



## Literacy

*Literacy lies at the heart of all we offer for children at St Paul's as we believe that excellence in speaking and listening, reading and writing will enable them to flourish in their journey to the fullness of life.*



### Our Vision for Literacy

Inspired by God's love for us, we illuminate the goodness in others, we care for and protect His children and reach out to help others flourish in their journey to the fullness of life.

Literacy is one of the most vital areas of our curriculum because the ability to communicate effectively and to comprehend the spoken and written word lies at the heart of success in all areas of the school curriculum, in the world of work, and in most aspects of everyday life. Reading, in particular, lies at the heart of the curriculum as we recognise that this skill is the key that unlocks access to all other subjects in the curriculum. Our intent is for pupils to become lifelong readers who are excited about books, and we believe that outstanding and rigorous Phonics teaching from their first day in Reception should ensure that pupils learn to decode fluently. We intend for children to have plentiful opportunities to speak, expressing opinions and articulating feelings, and for them to listen to and respond appropriately in a range of situations within and outside of lessons. Pupils learn to speak audibly and confidently before an audience (for example when leading class and whole-school worship, and when performing in school plays). Furthermore, we intend for our children to develop a love of writing and to be able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and creatively through writing. We intend to create writers who can re-read, edit and improve their own work, and enable pupils to be able to confidently use the essential skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling. We set high expectations for all our children, encouraging them to take pride in their work and to adopt a fluent, cursive style of handwriting.

### Rationale – Why we do what we do...

Over the past few years, St Paul's have found, like nationally, that there has been a difference in the language skills of children as they enter in Reception. We have also noted a marked difference in the children's levels of independence, resilience, ambition (skills for life). This, along with a need to promote a more deep-rooted love of reading, has prompted us to shape our curriculum with greater emphasis in these areas.

After completing a Literacy audit with pupils and staff we found that there were opportunities for us to enhance children's progress and attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Language skills gaps are already addressed in Reception and KS1, largely through child-led interactive and active participative approaches to teaching and learning in close partnership with parents using Tapestry. We plan teaching to expand children's vocabulary, and develop the ability to voice ideas and to debate.

We recently adopted a new Phonics teaching scheme called Supersonic Phonic Friends. Our intention is to ensure that children learn to decode as quickly as possible, and our phonics programme is supported by a reading scheme that enables children to practise the phonemes they have learned in lessons when reading independently.

Reading comprehension is taught in discrete lessons and in Guided Reading sessions. Our intention is to ensure that children learn to read, but also read to learn: a vital skill for any student. Staff and parents have been introduced to the ERIC approach to reading, where a child reads a passage and is then asked questions that require them to Explain (the meaning of a word), Retrieve (information from the text), Infer (or interpret what the author is suggesting), and comment on the author's Choice of language and the impact it has on the reader. In addition, children's comprehension skills are assessed against the domains outlined in the National Curriculum and against the Key Performance Indicators for Reading published for each year group by the school.

A key feature of our teaching of writing is to focus on enhancing children's knowledge and understanding of common spelling rules and letter-patterns, and applying these to their independent writing. Teachers devote an hour a week to teaching spelling rules and patterns, always addressing issues with spelling by allowing for further teaching and practice.

Teaching also focuses on equipping children with the language features and layout of different writing genres. Each year group has a number of genres that need to be embedded by the end of the year, whilst allowing for children to write in other genres too.

### How do we enable children to learn more and retain more?

#### Timings and timetable:

Literacy is taught daily, both as a discrete subject and through other curriculum subjects too. It forms the bedrock of our timetables. In Reception and Year 1, Phonics teaching is a priority: it is taught first every day. In Reception, Literacy is one of the seven areas of the early years foundation stage and children learn to understand simple sentences, become familiar with phonics, demonstrate understanding of what they have read, and gain the ability to write spoken sounds and words and even simple sentences. It is taught through whole class, small group and 1:1 learning with a mixture of adult-led learning and some child-initiated learning. Across the rest of the school, hour-long Literacy lessons take place daily, as do additional sessions focusing on group guided reading which are aimed at enhancing pupils' reading comprehension skills. Teachers read a story to children every day.

