



ENHANCING MOTHER TONGUE AND READING LITERACY: INSIGHTS FROM ST. STEPHEN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

Khurramova Lobarkhon Akramjonovna

Master's Student, Tashkent State Pedagogical University

Normurodova Nigora Abdusattorovna

Assoc. Prof of the Department of Mother tongue and its Teaching Methodology
Faculty of Primary Education Tashkent State Pedagogical University

Abstract

This article examines foreign practices in teaching English as the mother tongue and fostering reading literacy among primary school pupils, focusing on the exemplary approach of St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School in England. Furthermore, we try to explore the significance of effective teaching strategies in these domains, drawing attention to the innovative practices employed at this school. Through a review of their methods and outcomes, valuable insights are gathered for potential application in other educational contexts in Uzbekistan.

Keywords

English, mother tongue, reading literacy, primary education

Introduction

According to the Law “On Education” of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the primary stage of education plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's linguistic abilities and literacy skills. [1] Proficiency in the mother tongue and reading literacy are fundamental for academic success and lifelong learning. All teachers are teachers of literacy because all students learn through language. Language is fundamental to thinking and learning. Language is the primary means by which we gather and communicate information. The links between language use, thinking, and learning are globally recognized. [2] Therefore, teachers have a responsibility to find out where each individual student is at in their learning. One way to improve the quality of their knowledge of the students is to learn about the students' prior experiences and existing expertise in literacy learning. And that is what the St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School is currently applying.

Materials Review

Many primary schools in England have gained recognition for their excellence in education, innovative practices, and high academic standards. These schools often receive accolades, awards, and high ratings from educational authorities and inspection bodies. The reason why we have chosen St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School is that this school stands out as a beacon of excellence in English language instruction and reading literacy, along with its high academic standards, inclusive ethos, and commitment to providing a nurturing learning environment for its students. It has received outstanding ratings from Ofsted [3] and has been recognized for its strong leadership and effective teaching.

The school's approach is comprehensive, integrating various methodologies and resources to cultivate a deep appreciation for language and literature. Central to their curriculum is the implementation of

"the Read, Write Inc" scheme for synthetic phonics instruction, followed by the use of "the Oxford Reading Tree" [4] to develop reading fluency. Additionally, tools like "Letter-join" and "The Spelling Shed" are utilized for handwriting and spelling, respectively. Through a rich selection of texts and engaging activities, students are nurtured into confident and enthusiastic readers and writers.

Results and Discussion

At St. Stephen's, English education transcends mere academic achievement; it fosters a love for language and literature. By nurturing reading comprehension and expressive writing skills, students are empowered to communicate effectively and engage meaningfully with the world around them. The school's holistic approach instills not only literacy skills but also a passion for lifelong learning. Through experiential learning and creative exploration, students develop into proficient communicators equipped for success in both academic pursuits and personal growth.

In addition to imparting essential academic skills, English education at St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School is imbued with a profound understanding of language as a vehicle for self-expression and connection. By fostering an environment where children can freely express their feelings, thoughts, and experiences, the school empowers them to communicate effectively and engage meaningfully with others. Through interactive discussions and collaborative activities, students learn not only to articulate their ideas but also to listen actively and respect diverse perspectives.

The emphasis on reading and comprehension skills from an early age lays a strong foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. By honing these skills between the ages of 4 and 11, students not only excel in their academic endeavors but also develop the critical thinking and analytical abilities necessary for success in adulthood. Moreover, the cultivation of a love for books and literature enriches their lives beyond the classroom, providing them with a source of joy, inspiration, and intellectual stimulation.

At the heart of St. Stephen's approach is the integration of effective teaching methodologies and resources to support student learning. The implementation of "the Read, Write Inc" scheme for synthetic phonics instruction and "the Oxford Reading Tree" for reading fluency ensures that students receive comprehensive support tailored to their individual needs. [5] Furthermore, the diverse selection of reading materials, ranging from classroom book corners to the school library, encourages independent exploration and fosters a lifelong habit of reading for pleasure.

Writing instruction at St. Stephen's is characterized by creativity, enthusiasm, and purpose. Through a variety of genres and purposes, students are encouraged to express themselves imaginatively and eloquently. The curriculum is designed to instill not only the essential rules and technicalities of the English language but also a deep appreciation for its richness and versatility as curriculum is organized at the state, district, school, or other level, based on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should be taught, acquired, or mastered by educational standards. [6] By engaging in a process of drafting, editing, and redrafting, students learn to refine their writing skills and produce work of the highest quality.

In essence, English education at St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School goes beyond the acquisition of academic knowledge; it cultivates a lifelong passion for language and literature. By nurturing confident and competent readers and writers, the school equips students with the skills and mindset needed to thrive in an ever-changing world. Through the magic of language, students at St. Stephen's embark on a journey of exploration, discovery, and self-expression, laying the groundwork for a future filled with endless possibilities.

Conclusion

One of the main goals and tasks stated in the Law "On Education" of the Republic of Uzbekistan is to organize the educational process on the basis of advanced modern pedagogical technologies. In this way, the exemplary practices observed at St. Stephen's Church of England Primary School offer valuable insights for educators worldwide, including those in Uzbekistan. By adapting and implementing similar approaches, primary education systems can enhance the mother tongue and reading literacy skills of children, thereby laying a solid foundation for their academic and personal development. Continued research and collaboration are essential to further refine and optimize these strategies for diverse educational contexts.

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