ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
FREMANTLE

LITERACY STRATEGY

WHAT IS LITERACY?

"Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen to language in a way that allows people to communicate with each other and to make sense of the world."

Your Child's Future: Literacy and Numeracy in Australia's Schools.
Department of Education, Training and Employment (Pamphlet).

The program is centred around the following fundamental beliefs:

- That developing literacy is a life long process and each student will be equipped with the skills to communicate effectively in their ever-changing world.
- That literacy is a key to success in school and in life beyond school and will assist students to achieve their personal goals and contribute fully as adults.

DESCRIPTION OF THE KEY ELEMENTS

Key Element	**Classroom Literacy Planning and Practice** Teachers continually develop and adjust the literacy learning and teaching environment to meet the developmental learning needs of all students across the curriculum.
Key Element	**Assessment and Monitoring** Assessment and monitoring of what students know, understand and can do in literacy is fundamental to best practice in literacy learning and teaching.
Key Element	**Home, School and Community Partnerships** Wider partnerships involving parents, caregivers and other community members are important in the development of literacy for all students.
Key Element	**Intervention: Identification and Planning** Identifying students experiencing difficulty with literacy learning and planning appropriate interventions to meet their individual needs will be an ongoing process.
Key Element	**Professional Development** Professional development at a school and system level is critical to assist teachers to continually develop their practice in literacy learning and teaching.

THE CLASSROOM READING PROGRAM AT ST PATRICK'S

The aim of the overall reading program at St Patrick's is to produce confident, competent and independent readers. In order to achieve this, the classroom teachers incorporate a range of strategic reading procedures: teach explicit reading strategies using a core reading program in the classroom program. These will be briefly outlined in the next paragraphs.

Reading Procedures – provide meaningful contexts for focussing in selected parts of the reading progress. The following table describes the reading procedures commonly used within the classroom programs at St Patrick's.

	Reading to Students	Modelling Reading	Language Experience
Definition	• Reading a text aloud to students	• Demonstrating reading behaviours and verbalising the cognitive processes involved with those behaviours	• To use a shared experience as a basis for jointly creating a text that is then used for further reading.
Key Features	• Primary purpose is to share enjoyment of reading • Reading is uninterrupted • Sessions span 10 to 15 minutes daily	• Clear 'thinking aloud' statements • Singular or limited focus • Multiple demonstrations • Brief sessions from 5 to 10 minutes	• Based on a Shared Experience • Text created as a result of the experience • Use students' language when creating the text • Use the created text for further reading activities
	Guided Reading	**Shared Reading**	**Independent Reading**
Definition	• Teacher scaffolds and supports a group of students as they read a common text	A teacher-managed blend of modelling, choral reading and focused discussion.	• Students select text to read by themselves
Key Features	• Clearly defined purpose • A group of students with identified common need • Most reading done silently • A pattern of asking guiding questions, reading, discussing	• Short sessions from 10 to 20 minutes • Singular or limited focus • Text visible and accessible to all • Differentiated activities • Multiple readings of the text	• Students select texts • Uninterrupted time span

TEACHING READING STRATEGIES

One of the most crucial elements of supporting reading development is the explicit teaching of reading strategies so readers are able to access their prior knowledge during reading. The process of comprehending texts involves much more than the ability to decode words. A reader must actively integrate a range of strategies including both word identification and comprehension strategies to draw upon available knowledge in the form of cues.

In any reading event a number of reading strategies will be used simultaneously to aid comprehension and or to identify unknown words.

Predicting	Self Questioning	Re-reading
Connecting	Skimming	Reading On
Comparing	Scanning	Adjusting reading rate
Inferring	Determining Importance	Sounding Out using analogy
Synthesising	Summarising & Paraphrasing	
Creating Images	Consulting and reference	

Springboard Reading Series Year 1—6
A comprehensive reading series for Year 1—6

The Springboard Literacy Series is the perfect resource for guided reading and writing, reciprocal reading and independent reading. The engaging visuals and subjects will motivate your students to read for pleasure and for information.

The Springboard Literacy Series develops:

- Analytical thinking skills
- Decoding and comprehension skills
- Understanding of fiction and non-fiction
- Understanding of purpose, structure and genre

PM Writing Series Year PP—6

PM Writing series has been developed to explicitly teach writing, knowledge and skills across a range of student abilities through specific learning tasks.

