



St Peter's R.C. Primary School

POLICY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN LITERACY AND ENGLISH

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Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Overview

Literacy is a fundamental life skill and is central to children and young people's learning across Curriculum for Excellence. It underpins attainment, supports effective communication and enables learners to participate fully in society, learning and employment. At St Peter's School, we are committed to developing confident, competent communicators who can read, write, listen and talk effectively for a range of purposes and audiences.

This policy reflects current national guidance and supports inclusive practice, recognising that learners develop literacy skills at different rates and in different ways. Through effective teaching, appropriate resources and purposeful assessment, we strive to provide a coherent and progressive literacy programme that meets the needs of all learners.

Learning Experiences

Literacy underpins all areas of the Curriculum for Excellence. It includes three essential areas: Reading, Writing, and Listening and Talking.

"Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence." (Principles and

practice: Education Scotland)

Learners should experience a language-rich environment that promotes high standards in literacy and communication. They should be given regular opportunities to engage with a wide range of stories and texts to enhance their learning, build language skills and foster a love of reading. Teachers will provide a balance of active, engaging learning experiences alongside structured teaching of key reading skills and techniques, including phonics.

Reading

At St Peter's, we use the Read Write Inc programme in the lower primary stages (P1-P3). This systematic synthetic phonics programme helps to support initial reading and phonological awareness skills such as recognising sounds, blending/decoding words, reading sight vocabulary and encouraging reading for enjoyment.

When Primary 1s start in August, they quickly begin learning one sound a day, practising to say and form these correctly. Teachers in the early stages also focus on mark-making and wider phonological awareness skills during these sessions; listening and attention, auditory discrimination, visual and auditory memory, word boundaries, rhyme awareness and detection, syllable blending, syllable detection, rhyme production, onset and rhyme. Once learners begin orally blending (showing an awareness that c-a-t = cat) and reading Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) words, they move on to short 'ditties' (short, phonically decodable passages of around 10-20 words) which are taken home each day to practise at home.

Learners are assessed regularly by the Reading Leader using the online phonics assessment to determine fluid reading groups and identify gaps in learners' sound knowledge and fluency.

Through the Read Write Inc programme, learners are introduced to Fred - a frog who can only talk in sounds, not full words. Learners use this to help them read familiar and unfamiliar ("nonsense" / "alien" words) throughout the range of reading bands/levels.

While in P1, learners will be exposed to Set 1 sounds (letters of the alphabet and some digraphs ("special friends" such as *sh*, *th*, *ch*, *ng*, *nk* and *qu*). They continue with repetition of this during the Ditty and Red levels.

At the Green and Purple levels, learners begin to learn more digraphs and trigraphs, including *ay*, *ee*, *igh*, *ow*, *oo*, *ar*, *or*, *air*, *ir*, *ou* and *oy*. Following this, they move on to Pink, Orange, Yellow, Blue then Grey levels, which covers Set 3 sounds – *ea*, *oi*, *a-e*, *i-e*, *o-e*, *u-e*, *aw*, *are*, *ur*, *er*, *ow*, *ai*, *oa*, *ew*, *ire*, *ear*, *ure*, *e-e*, *ue*, *ie*, *au*, *wh* and *ph*. Learners will be reading and spelling words with these sounds as they move through these levels.

Learners are taught 'Red Words' (tricky or sight words) as part of the Read Write Inc programme. These are phonetically irregular or common exception words that cannot be sounded out and do not follow taught spelling rules. As learners progress through the range of reading levels, they encounter an increasing number of these

words, developing their ability to read and spell them accurately across a variety of contexts.

Red Ditty Level

I the put no of my he

the your said I my you
no put he be

Purple Level

the of to no I my
me go he baby said are
you paint your

Pink Level

all my like I've the want
you we be no her are
me said he she to
washing some so

Orange Level

what they do said you to the
me be want my go he no
old are all we so was they
want her call

Yellow Level

some saw her to all was they watch(es)
of said want you are school
small do what their your who tall
call brother were I'm I've baby
there fall any where wall

Blue Level

does were all one said of to they
any other two her there I'm could
I've what do ball would want their
watch some water are was wash you
anyone over who school wasn't through once
son brother where saw whole small tall
people

Grey Level

should were there call want come could one
through was to you said all of many
are other they two who your what school
mother water father son here people buy
bought do some watch anyone whole ball
great above someone another school
walk would where caught worse their great
everyone love wear buy bought

From Primary 4 to Primary 7, Accelerated Reader is used to promote enjoyment and engagement in reading. Each term, learners complete a reading comprehension assessment that identifies an appropriate reading range (e.g., 3.8–5.8) and supports them in engaging with texts that match their ability, promoting success for all. Learners are then encouraged to select books within this range from the library, where all texts are clearly labelled with reading levels. Daily, learners participate in approximately 20 minutes of ERIC (Everyone Reading In Class) time, during which they read their chosen texts. The use of Accelerated Reader supports learners to read at an appropriate level, enabling continued progress while fostering a positive attitude towards reading for pleasure.

