



English Policy

March 2022



English Policy

This policy

- Should be read in line with the Total Communication Policy as it is recognised that all aspects of communication are included in all curriculum areas, but are integral to the teaching of English
- Promotes learning across the curriculum and supports pupils' achievements
- Encourages pupils to express themselves creatively, imaginatively and practically to help them to meet their needs and to make sense of and contribute, where possible, to the wider world.

Rationale

Pupils at Fairfield School who experience profound and multiple learning difficulties have the same entitlement to develop literacy skills as those following the National Curriculum programmes of study. All our PMLD pupils are functioning at cognitive levels significantly below their chronological ages it is appropriate that they are included in our literacy aims regardless of age.

Setting aside specific times each day is regarded as being inappropriate for PMLD pupils as they invariably have great difficulties maintaining concentration and attention. More realistically and effectively they should be immersed in on-going, multi-sensory experiences to foster emergent literacy skills and awareness through all aspects of their daily routines and work. Guided by an application of early childhood development plus an understanding of how their learning is affected by their disabilities we can offer the experiences which are the foundation of early learning for all developmentally young pupils.

All pupils must experience and retain a series of pre-requisites to learning in order to move on to develop recognised skills in literacy. These pre-requisites include self-awareness, a sense of rhythm, pattern and order and communication skills.

For most of our PMLD pupils gaining these pre-requisites will be a continuous process throughout their time at school. In terms of progression we recognise that the usual hierarchical model is not realistic for PMLD pupils – a more appropriate one is horizontal. These pupils move on in very small steps – some of which are imperceptible to those who do not know them well and once achieved these steps are easily lost without continuous reinforcement. As most of our pupils will not move beyond this requisite stage we must be skilled at presenting the same learning goal in different ways. We also recognise that some pupils may regress and lose skills or need to redevelop skills previously learned.

Philosophy

Communication, whether verbal or written, is the foundation upon which all other learning takes place. Literacy and Language is the children's ability to communicate in all areas -reading, writing, talking and listening. We believe that all pupils are entitled to an enriching and stimulating environment which encourages them to communicate, participate as listeners and value the written word. The teaching of Literacy and Language is fundamental to the entire curriculum and for it to be effective, input is required from parents, speech and language therapists. For pupils for whom English is a second language bi-lingual support and acknowledgement of the importance of their mother tongue is paramount. At Fairfield

we believe in the philosophy of Total Communication, incorporating all forms of communication into our practice. We currently are currently a Makaton friendly school with on-site regional trainers.

Communication

In order for those of our children with multiple learning difficulties to become communicators a total communication approach, using the skills of the teacher, support staff, occupational therapist and the speech and language therapist, will enable the pupils to find the means to make their needs, feelings and ideas known. Intensive Interaction & ASD strategies are used to support the development of pre-linguistic skills that are a foundation for children becoming independent communicators e.g. turn taking, sharing and vocalisation.

Staff can help the child to become as independent a communicator as possible by giving attention to: -

- how the child calls for attention?
- how the child greets
- how the child indicates yes/no
- how the child indicates his/her needs?
- how the child makes choices?
- how the child gives more complex information?
- how the child asks questions?
- how the child interrupts
- how the child expresses emotions?
- how the child initiates and terminates communication?
- how well the child is understood by familiar people
- how well strangers can understand the child

Literacy and Language offers our pupils the opportunity to:

- Communicate effectively with others in a range of social situations and interact with their peers and adults in the world around them
- Develop effective strategies for making choices, express likes and dislikes, feelings, emotions and make their needs known to different audiences
- Be valued as individuals, recognising equally their own worth and the contribution of others
- Access an extensive, age-appropriate range of literary materials and experience

Literacy and Language is a cross curricular subject which permeates every learning experience across the key stages. It embraces Speaking, Listening, Writing and Reading

Objectives

At Fairfield we aim 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
- Develop children's key skills and confidence in all areas of literacy and language
- Develop emergent literacy skills
- Provide opportunities for pupils to view literacy as enjoyable and understand its relevance to everyday life.
- Present children with a broad range of materials and experiences which will stimulate interest and provide pleasure

- Link language with thinking processes in a range of curricular contexts in order to apply and develop their language and cognitive skills
- Endeavour to provide for those children with special needs and strive to meet their requirements at all times.
- Enable children to communicate effectively and confidently in a range of social groupings in formal and informal contexts
- 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,
- Teach children, where appropriate, to read fluently and with understanding, whenever possible, using reading methods that are appropriate to the material and to the writing purpose
- Develop children's ability, where appropriate, to use information texts and to locate, extract and use relevant information
- Develop writing skills using pre writing activities, tracking, tracing and copying
- Develop writing skills, where appropriate 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

Commented [EW1]: These are from a special school, but may be too aspirational!

