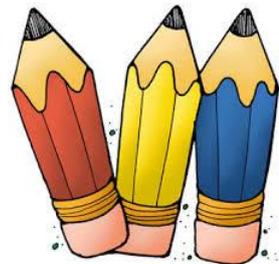




St. Mary's Primary School

Language and Literacy

Policy



October 2020



Introduction

Our Vision: *"Childhood is a Unique Experience, Respect it, Enjoy it, Protect it"*.

St. Mary's P.S promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. [Article 2](#) from the UNCRC underlines our school vision: *"The convention applies to all children whatever their race, religion or abilities"*. Therefore we believe that all children regardless of gender or ability should be given opportunities and experiences necessary to develop Literacy skills to succeed at school, in life and at work. We aim to provide a firm foundation in these skills during their time in our school. Every teacher promotes and supports the development of children's talking, listening, reading, writing and thinking skills in a variety of meaningful contexts in all curricular areas.

'Literacy is at the very heart of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Developing Literacy therefore must be central elements of a school's delivery of the NI curriculum.'

(Count Read: Succeed - A strategy to improve outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy, March 2011.)

This policy document will outline the strategies and approaches we will support and develop in order to ensure that each child becomes equipped with the necessary language knowledge, understanding and skills. It is within this context, that we met together as a whole staff to review and update our Language and Literacy Policy that was both relevant and in line with current good practice.

We used the following guidance materials:

'Every School A Good School',

'Better Literacy',

'Count, Read: Succeed'

'Together Towards Improvement'

Articles from the UNCRC

We, in St. Mary's P.S are committed to raising standards in Literacy. 'Every School a Good School,' (DENI 2009) has outlined indicators of what will be recognised as effective performance under the following four headings:

- Child centred provision
- High quality teaching and learning
- Effective leadership
- A school connected to its local community

The strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy: Count Read: Succeed (DENI 2011) aims to:

- Support teachers and school leaders in their work to raise overall levels of attainment in Literacy among young people.
- Narrow the current gaps in educational outcomes.

Count, Read: Succeed paragraph 1.7 defines Literacy as:

'The ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly, taking account of different purposes, contexts, conventions and audiences. It involves the development of:

- a. an integrated approach to the acquisition of talking, listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum;
- b. knowledge that allows a speaker, writer and reader to use language appropriate to different social situations;
- c. formal and informal language across all areas of social interaction; and
- d. the ability to read, understand and use information in multiple formats and platforms, including traditional print and on-screen material.

Child Centred Provision:

The following indicators from ESaGS are reflected in St. Mary's P.S approaches:

Decisions on planning, resources, curriculum and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school.

- A clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, and a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity.
- A school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability.
- Effective interventions and support are in place to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning.
- There is a commitment to involve young people in discussions and decisions on school life that directly affect them and to listen to their views.

Inclusion

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which is tailored to meet the needs of all children in our school. We are committed ([Article 3; work towards what is best for each child](#)) to ensuring all children meet their full potential in Literacy in line with their abilities.

In **Count Read: Succeed (DENI 2011)** the following 'Things 1-5' have been identified to help raise standards in Literacy:

Thing 1: High Quality Learning and Teaching in Literacy

All teachers in St. Mary's Primary School have agreed the following practices and are committed to providing high quality teaching and learning for all children.

- Each lesson in all areas of the curriculum contain an introduction, activity and plenary. Lessons are differentiated to cater for differing needs. Children where possible, help formulate the learning intentions and success criteria during the introduction and are encouraged to refer to these throughout the lesson. The plenary session allows the teacher and the children to evaluate their learning and plan for future lessons. P.1-4 use Walt & Wilf. These are referred to as characters and are displayed visually in the classroom. These characters are sometimes used in the children's own books. In P.5-7 the terms learning intentions and success criteria are used and displayed in each classroom. The children are expected where appropriate to record these in their work.
- The pace and challenge of the work set, is planned so that all children have the opportunity to learn effectively, make appropriate progress and achieve success.
- Work is marked regularly and teachers use the 'star and wish' approach on a weekly basis in literacy and numeracy. When oral feedback is given, the letters 'OF' is recorded in the children's books.
- ICT and the use of digital technologies are used across the curriculum as an integral part of the learning and teaching process.
- Peer & Self Evaluation: Each half term, one written Peer and Self Evaluation is completed in Literacy and Homework and is recorded in the children's books.
- Homework: All teachers plan for Literacy homework on a weekly basis.
- Class Contracts are displayed in each classroom and reference is made to UNCRC through rights and responsibilities. We are an all-inclusive school.
- School Rules and Sanctions are displayed and colour coded. Children know what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Thinking Hats and Maps are used to connect and consolidate learning in Literacy. There are displays of hats and maps in all classrooms.
- Teachers are aware of catering for different learning styles.
- Children have the opportunity to work individually, in pairs and in groups.