Primary 4–7 learners also engage in structured guided reading sessions, which focus on developing comprehension skills and promoting reflective reading strategies. In the upper stages, resources such as Big Cat and Book Detective are used to support and extend learners' reading development.

Reflective Reading and Comprehension

Within the Read Write Inc programme, teachers plan two comprehension assessments per term for their groups, often using link non-fiction texts to support this. In addition, class teachers plan for broader assessment of reading and comprehension skills beyond the programme. Each term, two assessments are planned that link to interdisciplinary (IDL) topics, with a focus on key strategies such as prediction, visualisation, inference, evaluation and summarising.

Reflective Reading is a structured and engaging approach designed to develop reading comprehension skills while promoting a positive reading culture across the

school.

In Primary 4–7, one dedicated Reflective Reading session is delivered each week. These sessions provide opportunities for learners to deepen their understanding of a range of texts through the explicit teaching and application of key reading strategies. This approach focuses on the development of higher-order comprehension skills, including inference, prediction, summarising, explanation, retrieval and visualisation. These skills are systematically developed through carefully planned lessons, supporting learners to become confident and independent readers.

Throughout the school year and across the school, a variety of genres of texts are selected by class teachers to meet the needs and interests of learners. In Term 3, there is a particular focus on the study of class novels, enabling sustained reading and more in-depth textual analysis.

Learners from P4 – P7 are assessed on a termly basis to monitor progress and identify their level of understanding in reading comprehension. A structured progression of reading strategies is embedded across the year, allowing learners to develop and consolidate key skills over time.

The suggested class novels for each year group, selected from those available within the school, are outlined below:

<u>Year Group</u>	<u>Novels</u>
Primary 4	The Butterfly Lion How to Train Your Dragon The Hundred Mile an Hour Dog
Primary 5	The BFG Holes Boy at the Back of the Class
Primary 6	Wonder The Boy who Harnessed the Wind
Primary 7	The Explorer Friend or Foe

Spelling

Learners are encouraged to apply the spelling strategies they have learned across a range of literacy experiences throughout the curriculum. To promote independence, learners in the earlier stages are supported to segment words by saying them aloud, using 'Fred fingers' (one for each sound, including digraphs and trigraphs), and 'pinching' each sound as they say it aloud before writing.

Teachers using the Read Write Inc programme provide accessible sound mats throughout the classroom, including on learners' desks during writing tasks, to support the identification and recording of sounds and words.

Read Write Inc Set 1 Sounds

m 	a 	s 	d 	t 
i 	n 	p 	g 	o 
c 	k 	u 	b 	f 
e 	l 	h 	sh 	r 
j 	v 	y 	w 	th 
z 	ch 	qu 	x 	ng 

Read Write Inc Set 2 and 3 Sounds

ay  may I play?	ee  what can you see?	igh  fly high	ow  blow the snow	oo  pon at the zoo
oo  look at a book	ar  start the car	or  shut the door	air  that's not fair	ir  whirl and twirl
ea  cup of tea	oi  spoil the boy		ou  shout it out	oy  toy for a boy
a-e  make a cake	i-e  nice smile	o-e  phone home	u-e  huge brute	aw  yawn at dawn
are  care and share	ur  nurse with a purse	er  a better letter	ow  brown cow	ai  snail in the rain
oa  goat in a boat	ew  chew the stew	ire  fire, fire!	ear  hear with your ear	ure  sure it's pure

In Primary 4 and 5, learners follow The Highland Literacy spelling programme. This is aligned with the First and Second Levels of Curriculum for Excellence, drawing on the relevant Experiences and Outcomes and Benchmarks to support progression in learning, teaching and assessment within and across levels. The programme places a strong emphasis on the development of high-frequency ('common') words, supporting learners to develop greater accuracy, confidence and independence in their spelling and written work.

In Primary 6 and Primary 7, teachers will select spelling words from learners' own written work, focusing on words they have previously misspelled. This approach aims to support the development of spelling accuracy and build confidence in using frequently encountered vocabulary.

At the beginning and end of the school year, learners in Primary 3–7 complete a spelling assessment to provide an indication of each pupil's spelling age. The results are used to support the tracking and monitoring of individual progress over time.

It is recognised that learners may progress differently through these approaches. Therefore, appropriate differentiation and targeted support will be provided to meet individual needs, ensuring all learners are supported to develop their spelling skills effectively.

