

# Developing Literacy at Madeley Nursery School



## (Policy Statement)

At Madeley Nursery School we believe that all children are competent with an innate desire to learn. Children have this innate desire to use and decode symbols and communicate together and that we intentionally plan, prepare and create contexts to support the development of literacy in meaningful ways (Rubizzi & Bonilairi 2012).

Language and communication is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be human. The society in which we live is surrounded by codes and symbols of communication. Young children grow and develop within these contexts and have innate desires to respond to and be part of this world of communication. Codes and symbols are used as a means of communication and form an essential part of the shared communication of literacy.



We believe that we must respond to this innate drive to use literacy as a form of communication, and offer a rich curricular environment where skills of reading and writing are practiced within meaningful contexts that motivate and engage children. It is essential for young children that the direct teaching of skills and knowledge including early phonics and letter formation occurs within relevant contexts in a rich and engaging environment. At Madeley Nursery School it is within our educational

philosophy based on the values of encounter, enquiry, collaboration and expression; expressed in the school statements of:

### **A place of citizenship – being part of a strong community**

Our school is an integral part of the community. It is a place where every child, family and educator has both a right and responsibility to contribute to and support their community. We *define community as being both immediately located around the school and stretching out to include the global community. We believe that citizenship encompasses people and cultures as well as environments and ecologies. That as citizens, children should be creators of culture not passive consumers.*

### **The researching School – working together to question and improve**

Working together to question and improve, our school is a place where children, families and educators work together to improve the quality of learning and teaching experiences, therefore promoting high aspirations, levels of well-being, good dispositions and achievement for all. We *believe that a researching school relies on developing a 'listening pedagogy, where all*

*protagonists collaborate and co-operate in reflective dialogue, respecting and encouraging different opinions and ideas, being open to change and innovation.*

### **A belief in the competent child – with an innate ability to learn from birth**

All children have an innate ability to learn from birth. We believe that every child has an incredible capacity to learn and develop through engagement with others and with the world. *This principle has inclusion and diversity at its heart and is made visible through the pedagogical approaches of the school. Where learning is seen as crossing the borders that separately define disciplines, curriculum and concepts.*

### **Partnership between children, families and school – learning in partnership**

We consider that a genuine, respectful and active partnership between children, their families and the school are central to successful learning. *This principle is interrelated and underpins the other school principles and reflects our relational and community ethos. Partnership involves parents, families and staff working together to benefit children in relationships where each recognises, respects and values what the other does and says. Partnership involves responsibility on both sides.*

Literacy is designated as a “specific area” of learning as part of the curriculum provision for Early Years Foundation Stage and we support the view that literacy skills and knowledge are essential in enabling children to participate successfully in society.

Working in partnership with parents, we hope to set children on a journey of literacy development as they explore many of the concepts, ideas and theories through everyday meaningful experiences. We aspire for this to support a life-long interest in literacy which will play a key role in their daily life, further education and employment.

#### **CURRICULUM CONTEXT:**

During the first stages in this process we aim, through planned activities and spontaneous play, to stimulate children’s interest in literacy and build their knowledge so that they are prepared for the fresh challenges and opportunities found in their next level of education.

Spoken language is the first and most important resource that young readers and writers have.

Children need to have a wide experience of story, knowledge of written language and how this works as a means of communication.

We acknowledge that all children come to school with a range of experience of literacy, including digital and media text, much of it framed by popular culture.

We believe that strong two-way links with home really supports all literacy learning; reading is particularly sensitive to parental support and role modelling.



The 'basics' of literacy learning involve an awareness of what it is to be literate, and a familiarity with the language of books, as well as knowledge of the alphabet and the sound/symbol relations of the orthographic code.

Our approach to reading and writing is to balance and integrate technical concerns with attention to the making of meanings that are interesting to the child are more successful than those that focus on technical methods alone.

We tailor our teaching to the needs of individual children, drawing on our understanding of the children's backgrounds and experiences, as well as close monitoring of their progress.

Learning to read and learning to write are interdependent processes: making links between reading and writing help both develop and improve.

(Based on principles from CLPE: Reading and Writing Scale)

## **READING:**

Children engage in early reading in contexts that are warm and enthusiastic about books and in other situations that for them has meaning and purpose. We believe that the development of reading occurs with a range high quality, engaging texts, routines and arising opportunities that are relevant, meaningful and motivating for children.

Positive reading dispositions and behaviours are promoted through our curriculum approach (See role of the educator and environment.)

We teach phonetic skills and knowledge consistently and systematically however it is essential that this occurs in developmentally appropriate ways and at times that makes sense to children and supports their desire to explore, relate, understand and connect. In this way it will be learning that is motivating and relevant to children.

Adults support children's early auditory discrimination and early sound awareness in contexts arising during children's enquiry, exploration and play and through planned group activities linked to phase 1 of Letter and Sounds (National Strategy 2007) under the following seven aspects.

Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds

Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds

Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – body percussion

Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme

Aspect 5: Alliteration

Aspect 6: Voice sounds

Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting

When developmentally ready children are introduced to individual letter sounds (phonemes) in the order identified phase 2 Letters and Sounds. We use resources from the Read Write Inc. scheme in the order of Letters and Sounds.

