St John's Special School and College
Literacy Policy

Rationale
This policy statement outlines the aims, organisation and assessment, reporting, recording and monitoring arrangements for Literacy at St John's School. An emphasis on the development of communication skills underpins all Literacy learning all at developmental levels. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school 'Communication Access Document' and related pedagogy papers including 'Intensive Interaction'.

Teaching Literacy within our curriculum enables pupils to:
- Develop the ability to listen and respond
- Understand information and the world around them
- Interact and communicate with a wide range of people and in a range of social situations
- Express preferences, communicate needs, make choices, obtain information, question and be actively involved in decision making
- Develop creativity and imagination
- Access a wide range of literature to enrich and broaden their experience

This links to the following whole school aims:
- To provide pupils with the required skills, knowledge and understanding in preparation for their effective inclusion into the wider community and ultimately into adult life
- To increase pupil self-awareness, self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect which emerges from the development of communicative competence

Aims
The aims of our Literacy policy are for pupils to:
- Develop communication skills
- Acquire an increasing range of vocabulary, from the names of everyday objects, events and people, to vocabulary used across the curriculum and related to the wider community
- Access a wide variety of age appropriate Literacy related activities
- Engage in a range of literature and communication activities
- Build the foundations for (and later develop) reading and writing skills which will be useful to their everyday life

This links to the following aims from the National Curriculum for English, which apply to some of our pupils:
- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- Appreciate our rich and varied literacy heritage
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- Use discussion in order to learn
- Develop competency in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

Literacy is planned to include opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Explicit opportunities to promote pupils' development in these areas include:
- Spiritual - Learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world. *For example, understanding and expressing feelings and emotions through Intensive Interaction, poetry, beat boxing and performing stories*

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- Moral – Respecting the law and understanding consequences. *For example, responding to the intonation of a member of staff or contributing to the development of classroom rules*
- Social – Participating, volunteering, co-operating. *For example, sharing an object with a member of staff during TacPac, planning and making posters for a special event, developing relationships through sharing a sensory story with a member of staff or peer*
- Cultural – Participating in cultural opportunities and celebrating diversity. *For example, anticipating a favourite sound/song during a sensory story or reading a traditional story from another culture*

A significant contribution towards SMSC is also made through working effectively with peers and staff and access to a wide variety of resources and learning environments within our school community.

Curriculum organisation and planning
Literacy is a core subject and part of the national curriculum, a vehicle through which we teach priority areas of learning identified on pupils' IEPs. This subject is planned so that each pupil has opportunities to develop, practise and consolidate their IEP targets.

Individual learning needs are met through differentiated teaching within 1:1 settings, small groups and classes. Relevant activities provide access to subject specific knowledge, skills and understanding as appropriate to pupils' abilities and needs.

All pupils access fun and functional Literacy at an appropriate developmental level using age appropriate materials as a stimulus. In general this is organised through:

EYFS – Pupils participate in a variety of daily activities (sharing and talking about books, sensory mark making, looking at environmental print, enjoying rhymes and stories) to promote early Literacy development based on the principles and early learning goals as described in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and supported by strategies from 'Development Matters'. Pupils begin to access a broad range of age appropriate fictional text, rhymes, poetry, environmental print. Activities to promote early awareness of sounds are taken from 'Letters and Sounds - Phase 1'. Where appropriate, Sounds Write is introduced to pupils who are showing potential for learning to read through a phonetic approach.

Lower (KS1) – Some discrete Literacy sessions are taught and pupils participate in a variety of fun and functional activities using a broad range of age appropriate fictional text, rhymes, poetry and environmental print as a stimulus. Where appropriate, Sounds Write is introduced to pupils who are showing potential for learning to read through a phonetic approach. Pupils may also continue to follow activities and strategies as described in 'Letters and Sounds – Phase 1'.

Middle (KS2) – Discrete Literacy sessions are taught and pupils participate in a variety of fun and functional activities using a broad range of age appropriate fictional and factual text, personalised books, rhymes, poetry and environmental print as a stimulus. Some pupils follow the Sounds Write programme in 1:1 and small group sessions. Pupils may also continue to follow activities and strategies as described in 'Letters and Sounds – Phase 1'. If phonics is not appropriate, pupils may be taught to read through recognising whole words. Teachers begin with a small bank of words that are meaningful to the pupil.

Seniors (KS3&4) - Discrete Literacy sessions are taught and pupils participate in a variety of fun and functional activities using a broad range of age appropriate fictional and non fictional text, personalised books, rhymes, poetry and environmental print as a stimulus. Where appropriate, pupils follow the Sounds Write programme in 1:1 and small group sessions. There is a greater emphasis on functional Literacy and adapting age appropriate texts to meet the reading ability and interests of pupils.

