



At Educare Small School, we understand literacy to be the ability to use dialogue, reading and writing effectively. The acquisition of literacy skills is vital if children are to be able to communicate with the world around them and take on further areas of learning. Our aim in teaching literacy skills is to develop children as confident, independent communicators with a lifelong enjoyment and pleasure in speaking, listening, reading and writing and to make the process of learning to communicate a positive experience for all of our children.

We understand that the development of these skills is individual to each child and depends on that child's own learning pace and style and not their chronological age. Our literacy teaching is based around an enjoyment of books and reading and writing and a pleasure in communicating the spoken and written word.

We believe that it is important that children are encouraged to speak and listen, and then read and write as soon as they are ready so that they can enjoy the benefits that these skills bring and develop their learning in other areas. In this context the word 'ready' means to be 'ready' physically, emotionally and intellectually.

We also believe that any intervention to strengthen areas of weakness for children who are experiencing difficulties must be positive and always maintain children's self esteem and confidence. The worst and longest lasting experience for a child is to feel that they have failed.

Our intent is:

- To enable each child to acquire a lifelong pleasure and enjoyment of speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- To enable each child to acquire a level of literacy skills which will allow him or her to communicate effectively with others and develop knowledge in other areas of the curriculum.
- To give children a wide experience of books and stories and constant opportunities to use their speaking and writing to communicate their ideas.
- To teach reading and writing skills in small structured teaching groups or individually according to children's needs.

Kindergarten, Butterflies and Dolphins

Communication and literacy skills are planned and developed 'In the moment' as part of a topic following the EYFS curriculum and our Educare assessment targets, which are based on the National Curriculum. Activities are practically based using a multi-sensory approach to support language, physical and sensory, emotional and social development. Children are encouraged to speak and listen through play and teacher-led activities; they are offered the opportunity to look at books or 'mark make' throughout the environment; a rich

and regular story time promotes discussion and enjoyment; outdoor play, painting, jigsaws etc. support physical and sensory development.

Teachers look for indications that children are ready to start reading and writing by observing language, physical and sensory development as well as emotional and social development

Activities such as drawing, painting, copying, sequencing, pattern making, cutting, colouring are more structured in the Butterflies and Dolphins than in the Kindergarten and planned to develop and support the perceptual and physical abilities needed to begin to read and write.

When children can hear and appreciate rhyme and discriminate between individual letter sounds, they are introduced to simple books. They begin guided reading with an adult, learning to recognise sight words, blend sounds, recognise letter shapes. Writing becomes a shared activity with an adult, children are encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to hear, segment and represent sounds in their writing.

All children are involved in listening to text, joining in and following the reading and contributing to discussion and response. After a rich foundation in Kindergarten, where most children learn initial letter sounds, the EYFS curriculum continues to be followed in Butterflies and Dolphins extending into the first targets of the National Curriculum. Children learn to apply reading and writing strategies in their own work and have regular reading and spelling practice incorporating handwriting. Reading and writing activities as part of topic work allows them to practise and explore their skills independently.

Our intent for Literacy is to:

- Help children develop the ability to express themselves and communicate with others clearly
- Help children develop a broad and good vocabulary and the ability to structure thoughts
- Encourage children to use language for the subject and audience ● Teach children to listen to others and respond appropriately ● Encourage children to make sensible and comprehensible responses. ● Inspire and motivate children by creating a language rich environment ● Ensure children feel confident and have a positive attitude to writing ● Ensure children gain enjoyment from writing
- Help children to understand and apply knowledge of phonics
- Help children to learn or consolidate corresponding graphemes (letters that make up a single sound) and phonemes (sounds) to help them to decode words.
- Have a good understanding of story structure
- Develop their comprehension skills by discussing texts
- Read and write for pleasure

Implementation:

- Setting expectations for talking such as raising hands, hands on head, hands in the circle
- Coming up to the front of the group
- Talking about stories, for example the characters and the plot
- Talking about differences and beliefs
- Talking about experiments and making predictions

- Drama sessions – acting out stories/putting yourself in a characters shoes
 - School plays, such as the Christmas play
 - Circle times (Monday and Friday)
 - Discussion times (during focus sessions)
 - Exchanging ideas
 - Talk buddies
 - Listening/giving instructions
 - Dialogue/ Conversation – Listening to what others say
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- Providing inspiration for writing - a purpose/desire to write and for them to feel invested
 - Planning for each child individually
 - Planning with clear literacy focused activities
 - Monitoring children's progress
 - Providing children with a stimulating writing environment – different texts around the classroom that children are able to see and access • Teaching a range of writing strategies through skills sessions such as spelling, grammar, sentence structure and composition,
 - Free writing - ensuring mark making resources around the learning environment - writing table, whiteboards, clipboard etc
 - Giving children opportunities to write for a range of purposes • Discussing the writing in story books when reading aloud [i.e how the author is using bold lettering for BANG]
 - Modelling writing -letter formation
 - Developing phonic knowledge -regular Literacy games (with an adult or independently on the carpet)
 - Offering the opportunity for children to write throughout the classroom during all topic/subjects
 - Writing prompts such as 'poem ideas' and story stones
 - Book corner
 - Construction and writing labels
 - Individual science books of 'What we have found out'
 - Interactive writing sessions
 - 'Sounds of the week'.
 - Adult modelling and children using whiteboards
 - Writing in the playground
 - Opportunities to reflect on writing – Dolphins – using pens to self correct and edit.
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- Letter boards and magnetic letters
 - Phonic mats, letter mats and sound mats to encourage independent writing
 - Self-registration
 - Name cards
 - 'Feely Letters' – children feel the letters to see the way it is formed