- Accelerated reader 100% board is displayed in classrooms P.4 - 7 to encourage and reward progress in Reading.
- Achievements in Literacy are celebrated e.g. Golden book and assemblies, World Book day, World Education Games.
- A learning support timetable is in place based on need in order to most effectively meet the needs of the children.
- IEPs with SMART targets are in place.
- Teachers participate in continuous Professional Development and share with staff.
- Audits of Literacy resources are carried out.
- There are close links with outside agencies.

The following practices are agreed in Literacy as outlined in the Teaching and Learning Guidelines:

- Spellings from the Prim Ed programme are taught and referred to throughout the week. Extension words are encouraged in week 2. Dictation and spelling lists are used as a means of assessment.
- Reading: P1-4 participate in Shared Reading using Big Books. There are also two guided reading sessions for each group in the class every week. P.5-7 emergent readers participate in two guided reading sessions weekly and fluent readers participate in one session weekly. This is based on either the group reading book or class novel.
- Planning: All areas of Literacy are planned for within each Half Term. Areas include Talking & Listening, Reading and Writing. A progressive scheme of work is in place for writing for P.1-7. Teachers evaluate their planners regularly to inform future teaching and learning.
- Moderation: There is an agreed half-termly focus for levelling and moderation purposes in reading and writing. Three samples of unmarked work are sent to the co-ordinator by the agreed date. The focus area is planned for on a separate planning sheet to include Familiarisation, Modelled, Shared, Guided and Independent lessons. A Task Description is also completed by the class teacher for moderation purposes on the independent sample. Pupil Portfolios include one piece of levelled work on the focus area each half term. Regular staff meetings are led by the Literacy coordinator to develop competence and confidence in levelling.

Things 2 & 3: Identifying underachievement as soon as it emerges.

Supporting underachievement with support from other staff in the school.

Count, Read: Succeed, paragraph 1:13 defines underachievement as 'a situation where performance is below what is expected based on ability. It can apply at the level of an individual pupil or describe a class or school, or indeed a system.'

All teachers in St. Mary's Primary School are committed to addressing underachievement as soon as it emerges. The following practices are in place:

- Using the school spread sheet, class teachers input the data and colour code accordingly for high/low/underachievers. Children on an IEP and Record of Concern children are also colour coded.
- PTE together with NRIT data are analysed by class teacher and also by the Literacy coordinator. Following analysis, high, low and underachieving children are identified early in the school year.
- Areas of strength and areas for development from the PTE are identified by the coordinators and shared at whole staff meetings. Whole class Action plans are drawn up with SMART targets to address the focus area. These are evaluated at the end of the year and evidence of strategies used are stored in the Assessment folder.
- Targeted underachieving children are identified from P.1-3 using professional judgement and P.4-7 using standardised scores. Action plans are put in place and implemented to 'close the gap'. Support from parents is sought and extra work provided for learning at home. This is evaluated at the end of the year to note progress.
- Records of Concern and IEPs are shared with parents in October and February and are reviewed in February and June each year.
- Good relationships are maintained with the SENCO and Assessment co-ordinators.
- Good relationships are established with outside agencies; Educational psychologist, MAST, Education Authority, Speech and Language, LTSS, ASD Service, OT, Barnardo's.
- Based on priority of needs 2 children are identified for referral to Educational Psychology.
- The SEN register is kept up to date.
- Formative Assessment and observations are used to inform future learning and teaching.
- Supportive staff who are willing to share good practice.
- Each teacher is aware of their responsibility for planning for differentiation.
- Teachers provide quality oral and written feedback which informs children of their progress and next steps in learning.
- The Reading Partners programme is in place for P.3 children following PM screening.

