



WRITING

LISTENING

LITERACY

SPEAKING

READING

Literacy: A Guide for Parents



St Killian's
College



What is literacy?

Literacy is the ability to read, view, write, design, speak and listen in a way that allows us to communicate effectively and to make sense of the world.

Why is literacy important?

Literacy is vital to ensuring your child has the best chance to succeed in their schooling and everyday life. Literacy allows us to make sense of a range of written, visual and spoken texts including books, newspapers, magazines, timetables, DVDs, television and radio programs, signs, maps, conversations and instructions.

Research has shown that children's motivation and achievement improve when their parents or carers are involved in their education.



Language and Literacy are fundamental prerequisites for thinking, learning and interacting in personal, social and work contexts throughout life. Literacy is therefore a key to learning as well as a key to enjoyment and personal growth.

Ways to support your child's literacy development

Research has shown that children's motivation and achievement improve when their parents or carers are involved in their education.



There are many everyday things you can do to encourage literacy learning. These include:

- valuing and encouraging your child's efforts with literacy
- sharing your knowledge and explaining how you use literacy in your everyday life
- encouraging your child to read and view a variety of texts such as newspapers, novels, comics, magazines, websites, email, timetables, instructions and recipes
- encouraging your child to write and design for a variety of purposes using print and electronic resources — invitations, thank you notes, shopping lists, messages, journals and electronic slide shows
- encouraging your child to speak and listen for a variety of purposes — sharing a joke, giving instructions or asking for information
- sharing a love of language
- discussing how texts look different depending on the purpose and audience — for example, text messaging uses different spelling from school projects
- talking about things that you have read or viewed that were amusing, interesting or useful
- discussing favourite authors, producers, directors or illustrators and what you like about them
- discussing new and unusual words or phrases and exploring these through print and electronic dictionaries
- playing games that develop knowledge and enjoyment of words
- making use of community resources for information, local and school libraries, clubs, community groups and websites.



www.readsquirrels.weebly.com

Visit the English Department blog for more Literacy games and tools!

What is Literacy?

- **Literacy** is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly for a range of purposes, within a range of contexts and for a variety of audiences.
- **Literacy** involves the integration of talking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing and includes the knowledge that enables a speaker, writer and reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations.
- **Literacy** permeates and develops learning in all areas of the curriculum, formal and informal, and all areas of social interaction and development.

(Every School A Good School –A Policy for Improvement by Dept of Education NI)

Guidance in helping your child progress in English

At all levels, learning English is about learning to use language to express, explore and communicate our thoughts ideas and feelings with others. We do this through speaking, listening, reading and writing and getting better at English means making progress in each of these areas.

Children do not usually make progress at the same rate in speaking, listening, reading and writing. In their early years, for example, most children are better speakers and listeners than readers and writers. This is important as early skills with spoken language underpin the development of reading and writing. However, speaking, listening, reading and writing are closely interrelated. So, for example, effective speakers and writers take account of their listeners and readers because they are hoping to interest or influence them.

Talking to your child is vital in helping children to make progress in all aspects of English. Questioning, prompting, responding (whether the focus is on reading, writing, speaking or listening) are all important in helping your child to build on what they can already do.

To improve Literacy standards ‘**Accelerated Reader**’ has been introduced to Year 8 and Year 9 students. ‘**Accelerated Reader**’ is a well recognised, highly successful computer programme that helps you and your child’s teachers to monitor your son/daughter’s independent reading practice. Your child will pick a book at an appropriate level, one that is challenging without being frustrating, and read at their own pace. When finished he/she will take a short quiz on the computer, and we will receive feedback based on the quiz results. The English teacher and Librarian will then help your child set goals and direct ongoing reading practice.

An additional feature called ‘Renaissance Home Connect’ means you can view your son/daughter’s quiz results, view the books they have read, the number of words read per term, and the accuracy of their reading. Various certificates and prizes are awarded throughout the course of the year to celebrate your child success.

‘Accelerated Reader’ supports our belief at St Killian’s, that reading is the key to success.