Starfish

When younger children join the **Starfish** group, the learning journey they started in the Butterflies and Dolphins group is continued in order to allow a smooth transition. Therefore, their work is differentiated from the rest of the

class in line with their needs and interests as well as with the type of work that they have done in the past. For example, the use of art, drawing and play is encouraged whilst more writing and book work is slowly introduced over the year. They are working towards being able to read and write independently and speak confidently to different audiences. A wider range of books is introduced, children are taught how to read for information and meaning and to use their writing for different purposes. Spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting are taught according to the writing outcome and reinforced as part of the editing process. Children continue to read aloud for pleasure and if needed take home a reading book or phonic practice. Literacy skills are developed in line with the Educare assessment targets, which are based on the National Curriculum, through the use of real books and activities based on meaningful situations. Opportunities for speaking, listening and questioning are frequent, children are encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions.

Our intent for Literacy is to:

- Foster a love of literacy (reading, writing, spoken word)
- Equip children to use literacy skills to independently access information, and record and articulate their ideas
- Develop retrieval, interpreting and inference skills through and whilst developing a love for reading
- Learn to write for a purpose: lists, recipes, instructions, designs, labels and captions, real letters, holiday diaries/journals. publishing – fact sheets, booklets, Big Books. recording and sharing information – notes (from video, of meetings...), mind maps, post-its, white-boards. Write-ups (experiments).
- Planning – mind-maps, bullet-points, research Q, performance: playscripts, poems
- Help each child to develop receptive and expressive language
- Be able to sustain dialogue
- Be able to address an audience with awareness

Implementation:

- We provide children with numerous opportunities to read a wide variety of genres in a wide variety of contexts
- We enjoy and study a wide variety of genres, from stories to poems and plays, as well as non-fiction texts, in order for the children to write their own texts to share with their peers
- We offer specific opportunities for reading are offered weekly; children may read on a 1:1 basis with an adult, go to the library and borrow books of their choice, spend time reading independently at the end of the day and enjoy story time on a regular basis
- Reading and writing skills are implemented not only in English lessons but also Topic, Science, Maths (word problems etc) across the curriculum
- ChIL time (free choice) is available weekly and children often choose to use their reading and writing skills to complete activities such as write their own plays, research topics and prepare presentations
- Cursive handwriting is started
- Literacy skills sessions and individual literacy bags with detailed work

- responding to children's group and individual targets
- 1:1 support as needed
- Spellings are discussed through word-books, wordbanks and dictionaries, individual targets for key words and providing spelling rules in literacy skills and literacy bag work by building on phonics – hear sounds/make plausible attempts
- A rich use of grammar and punctuation is fostered by creating a language-rich environment
- We focus on deep open Qs that lead to deepening comprehension skills
- Visual literacy approaches are used
- Time to discuss thoughts is always provided through TPs, small groups and pausing to discuss stories including at story-time
 - Access to Chromebooks to record ideas is available
 - Acting out ideas and the use of drama is encouraged
- Active listening, deep questioning and lateral thinking skills are fostered during thinking and circle times, P4C and debating times
- Learning from each other is modelled – new words, concepts and ideas
- We specifically teach and enjoy new, complex, specialist vocabulary relating to topics (eg Human Body – peristalsis)
- We focus on understanding a character's point of view, retelling and sequencing; originating and refining creative ideas, listening to each other/teamwork, (P4C) crafting an argument, making a case, persuasive language
- Audience Performances are prepared and carried out – for example, Christmas show, poetry and presentations across all subjects

We use as stimulus for all groups:

Texts – books, picture books, poetry.

Oral – traditional tales, poetry.

Performances – theatre, drama.

Imagination – objects, oral story-telling, questioning and discussion. Visual – images and photos, own drawings and artwork, films and any of the children's personal interests.

Personal experiences – recounts, write-ups (science) reports. Aural – music, rhythm, discussion in pairs and larger groups. Genres: eg story (various styles – traditional tales, fairy tales, myths and legends, fantasy, realistic...), Non-fiction (books, magazines, library visits, websites), poetry (different styles, written and oral examples – children's poetry archive etc)

Models: real-life examples of brochures, reviews, job-ads, recipes, newspaper articles...(shows both how to – and why I should bother)

Features of texts: taught through different genres and models.

Structure, layout, language, conventions...

Intervention:

At times, in order to progress some children need a more structured phonic programme to help them recognise, hear, and then blend letter sounds. These children have regular one to one practice to recognise, hear and write letter

sounds. This helps them to decode new words when reading and spell when writing. The programme continues until the child can cope independently.

This policy was last reviewed November 2025 and will be reviewed again in November 2026.