- Accelerated Reader is promoted to motivate reluctant readers. STAR reading test is used to assess children's progress in reading.
- In Foundation the Baseline Assessment, British Picture Vocabulary Scale and MIST assessments are used to identify needs early.
- Small group work is utilised within class and as much 1:1 adult support as possible is given.
- Jolly Phonics workshop for P.1 parents to support their child with phonics at home.
- There is good communication between teachers e.g. sharing of information through transition forms in June.
- Learning support staff play an essential role in helping children achieve their full potential and are greatly valued in our school.
- There is a culture of celebrating children's efforts and achievements which promote self-esteem and confidence.

Thing 4: Address continuing underachievement with support from outside the school.

Support by the class teacher will be continued or adapted after the review process and more than one approach may be deployed. The school will seek help if the child continues to underachieve.

Thing 5: Meet the needs of pupils after a non-statutory assessment through the SEN framework.

The SENCO together with the class teacher are responsible for meeting the needs of the child by:

- Identifying any external support and/or resources required for the child in addition to school based provision already in place.
- Liaising closely with speech therapists, OTs etc.

The special educational needs of individual children are identified in accordance with our school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The class teacher draws up clear and realistic education plans which are focussed on addressing the identified areas for improvement. These plans are monitored and reviewed regularly in consultation with SENCO, parents, other professional and support agencies, where appropriate.

Teachers recognise the vital role classroom assistants play in supporting children's learning. All classroom assistants are given opportunities for continuing professional development; both in and outside school.

Equal opportunities

In St Mary's Primary School we ensure the provision is open and accessible to all children, [\(Article 2; The convention applies to everyone\)](#) regardless of identity and background and in a manner that takes account of their abilities.

High Quality Teaching and Learning:

The following indicators from ESaGS are reflected in St. Mary's P.S approaches:

- A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for the pupils.
- An emphasis on literacy and numeracy exists across the curriculum.
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school-based staff and dedicated to improving learning.
- Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom.
- Assessment and other data is used to effectively inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement.
- Self-evaluation is carried out by teachers and the whole school, using objective data and leading to sustained self-improvement.
- Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils.
- Education outcomes reflect positively on the school, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken.

Language and Literacy reflects the statutory curricular requirements (Northern Ireland Curriculum, Primary CCEA 2007) and is supported by the SELB Language Framework (2007).

Classroom organisation will vary to suit the purpose, context and children involved. The following range of organisational strategies will be employed:

- whole class teaching
- small group teaching (size, flexibility and composition of the groups will be given consideration - e.g. peer, ability, mixed ability, friendship groups, etc.)
- paired work - similar ability, less experienced pupil working with more experienced pupil
- individual - one-to-one support with teacher or classroom assistant
- independent work

Attention is given to classroom layout, wall displays, access to a diverse range of resources (fiction, non-fiction, ICT and media texts; [Article 17](#), resources from other cultures; [Article 30](#)) and the provision of library/resource room, writing areas and listening areas with appropriate equipment.

We are aware that progress is enhanced when teachers are sensitive to differences in learning styles. Since children learn in different ways and at different rates, a flexible approach which encourages children's active engagement in their learning through problem solving will extend the pupils' use of thinking and language and promote independence. Teachers will have realistically high expectations and will ensure that all children understand what is expected of them by sharing the learning intention and success criteria with them.

Talking and Listening

'Oral language is used to communicate with people, to share and release feelings, to give and obtain information and to understand ideas and develop thoughts'. N.I Curriculum

In St. Mary's children are encouraged to listen attentively and to speak clearly, confidently, fluently and appropriately for a variety of different audiences and purposes. They are encouraged to listen to others and take turns, and to respond appropriately to what has been said and to value the opinions of others. [Article 12; have their opinions taken into account.](#)

Emphasis on oral language is reflected in

- The planning for talking and listening in many areas of the curriculum.
- The promotion and extension of oral language. Through play and activity based learning, pupils are given opportunities to talk about decisions they make and to ask and answer questions on their learning.
- Pupils are given opportunities to talk about theirs and others work, give oral feedback and presentations.
- Talking is further extended with the use of active learning strategies and effective questioning. For examples, hot seating and talking partners.
- All children have opportunities to participate in assemblies, Christmas plays, circle time, show and tell.
- P.7 children take part in public speaking competitions.
- Teachers role in modelling oral language
- Talking and listening is promoted during modelled, shared and guided reading lessons.
- Children are encouraged to use language in imaginative ways to retell stories, events or personal experiences with increasing detail.
- Children have opportunities to discuss, interact and talk in pairs, small and larger groups.
- Children are given opportunities to take part in peer and self-evaluation activities.