Working at Level 3 in English

Children will be able to do many of the following:

Speaking and listening

- ✓ Start conversations and keep them going, building on what other people say.
- ✓ Contribute to a small group, recognising speakers' main ideas.
- ✓ Adapt their speech and gesture to suit obviously different situations or create a role.
- ✓ Notice some differences in people's spoken language.

Reading

- ✓ Read aloud with fluency, expression and understanding.
- ✓ Use different ways to read unfamiliar words.
- ✓ Get the literal meaning from a text and make some straightforward inferences.
- ✓ Pick out the most obvious points from texts they read.
- ✓ Identify the main purpose of the text.

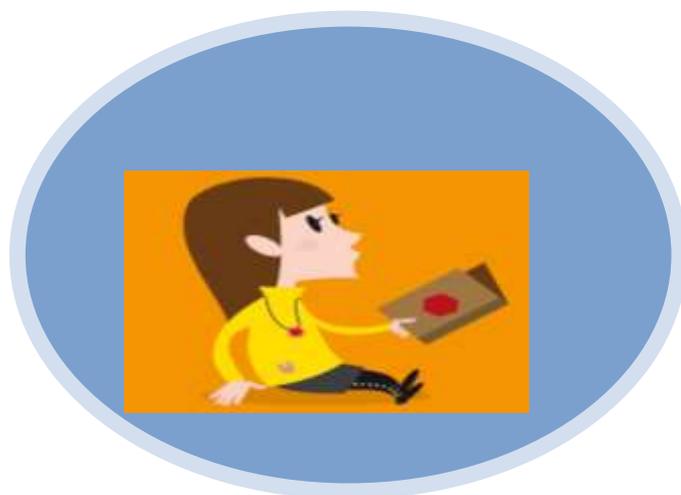
Writing

- ✓ Write simple texts with a clear purpose using the main features of the type of writing they choose.
- ✓ Organise their ideas to help the reader, for example, by grouping ideas in sections, or signalling the beginning and ending of their writing.
- ✓ Use capital letters and full stops accurately to separate simple sentences.
- ✓ Attempt some more complex sentences using connectives, such as 'and', 'but', 'so'.
- ✓ Start to enjoy writing independently and use it to support their learning in other subjects.
- ✓ Encourage them to develop their ideas by taking longer turns, adding detail and thinking about how ideas connect.

→ **Ensure they have:**

- access to books, magazines and newspapers from home, school and library
- somewhere quiet to read
- time to read regularly
- opportunity to see you as a reader – reading, choosing books, going to the library, talking about what you read.

→ **Read to them and take turns with them in reading a section each of the text, supporting and prompting their reading in positive ways.**



What you can do to help your child make progress

Moving from Level 3 to Level 4

Speaking and listening

- ✓ Play listening and guessing games where they have to listen and ask questions, for example, 'I spy', '20 questions'.
- ✓ Encourage them to take different roles when playing in groups.

Reading

- ✓ Engage with what they read by asking them to:
 - *predict what will happen next in a story*
 - *describe their response when they know what does happen*
 - *explain why a character behaves as they do*
 - *point to particular parts of a text that they like*
 - *talk about what a text suggests or implies.*
- ✓ Talk with them about their likes and dislikes in what they read.
- ✓ Encourage them to read a range of texts, for example, fiction and information books, comics and poems.

Writing

- ✓ Encourage them to write more, for example, a shopping list, a plan for a party or family celebration, a story that they can email to grandparents.
- ✓ Keep a journal on holiday, keep a diary, have a pen-pal.
- ✓ Talk with them about how they might improve or rephrase sections, for example, by including more descriptive detail or using connectives, such as 'and', 'but'.
- ✓ To combine sentences.



Remember to use a dictionary to find the meaning of words.

Remember to use a thesaurus to find synonyms; words with a similar meaning.

Working at Level 4 in English

Children will be able to do many of the following:

Speaking and Listening

- ✓ Express their ideas or feelings or tell a story clearly.
- ✓ Adapt their speech appropriately in more formal situations.
- ✓ Work in groups to plan or fulfil a task.
- ✓ Take on a specific imagined role.
- ✓ Comment on how people's spoken language varies.

