other lessons we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use teaching assistants to support all children with varying needs, of all levels as appropriate to the specific task. Teaching Assistants and Teaching staff support children of all abilities to enable work to be matched to individuals needs, either to support or challenge learning. All work is planned and implemented to ensure every child makes sufficient progress in their individual learning in Literacy.

4.0 Teaching of Reading

- 4.1 On starting school, children are introduced to, and work within a stimulating reading environment. They are encouraged to develop reading skills through a range of structured and informal activities. Time is set aside every day for adults and children to read to each other. Children are invited to choose a selection of books each week to share at home from an attractive and stimulating colour coded selection. The book banded colours correspond with the Letters and Sounds programme, providing children with text they are familiar with and are at an appropriate level for their learning in phonics. They are able to blend simple CVC words to develop reading for meaning. This also helps them to develop a basic sight vocabulary, together with early phonic skills, heightening their awareness of print conveying meaning. The developing reader is encouraged to decode and blend words from a variety of strategies becoming 'word detectives'. This combination of approaches involves phonics, speaking and listening and picture clues. Later, for more confident readers, this will also involve comprehension, by reading the whole sentence where the 'unfamiliar' word lies in order to gain an understanding of the context of the word. Parental involvement is recognised as an integral factor in the teaching of reading and we therefore provide current information days and evenings, along with an ongoing reading record for children to share between home and school. Children are also encouraged to read and share a range of texts outside the book banded books. Books used for the teaching of Reading in school are chosen at a higher level for the individual child, in order to 'teach' new skills and challenge them further. Once the class teacher is confident an individual child is ready, able and confident in a particular level, they will then



progress them onto the next colour in the sequence. It can sometimes be detrimental to children's individual learning if they progress too quickly through the book bands as each level corresponds with vital spelling patterns taught through Letters and Sounds.

- 4.2 In later years, the initial reading skills are extended in purpose as well as complexity, e.g. for specific information, for personal interests etc. As children make progress as readers, they are encouraged to read for meaning. They develop a range of strategies to help them read a variety of texts. When reading aloud, teachers demonstrate how texts carry meaning. Children's own reading continues to include a balance between structured texts from the school's book banded scheme and a range of quality books from the school library. Children are encouraged to develop their ability to talk about their reading, and to express preferences for particular books and authors. Their progress also continues to be carefully monitored by the teacher and communication with parents.
- 4.3 At both Key Stages, children are introduced to a variety of texts through use of shared reading during the daily teaching and learning of Literacy. Shared reading enables children to experience language being used for different purposes, together with modelling appropriate structure and grammar. Guided Reading is used to teach further reading skills and strategies to small groups within the class, catered for their individual learning abilities.
- 4.4 Once children have learnt to read, they are encouraged to read for *information and enjoyment* both at home and at school. They learn to apply their reading skills in a wide range of learning experiences across the curriculum. Teachers help children to become more confident, reflective and critical readers, and to develop their ability to talk about their reading. Children are taught to use more advanced reading skills to help them to locate and use information.
- 4.5 At Berkeley Primary School, we believe that in providing children with a wide range of texts and reading experiences, we are not only teaching them to become confident readers, but also helping to develop children's learning as confident writers.

5.0 Teaching of Writing

- 5.1 In the FS, children are encouraged to see themselves as writers and to have the confidence to express themselves by making marks in a wide range of learning experiences. They are progressively introduced to letters and sounds which encourages them to use their emerging knowledge of words and letters in their
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independent writing. Writing is promoted through meaningful play and learning activities, (both inside and outside) alongside some guided work.

5.2 As they develop in knowledge and confidence, children are encouraged to write at greater length and in a wider range of purposes. Teachers use shared writing activities to model the writing process to children. Shared writing is interactive in nature and is appropriate for teaching all forms and genre. Children are encouraged to draw knowledge from their reading, and the systematic teaching of phonics, handwriting, punctuation and grammar to improve the accuracy of their work. Great emphasis goes into stimulating and purposeful writing at this level, engaging children in a topic of interest to capture their imaginations, with a strong emphasis on writing to communicate.