- The School Council representatives voice our children's opinions. This is in keeping with our Right Respecting School ethos.
- All classrooms have a planning board and children's ideas and opinions are taken into account when planning for a new topic.
- Visual cues for listening are also used in the foundation stage and in key stage 1.
- The Active Learning and Teaching Methods Resource for Key Stages 1 & 2 is used as a stimulus to further promote talking and listening skills.

Talking and listening is promoted as a social, communicative and cognitive process.

Reading

'Children should be encouraged to develop a love of books and the disposition to read'.

NI Curriculum

In St. Mary's we strive to teach all our children to read and to enjoy a wide variety of texts so that they will become independent, life-long readers and learners. We believe reading is a vital skill and this is reflected in the emphasis placed on the teaching of reading in our school.

- ❖ Each classroom has a class library where books are displayed and promoted.
- ❖ Classes are timetabled for the use of the resource room/library and children borrow books through the Junior Librarian database.
- ❖ DEAR time is a regular part of classroom practice.
- ❖ All children experience familiarisation, modelled, shared, guided and independent reading. Teachers and classroom assistants "model" good reading practice.
- ❖ Accelerated Reader Programme is promoted to foster independence and celebrate success in reading. Children are encouraged to quiz often and meet their target.
- ❖ Participation in the reading partnership programme. Pupils are identified by the class teacher and take part in the reading partnership programme in P.3 and P.4.
- ❖ Classroom assistants also play a key role in daily guided reading sessions.
- ❖ Our main reading scheme is the PM scheme. This is supplemented by other schemes to allow for differentiation and extension. Reading resources are stored centrally as a shared resource and are levelled accordingly. There is a database of reading resources saved onto the staff folder.
- ❖ Reading strategies posters are used throughout the school and to support under and low achievers in reading.

- ❖ The PM Benchmark kit, running records, STAR results and reading ages are used to ensure children are reading at the appropriate level or when individual concerns arrive.
- ❖ Pupil portfolios contain samples of work in reading from P.1-7.
- ❖ Comprehension skills are further developed during guided reading sessions and through effective questioning.
- ❖ Reciprocal Reading strategy is implemented in P.4-7 to help develop comprehension skills.
- ❖ Paired reading activities are promoted during World Book Day throughout the school.
- ❖ Children are encouraged to use reference materials such as atlases, encyclopaedias, timetables, brochures, dictionaries and online dictionaries etc and extract information from books using the contents page or index.
- ❖ The Jolly Phonics and Grammar programme together with the Prim Ed and Complete Spelling Schemes are used throughout the school to develop phonological awareness. Spelling rules and lists are adapted to allow for differentiation and extension of more able children. The SWST is used in September to ensure that each child is on the appropriate spelling scheme.
- ❖ Reading homework allows children to practice their reading skills and share their reading with their parents.
- ❖ Parent teacher meetings are used as an opportunity to share information on approaches to Literacy.
- ❖ Regular book clubs and fairs are held to promote reading for enjoyment and to build up new Literacy resources.
- ❖ World Book day is celebrated.
- ❖ Literacy coordinator runs Author of the Month competitions.
- ❖ KS1 and 2 children have opportunities to read to and share reading with children in the Foundation stage and Nursery.
- ❖ Visits to our local library and from authors and story tellers are organised to promote a love of reading.
- ❖ The mobile library visits the school once a year. This allows us to change our class and central library resources.
- ❖ Topic boxes and resources are ordered from the mobile library when new topics are introduced.

Writing

'Children should learn to communicate meaning through enjoyable writing activities; thereby they express themselves in writing both imaginatively and factually and including digital resources'. NI Curriculum

Children write to express their emotions, to convey their thoughts and opinions and to present evidence of research. By developing these skills, we aim to equip our children to use writing across a range of curricular activities in which they are involved. We also aim to develop within our children an ability to write effectively in various forms according to purpose and audience. They will be encouraged to develop as independent writers, learning over time to use conventional spelling, punctuation, grammatical organisation and handwriting.

In St. Mary's we strive to provide an environment where children are inspired to write.