Reading



- ✓ Read full length books independently.
- ✓ Select strategies to help them self-correct when faced with difficult words or unfamiliar texts.
- ✓ Read actively. For example, predict what happens next;

visualise what is described; speculate about characters' actions and motives.

- ✓ Get the point, the moral or the message of a text beyond the literal.
- ✓ Read to support their work in all subjects, for example, research a topic in print or on-screen.

Writing

- ✓ Write reasonably complex texts independently, developing some ideas in detailed, interesting ways, for example, a newspaper report of an incident including eye witness reports.
- ✓ Choose a form of writing appropriate to the purpose and use some words and phrases for effect.
- ✓ Use sections or paragraphs to organise their material to help the reader.
- ✓ Write simple sentences accurately and some extended sentences, using commas to chunk them.
- ✓ Use writing in a variety of forms to support their learning in all subjects.



What you can do to help your child make progress

Moving from Level 4 to Level 5

Speaking and listening

- ✓ **Encourage** them to talk clearly and at length about their ideas.
- ✓ **Listen** to and **talk** about things that are not immediately familiar, such as items on the news.
- ✓ **Play** memory **games**, taking turns to answer questions about a story or film they've listened to.
- ✓ **Encourage** them to take on specific roles in their social life, for example, in a sports team, after school club.

Reading

- ✓ **Help** them to think about the writer behind the text, for example:
 - *why they chose the language they did?*
 - *why they organised the text in that way?*
 - *what effect they hoped to have on the reader?*
- ✓ When looking for information in print or on-screen, encourage them to **scan** ahead and think about how helpful the text is, whether it is a biased or reliable source.
- ✓ When they talk about their reading encourage them to **refer to evidence** in the text that will support their views.
- ✓ Get them to **share their opinions** in different ways, for example, blogging and social networking site contributions.

Writing

- ✓ **Ask** them to tell you what the best features of their writing are.
- ✓ **Discuss** possible **improvements**, for example, how to include more detail, vary the pace of a story, or rephrase a sentence.
 - ✓ **Help** them to use their reading to **support** them as writers, for example, ask them to look at how a writer they like uses **varied** sentences or organises paragraphs.



Working at Level 5 in English

Children will be able to do many of the following:

Speaking and listening

- ✓ Narrate, recount or express their ideas clearly in a way that takes account of the listener.
- ✓ Pick up on some nuances or implications in what they hear
- ✓ Judge the level of formality needed in a situation and adapt their speech accordingly.
- ✓ Adopt different roles and strategies in a group to achieve the purpose or task.
- ✓ Sustain a character in role and work with others also in role.
- ✓ Explain some of the differences they notice in people's speech.

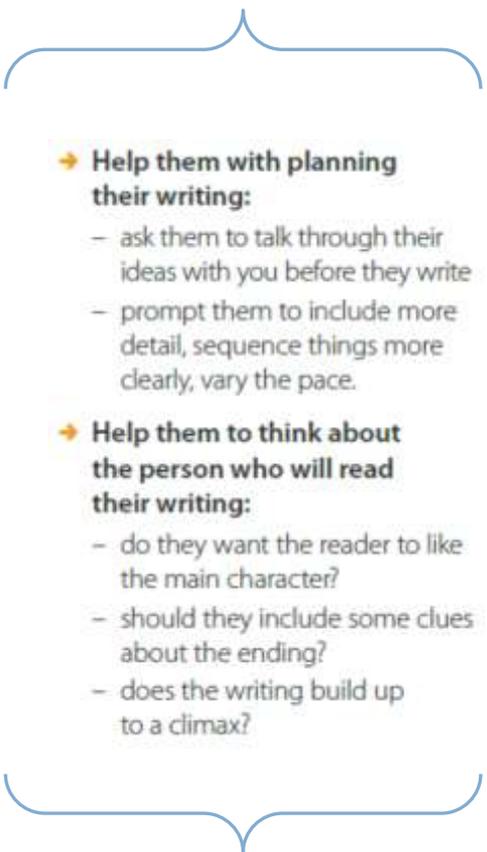
Reading

- ✓ Select relevant evidence from different points across the text.
- ✓ Quote or refer to the text to support their ideas.

