

## English Policy

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

At Howard Park Community School we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this is necessarily cross-curricular and a constant through-out school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (p10 National Curriculum)

We are an inclusive school, we set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We use one to one support, small groups and cross-phase work to help with this. We plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with disabilities outlined in the SEN code of practice. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that 'pupils...who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised' (p13)

## Principles

- policy and provision are evaluated and reviewed regularly
- resources of time, people and equipment are planned, budgeted for and detailed when appropriate in the Strategic Development Plan
- supported by the SLT and the Subject Leader for English, teachers engage in joint professional development through Lesson Study to optimise the quality of teaching in English
- planning of English ensures continuity and progression across all year groups and key stages

## Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide teachers with a framework for high quality teaching and learning in literacy and English. We aim to help children develop skills and knowledge that will enable them to:

- communicate effectively and creatively with the world at large, through spoken and written language
- read English fluently
- respond critically to a wide range of texts, express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to both fiction and nonfiction using appropriate technical vocabulary
- enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety
- be interested in words and their meanings, and to develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written form
- produce fluent, well-formed handwriting with a level of early automaticity which supports ease and fluency of written expression

- write in a variety of styles and forms showing awareness of audience and purpose
- develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy
- use grammar and punctuation accurately
- be competent spellers and understand spelling conventions
- produce effective, well presented written work
- judge whether their answers are reasonable and have strategies for checking them where necessary

### Reading

In reading, to enable children to:

- develop positive attitudes towards reading and read for purpose and pleasure
- use reading skills as an integral part of learning throughout the curriculum
- read and respond to a variety of texts whilst gaining increased level of fluency, accuracy, independence and understanding
- develop different strategies for approaching reading and can orchestrate the full range of decoding and comprehension strategies

As such, pupils are entitled to:

- shared reading
- guided reading
- regular independent reading
- home/school reading
- hearing books read aloud on a regular basis
- selecting own choice of texts including ICT texts
- reading whole texts
- reading in other subjects, across a broad and rich curriculum
- reading in the community

### Teaching and Learning

Teachers promote and value reading as an enjoyable activity and as an essential life skill. The new National Curriculum for English provides a detailed programme of study. We aim to ensure that four key conditions for the development of fluent reading are provided for all pupils every day:

- Systematic teaching of synthetic phonics from EYFS, until fluent decoding of text is achieved
- Systematic vocabulary development to support comprehension
- Explicit teaching of meta-cognitive comprehension strategies
- Substantial time spent every day in authentic engagement in independent reading

## Writing

In writing, to enable children to:

- write in a wide range of contexts, for different purposes and audiences, making decisions about form and style
- form letters correctly, leading to a fluent joined and legible handwriting style, giving increasing regard to presentation
- be increasingly aware of the conventions of writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling
- plan, draft and edit their writing to suit the purpose
- use ICT as a literacy medium for presenting work and manipulating text

As such, pupils are entitled to:

- daily synthetic phonics throughout YR-Y1/Y2
- shared writing
- guided writing
- independent writing
- writing different text types and narrative styles
- writing in different curriculum areas
- handwriting – direct teaching and practice
- collaborative writing
- writing related to own experiences and enjoyment
- writing from a variety of stimuli
- planning, drafting, editing and presenting
- using ICT

## Teaching and Learning

Teachers promote writing and look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as 'writers' working within a community of writers. Synthetic phonics is the first and main strategy for teaching the early stages of writing/spelling words. Teachers help pupils to establish the purpose and audience for writing and make learning objectives explicit to pupils so they know why they are studying a text type, what the ultimate outcome will be and what they need to learn to achieve it. The teaching sequence for reading and writing is used as a framework for planning a unit of work. It is known as the Writing Journey.

Reading and responding: Introduction to reading; enjoyment; teach reading strategies; response; provide models/exemplars/mentor texts for writing; use of shared reading as a bridge to writing.

Analysing: Analysis of texts for structural and language features; teacher demonstration/modelling of usage of sentence and word level features; further consolidation of key features; use of mentor texts to support writing.

