


# Forty Hill CE School

## Literacy Policy



### Our School Vision

#### Our Vision



Jesus said "As I have loved you, so you must love one another.  
By this everyone will know that you are my disciples." John 13:34-35

Following Jesus's example, we treat each other, our community, and God's amazing world with love, respect and compassion. We aspire to ignite curious minds, nurture a passion for learning and enable everyone to experience and share **faith**, **hope** and **service**.

**Learning and living in Faith, Hope and Service**

#### Introduction

At Forty Hill CE School, our Literacy curriculum is designed not only to develop key skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, but also to foster personal growth and moral development rooted in the Christian values of Faith, Hope, and Service. These values guide us as we strive to create a nurturing environment where children are encouraged to excel academically while following in Jesus' example in their everyday lives.

**Faith:** Just as we have faith in God, we encourage our children to have faith in their abilities to learn and grow. Literacy is central to this journey, as we help children develop the confidence to engage with texts, express their ideas, and discover new ways of thinking. We believe that each child has unique talents, and by nurturing their literacy skills, we help them to discover and develop their potential as they learn to appreciate the world around them through the power of words.

**Hope:** Our Literacy program instils hope for the future by encouraging children to become lifelong learners who are equipped to meet challenges with perseverance and optimism. Through engaging with a range of texts, from stories of hope and resilience to the exploration of diverse perspectives, children learn that through hard work and determination, they can overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. We aim to inspire children with the belief that learning opens doors to new opportunities and possibilities.

**Service:** Literacy is not only about personal achievement; it is also about using one's gifts to serve others. Our curriculum promotes the idea that literacy can be a tool for service—whether through telling stories that inspire, writing for a cause, or using communication skills to make a positive difference in the community. We encourage children to use their voices for the good of others and to understand the power of words in building relationships, resolving conflicts, and sharing God's love with the world.

By integrating these Christian values into our literacy teaching, we aim to provide a holistic education that shapes both the mind and the spirit, guiding our children to become compassionate, confident, and capable individuals who serve God and others through their learning and actions.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the learning and teaching of Literacy at Forty Hill CE School. This policy will focus on the key areas of Literacy in the primary curriculum: reading, writing, handwriting, phonics, speaking and listening, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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## **Aims and Objectives**

We intend to help our children develop skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate clearly, accurately and creatively with the world at large, through spoken and written language. We also intend to help the children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

We aim to:

- Provide a rich and stimulating language environment, where speaking and listening, reading and writing are integrated
- Provide opportunities for pupils to become confident, competent and expressive users of the English language with a developed knowledge of how it works
- Encourage children to express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts, fiction and non-fiction, using appropriate technical language
- Enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners
- Foster an interest in words and their meanings, and to promote the development of a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written forms
- Help pupils to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge
- Develop enthusiastic and reflective life-long readers, through contact with high quality challenging texts
- Foster the enjoyment of writing, and recognition of its value, audience and purpose through accurate and meaningful writing tasks, be it narrative or non-fiction
- Provide opportunities for children to peer and self-assess their as well as respond to the teacher's feedback, to edit and improve their written work
- Encourage and model the production of effective, well presented written work using fluent and legible cursive handwriting
- Teach the understanding and accurate use of grammar and punctuation to ensure written work is well structured and accurate
- Provide opportunities for pupils to communicate ideas through the use of ICT

## **Expectations and requirements**

By the time children leave Forty Hill, we expect our pupils to be able to communicate through speaking and listening, reading and writing, with confidence, fluency and understanding, in a range of situations. This will enable them to be 'fulfilled, healthy and successful' in further education and the wider world.