Early Years/KS1

Children in the Early Years follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

This covers the following areas:

Prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Pre-Formal

Within KS2-KS4 pupils will follow the Fairfield Pre-Formal Curriculum alongside their EHCP personal targets.

Each of these covers four areas:

- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Sensory and Mobility
- Personal, Social, Health, Emotional

In addition, the Curriculum also highlights

- Personal Care and Independence
- Citizenship (included within PSHE in the curriculum)

The Teaching of Literacy and Language in Pre-Formal is done throughout the day, interwoven throughout the school day in all aspects. The learning in Pre-Formal is cross-curricular with opportunities taken by the Teaching and support staff to explore, engage and develop literacy and language. Every section of the

school day, from the journey to the classroom to personal care in the bathroom contains a wealth of opportunities for emergent literacy and language skills.

Pupils with multi-sensory impairment will access an appropriate MSI curriculum provision.

Semi-Formal

Within KS2-KS4 pupils will follow the Fairfield programmes for learning supported by the curriculum pathway frameworks pertinent to students' personalised needs.

Post 16

Post 16 pupils follow ASDAN Schemes which lead to accredited units of work.

Literacy and Language will be taught through an allocated lesson and covered through all the areas of the curriculum and taught discreetly, where appropriate. For PMLD students, literacy and language will be immersed through multi-sensory experiences to develop specific and personal skills. Staff should modify the programmes of study as required by the statutory inclusion statement in order to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work through Post 16. Staff should teach knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that match and challenge their pupil's abilities.

Teaching Styles & Content

It is important to use a range of teaching styles to accommodate the different learning needs of individuals in any group of children. At Fairfield school we will build on pupil's skills to ensure progress. Pupils will be taught individually, in small groups or as a whole class. Teaching materials will be appropriate for the abilities of the children and wherever possible age appropriate.

The focus for teaching Literacy and Language is to give pupils the opportunities in

Speaking to:

- communicate to different listeners and a range of audiences
- work in small groups and in a class, participating and contributing
- participate in drama and imaginative play activities, communicating with others in the group, and play in role

Listening to

- attend and listen to what others are saying so that they can respond to, and recall, what has been said

Reading to:

- build on their prior experience of literacy
- develop their interest and pleasure in reading through learning to focus on objects, pictures, symbols, words and sentences and how they relate to the text
- access texts with support and demonstrate preferences for different types of literature. Materials used throughout the school will reflect the age and understanding of the pupils and sharing of books will be delivered in a multi-sensory way appropriate to a pupil's developmental stage

Writing to:

- build on prior literacy experiences and write and record in a variety of ways

- enjoy and understand the value of recording and writing
- differentiate between print and pictures
- understand the connections between speech and writing
- communicate meaning in narrative and non-fiction texts, *for example, writing shared stories and lists*
- attend and respond appropriately to others' understanding and use a developing vocabulary
- learn the sounds and names of letters and how to write them and combine letters to make words.

For pupils with **MSI** the focus for teaching English is to give pupils opportunities in:

- Social relationships and emotional development
- Communication
- Sensory responses

Phonics

Many pupils in school will be working within Phase 1 of the Letters and Sounds programme/Level 1 of Twinkl Phonics Programme with emphasis being on developing phonological awareness through sound discrimination games, rhythm and rhyme activities, body percussion and voice sounds. Many pupils struggle to discriminate between sounds due to auditory processing difficulties and phonemes may need to be exaggerated. For pupils working within Phase 2 staff will follow a systematic synthetic phonics approach (*s a t p i n* etc.) using lower case letters and introducing upper case letters for name recognition.

Reading

Reading is a complex skill with many components. As such, the school understands that successful approaches to the teaching of reading should encourage children to use a variety of strategies in their pursuit of meaning. Teachers will work carefully to plan the development of reading skills taking into account individual needs and at all times ensure these are reflected in the approach used.

At Fairfield we are focused on celebrating reading through the immersion of this within the curriculum. This may be seen in carefully planned approaches, sensory stories, story massage and from the excellent use of ICT within school. Fairfield also links into other areas of reading approaches to support children to progress within the literacy curriculum. These areas include joint working practices with the CVI / MSI team (Amanda Riddle and Iain Mackie). Colourful Semantics (Zaynab and Claire), See and Learn with Becky Sorenson and Social Stories. It is essential that all teaching practitioners understand the importance of laying firm foundations in this crucial area of the curriculum and as such apply where possible a consistent, whole school approach to the teaching of reading. This approach will be facilitated by the Reading Lead- Rebekah Clee

The school aims to:

- To develop happy, healthy and curious learners who, where appropriate read confidently
- To begin to develop a lifelong enjoyment and pleasure in reading
- To enable children to access, understand and begin to manage emergent literacy skills
- To begin to understand the meaning of what is read to them and what they read
- To begin to respond to what they read; to say whether they like or don't like it and why

- To begin to understand and respond to the feelings that words can arouse in us like happiness, sadness, anger
- To experience objects related to texts, stories and poems Where appropriate every day each child will be engaged in learning that encompasses these
- Teachers where appropriate will have planned speaking, listening, reading and writing activities which allow pupils to explore and practice their pre reading skills, phonic knowledge, blending and segmenting skills
- There will be a wealth of opportunities within continuous provision to develop pre-reading and reading skills independently
- Shared reading and/or writing led by the teacher to demonstrate reading and writing strategies (including phonics) in a meaningful way.

Pupils are given the opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and understanding through the following ranges of literature:

- Stories & poems with familiar settings and those based on imaginary or fantasy worlds
- Stories, plays & poems by significant children's authors
- Stories & poems from a range of cultures
- Stories, plays & poems with patterned & predictable language
- Stories & poems which are challenging, in terms of length and vocabulary
- Texts where the use of language benefits from being read aloud and reread Non-fiction and non-literary texts:
 - Print & ICT-based information texts
 - Books without words
 - Decodable books fiction and non-fiction
 - Reading books grouped into 'book bands'; core scheme Oxford Reading Tree supplemented with Letters & Sounds/Twinkl Phonics
 - Library books linked to whole school events and topics
 - Class library books Reading Schemes (Oxford Reading Tree) encompass a range of reading strategies including blending and segmenting and sight vocabulary. We aim to provide reading materials at all levels of ability.

Fairfield School supports pupils with complex needs and whose skills are very different. Reading therefore needs to be flexible and individualised around the pupil.

In some classes and, where appropriate, reading books are sent home with some pupils so that parents can hear them read. Progress in reading needs to be recorded in an individual reading record. Contexts for Reading Print in the Environment Pupils should be encouraged to note print around them. Classroom notices should take the form of the most appropriate approach for the class group taking into account their reading ability for example pictures, symbols, phrases, sentences and individual words. All classrooms with SLD/MLD pupils should have should have designated Reading Areas, where appropriate. Class libraries should be well organised with a variety of fiction, non-fiction and poetry books. Classes should also have letter displays and high frequency words, where appropriate.

***Reading in the Early Years** - Please refer to the EYFS curriculum document

Reading is encouraged for those it is appropriate in the following ways:

Shared Reading

Through the use of enlarged texts via big books, ICT and high quality fiction books, pupils will become more independent in reading material that would otherwise be too difficult. When using these books in 'shared reading' the teacher takes responsibility for decoding, but at the same time the activity allows for, but does not demand, active participation. It allows the child to learn at their own pace.

The school will encourage the child, where appropriate:

- to distinguish between print and pictures
- to recognise that words, have meaning
- to understand one to one correspondence of spoken word to written word
- to understand that print is read from left to right and top to bottom
- to read the left page before the right
- to understand the meaning of capital letters and full stops
- to learn the conventions of title, author, illustrator
- to learn that information books have a contents page, index, glossary; that they do not necessarily have to be read from beginning to end
- to predict, retell the story
- to acquire language skills taught in context
- word recognition
- phonic knowledge e.g. initial sounds, rhyme
- graphic knowledge e.g. plurals: ing 'ed' endings, contractions, don't, can't
- grammatical language e.g. full stop, question mark, capital letter, word, sentence
- reading for meaning: – pause at full stops and not at the end of a line, read with expression.

Guided and Independent Reading

The school will provide suitable reading materials to provide structure for both the teacher and the child. Currently the school utilises a selection of reading books taken from a range of different reading schemes as advised by the LEA Literacy Consultant. This is to ensure pupils have the opportunity to read a range of texts at an appropriate level. We appreciate that children may remain at the same reading level for many years and using only one scheme would limit the books accessible.

The school will provide a range of books specially selected for older readers who continue to work at a lower level. Teaching staff will ensure that reading material is appropriate to the age and development of individual children. The school will provide a range of high quality children's literature to give breadth and balance to reading content and also to help the child to recognise and increase his/her understanding of the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and social and cultural traditions.

Pupils will be encouraged, where appropriate: -

- to learn letter names, sounds and alphabetical order
- to recognise initial sounds and some common digraphs
- to establish a store of familiar words that are recognised immediately and linked to their meanings
- to use picture cues
- to decode regular monosyllabic words
- to use a range of phonic initial and final phonic sounds and some blends
- to recognise that some words can be decoded by 'chunking'

- to find information by reading illustrations
- to express opinions about books and stories
- to listen and have the opportunity to learn by heart, rhymes, jingles and simple poems by recognised authors
- to recognise rhyming words, rhythm and alliteration
- to recognise the difference between stories and information books
- to use information books for simple reference purposes
- to use alphabetical order, a simple dictionary and thesaurus to aid their studies
- make and read his/her own books

The school will ensure that as the child becomes a more experienced reader they will enjoy a widening range of reading materials, will read silently from choice, manage the reading necessary in most curriculum areas and develop a more extensive range of comprehension skills through the reading scheme, class and library books and ICT activities.