The teaching content in the books is flexible, making it appropriate for use in a number of teaching and learning environments, including whole-class, small-group and independent. "Book Web" big books are also used in upper primary, which lend them to be used in a variety of teaching settings.

Reading Eggs
Reading Eggs is an online program used by students via website or iPad application. The program has been designed by teachers and focuses on phonics and sight words in an interactive way through games, songs and rewards. Children have their own Reading Eggs account, which allows them to progress and develop at their own rate as the program is targeted to their personal needs.

FLUENCY PASSAGES – READING A-Z

Reading A-Z fluency passages are used by class teachers to improve reading speed and accuracy. The passages are read orally several times and students are encouraged to read them with expression and smoothness to improve comprehension. There are a variety of levelled passages to suit all ages and reading abilities from Year One through to Year Six.

SPELLING AT ST PATRICK'S – THE SMART WORDS PROGRAM

Learning to spell is a complex process and one that is never completed. The English language has been derived from words from many other languages. This sometimes makes learning to spell English words difficult, as words do not always follow the expected pattern.

Even the most competent speller will always be faced with new words as they learn new content and must have a range of strategies to deal with new words. The task of Spelling is also not just about learning new words to spell, but involves many other skills and so how schools teach spelling needs to incorporate the teaching of strategies also.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS – DIANA RIGG PROGRAM

Phonological Awareness is the conscious realisation that words and speech are comprised of a sequence of discrete sounds that may be combined and recombined to form other words. It is the ability to identify and manipulate these sounds that enables a reader to make sense of the alphabetic system.

The development of Phonological Awareness occurs as follows:

- Syllable Level – the child is able to break a word into syllables.
- Onset Rime Level – the child is able to break a word into an onset and a rime, eg. cup = c *onset* & up *rime.*
- Phoneme Level – the child is able to break words into individual phonemes or sounds, eg. spoon = s + p + oo + n.

The levels of Phonological Awareness

1. Knowledge of Rhymes.
2. Word Awareness – knowledge of what a word is and the ability to focus specifically upon a single word is essential for the next steps along the PA ladder. Typically asking a child to tap, clap, or move a counter to symbolise individual words in a single sentence assesses this skill.
3. Recognition and production of Rhyme.
4. Recognition and production of Syllables – Tapping, clapping or moving counter exercise illustrates a child's ability to divide a word into component syllables.
5. Recognition and production of Initial Sounds – Initial sound activities show children that words contain phonemes and introduce how phonemes sound and feel when spoken in isolation.
6. Recognition and production of Final Sounds.
7. Blending – Blending task involves a child being presented with the phonemes *f* a word, and is asked to put the sounds all together for form a word. Eg. Teacher: "Listen I'll say a word slowly, then you say it fast… Mmmmmmmmaaaaaaaannnnnnnnn". Student: "Man".

8. Phonemic Segmentation – requires a child to decompose a word into its component phonemes.
9. Phonemic Manipulation Tasks – Deletion or addition of an initial phoneme – the ability to delete or insert a phoneme from a designated word requires memory skills and mental gymnastics applied to some level of spelling skills.

** Great resources – Sounds Abound & A Sound Way

DEVELOPMENT OF NARRATIVE SKILLS

- A narrative is a story. Stories entertain us and can teach us certain things.

- Stories allow us to organise and communicate thoughts and ideas.

- It is through books and stories that children extend their language skills.

Stories open up new words of experiences for children and improve their imagination skills. General knowledge of the world and also the number of words children understand increases. When hearing stories children get practice at making meaning out of longer chunks of spoken information.

Stories are very important when it comes to school work and literacy. If you are having difficulty telling stories verbally, then it will also be difficult to write stories and to understand when they are being read to you.

In a good narrative, the people in the story are introduced, the scene is set, a logical sequence of events is described and an ending is outlined. Sentences are connected together so that they flow, and enough information is given for the reader/listener to easily follow the plot.

Sharing stories helps children to make the link between written words on the page and the words you speak, and also gives children the knowledge about how stories are put together (ie. story structure).

Stories are extremely important in helping children move from oral language skills (speaking and listening) to literate skills (reading and writing).

How are Stories Structured?

