

Helping your child with Literacy - Primary 7

This leaflet aims to provide you with information about Curriculum for Excellence second level expectations. It also provides information about websites that will help and how you can support your child's learning. There are a number of suggestions for activities that will benefit your child.

One of the writing targets (benchmarks) is to use idioms in writing. Here are a few about the sea.

Activity – try and find as many as you can about love, music and books.

Idioms – Every language has its own collection of wise sayings.

1. **a big fish** - an important or influential person
2. **a big fish in a small pond** - someone who is important within a small/limited field
3. **a drop in the ocean** - a small amount compared to what is expected
4. **a loan shark** - a moneylender who charges very high interest rates
5. **a whale of a time** - a very enjoyable time
6. **all's fish that comes to net** - you should take advantage of all that comes your way
7. **another kettle of fish** - an entirely different thing
8. **any port in a storm** - any source of relief or escape in an unfavourable situation
9. **fishy** - suspicious
10. **in the doldrums** - low-spirited, depressed
11. **like a fish out of water** - in an uncomfortable/awkward situation
12. **packed like sardines** - crowded

Listening and talking

We want our pupils to be confident communicators. We want them to be able to ask and present information, interact with others in a purposeful way, express a personal opinion and influence others, create individually and with others.

Some of the second level targets include

- listen when others are talking throughout the discussion
- make relevant contributions throughout most of the discussions
- show they value others' contributions almost all the time
- give appropriate feedback to speakers based on the techniques and strategies they have used
- build on the contributions of others at various times e.g. to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking
- challenge the ideas of others
- ask relevant questions to support understanding, seek further information and ask others to clarify / extend

Our pupils are working with each other constantly and developing these important skills in the school context. In a home context it is important to find time to chat about news items, share and discuss opinions about culture and products.

Reading

The first area of reading is to develop a love for reading

- select and read increasingly challenging material for a sustained period
- express thoughts, opinions and ideas on authors
- explore the impact on a reader from a range of texts

We encourage children to read a wide range of material – everything counts. For those that are confident and reading a lot this will undoubtedly have a positive effect. It is important that children see adults enjoy reading but also with a purpose. Adults need to model good reading habits. You need to continue to be interested and promote reading in the home.

You could read the same text together and share opinions about the book.

VCOP	Summary
Vocabulary	The range of ambitious vocabulary a pupil knows; WOW words.
Connectives	The range of ways pupils have of joining ideas, phrases & sentences
Openers	The strategies pupils have for opening sentences; especially the 3 key openers: connectives, 'ly' words & 'ing' words
Punctuation	The range of punctuation a pupil can use & the accuracy with which they use it.

Here are recommended websites:-

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/category/reading-lists-for-ks2-school-pupils/>

This contains a list of recommended authors and books. The choice of these books are personal.

<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/> this is a super website with many suggestions

Writing – the hardest of all literacy activities.

Our most challenging lessons as teachers are to work with the whole class to inspire pupils to write. There is a reluctance because it uses all the skills. And it is difficult. It can be hard going. It is a lot easier to work with an individual or pairs. If you can find time to write with your child this can be beneficial.

Generally your child will need a purpose and lots of support. Functional writing is the best type for a purpose. In our world emails could be written and sent, they could design leaflets for a holiday, write out recipes and send letters/postcards to relatives.

In class the focus is on VCOP – we are trying to extend their vocabulary, use connectives and a range of punctuation.

Punctuation is practised independently but it is transferring the skills to the writing that is more challenging.

Connectives are words (or phrases) that can be used to link one sentence to another or to extend sentences

furthermore	then	however	so	but
nonetheless	as	therefore	and	moreover
henceforward	if	whenever	with	meanwhile
notwithstanding	yet	after	when	although
nevertheless	for	since	while	besides
consequently	until	whoever	whatever	
alternatively	whereas		because	

Another website for the different types of writing. This website covers the range of writing activities.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/english/writing/>

Activities

Extend your vocabulary – how many synonyms can you get? Eg Happy (Ecstatic Exhilarated Delighted Jolly Lively Merry Thrilled Blissful Cheerful Chipper Glad Gleeful Joyful Joyous Upbeat Overjoyed)

Use “Word” on the computer, use a thesaurus.
Why not have a word of the day? Use websites – wordthink.com

Spelling – websites

A great website – This website is brilliant to reinforce language activities. **spellzone.com**

It will help you with your idioms!