#### Literacy– An Overview:

Literacy comprises speaking and listening, reading, and writing. In fact speaking underscores the subject: the ability to speak clearly and with grammatical accuracy is a pre-requisite for learning to write effectively. Therefore, opportunities to speak and listen to others abound in the literacy teaching that we provide at St Paul's. A class debate or discussion will precede the writing of a balanced argument, for example; children will learn to recite and tell stories in order to enhance their ability to write stories.

Reading also underpins successful writing. A child needs to have read from within a genre before they can write in that genre. We introduce and explore quality texts with children as part of our teaching in how to write to particular genre. Typically, in Reception and Year 1, children learn to read, and by year 2 children are beginning to *read to learn*, with some level of independence. By Year 2, a pupil will usually be developing the ability to write at greater length and with far greater independence than in Year 1, having mastered decoding and the spelling of high-frequency and phonetically decodable words.

Pupils learn to read using the Letters and sounds Phonics programme. The ability to read to learn is developed through whole class teaching right across the curriculum, group guided reading sessions and 1:1 reading opportunities, with questions being posed that require children to retrieve information, infer, and comment on an author's choice of language and intent.

Children learn to write across a range of genres and each year group is required to ensure that pupils acquire a firmly-embedded knowledge and understanding of the style and layout of a number of those genres. By the end of year 1, for example, children should know how to set out and write a set of instructions. The style of layout of a balanced argument is embedded in year 5. Children are encouraged, through discussion and through exposure to excellent model texts, to write with flair and creativity. They are also expected to spell accurately and to possess a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terms pertinent to their year group, including examples of these grammatical features in their independent writing.

All of our teaching is designed to address the learning needs and styles of the pupils in our classes. Essentially, teachers establish what a child's "next step" is in reading and in writing, and design teaching and learning opportunities that will enable each pupil to take that next step, before moving on. Every child has a target for writing: an objective they need to work towards and meet in order to take their writing skills to the next level. Any child can, from time to time, need additional support (or intervention) in order to take that next step and the role of the teacher is to work with the child in identifying and addressing those needs.

Some children are diagnosed with special needs that present real challenges for them, and need longer-term specialised support in order to progress. Teachers work with families and the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in order to ensure that these needs are quickly diagnosed and that assistance and intervention is put in place effectively. This may mean that a child works with additional adult support or has extra tuition outside of Literacy lessons. The school subscribes to a spelling and reading programme called IDL, and this is available for all children with SEN to use daily. Progress and attainment on IDL is regularly monitored. The school also employs staff who have trained in how to support children with dyslexia and other SEN, and these staff provide discrete interventions for those children.

### **Assessing Outcomes in Literacy**

Throughout their education at St Paul's, our pupils should develop confidence as speakers, a real love of reading and an ability to express ideas with flair and creativity in writing which is grammatically accurate and well punctuated. As they show an increasing awareness of their role as global citizens, pupils should be able to read to learn more about how the personal choices people make have an impact on the planet, and express their views on this orally and in writing. Reading should enable them to be knowledgeable about the world, curious to discover more about its wonders, aware of the threats it faces, and passionate about its protection.

Our children should leave our school equipped with literary skills and knowledge that will enable them to be ready for the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and for life as an adult in the wider world.

Assessing outcomes in Literacy is rigorous and focused. Teachers regularly review learning and knowledge within and after lessons and adapt their teaching as a result.

In Reception, all children have a personalised 'Learning Journey' using Tapestry which is used to record learning from all areas of learning across the year. Teachers use this evidence to ensure that all children are making progress and attaining well. Where children are not meeting expected standards, teachers provide additional support where appropriate.

From Year 1, performance in reading and writing is assessed against bespoke Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on an on-going basis and teacher assessment is validated using formal testing twice yearly. KPIs also exist for speaking and listening and are used as a guide for teachers to ensure that children are enjoying the full range of opportunities to develop these vital skills.

Statutory testing also forms a significant means of assessment in reading and writing, with a Phonics Screening Test at the end of Year 1, tests in reading comprehension and grammar at the end of KS1 and KS2 along with formal (moderated) teacher-assessment of writing. Results for these are analysed against national outcomes, presented to governors and scrutinised (and investigated where necessary) at county level.

Progress and attainment for children with SEN is also constantly monitored by teachers so that teaching that be planned to address gaps and next steps pertinent to each child. Formalised testing is arranged at least twice yearly, as for all children, as is tailored in order to ensure that it is accessible for the child and helpful in showing progress and identifying gaps. Teachers and Assistant Heads meet formally every term with the SENCO to discuss progress and attainment of children with SEN, as well as consulting with the SENCO on a regular basis for advice and to instigate investigations into possible needs that children may have.