Writing

In early stages taught writing lessons, a "kind, specific, helpful" feedback grid is used. This includes visuals, based on the Read Write Inc approach, which link to key writing tools such as "Fred Talk", full stops, capital letters and finger spaces. The use

of these visuals enables learners to self-assess their work and identify their next steps for improvement.

In Primary 1–3, learners are encouraged to apply spelling strategies taught through the Read Write Inc programme to support increasing independence in writing. Writing lessons are typically linked to the whole school's Context for Learning and may include imaginative, functional and personal writing tasks. There is a strong emphasis on modelling sentence structure, with ideas developed through the use of images and visual supports.

Handwriting is also taught as part of the Read Write Inc. programme. In the early stages of Primary 1, learners are given frequent opportunities to practise correct letter formation using structured handwriting phrases (outlined below). This supports learners in forming letters accurately as they are introduced. Self-assessment is also encouraged, with learners identifying letters formed correctly (circled in green) and those requiring further improvement (circled in pink).

Read Write Inc. Phonics Handwriting phrases

Use these handwriting phrases to help your child to remember how to form each letter correctly.

Always practise writing sitting at a table and write on paper using a sharp pencil.

1. Write the letter in the air as you say the phrase. Ask your child to practise in the air with you.
2. Help your child to say the phrase as they write the letter on paper.

3. Always praise your child for their efforts. Focus on correct formation rather than size.
4. Aim to practise with your child for a short time each day.

m	Maisie, mountain, mountain
a	round the apple, down the leaf
s	slither down the snake
d	round the dinosaur's bottom, up its tall neck and down to the feet
t	down the tower, across the tower
i	down the body, dot for the head
n	down Nobby, over his net
p	down the plait and over the pirate's face
g	round her face, down her hair and give her a curl
o	all around the orange
c	curl around the caterpillar
k	down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg
u	down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle



b	down the laces to the heel, round the toe
f	down the stem and draw the leaves
e	lift off the top and scoop out the egg
l	down the long leg
h	down the head to the hooves and over its back
r	down its back and then curl over its arm
j	down its body, curl and dot
v	down a wing, up a wing
y	down a horn, up a horn and under its head
w	down, up, down, up
z	zig-zag-zig
q	round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair
x	down the arm and leg and repeat the other side



OXFORD

Ruth Miskin
Training

In Primary 2 and 3, learners follow Stage 2 of the Read Write Inc handwriting programme to develop consistency and accuracy in forming ascenders and descenders.

In Primary 4–7, writing is supported through the use of the National Improving Writing Programme (CYPIC), which aims to raise attainment in writing.

CYPIC writing is a structured approach to improving writing attainment, focused on high-quality learning and teaching, effective assessment and strong pupil participation. It emphasises clear teacher modelling, visible learning intentions and success criteria, and targeted differentiation to support all learners. Learners are actively involved in the writing process by assessing their own work, setting individual targets, and analysing progress data.

The approach also includes regular, focused writing opportunities, supported by ongoing feedback linked to success criteria. Improvement is driven through explicit targets, the use of data to inform practice, and a consistent focus on specific areas of development over time to ensure sustained progress in writing.

In Term 1 of the school year, learners from P4 – P7 complete a ‘cold piece’ of writing without adult support. This piece is written in a common genre across the school; at St Peter’s, this is an imaginative piece.

Class teachers assess these initial pieces and record findings using an Assessment and Pareto spreadsheet (First and Second Level). This process identifies the class’s first teaching aim. Classes then work progressively through a sequence of teaching aims over the course of the year. Once a teaching aim is achieved, it remains part of the success criteria, with new aims added over time. As a result, by the end of the academic year, learners may be working towards achieving four or five success criteria simultaneously.

Learners are expected to engage in writing three to four times per week, typically in focused 20-minute sessions. Following each task, learners self-assess their work against the success criteria using a colour-coded marking approach, focusing on areas such as **punctuation**, **connectives**, **openers** and **vocabulary**.

After six lessons, a median score is calculated to establish a baseline. As learners continue to write, once six subsequent pieces exceed this median, the class progresses to the next teaching aim. The overall goal is for learners to consistently produce a set number of grammatically accurate sentences, contributing towards achieving ‘The 100 Club’.

Learning intentions and success criteria are consistent throughout the year to ensure continuity and clarity. These are regularly referenced during teaching input and are clearly displayed within learners’ writing jotters. As new teaching aims are introduced, they are incorporated into the existing success criteria, supporting learners to build on prior learning.

Targets are set based on initial assessment data, with learners gradually working towards achieving the full range of expected targets as the year progresses. This can be evidenced in the below examples:

2.1 - My Punctuation Target:

- I can write sentences which have capital letters, full stops, commas, exclamation, and question marks. With help, I can use speech marks to show direct speech and apostrophes correctly. (with support)

I can write at least 5 sentences with the correct punctuation.