5.3 By the end of Year 6, all children will have had experience of writing in a range of styles and genres for different purposes and audiences. At Berkeley Primary School, we aim to develop Literacy skills through all areas of the curriculum. We follow the objectives outlined in the National Curriculum to teach the necessary skills and knowledge for each writing genre. Using a progressive and creative curriculum, we then encourage children to apply these skills in other areas of learning which are both stimulating and meaningful.

6.0 Speaking and Listening

6.1 At Berkeley Primary school, all children are encouraged to participate in many activities to develop their confidence in their speaking and listening skills. They share in discussion and role-play activities and learn to respond to rhymes and stories which are read with them. Teachers model good listening skills, valuing children's thoughts and experiences and giving them 'time to talk'. They learn important social skills in turn taking and listening to others.

6.2 All children are presented with a range of situations, audiences and activities, to develop social skills, questioning, listening skills, understanding instructions and confidence. They experience whole-class, group and partner activities in which they learn to express their views and listen more carefully to the opinions and ideas of others. They are encouraged to ask questions, to make suggestions about how they might carry out their work, and to take part in a range of oral activities, including role-play and drama. They have opportunities to participate in class assemblies and performances for different audiences.

6.3 *Talk For Writing* is used throughout the school, giving children range of opportunities to make use of talk, to share and try out ideas for writing and to respond to what they hear in class.

6.4 The Pupil Council plays an integral role in developing speaking and listening across the school. Children have weekly discussions about issues of interest arising from



children within the meetings which is then fed back to the Pupil Council. This nurtures and develops their skills in expressing their opinions and listening to each other.

7.0 Spelling

7.1 As their knowledge of phonics improves, children are encouraged to spell simple words using plausible attempts independently. They use a variety of strategies: word banks; wordbooks; dictionaries; segmenting and blending skills; class displays along with adult and peer support. There is a carefully structured phonics programme to ensure continuity and progression. Rhyme is recognised and taught as an important spelling strategy, providing an understanding and awareness of the patterns in language. Letters and Sounds guides children through the different phases of language building, reinforcing spelling patterns and strategies for learning.

8.0 Handwriting

8.1 Letter formation is closely linked to phonic work in the early stages and children learn to form a letter correctly as well as learning the letter name (Grapheme) and the sound (Phoneme). In the early stages, it is important for children to explore forming letters through a variety of experiences, such as painting or using large ribbons, as developing this gross motor skill is essential when helping children to make the transition into writing using their fine motor skills. At Berkeley Primary School, we encourage children to form their letters correctly before progressing to joined up handwriting. For those children who are confident and able, we provide the opportunity for them to explore cursive script which is taught in a meaningful and relevant context, particularly in the areas of grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and spelling. In the early years, all digraphs (Phonemes with two letters that make one sound, e.g. 'sh') are modelled by the teaching staff as joined up writing, therefore reinforcing spelling patterns from an early age. Teaching Staff use cursive script to model handwriting when appropriate for individual children and cohorts. From KS1, all Pupils are to write in pen. We believe this helps with writing, as it allows pupils to be able to 'make mistakes' and therefore develops skills in drafting. It also allows teachers to see their thought process in writing, with mistakes simply being crossed out with one line. It also improves handwriting and presentation.

9.0 Literacy Curriculum Planning

9.1 Literacy is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Literacy Strategy as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for Literacy.



- 9.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in Literacy in three phases: Long-Term; Medium Term and Short-Term.
- 9.3 Class teachers complete a weekly (Short-Term) plan for the teaching of Literacy. This outlines the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of differentiated activities/learning outcomes (success criteria) to challenge the range of abilities within the cohort. Class teachers annotate both Short-Term and Medium-Term plans in line with Assessment For Learning to inform subsequent plans. Literacy Short-Term plans are handed to the head teacher once annotated to keep a record of T & L and progression throughout the school.

10.0 The Foundation Stage

- 10.1 As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage, we relate the Literacy aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the EYFS. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of experiences, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy and learn about the use of words and text in a range of situation.
- 10.2 In the Foundation Stage, the children follow Letters and Sounds to gain knowledge and understanding of phonics, exploring how they are used to spell, write and read words. This knowledge is essential as it underpins the understanding required in order for the children to make sufficient progress into the National Literacy Strategy in Key Stage 1.