The Literacy subject leader completes regular monitoring of attainment and progress through a combination of pupil voice, book monitoring and matching actual outcomes to intended outcomes as identified in the KPIs and National Curriculum. From this monitoring, key actions are given to the teacher and are re-visited frequently.

The Literacy subject leader then has a formal meeting with senior leaders to discuss outcomes and next steps. The subject leader also presents this information to the Governor sub-committee 'Curriculum and Achievement Meetings' each term. These are in addition to the Pupil Progress Meetings that identify and celebrate pupil progress and set agreed targets for narrowing any gaps in knowledge and skills.

### Enrichment

Enrichment opportunities within and across all areas of the curriculum are important to the stakeholders at our school. Our research shows that children enjoy and really remember themed reading days, such as Roald Dahl Day. Therefore our enrichment opportunities for Literacy will continue to include these, with one per term, and we will also include an annual whole-school writing week, where each class takes inspiration from the same stimulus to produce creative written work. These opportunities will be relevant, age appropriate and inclusive to all.

Furthermore, children value and use both of the school libraries, which are in the process of being re-stocked with additional new books, including a number that are specially produced for children with dyslexia and other specific needs.

Please see below the 'Literacy Enrichment Overview':

### Literacy

Enrichment opportunities within and across all areas of the curriculum are important to St Paul's to help develop the children's skills for life.

	Enrichment Opportunity	Term of Enrichment	Topic
All Year Groups	Opportunity: Author Day (e.g. Roald Dahl Day) Purpose: to introduce children to the works of a particular author and to create excitement and motivation to read books by that author.	Autumn	Reading
	Opportunity: World Book Day Purpose: to help children to realise that reading is a shared activity and loved worldwide; to inspire them to investigate the world of literature and to see books as a major source of enrichment and inspiration: an opening to ideas, opportunities, information, activities, support etc.	Spring	Reading
	Opportunity: Wild Reading Experience Purpose: to enable children to recognise that reading can be enjoyed anywhere – there are no rules about what you read or where you read. There can be a competitive element to this event – e.g. photo of "extreme reading"	Summer	Reading
All Year Groups plus parents	Opportunity: Read and Relax evening Purpose: children come to school in PJs and hear a story. Parents learn about phonics, supporting children with SEND and helping their children with reading comprehension at home using ERIC.	Autumn	Reading
All Year Groups	Opportunity: The Big Write: an engaging stimulus is introduced to the whole school and inspires writing on that theme, school-wide (a week-long enterprise) Purpose: inspire children to write, share ideas, learn from each other: increase enjoyment of writing.	Spring	Writing

### Environmental Link

Literacy – Opportunities for children to make a positive difference to the environment.

Year Groups	Topic	Making A Positive Difference
Rec	<u>Understanding the World</u> Growing plants from seed: Discussion, hands-on and observation-based activities with some written recording of results.	Children learn the origins of food and the benefits of "growing and going local".
1	<u>Geography</u> Beside the seaside: Discuss environmental issues relating to the seaside and the oceans, with some non-chronological report writing.	Children learn how to be responsible at the seaside and how to protect the oceans from pollution.
2	<u>Geography</u> Non-chronological report-writing about countries of the world	Children learn the concept of the "global village", and how activities in one country can have a worldwide impact on the environment in other countries. Children learn what they can do at a local level to protect the environment.
3	<u>RE</u> Read and discuss creation stories, and write about how to care for God's World.	Children learn how to be responsible for the immediate and wider environment eg litter, single use plastic bags impacting on the oceans,
4	<u>Geography</u> Non-chronological report on deforestation (looking at banana plantations)	Children learn about the need for genetic diversity and examine what they can do to promote this, e.g. tree planting, considering the origins of the goods that they buy.
5	<u>Geography</u> Newspaper report on an environmental issue relating to river pollution.	Children learn about the environmental impact of human activity on rivers, and the part they can play in reducing river pollution.
6	<u>Geography</u> Writing a balanced argument: should people be allowed to climb Mount Everest?	Children will learn about the positive and negative impact of tourism, travel and adventure on the environment and will learn to weigh up how their own actions affect the physical and human environment.