### **In the EYFS (Nursery and Reception) children should:**

- talk and communicate in an increasingly wide range of situations
- respond to adults and to each other
- listen carefully
- use phonics to link letters and sounds
- practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills
- explore words and texts
- begin to communicate through emergent writing
- read with adults 1-1, as a class in shared reading and in small guided groups

### **At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2) children should:**

- Speak confidently and listen to what other have to say
- Begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm
- Use language to explore own experiences and imaginary worlds

### **At Key Stage Two (Years 3- 6) children should:**

- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with some ways in which narratives are structured through basic literacy ideas of setting, character and plot

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- Understand and be able to write in a range of non-fiction genres and structure text in a style suited to its purpose
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately
- Have an interest in words and a growing vocabulary
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own work
- Understand and use phonic systems and spelling conventions to spell accurately

By the time pupils leave Forty Hill, they should have made significant progress, reached their potential and met the age related expectation at least.

### **Planning**

The Literacy Curriculum at Forty Hill CE School is planned using the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum 2014.

Planning at Forty Hill CE School is carried out in three phases:

1. A Long Term Plan which provides a yearly overview of the full coverage of Literacy objectives from the Early Learning Goals and National Curriculum, the range of genres of writing to be covered and key texts linked to the half-termly International Primary Curriculum (IPC) unit and/or focus days/weeks
2. Medium Term plans map out each term how the coverage of specific National Curriculum literacy objectives in reading and writing fit in with the year group's choice of curriculum topic, the texts being studied to compliment the topic, as well as a list of key grammar, punctuation and spelling areas which will be covered and integrated into extended writing opportunities
3. Weekly plans are in the form of a presentation on Lynx or Powerpoint alongside a detailed weekly timetable that gives details of key objectives to be taught each day in Literacy and the purposeful, cross-curricular link where appropriate. A success criteria is included to clarify the expectations for learning and ensure there is always challenge and opportunities for mastery for every child in every lesson. Daily presentations will also include pupil activities as well as the different levels of challenge within sessions.

At Forty Hill CE School we believe that medium and weekly planning are working documents that will be amended during a given unit of work, in order to reflect progress and assessment of learning along the way.

All plans are electronically stored on the shared area of the school's network in order to allow ready access by LSAs and other adults and members of staff involved in the planning and/or teaching of Literacy.

The Deputy Headteacher, in line with the cycle of monitoring for this subject, will carry out monitoring of planning in Literacy on a weekly basis.

### **Teaching and Learning**

At Forty Hill CE School, we use a variety of learning and teaching styles in our Literacy lessons in order to meet the needs of all our pupils. All year groups will teach the relevant objectives for Literacy through a key text, which will often relate to their Topic in History and Geography as well, creating cross curricular links and a fluency within all learning each half term.

Clear objectives from the Early Learning Goals or National Curriculum are set for each Literacy lesson, and are referred to throughout the session in order for children to understand the purpose of the learning and reflect on how it is being achieved. Where appropriate, and for longer pieces of writing (and certainly within Talk for Writing units – see below) toolkits will be made collaboratively between teachers and pupils, in order for children to choose what to incorporate to make their learning most successful. Teachers adapt according to the needs of the children and targeted teaching is used to support identified children.

Teachers and teaching assistants will apply an 'agile learning' approach in the classroom to ensure all children are engaged, supported and challenged at variable times within the lesson.

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All teaching staff will employ a range of generic teaching strategies within teaching Literacy, including:

- Instructions/direction
- Modelling/ demonstrating/ scribing
- Explaining
- Questioning
- Discussing
- Consolidating
- Evaluating

Literacy across the curriculum is encouraged including extended writing in R.E, Science and Topic. ICT is used where it enhances, extends and compliments Literacy teaching and learning, both by teachers and pupils.

### **Reading**

Reading is at the heart of high quality literacy teaching at Forty Hill CE School. There is a clear reading structure that builds on children's reading skills and confidence. From Nursery to Year 6, there is a planned and consistent approach to whole class and guided reading sessions.

For children at **Foundation Stage**, language and English development are incorporated into all areas of learning. Opportunities are provided for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings. Purposeful role-play is used to develop language and imagination. Children are given opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of language activities, rhymes, songs, poetry and books.

In **Reception and Key Stage 1**, all the children take part in a daily phonics session using the Little Wandle phonics scheme. During this time, they have the opportunity to learn their sounds and eventually move on to blending in order to help them to develop into readers.