The school will ensure that the older child, whose reading has progressed more slowly, will be encouraged to listen to a wide range of stories to enjoy picture books which have been chosen as appropriate for his/her age and ability be provided with age appropriate readers with manageable texts and to develop a social sight vocabulary which will enable him/her to function safely and sensibly in the wider community. Wherever possible the school will encourage parents to become reading partners assisting the pupil by sharing their interest and pleasure in reading and by reading 'to' and 'with' their child.

Assessment

At Fairfield school all children follow a personalised curriculum and support children's communication needs as part of a holistic process and in-line with their EHCP. Assessment will be the responsibility of the class teacher, to monitor and ascertain progress. This will therefore feed into the next steps. Assessment for many classes may include engagement levels and how these are supported and maintained through Reading and Literacy opportunities. Assessment at Fairfield School is ongoing and supported by Evidence for Learning using specific assessment frameworks specific to the students' level of learning.

Learning objectives are set based on a pupil's PLGs and these are evaluated termly. Meetings take place with the teacher and any other relevant professionals to discuss communication targets for each pupil and any aids to communication and literacy which may be required.

Progress in Literacy and Language is reported to pupils, parents, carers and other professionals through the end of year report and Annual Reviews.

Achievement is also reflected in displays, IT work and assemblies, as well as the students work in work books where relevant.

In Post 16, assessment will also be supported through ASDAN Personal Progress.

Recognising progress

For most pupils with learning difficulties achievements can be predicted and planned for and progress can be demonstrated in terms of increased knowledge, skills and understanding. Not all pupils will follow the same developmental pattern at the same age or rate. Progress may not be made in all areas of the curriculum. For some pupils' progress may be difficult to predict and may only be demonstrated in a certain environment with a familiar person.

Planning for progression

Planning for progression at Fairfield School is based on the philosophy that effective planning involves thorough and informed sequencing of curriculum content and experiences which builds on prior learning. As pupils move throughout the school, their progression and next steps for learning are reflected in long, medium and short term planning. For some pupils this progression will be demonstrated through a broadening of their experiences.

Planning for progression for individuals or groups will include:

- The development of skills
- Broad curriculum content
- Different contexts and environments
- Use of verbal and physical prompts and equipment
- A range of teaching methods and resources
- Pupils, where able, taking ownership of their own learning
- Independent learning opportunities

For our pupils, progression is not necessarily only movement up a hierarchical ladder of skills and knowledge. Horizontal progression is also important and for some pupils with degenerative conditions the priority is to maintain skills for as long as possible.

Equal opportunities

All pupils and students will work at a level appropriate to their own needs and level of ability. All pupils will have equal access to Literacy and Language, regardless of gender, cultural origin or ability.

Staff responsibilities

Teachers accept shared responsibility for promoting Language and Literacy throughout the school. The Communication Provision Lead supported by the Reading Lead aim to ensure that:

- Language and Literacy is positively promoted across the school
- High standards of teaching and learning in language and literacy are maintained
- A school Language and Literacy Policy is maintained and implemented in consultation with staff
- Teaching is managed and organised to meet school aims and monitored effectively and funded appropriately
- Priorities and targets are set, in liaison with SLT and all staff, to continually improve provision
- On-going professional development and training is encouraged and promoted
- Relevant training and course updates are cascaded where relevant to all teaching and support staff
- Guidance and support is provided in implementing programmes of work
- Priority needs are identified and monitored within on-going action planning
- Liaison between schools (moderation) is effectively promoted and implemented

All teachers will:

- build up a caring, trusting and supportive relationship where different points of view are listened to and self-esteem is developed
- be flexible in approaches and to be sensitive to different children's learning styles and rates of learning
- be aware of own language use and position as a role model
- avoid negative responses to children's contributions
- use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning in Language and Literacy

- be aware of the need for careful planning progressively across the curriculum, differentiating where appropriate
- recognise that specific skills need to be taught across the school
- maintain records and monitor progress in line with school expectations
- work collaboratively with support staff and other professionals to support the development of language and literacy
- Aim to develop reading skills with pupils in a personalised way, this may include a range of lessons such as sensory stories, story massage and much more.
- develop and update personal skills, knowledge and understanding of Reading and Literacy. (supported by access to the school library and through disseminating training around reading)

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