“Children entering Phase Two will have experienced a wealth of listening activities, including songs, stories and rhymes. They will be able to distinguish between speech sounds and many will be able to blend and segment words orally. Some will also be able to recognise spoken words

that rhyme and will be able to provide a string of rhyming words, but inability to do this does not prevent moving on to Phase Two as these speaking and listening activities continue". (Taken from Letters and Sounds)

Phonic progression

Set 1: **s a t p**

Set 2: **i n m d**

Set 3: **g o c k**

Set 4: **ck e u r**

Set 5: **h b f, ff l, ll ss**

At the same time we introduce some 'tricky

or none decodable words: **the, to, go, no.**

### **WRITING:**

All children engage in early mark-making that for them has meaning and purpose. We believe that the development of writing occurs with a range of graphical representations in which one person communicates with another. Children begin to develop their understanding of shared meaning and the difference between drawing and writing they increase in accuracy and fluency with practice and sensitive teaching. Again it is essential that this occurs in developmentally appropriate ways and at times that makes sense to children and supports their desire to explore, relate, understand and connect.

The awareness of what is developmentally appropriate varies between children and changes over time. The development of reading and writing also requires the development of communication and language, personal, social, emotional and physical skills.



Spoken language is the first and most important resource that young writers have. Children need to have a wide experience of story, knowledge of written language and how this works and knowledge of how print works as a means of communication. Young children can compose long before they can transcribe and we focus on easing the burden of transcription and enabling children to compose more freely. Therefore, initially children need the help and support of another person, usually an adult, in order to write conventionally. This support will be gradually withdrawn as transcription becomes easier and the child increases in independence.

Progress and development will be multi-dimensional. Inexperienced writers will also need support with developing spelling skills – as a foundation for moving from the phonetic stage to gaining increasing control of standard spelling – and gaining better control of handwriting.

We focus on the development of both fine and gross motor physical competencies throughout nursery as this is essential to fluent handwriting later on. Core strength, proximal stability in shoulders and pelvis and pincer grip are developed in all areas of nursery.

We use the Read Write Inc. rhymes for letter formation.

### **Values, dispositions and attitudes**

Our approach to learning and teaching literacy will support the development of, and be supported by, the school's pedagogy that is based on these values:

*Prosocial behaviours*

*Creativity and innovation*

*Self-regulation*

*Critical thinking*

*Collaboration*

*Confidence*

*Resilience and perseverance*

*Effective communication*

### **The role of the educator**

As children become more experienced writers, adults will need to use approaches which encourage children's independence as writers; developing awareness of audience and the needs of the reader. Children will increase their ability and stamina to manage extended texts. Adults should model and demonstrate how written language works as a means of communication.

The educator must always act as a role model for valuing and using literacy, speaking to children openly about why and how they read and write.

Educators must have good knowledge of literacy skills and their development including synthetic phonics, segmenting, blending, irregular words and steps into writing including letter formation.

The educator must make decisions based on observation, reflection and assessment about how and when to teach children knowledge and skills.

Educators must offer many opportunities within the environment and as part of the curriculum to learn, practice and use reading and writing; ensuring that these opportunities are motivating and engaging and support the children's desire to explore, relate, understand and connect.

Educators and in particular key-workers will work together with parents / carers to develop literacy at home and at school; together identifying effective ways to motivate children and supporting parents with accuracy in phonics and letter formation. Parents will be given resources and have the opportunity to attend information workshops, family learning courses and meetings with their child's keyworker as well as daily encounters and exchanges when children are brought to and collected from nursery.

### **The learning environment:**

Children need to explore different ways and means of composing and publishing writing, including digital and multi-modal texts, related to purpose and audience.

Materials and Resources

Some materials and resources must be prepared in response to children's emerging interests and enquiries. Other materials and resources are available to be used at any time including:

- Lending library of fiction and non-fiction books
- Phonetically decodable books
- Grapheme cards
- Key word cards
- Simple games
- Cd / DVD's
- Online links
- Posters
- Writing materials including triangular shaft pencils and pens.
- Digital resources

We understand that a few children may well achieve the Literacy Early Learning Goals during their time in Nursery and familiarity with the National Curriculum allows us to plan for their future learning.

Transition from home into the nursery, from stage-to-stage within the Nursery, and then on to Primary school is carefully managed, with free exchange of information at all transition points, to ensure that children's learning is as seamless as possible.

This policy statement covers the provision of Literacy teaching within all areas of Madeley Nursery School, to support our commitment to inclusion, equalities and diversity we are aware of engaging families and communities to ensure our materials, resources and planned activities are accessible and respectful.

We encourage children to take appropriate risks in their learning; however adults are vigilant and ready to intervene to ensure children's safety. Health and Safety policies and risk assessments support us in maintaining a safe learning environment for our children.

*Rubizzi L. and Bonilauri S. 2012 History, Ideas and Basic principles: An Interview with Loris Malaguzzi in Edwards,C. Ganini,L. and Formaan. G. (Eds) 2012. The Hundred Languages of Children 3rd Edition. Oxford PRAEGER*

*Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics: Primary National Strategy 00281-2007BKT-EN © Crown copyright 2007*

*CLPE: Centre for Literacy in Primary Education Reading and Writing Scales ©The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education 2015-16*

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