As part of our Little Wandle Scheme we teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. Children are taught in small groups and use books matched to their secure phonic knowledge. Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- Decoding
- Prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- Comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

In Reception these sessions begin with wordless picture books until children are blending and can begin to read books. In Year 2 we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books. Those who are fluent readers move on to whole class Guided Reading sessions involving text-led discussions and comprehension.

We expect our children to be fluent readers by the time they move into Key Stage 2, and therefore our approach to teaching reading evolves into development of expression, comprehension and exposure to a greater range of texts. Children are still given daily opportunities to read aloud and develop their fluency and expression further, not just in reading sessions but in drama and poetry recital opportunities through literacy or topic lessons.

In **Key Stage 2**, we take a holistic approach to whole-class guided reading and the teaching of reading skills. There are whole class reading sessions every morning at the start of the day. Lessons will enable children to read and explore their class Literacy text in great depth; not only practising fluent and expressive reading but by being exposed to rich questioning and discussion around vocabulary, character, plot and authorial intent. Not only does this approach develop their fluency and comprehension, but also supports children's learning in Literacy lessons where their writing tasks are centred around the text and its characters. Children are also actively encouraged to make links between and compare the texts they have read in class and will refer back to previous books in order to do this. As well as focusing on fiction texts, our reading curriculum also ensures that children access non-fiction texts linked to their learning across the curriculum, poetry and playscripts. When looking at these texts, teachers ensure children are taught to consider audience and purpose, and build upon retrieval and summarising skills. This whole class approach enables all children, whatever their reading ability, to have exposure to new challenging vocabulary and texts, be taught the

comprehension skills required in the curriculum and ensure all children are actively involved through lots of talk and modelling.

Each class also has a wide range of books within their class reading areas, in order to encourage children to develop an enjoyment of reading and have the opportunity to read a selection of books. In September 2024 we re-launched the Forty Hill Reading Challenge, where children are encouraged to read as many books as possible and share them with their peers to encourage a life-long love of reading. Although we are happy for children to simply enjoy reading and read anything that interests them, we have also compiled a list of '50 Recommended Reads' for each year group. Each class has a hamper in their classroom containing each of the 50 recommended reads - they are given opportunities to borrow, share and discuss what they are reading.

Partnership between school and parents is developed through meetings and the use of online journal Boom Reader, to encourage and celebrate children reading regularly at home.

The School Library is bright and comfortable area, with a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts to encourage reading for pleasure. Each class has a timetabled slot each week to share and indulge in books with their teacher and peers, in this special part of the school.

### **Writing**

At Forty Hill CE School, we use a range of high quality texts often linked to our Topic unit to provide the stimulus for extended writing. Texts may be fiction or non-fiction books, picture books or chapter books, poetry or newspaper articles, and these will be the basis for learning and writing content, and may be adapted to suit the particular needs of the class.

Literacy lessons will use a range of creative approaches to support the pupil's understanding and exploration of the text, such as drama, hot-seating, story maps, speaking and listening tasks, visits to settings, illustration, debates or research.

In addition to these creative approaches, there is consistent teaching of the structure and features of different text types with a link to the grammar and punctuation needed to making their independent writing successful. This will involve looking at good examples of the text type, identifying the key features, creating toolkits for writing, teacher modelling and time to draft, edit and publish where appropriate.

At Forty Hill, we have adopted the 'Talk for Writing' model, which aims to enhance children's ability to write high-quality, engaging and imaginative texts through following a carefully planned sequence of lessons. A 'Talk for Writing' unit will be taught every half term, or whenever deemed appropriate, alongside our more formally structured lessons. Talk for Writing makes explicit the links between reading and writing, and is underpinned by the notion that children who read well will become children who write well. Typically, a unit will last three weeks and can be linked to the class text, or topic. It will focus on one specific element or genre of writing, for example, creating suspense, writing a setting description, or using dialogue to advance a story. Children will begin by 'talking a text': learning a model that is recited to them by their teacher. They will orally rehearse, draw and story map this model, adding actions to help them internalise the structure and language features used. They will then go on to deepen their understanding of the model text through drama and reading activities, before practising re-writing elements of it in 'short bursts', focusing on particular writing skills. Then, classes will produce shared and guided writes to practice applying these skills before finally writing pieces independently, where they can apply all of the skills and techniques that they have learned throughout the unit.