- Beginning/Introduction – Who, where, when, how it started.

- Middle – What happened, why things happened, what the characters did, how they felt.

- End/Conclusion – What happened to the characters, how they left, what was the message/ moral of the book, how did the reader feel after reading.

In class, children are required to tell news, discuss stories, report on experiments and eventually write down their stories and experiences – all of these involve Narrative skills.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSION SKILLS

The Blank Model of Comprehension

LEVEL 1

When the child is beginning to learn language he/she best responds to things in their immediate environment. It's best to use short questions and statements that only require the child to respond to key items and events – matching, pointing and simple naming tasks.

- 'find one like this'
- Who is making that noise?
- 'what's this called?'

LEVEL 3

The child needs help to develop skills in using language in more complex ways. The language does not relate directly to what they see or hear but instead the child must think and re-order the information given.

- What will happen next…?
- What could he/she say?
- How are these the same?
- Name something that can fly but is not a bird.
- Make these into a story, which one goes first, second etc.
- Tell me this story
- Find the things that cannot (talk)
- What are the things you do when you brush your teeth?

LEVEL 2

The information is supplied but it is not directly apparent. The child has to select what to attend to, eg. size, colour, function of object.

- 'What is happening?'
- 'What shape / size / colour is it?'
- 'How are these different?'
- 'What is it for?'
- 'Who / what / where ?'
- 'Name something that is an animal'

LEVEL 4

In this complex level, the child has to reason beyond what is said, heard or seen. The child needs to draw on past experience, make parallels, examine causes and likely effects as well as justifying the decision they made.

- 'What will happen if….?'
- Why will/wouldn't it ….?
- 'What makes it happen?' How can we tell….?'
- 'What could he/she/you do?'
- 'How can we ….. (make it work)?' 'What could we use?'

HANDWRITING

Some General Information about Handwriting

"*There are so many things that have to come together before a young child can write or even copy a word. It is therefore essential that those of us who teach children how to write are aware of the concepts that govern the writing system*".

(Sassoon, 1990, p9).

Concepts of Handwriting

- Direction of writing is from left to right, and from the top of the page downwards.
- Each letter has a correct movement – the strokes that make up each letter must commence at the appropriate point and proceed in the correct direction.
- Letters have specific height differentials.
- Some letters are mirror images of each other – therefore extra care is needed when teaching their formation.

"Young children may not have developed the visual discrimination to recognise the differences, so 'b' and 'd' etc. may present special problems. If teachers can be aware of this at the pre-writing stage then simple sorting, matching or pattern tasks can be devised to prepare young children for discrimination between mirror images".

(Sassoon, 1990, p13).

- Capital letters and small letters have different uses.
- Handwriting requires consistent letter spacing and adequate word spacing.

Handwriting is a skill that must be taught, but it is so much more than the ability to copy and produce patterns. Students need to understand the purpose of what they are doing, so that the link between the physical production and real meaning of what they are doing exists. Short and simple explanations of the concepts of print, from the beginning of the school days will benefit all students and will decrease handwriting problems in the future.

Practical Factors to Check Before Starting to Write

From the very beginning when a child enters school, different factors come into play, which contribute to a child's ability to develop a legible and fluent handwriting style. It is therefore crucial to ensure that teachers are aware of and reinforce at the appropriate developmental level, the following things –

- Posture
- Pencil grip
- Seating (avoid asking children to write when they are seated on the floor)
- Writing surface
- Lighting
- Writing implement
- Paper position – In order to be comfortable and so they can see what they write, students should have their paper over to the side of the hand that they write with. Children can be encouraged to slant their paper also.

Pre Lit Program
PreLit is a skills-based, early literacy preparation program for preschool children in the year before school. It is designed to complement a play-based learning environment and provides children with a sound foundation for learning to read.

MiniLit Program

MiniLit is an evidence-based, effective, early literacy program. It is a practical, systematic, explicit and effective model for teaching reading skills. MiniLit targets the bottom 25% of students and is specifically aimed at struggling young readers. MiniLit is an integrated and balanced program of 80 carefully structured lessons, divided into two levels of forty lessons each:

- Level 1: Teaching the basics of letter/sound knowledge and decoding skills for CVC words
- Level 2: Extending word attack knowledge by teaching commonly used digraphs and longer words