11.0 Contribution of Literacy to teaching in other curriculum areas.

- 11.1 The skills that children develop in Literacy are linked to, and applied in every subject in our creative curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school.
- 11.2 **Mathematics:** Literacy contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that rely on counting and sequencing. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems, in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.
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- 11.3 **ICT:** The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in Literacy in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively in a variety of styles. Older children use the internet when searching for information about a different part of the world, or when using desktop publishing to design a class newspaper. They also use e-mail as a form of communication when writing letters. Children use the planning and proofing tools in a word processor when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.
- 11.4 **PSHCE:** Literacy contributes to the teaching of PSHCE. We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Older children research and debate topical problems and events. Planned activities within the classroom also encourage children to work together and to respect each other's views. Teaching the children to communicate effectively with each other and adults also helps to nurture friendships and relationships in and out of the classroom environment.
- 11.5 **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development:** The teaching of Literacy develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own Literacy heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

12.0 Teaching Literacy to children with special educational needs

At Berkeley Primary School we teach Literacy to all children, whatever their ability. Literacy forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of the children with learning difficulties. Work in Literacy takes into account the targets set for individual children in the My Plans/My Plans Plus/EHCPs. Teachers provide help with communication and Literacy through:

- Using texts that children can read and understand;
- Using visual and written materials in different formats;
- Using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- Using the skills of Teaching Assistant's to nurture and support learning.

13.0 Assessment and recording

13.1 (See Assessment and Monitoring Policy)

13.2 Teachers assess children's work in Literacy in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make using AfL help teachers to adjust their daily plans



to suit the needs of all learners. Teachers match these assessments closely to the key learning objectives and the success criteria. They use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. Teachers make long-term assessments at various times in the academic year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. Using teacher assessment, teachers are able to set individual learning targets and summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents. These assessments are recorded and tracked using Insights which is closely monitored by both the Subject Leader and the Head Teacher. We use summative assessments as the basis for planning work for the next school year. These long-term assessments are made using end-of-year tests and ongoing teacher assessments. Children undertake the National tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers also make annual assessments of children's progress using the level descriptions of the National Curriculum.

- 13.3 The Subject Leader keeps samples of children's work over a range of levels throughout the year. This demonstrates high levels of achievement in Literacy and progress throughout the school.

14.0 Monitoring and Review

- 14.1 Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in Literacy is the responsibility of the Literacy Subject Leader. The role of the Subject Leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of Literacy, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for Literacy in the school. The Subject Leader carries out observations, peer observations, whole school standardisation and moderation sessions throughout the year, staff training, monitoring of work throughout the school and annual reviews. The subject Leader gives the Head Teacher an annual summary to review the progress of each academic year, in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and the value of impact on standards of learning. The Subject Leader indicates areas for further improvement and puts together an Action Plan for the following academic year. This helps to inform the SDP.

15.0 The role of parents

- 15.1 At Berkeley Primary School, we see parents as important partners in the process of developing children's language skills:
- They have an important influence on children's language before they come to school, and indeed, throughout their lives;
 - They provide valuable support at home in helping children to become readers and writers;
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15.2 We therefore encourage parents to play an integral role in their child's education by:

- Providing guidance for parents of pre-school children on how to help their children develop the necessary and essential early language skills;
- Involving parents in the school's reading programme from the moment their children start school;
- Supporting parents to help their children with their phonics by introducing them to the different stages we teach at Berkeley from FS-Y3. We do this through open days and information evenings;
- Providing an open door policy where parents know they can discuss any concerns with the class teacher or Head Teacher;
- Updating the guidance for parents as their children move through the school so that they can continue to offer valuable support;
- Communicating effectively and regularly with parents through reading records; informal meetings; information days; parents meetings; sharing individual learning targets and reports.

Priorities during the next review cycle:

Integrated SPAG learning

- Raise Standards in Writing for more able pupils
 - Raise progress in reading from EYFS-KS1 and from KS1-KS2
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