



Primary English Policy

1. Rationale

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across the curriculum and carry this knowledge forth into their lives in the wider world.

2. Aims and Objectives

In accordance with this rationale, we aim:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to recognise, value and build on the language skills that children have already acquired, including the foreign language skills of children for whom English is an additional language.
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used, through both discussion and a range of drama activities;
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with texts that are engaging and appropriately challenging;
- to develop children's enjoyment of writing and recognise its value;
- to develop children's written fluency and pace through the teaching of continuous cursive handwriting.
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing techniques to both improve their work and to critique the work of others.

3. Teaching and Learning Style

At our School, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, as recommended by the National Curriculum Framework (2014). Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English. This is achieved primarily through a daily literacy lesson based on the objectives of the National Curriculum Framework. During these lessons children experience a whole-class shared reading and/or writing activity, which may have a focused word or sentence activity, a guided group or independent activity and a whole-class session to review and evaluate progress and learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, supported by a range of resources to inspire their work. Children sometimes use ICT in

English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work, and may view multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

There are children of differing ability in all classes at our school. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by using a range of teaching strategies. In some lessons we may differentiate group work, while in other lessons we may ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. Classroom assistants are available to support children and to ensure work is matched to the needs of individuals.

4. English Curriculum Planning

The English curriculum is planned in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Primary Framework for English details what we teach in the long-term. Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year. We plan and deliver Phonic lessons daily according to 'Letters and Sounds'.

Our medium-term plans give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The English subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.

Class teachers prepare a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English, within their year group planning. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning. The class teacher keeps these individual plans. The year group team leaders and the subject leader discuss these plans termly, on an informal basis.

5. The Foundation Stage

The teaching of English is an integral part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum in the Reception year. The format for the daily lesson is similar to that used in the rest of the school, with guided writing being a primary teaching strategy used. As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged birth to five. We also base our teaching on the Letters and Sounds programme for phonic work, as devised by the National Literacy Strategy but still and effective structure for efficient delivery of 'Structured Synthetic Phonics'. We give all children in Reception and Nursery the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations.

6. Contribution of English to Teaching in Other Curriculum Areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school. It impacts on the remaining core subjects in the following ways:

6.1 Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children and through stories and rhymes that promote mathematical concepts such as counting and sequencing. Our children build upon these foundational skills by reading and interpreting given problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others throughout lessons and during plenary sessions, and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language. Children are encouraged to answer mathematical problems in full sentences.

6.2 Computing formerly Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT plays an increasingly prominent role in helping pupils to develop their skills in English by enabling them to communicate, edit, annotate and arrange text quickly and flexibly. ICT can be used to integrate skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. It enhances interactive teaching and caters for a range of learning styles and abilities. It also extends pupils' ability to exercise choice, work independently and allows them to make connections between their work in English and in other subjects.

6.3 Science

English contributes to the teaching of science in various ways. Children are encouraged to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their work, they are encouraged to hypothesise, reason and explain their understanding of given topics and to listen carefully to others. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and to respect each other's views.

6.4 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results. The children are encouraged to participate through reading and drama. This enables them to express their emotions and strengthen their own self-image.

7. Teaching English to Children with Special Educational Needs

At our school we teach English to all children, irrespective of ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all children to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors, including classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation – so that we can effectively plan to meet the child’s needs to enable them to achieve to their highest ability. As such, it may be that the creation of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for children with special educational needs. The EHCP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to English. Teachers may provide help to children with communication and literacy difficulties through:

- using texts that children can read and understand
- using visual and written materials in different formats
- using ICT, other technological aids and recorded materials
- using alternative communication, such as signs and symbols

In addition, we aim to enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities that are involved in learning English. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a theatre trip, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils to attend.

8. Teaching English to Children with English as an Additional Language

The National Curriculum states that planning, teaching and learning for children learning English as an additional language should be underpinned by the following **key principles**:

- Bilingualism is an asset and the first language has a continuing and significant role in identity, learning and the acquisition of additional languages.
- Cognitive challenge can and should be kept appropriately high through the provision of linguistic and contextual support.
- Language acquisition goes hand-in-hand with cognitive and academic development, with an inclusive curriculum as the context.

As such, children are supported with their literacy development throughout the school. Targets are reviewed termly by support staff in conjunction with class teachers. Speaking and listening activities have a predominant focus to allow children opportunities to hear and engage in sustained conversations in order to maximize language development. Modelling speech provides opportunities for body language to be carefully observed, together with patterns in speech and movement of the mouth. These activities, which allow language to be modelled by both adults and peers, provide opportunities for the learner to rehearse and use the language in meaningful contexts. Consideration is also given to appropriate scaffolding of the literacy curriculum and the context into which the content of lessons is set. This enables EAL children to have full access to the Literacy curriculum.

9. Assessment and Recording

Teachers assess children’s work in English in three phases – short, medium and long term and although most of our assessments are integrated into planning, a great deal of assessment takes place in an unplanned way. Short-term assessments are made by teachers as part of every lesson to help assess their teaching methods and the children’s learning and understanding. Contact with the children results in automatic assessment which informs the way we respond to situations. As such, teachers try to build in time when they can sit down with each child, as the most effective marking is done alongside the child, rather than at a distance. Adjustments may then be made immediately during the lesson or alternatively will inform daily planning. Teachers then match these short-

term assessments closely to the teaching objectives in their weekly plans to ensure they are achieved.

Much of the day to day assessment of this kind will therefore not be recorded – it does nevertheless, provide a backdrop for interpreting more formal assessments. Staff also encourage self-assessment, which leads to children taking responsibility for their learning. It also ensures that they understand criteria and standards.

Teachers use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives in the National Curriculum, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. They use a class record of the minimum expected standards, in combination with Target Tracker documents, as the recording format for this.

Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, teachers are able to set targets for the next school year and are able to summarise the progress each child has made during the year before discussing it with the child's parents. The next teacher also uses these long-term assessments as the basis for planning work for the new school year. These long-term assessments are made using end-of-year tests, benchmarking levels and summative teacher assessments.

9.1 Guided Reading

Prior to Guided Reading, teachers assess the children through the use of observations of text reading and the taking of running records, in order to put them into groups. Generally, the children will be grouped according to ability, but there may be occasions when the teacher groups the children in a strategic way, for example, where there is a need to develop fluency. Having assessed and grouped the children, teachers decide upon the next step for each particular group and set targets to form a specific teaching focus over the half term. The targets set are based on the evidence from the teacher's assessments.

9.2 Guided Writing

The assessment process for grouping children for Guided Writing is similar to that of Guided Reading, through the use of specific assessment tasks and through careful observation. Children are again generally grouped according to ability however they may also be grouped to work on a specific target area in order to hone their skills. Teachers therefore negotiate specific targets for each Guided Writing session, ensuring that children are aware of what they are working towards, whilst modelling and discussing how it may be achieved.

10. Resources

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate small apparatus. Each classroom has a reading area with a book box containing a range of specifically selected texts across various genres. The reading areas are made homely by the use of scatter cushions and are ideally located in a corner and/or quieter part of the classroom. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts.

Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computer (in Reception classes) and through their allocated class set of Ipads. Our information and communication technology is an extremely valuable resource and enables staff to share books and examples of work etc on a visualiser which displays on a large screen.

The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research and children are encouraged to source this information independently through carefully planned library lessons. Children borrow books on a fortnightly basis.

11. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader gives the head teacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement. The leader also evaluates annual year 2 SATs results, benchmarking and book bands levels to monitor progression. The leader has specially-allocated regular management time in order to enable him/her to review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school. They are also responsible for informing and providing advice to parents about developments in English.

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