- In the Foundation stage, free writing is encouraged during play; in the writing area and the role play area.
- From P.1 children are encouraged to write independently; gradually developing the range and extent of their writing. Teachers develop independent writing by observing, facilitating and modelling.
- Word banks, dictionaries and thesauri are available for the children in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Classroom displays also contain language that children may require in their writing.
- Writing frames are used to help children organise their writing.
- Familiarisation, Modelled, shared, guided and independent writing lessons take place in all classes and through all genres of writing.
- Children write for themselves, for peers, for a parent, for the school and audiences outside the school, etc. Children are given opportunities to and are encouraged to write in different genres for different purposes and audiences.
- Children's written work is displayed in their classroom and on wall displays throughout school.
- Achievements in writing are celebrated in the golden book at weekly assemblies.
- Feedback is consistently given to children on their writing - both verbal and written. Feedback is also given by their peers through peer evaluation.
- Learning intentions and success criteria are always shared/negotiated with the children.
- Children are encouraged to have a go, to problem solve and use their prior knowledge of phonics to try and spell words for themselves.
- Children are taught to frequently read back over their writing to ensure it makes sense.
- Pupil portfolios contain samples of work in writing from P.1-7.

- Word processing is promoted, wherever appropriate, to facilitate both the crafting and editing of writing and presentation of work. Children also have access to Literacy apps on the iPad.
- The Collins Primary Literacy scheme together with the SELB writing framework are used throughout the school when planning for and teaching writing.
- The quality of handwriting is promoted and encouraged through the use of the Nelson handwriting scheme.

Children have opportunities to use a wide range of resources; for example, individual whiteboards, writing frames, magnetic letters, the sand tray, foam, glitter, story boxes, a range of media and texts which help build confidence and a positive disposition to writing.

TS and PCs/Cross Curricular Opportunities for Literacy Development

We aim to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities and to make cross-curricular links where possible. The pupils are given opportunities to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through Literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

- Children are encouraged to use their visual, auditory and kinaesthetic channels for better learning and a range of active learning strategies are used to engage children. This includes drama and role-play.

- Children are given opportunities to develop good social skills, to work effectively as part of a team, to develop oral language and oral skills. Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities are threaded through many of everyday classroom activities.

- Teachers make good use of effective questioning to promote thinking and reasoning skills. Children are given opportunities to ask and answer questions, to predict, give reasons and express opinions, think about similarities and differences, sequence and order events and information

- Teachers are aware of the importance of time to listen to children, and children are encouraged to listen to each other.

- Teachers model thinking strategies and pupils are encouraged to reason and think and consider all options and to give reasons for their answers.

The Use of ICT

We aim to make the maximum use of I.C.T. across the curriculum to promote our children's literacy skills, as well as developing competence in I.C.T. skills. This involves the use of computers, iPads and the Interactive White Board. Pupils have opportunities to gain confidence in the use of I.C.T. For example, using word processors for drafting, editing and presenting their work, or when using the Internet to research topic work.

The range of I.C.T. resources available include:

- Desktops and Laptops with access to C2K network,
- Interactive White Boards
- Digital cameras
- i-pads
- Bee Bots
- Listening centre

-The use of information and communication technology as a cross-curricular skill supports the teaching of Literacy. ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent level.

-The interactive white board enables text to be read and shared and the writing process can be modelled effectively.

-A range of equipment such as digital cameras, iPad voice recorder, headphones, interactive white boards are used to promote speaking and listening and also prepare children for writing experiences. The Interactive Whiteboard is used regularly to model writing as it allows children to interact and engage with the writing process.

- Staff are responsible for researching software and websites together with apps to enhance their literacy teaching.

Effective Leadership:

The following indicators from ESaGS are reflected in St. Mary's P.S approaches:

- an effective school development plan is in place, providing clear and realistic targets for improvement based on a sound vision for the school
- governors understand their responsibilities and provide clear strategic direction as well as support and challenge to the Principal in carrying forward the process of improvement
- school leaders demonstrate a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for staff, particularly teachers, and promote a readiness to share and learn from best practice
- teachers are given the opportunity to share in the leadership of the school
- the resources at the disposal of the school are managed properly and effectively, with appropriate arrangements in place for financial management, attendance management, and working relationships
- school leaders monitor and evaluate effectively school outcomes, policies, practices and procedures and the School Development Plan itself

All teachers in St Mary's Primary School together with the Principal accept shared responsibility for promoting Literacy throughout the school. However, the literacy co-ordinator has responsibility for co-ordinating the development of language and literacy. There is a school development plan in place which has been contributed to and agreed and is supported by appropriate action planning for literacy. The literacy co-ordinator analyses data, decides on a school/class focus, contributes to the School Development Plan, disseminates new initiatives and supports staff with classroom practice.