- ✓ Read between the lines and understand meanings that are implied rather than stated.
- ✓ Give a general overview of the purpose of the text and its effect on the reader.

Writing

- ✓ Establish and maintain a clear purpose for their writing, using a style and form that matches the purpose.
- ✓ Hold the reader's interest by the imaginative development of their ideas and choice of words.
- ✓ Organise and shape paragraphs to suit the purpose of the writing and guide the reader through the text.
- ✓ Express more complex ideas, using varied sentence structures to build up detail or vary pace and emphasis.

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- ➔ **Help them with planning their writing:**
 - ask them to talk through their ideas with you before they write
 - prompt them to include more detail, sequence things more clearly, vary the pace.
 - ➔ **Help them to think about the person who will read their writing:**
 - do they want the reader to like the main character?
 - should they include some clues about the ending?
 - does the writing build up to a climax?


**TIPS to Improve
your Child's
Writing.**



What you can do to help your child make progress

Moving from Level 5 to Level 6

Speaking and listening

- ✓ **Find opportunities** for them to talk at length about increasingly complicated ideas and situations, for example, explain an experiment they have done in science or a topical subject such as cyber bullying.
- ✓ **Help** them take more account of the listener's reaction when speaking, for example, when telling a story to a younger sibling making it exciting.
- ✓ **Encourage** them to listen and express their opinions about local and national issues in the news.

Reading

- ✓ Give them regular **opportunities** to make their own choices in what they read at home. For example, read and discuss the differences between tabloid and broadsheet newspaper articles; visit the library.
- ✓ Encourage them to **develop** their response to a text in more detail, for example, ask them to tell you how their feelings towards a character changed at different points in a story.
- ✓ **Talk** with them about the writer's choice of language, for example, ask them to choose a section they think is good and explain why they think it works well.

Writing

- ✓ **Encourage** their personal writing, for example, a journal or diary, social networking, a blog.
- ✓ **Talk** through their ideas with them before they start to write, for example, prompt them to think about how they intend to tackle a subject.
- ✓ **Help** them to reflect on their writing, particularly the effect they hoped to have on the reader, for example, is the reader sufficiently prepared for the ending?
- ✓ **Encourage** them to read through their work, shaping their sentences for clarity and impact and checking their accuracy.



We would recommend
your child uses a
Dictionary at home.



In conclusion, at St Killian's we appreciate that children develop at different rates. However, we believe National Curriculum levels can give you an idea of how your child's progress compares to what is typical for their age.

At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils will be working at level 2

At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils will be working at level 4

In Year 8 most will be working at level 4, moving towards level 5

In Year 9 most will be working at level 5, moving towards level 6

In Year 10 most will be working at level 6, the gifted and talented moving towards level 7



Enrichment

As well as developing **a culture for reading** we, at **St Killian's**, **promote** and **celebrate a writing culture**.

We do so through the **English Department blog**;

<http://readsquirrels.weebly.com/squirrels.html> a forum that enables us to display pupils' writing, as well as a forum for discussion and debate. We also provide advice from the English Department and links to Literacy activities relevant to your child.

You as a parent can browse the KS3 section of our school blog. We encourage both students and parents to comment on pupils' writing.

In addition, the Creative Writing Group, **the Red Squirrels**, display pieces of their writing. This is a popular extra-curricular activity, specifically for Year 8 pupils. You can see excerpts from their writing journals at

<http://readsquirrels.weebly.com/squirrels.html>



Homework

These websites provide useful Literacy tools, enabling you and your child to access all areas of the curriculum with confidence.

www.bbc.co.uk/schools

www.bbc.co.uk/learning

www.gridclub.com

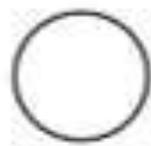
www.learnthings.co.uk

www.schoolzone.co.uk

www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/At-home

When a piece of written work has been completed, your teacher will indicate corrections/inaccuracies using this marking code.

School Marking Code



Capital letter needed

NP // New paragraph



Missing word



Sentence Structure



Clear or striking writing

Gr

Grammar error

P

Missing or incorrect punctuation