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2.1 - My Opener Target:

- I can include sentence openers to at least 5 different sentences. (last time, also, after, then, soon, at last, another thing, as well as, at last to this, later, firstly, lastly often)

2.1 - My Vocabulary Target:

- I can include at least 5 sentences, each with a different WOW word. (beautiful, adventure, fierce, awful, magic, enormous, gigantic, bravely, joy, freezing, sadness, fear, shelter, companion, silently, happiness, thunderous, fearful, marvellous, patiently, echo, attractive, nervously, worriedly, furnishings, generously, experience, courage, peak, robe, sensitively, timidly, aggressively, imaginatively, unfortunate, murderous, echoing, emotion, anxiety, longing, progress, system, communication, vibrations, prefer, nourish, ingredient)

2.1- My Connective Target

- I can include at least one connective in my sentence (and, but, because, so, when, if, although)

I can write at least 5 sentences, with an opener, connective, adjective and the correct punctuation.

Learners should be actively involved throughout the entire process. Teachers should discuss both the stretch aim and teaching aim with learners and provide clear visual supports within the classroom to reinforce understanding. Pareto charts and run charts should be shared and discussed regularly, with the percentage of learners achieving the success criteria communicated daily.

Learners should be motivated through ongoing dialogue about progress, including recognition of the "100 Club" and appropriate rewards for achieving teaching aims, helping to promote engagement and a sense of achievement.

Throughout the year, class teachers deliver dedicated 'taught writing' lessons. These sessions are designed to support learners in transferring and applying skills developed through CYPIC lessons across a range of writing genres and techniques. This approach also ensures breadth and progression within the curriculum, enabling learners to demonstrate their development as confident and successful writers.

Learners are assessed a minimum of twice per term through structured assessment activities separate from their jotter work. These assessments utilise a range of texts and genres to provide a broad measure of learners' reading comprehension skills. The evidence gathered is used to track progress and attainment over time, supporting the identification of improvement and informing next steps in learning.

From Early to Second Level, each assessed piece of writing is accompanied by a copy of the Aberdeen City Council writing progression grids, introduced in 2025 and aligned with Education Scotland Writing Benchmarks. These grids include genre-specific criteria, which teachers highlight when learners demonstrate achievement of particular skills. This approach supports the systematic monitoring of progress and attainment, while providing clear and robust evidence to inform professional judgements regarding learners' progression through the levels.

Listening and Talking

At St Peters, we aim to have children who become fluent and confident communicators, increasingly matching their style and responses to their purpose and audience.

Effective listening and talking involves a set of complex skills that develop through a range of interactive learning activities focussing on content, delivery and body language. Children are encouraged to develop these skills through a wide range of cross-curricular opportunities, frequently using real contexts for real purposes.

Class teachers assess listening and talking through a range of curricular experiences, often linked to whole-school Contexts for Learning, at least once per term. Learners are provided with opportunities to share their ideas with a partner, in groups and with the wider class. The focus is on communicating clearly and audibly, demonstrating appropriate eye contact and body language, and responding to questions and instructions. These skills are assessed in a variety of ways, including teacher, peer and self-assessment.

Literacy Home Learning ("Homework")

In the lower stages (Primary 1–3), phonics videos are shared weekly on Google Classroom. It is important that these are watched regularly, particularly in the early stages of Primary 1, as the Fred Games blending videos support the development of key early reading skills. Login details are issued at the beginning of the school year.

Reading books are assigned through Oxford Owl, with new books set on a weekly basis (unless learners are working on a non-fiction text, which may not have an online version). These books often include a quiz, allowing completion of homework to be tracked. Learners receive their login details when they reach Red level, as this is the stage at which online books become available.

P1 pupils and other learners following the Read Write Inc programme are also provided with book bags containing materials to support reading at home. Initially, these include the sounds learned during the week, followed by books that align with the texts being studied in class. This provides learners with opportunities to practise

reading unfamiliar texts independently.

Book bags are returned each Friday, with new materials issued on a Monday.

In the upper stages, literacy homework is set through Boost Learning. A new book is assigned every two weeks, and learners are expected to read the text and complete a corresponding comprehension quiz. Login details are provided at the start of the school year.

All literacy home learning (“homework”) is shared via Google Classroom, where learners can access direct links to the relevant websites and resources.

Further information about our approaches to home learning can be accessed via the link to our school’s [Home Learning Policy](#).

Links

The following links provide further support for this policy:

- [Aberdeen City Council’s Raising Attainment and Achievement Standard](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment Standard](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council’s Literacy Hub](#)