FE (Post 16) – Rather than participating in discrete Literacy sessions, FE students undertake daily tasks to promote understanding and expression through functional activities such as putting together planners,

writing notes, preparing shopping lists, following 'jobs lists'. Students access a range of texts of their preference such as recipe books, newspapers and magazines and simple fictional texts.

Effective curriculum planning ensures the careful and deliberate sequencing of content and experiences that build upon previous learning and achievements to promote future learning. Rolling programmes of themes (taken from the IPC-International Primary Curriculum) exist for each key stage up to and including KS4 and are linked to the school's schemes of work for Literacy. These plans enable teachers to design and implement learning opportunities, detailed in their teaching and learning plans, to ensure appropriate access, progress and achievement for all pupils. Other planning tools include the 'Equals Guide to Literacy', 'Letters and Sounds (Phase 1)' and the 'Sounds Write' programme. Other interventions should not be used unless discussed and agreed with the Subject and Strategy Leader for Literacy and appropriate Department Leader.

A wide range of subject specific resources and contexts for learning are used to extend subject knowledge and understanding. Examples of these include:
- Sensory story packs
- Reading books (stored in the Primary green corridor and the entrance to the Secondary building)
- The pupil library and other local libraries (Kempston and Bedford town centre)
- Sounds Write resources (saved in the Literacy folder on iShare)
- Environmental print, text*, symbols and pictures around the school

*Pupils should be exposed to a range of fonts through Literacy activities planned by their teacher. To ensure consistency for pupils who are emerging readers, text used for display and signage throughout school should be either handwritten or Sassoon font. Capitals should only be used for the first initial on name labels.

Best practice in this subject is highlighted and shared through:
- Collaborative planning in phases
- Sharing ideas and strategies at teaching and learning forums
- Discussing outcomes with other Subject and Strategy Leaders and SLG
- Sharing evidence of progress through teacher assessment and moderation
- Celebrating pupil achievements through displays, assemblies, records of achievement

Assessment, reporting and recording
Pupil progress is assessed termly in Literacy using the P levels and early NC levels. Teaching staff gather evidence of progress throughout the school year, using photos, videos, recording charts, learning journals and annotations cross referenced to the P level/NC descriptors. Teacher assessments and supporting evidence are collected termly and filed in 'Pupil Progress Files'. These are moderated through termly pupil progress meetings. An assessment criteria of never, occasionally, frequently and consistently is used across the school to record pupil progress using the P level descriptors. P level assessments are reported to families as part of the End of Year (EOY) report sent home in July each year. In Early Years pupils are assessed using descriptors from 'Development Matters' and observation stickers are used to record progress. In FE pupils' achievements in functional Literacy are recognised through OCR accreditation.

Pupil's significant achievements are shared in assemblies, annual review meetings and recorded in record of achievement folders shared with pupils and their families.

Monitoring, evaluation and review
Systematic monitoring and evaluation helps us identify clear priorities for the development of this subject. A number of robust systems of MER are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of Literacy and inform school improvement:
- P Scale data and analysis
- Termly pupil progress meetings

Shared and discussed with teachers 07/16

- Pupil progress tracking files (purple)
- Annual review checking
- Teachers' meetings
- Classroom observation
- Reports to governors
- Evidence of progress files (pink)
- Tracking of individual pupils, sampling evidence of progress and sharing teacher assessments

Relevant documents and references
This subject policy statement should be read in conjunction with:

Case S, Philpot D, Walker J (2006) **Sounds-Write: A Linguistic Phonic Programme** *Sounds-Write Ltd*

Coupe O'Kane, J and Goldbart, G (1998) **Communication Before Speech** *David Fulton Publishers Ltd*

DfES (2007) **Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics**

Department for Education (2014) **National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study**

Department for Education (2014) **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage**

Department for Education (2014) **Early Years Outcomes**

Edwards S (1999) **Reading for All** *David Fulton Publishers Ltd*

EQUALS (2011) **Guide to Literacy**

Imray P (2014) **Curricula for Teaching Children and Young People with Severe or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties** *Routledge*

Latham C, Miles A (2001) **Communication, Curriculum and Classroom Practice** *David Fulton Publishers Ltd*

St John's School **Intensive Interaction Pedagogy Paper**

St John's School **Sounds-Write Pedagogy Paper**

St John's School **Communication Access Document**

Staves, L (2015) **The Roots of Reading** *SLD Experience*

The British Association for Early Childhood Education (2012) **Development Matters**

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2009) **Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties - General Guidance**

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2009) **Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties - English**