Planning and writing: Talk for writing; planning, drafting, revising, editing

Subject-specific texts that link to work being undertaken in other areas may also be used in literacy lessons to support the wider curriculum. Teachers use shared writing to model the writing process. Shared reading and writing provide a context for discussion and demonstration of grammatical features at word level, sentence level and text level. Activities are differentiated using writing frames, spelling banks, collaborative work and peer or adult support. In all year groups teachers use a range of 'Published Methods', Jayne Considine, Pie Corbett, etc. helping children to learn and to embed language patterns and structures in learning. Explicit links with ICT, visual literacy, drama and feedback are an integral part of the process. Crucially, pupils are encouraged to write independently and at length every day, from the start, to ensure that essential discrete, guided and supported learning is balanced with opportunities to apply it without support.

### Grammar

The grammar objectives outlined in the National Curriculum for English are taught systematically in all year groups, sometimes discretely if appropriate, but mostly in the context of the genre being studied in the class's current unit of work.

### Handwriting

Pupils are taught to write using PenPals from entry to school. In EYFS the formation of letters is taught without joining. Thereafter the teaching of joins is closely linked to progression in phonics and spelling.

Please refer to the Handwriting and Presentation Policy. This is a major focus in school and vitally important to all.

### Resources

Each class has a range of materials to support the writing process. Writing materials are kept accessible and organised and pupils are encouraged to take care of the equipment and return it to where it belongs. Each class also has a set of age appropriate dictionaries, thesaurus and word banks. Teachers use a range of resources alongside commercially produced resources to support writing. These include:

- National Curriculum for English
- Developing Early Writing
- Grammar for Writing
- Pie Corbett's Planning for Progression in Writing.
- Improving Writing/Boys' Writing Fliers
- PenPals
- Support for Spelling
- Collins Grammar and Punctuation
- Film and ICT media resources eg Google images etc
- Communication Matters
- Early Years Foundation Stage

- Letters and Sounds
- Talk for Writing
- Sue Palmer 'Skeletons'
- Teaching Writing and Writers' Workshop Units of Study (Lucy Calkins)

other resources to support pedagogy and practice in the teaching of English are kept in a central resource area and are audited at the end of each year by the Literacy co-ordinator.

### Speaking and Listening

In speaking and listening, to enable children to:

- communicate effectively, speaking with increasing confidence, clarity and fluency
- participate in discussions and debate in a variety of contexts
- listen to the views, opinions and ideas of others with increased interest
- articulate ideas and thoughts clearly with appropriate tone and vocabulary, recognising audience
- respond to questions and opinions appropriately
- retell stories and poems which are known by heart
- ask questions with increasing relevance and insight

As such, pupils are entitled to:

- planned teaching and learning of speaking and listening skills, drama, group discussion and interaction
- talking about their own experiences, recounting events
- participating in discussion and debate
- Talk for Writing
- retelling stories and poems
- expressing opinions and justifying ideas
- listening to stories read aloud
- presenting ideas to different audiences
- taking part in school performances
- responding to different kinds of texts
- talking to visitors in school
- listening to ideas and opinions of adults and peers
- role-play and other drama activities across the curriculum.

### Teaching and Learning

Teachers provide a wide range of contexts for speaking and listening throughout the school day. Teachers model clear speaking. This includes clear diction, reasoned argument; using imaginative

and challenging language and use of Standard English. Listening is modelled as is the appropriate use of non-verbal communication, respecting the views of others. Teachers are also sensitive in encouraging the participation of retiring or reticent children. Speaking and listening outcomes are planned for in all areas of the curriculum and speaking and listening objectives are identified in planning. Roles are shared with pupils: sometimes a pupil will be the questioner, presenter, etc.

Learning takes place in a variety of situations and group settings. For example, these could include reading aloud as an individual, working collaboratively on an investigation, reporting findings as a newscaster, interviewing people as part of a research project, acting as a guide for a visitor to school, responding to a text in shared or guided reading. Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) is embedded in the curriculum, and provides opportunities for children to learn to respect the views of others and the importance of speaking and listening about others. Through assessment for learning strategies such as 'Talk Partners', through discussion and debate in subjects such as Philosophy for Children, and by embedding the NLS Speaking and Listening objectives across the curriculum pupils are explicitly taught a range of speaking and listening strategies, skills and objectives in planned and systematic progression throughout the school. Talk for Writing strategies are used extensively in all year groups.