### **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

In **Reception and Key Stage 1**, spelling is taught through Phonics (Little Wandle), using sounds and blends to spell or attempt to spell familiar and unfamiliar words. Children will also learn the high frequency words expected for each year group within class and sometimes through home learning tasks. Children in **Key Stage 1** will also have weekly discrete lessons from the Little Wandle or Emile scheme, which will consolidate their learning in phonics and enable them to practise and apply particular spelling patterns that they have already encountered.

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In **Key Stage 2**, children will be taught spelling rules, patterns and strategies for more complex words through weekly, discrete lessons using the Emile spelling scheme which links directly to the National Curriculum. From these lessons, spelling lists are used for the children to learn at home online, using the app or browser platform. Punctuation and grammar skills are taught non-explicitly, through literacy lessons and particularly as part of the Talk for Writing sequence, where identified by the class teacher. Discrete SPaG lessons may be taught in **Upper Key Stage 2** and in preparation for SATs, where necessary.

### **Handwriting**

Children are taught pre-cursive handwriting (not joined) in Reception as part of their Phonics and early writing lessons. This will prepare them for cursive handwriting (joined) and the fluency of script as they move through the school and become more confident writers. Children are also taught the correct orientation and size from an early age, with the expectation being that by the end of **Key Stage 1**, children will be able to join their writing with emphasis on presenting writing that is neat and legible. From **Key Stage 2**, children are expected to use the Forty Hill cursive script, which is displayed and modelled throughout the school. Where needed, interventions will be provided to support children in this.

### **Assessment**

Assessments are made at 3 checkpoints in the school year, and completed in line with the school assessment policy. Teachers report to parents twice a year at parents evening and at the end of the year in the child's annual report. Children are assessed on entering the school as a baseline, and formally assessed in Phonics in Year 1, and at the end of Year 6 in statutory tests, as well as at the end of EYFS.

### **Daily Assessment**

These are an informal part of every lesson. We use these to:

- Check that children have grasped the main teaching points.
- Give teachers information that will help plan the next lesson.

### **Half Termly Assessments**

These are assessments in Writing and Reading used to:

- Identify children's progress against specific individual targets
- Plan work for the next half term
- Identify children that are excelling and children that need further support
- Report on children's progress to parents at termly consultations

### **End of Year Assessments**

These include Key Stage SATs in Year 6 in Reading and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG), whilst writing is assessed by the class teacher.

We use these to:

- Assess pupil's work against the objectives for the year
- Help us report to parents
- Help us inform future learning
- Help us to inform action plans for the following year

### **Inclusion**

All children receive quality first teaching in literacy on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. Staff have high expectations that all children can achieve their full potential. Wherever possible, Teaching Assistants work in class, supporting all ability groups, specific individuals or groups of children, ensuring that work is matched to the needs of the child. When identified some pupils are considered to require targeted support to enable them to work to age appropriate objectives and/or make progress in an area of Literacy. Interventions will be included in an individual child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and will be discussed with parents. More able pupils are provided with opportunities to take part in enrichment activities such as debating, public speaking, workshops and writing competitions. The needs of children with English as an additional language will be met through planning and support. This is supported by our SEND and Equal Opportunities Policies.

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### **Parental/ Community involvement**

We believe it is vitally important to work together with parents and carers to support their child's development of literacy. We promote a positive home school partnership in the following ways:

- Asking parents to read regularly at home and record and write comments in the pupil's reading records
- The School and Home Reading Challenge (re-launched in 2024)
- Sharing information through our weekly updates, monthly newsletters, Boom Reader and parent meetings
- Celebrations and Focus Weeks such as World Book Day, Multi-cultural week, Christmas and Easter focus weeks, Collective Acts of Worship, Church Services, class acts of worship and displays
- Home Learning
- Parental help- volunteers to support with reading and literacy skills

Accepted by the Governing Body: December 2024

Review Date: December 2026