Role of the Literacy Co-Ordinator

The Literacy co-ordinator is responsible, in consultation with the Principal and staff, for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy. The co-ordinator together with the staff evaluates the quality of learning and teaching within Literacy by:

- Identification of needs in the area of language and literacy in relation to the needs of the school
- Setting targets in an action plan and areas for development for the whole school
- Contribution to evaluation and monitoring procedures

- Supporting colleagues in their continuing professional development (PRSD)
- Evaluations using a variety of tools eg questionnaires, feedback from pupils, parents and teachers.
- Monitoring pupil progress with staff and analysis of data.
- Provision of support with literacy i.e. reading partnership
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Auditing, purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments and disseminating information to all staff.
- Support and motivation for colleagues
- Communicating with all relevant outside agencies, including DENI, the Board, CCEA, etc.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The quality of children's learning is carefully monitored throughout the school. Evidence used to inform the evaluation of language and literacy includes:

- Monitoring teachers' plans and sharing good practice
- Collecting, presenting and sharing samples of work during staff meetings and levelling these accordingly
- Book Scoops
- Displays and photographs
- Discussions with teachers, children and parents
- Observations by the principal, senior management team, PRSD observations where applicable

The outcomes of the monitoring process are used to inform future planning and evaluation.

Effective Performance Data Management

Data generated from standardised tests, PIE, BPVS, NRIT, CAT4, SWST, MIST and statutory assessment is analysed for a range of purposes:

- to track pupil progress
- to track complete classes
- to identify individual children's cognitive strengths and weaknesses
- to inform planning for teaching and learning
- to identify underachieving pupils for further support
- to set targets for individuals, groups or entire class
- to make meaningful comparisons between scores from more than one test

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors have access to the school development plan, and through the literacy action plans are aware of the contribution made by the literacy co-ordinator and staff to this plan. Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of language and literacy provision and the standards being achieved.

A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY:

The following indicators from ESaGS are reflected in St. Mary's P.S approaches:

- good relationships that facilitate engagement and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serve
- the school and its teachers are held in respect by parents and the local community who in turn actively support the work of the school
- the school uses its involvement in particular programmes (for example Extended Schools or Specialist Schools) effectively in meeting the needs of the community and nearby schools
- good relationships and clear channels of communication are in place between the school and the education agencies that support it
- the school works closely with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies whose work impacts on education, especially Health, Social Services, the Public Library Service and, where appropriate, local Neighbourhood Renewal

- Parish links - Sacramental Preparation Talk, Do This in Memory programme, Sacrament of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. The school choir sings at these services. RSE programme led by Fr. Dolan.
- Board of Governors are committed to their roles and responsibilities and play an active role in school life.
- Parents are invited to see class assemblies and Christmas shows.
- The ethos of the school promotes a welcoming environment for parents and visitors.
- There is an open door policy. Parents are encouraged to make appointments with school staff to discuss any matter relating to their child which needs further clarification or is giving them cause for concern.
- Parents receive an annual end of year report in June informing them of their child's progress.
- There is an annual book fair which allows the opportunity for parents to discuss and purchase new books for reading and sharing.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities to develop the child holistically.
- Our school website, newsletter and text messaging service have helped to develop effective links with families and our community.
- IEPs and Records of Concern are shared and reviewed with parents.
- P.1 settling in meetings are held in October.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November for P.2-7. P.1 parent teacher meetings are held in February.
- Friends of St. Mary's host various events to raise funds for new resources.

- Strong links with post primary schools helps to make the transition to post primary schools easier for our children.
- Grandparent's day is celebrated during Catholic School's week.
- Visitors/parents are invited into school to share their knowledge and expertise in many different areas of the curriculum.
- Fundamental Movement programme provided by the Ulster GAA council.
- Curriculum Open mornings and Open day for Nursery help promote our school positively.
- School Prospectus helps new Primary one parents find out more about St. Mary's P.S.
- School events are promoted positively in local press.
- Links with local business' are established e.g. Ditty's Bakery.
- Induction Talk and Jolly Phonics Workshop for P.1 parents annually. This helps parents understand how they can best support their child's learning at home.
- Parent's views and opinions are taken into account through the use of Parent Questionnaires and participation in the online School Development Plan survey.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to statutory requirements.

Ratified by Board of Governors:

Date: _____