Here is another website: spellingcity.com

Boys and writing

Simon Mayo

New research published by the National Literacy Trust reveals that boys are half as likely to enjoy writing as girls and almost a third never or rarely write outside of class. The Trust is calling for parents to encourage their children, particularly boys, to write more, and broadcaster and children’s author Simon Mayo is backing the campaign. Simon, author of the Itch series, whose protagonist is a 14-year-old boy obsessed with science and on a mission to collect all the elements in the periodic table, says:

“It’s so important for boys to find a topic that interests them before they pick up a pen and start writing. I wasn’t particularly interested in writing at school, I only started to enjoy it later on, but I was hampered by being fantastically slow. When I started writing the first Itch book, it was as a short story for my son, but then I was completely captivated by the plot and characters, and the story took over. If you can grab a child’s imagination in the same way, getting them to write about a hobby or something they really enjoy doing then the whole story writing world is open to them.”

Choose subjects your child loves, whether that is dinosaurs, superheroes, shopping or football. Your child will write best if they write about topics that they know about or that are hobbies.

Laying a story out visually can help. Work with your child to develop a “story map” where you draw pictures of key elements of a story in a line and build a piece of writing from there. Boys are often visual learners so this can work particularly well for them.

It’s not just about fiction; boys in particular often enjoy reading non-fiction so may well prefer writing other genres. Your child may prefer to draw a comic strip, write a report of a football match they have watched or a computer game they have played, or make up a recipe instead of writing a traditional story.

Why not put together a range of writing types to make your own family book, magazine or newspaper?

Be appreciative of the time and effort your child has put in to a piece of writing; if they are having fun and feel good about their work they will be more likely to persevere.

Listening and talking ideas

Look at non-fiction texts and talk about the way they are laid out. For example: look at a newspaper /internet article and ask your child if they can name any of the features of the text (headline, picture, caption, paragraph, quotations). Ask them to read through the newspaper article and then see if they can sum up verbally what it was about.

Start a debate

Debates are an excellent way of ensuring that children are not only finding their voice through sharing opinions and facts, but also find their ears too by patiently listening and respecting the views of others. Suggest a topic your child has expressed an opinion about and get them debating at home. It's a great way of getting the whole family involved and will certainly improve your child's confidence in their communication skills. You never know, you might find you have a budding politician sitting at your dinner table!

Be persuasive

For another activity, ask your child to find an item in the house that they must try to sell to you. Encourage them to look at adverts, highlighting persuasive words and phrases that they can use. They then need to write a 'pitch' and attempt to memorise it! Get them to present their pitch to you and then ask them plenty of questions which they need to think up answers to, convincing you that their product is the best. If you have other children, you could ask them to be rival salespeople! This fun and lively activity could even help them practice their ICT skills if they wanted to do a presentation to support their pitch.

During the primary 7 year most of our pupils begin to mature and will become more independent. The level of work will be more sophisticated and their depth of thinking should be deeper. They will begin to work at a more consistent level.

Everyone benefits from extra practice, it might be spelling, talking to others, exploring their reading, writing small and long pieces or extending their vocabulary. Little and often is the best approach. Literacy surrounds us so the opportunities are endless. For example, if your child needs a boost in spelling ten minutes every day on spellzone will do this.

Curriculum for Excellence –These are some of the areas that we will be focusing on within the school year.

Spelling - understand the convention of adding suffixes (here are a number of words with suffix endings) comfortable tolerable agreeable capable reasonable terrible possible responsible coverage breakage postage percentage mileage marriage leakage acceptance clearance abundance importance performance difference reference occurrence accountant contestant participant correspondent dependent elementary honorary dietary momentary imaginary budgetary (try these ones)

Writing

- ✓ use paragraphs of different lengths in extended pieces of writing
- ✓ use opening paragraph / introduction to make purpose clear
- ✓ use turning points and cliff hangers effectively
- ✓ accurately use punctuation for speech marks
- ✓ use notes to create a range of texts.
- ✓ express thoughts and opinions using supporting detail and evidence to persuade the reader