### Resources

Teachers have access to a range of resources for speaking and listening activities. These are kept in the central literacy resource area. There are also some useful PSHCE resources which also support this area.

- Key resource - DfES Speaking and Listening Materials

### Spelling

In spelling, to enable children to:

- understand the alphabetic code and spell accurately to communicate effectively and independently in writing
- understand the conventions of English spelling to decode and read text independently, accurately and fluently
- be creative and use ambitious vocabulary
- proof read their work accurately

As such, pupils are entitled to:

- Despite the age of electronic literacy, children still need to express themselves quickly and accurately on paper. The ability to be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill and one that society demands.

### Teaching and Learning

Through the daily, systematic teaching of synthetic phonics in early reading development in Foundation Stage and KS1, pupils are taught a balanced programme which develops understanding of the alphabetic code, the phonemes of the English language and their corresponding graphemes; the skills for segmenting phonemes for spelling and blending them for reading are taught discretely and systematically. Towards the end of Y1 and throughout Y2 this phonics learning leads seamlessly into teaching and learning of spelling, which continues throughout KS2. All pupils receive a planned and structured spelling programme, taught weekly and discretely. This programme is formed from a

planned combination of Ruth Miskin Spelling and a 'word study' approach to consolidate and secure the Ruth Miskin curriculum. Spelling is taught discretely, within the context of Literacy lessons and when appropriate, in other subjects. Homework linked to weekly spellings is provided along with opportunities for practice throughout the week. Teachers use dictation as an assessment strategy. A small and manageable number of individual spelling errors are highlighted through marking across the curriculum and added to a list of no more than 5 individual 'target words' which pupils are expected to practise and learn alongside their whole class words. Once they can spell those words accurately in their independent writing they are removed from the target words list and replaced by new ones. Children who experience specific difficulties in learning to spell receive extra support as appropriate, either in class, or in 1-1 or small group withdrawal with a trained Teaching Assistant. Explicit links are made between teaching of cursive handwriting and the teaching of spelling. Children are expected to learn to spell the words detailed for each age group in the new National Curriculum (2014).

### Resources

- Shakespeare and More
- PenPals
- National Curriculum Programmes of Study for English (2013)

### Assessment

Assessment in English is a continual process through formative assessment. During guided reading sessions teachers will mark off against the national curriculum objectives. In KS2 there are also additional reading comprehension sessions to support pupil's understanding of texts. This is supported by the use of reading assessment tests at the end of each term and optional tests at the end of the year. Guided reading groups are set by ability and the challenge of texts and questioning are used appropriately. Pupils who may be struggling will receive additional guided reading sessions through the week offered by either the class teacher or TA.

Writing is assessed on a continual basis. Pupils are not assessed against each individual piece of writing they produce but across a range of writing that reflects their ability. Teachers mark off against the national curriculum objectives when they feel a pupil is developing in each area. This is monitored on a half termly basis by SLT to monitor progress of the class and individuals. Teacher's understanding of a child's performance is based on the use of effective questioning, success criteria, clear learning objectives and effective feedback and response in their marking.

In Y2 and Y6, staff use past and sample papers to inform their assessments.

**Formative Assessment** We use 'Assertive Mentoring' (AM) materials to support rigorous and regular formative assessment of basic skills in numeracy. Pupils sit a weekly 'Maths Challenge', the results of which are analysed to identify key gaps in understanding which are providing a barrier to progress. Pupils are set according to National Curriculum levels for a weekly 'follow-up' lesson which is planned specifically to tackle those gaps. Teachers integrate the use of formative assessment strategies such as effective questioning, clear learning objectives, the use of success criteria and effective feedback and response in their teaching.

**Summative Assessment** Using AM half termly single level tests, pupils are assessed against NC levels every half term. The school's progress tracking system is updated termly. National Curriculum tests

are used at the end of KS1 and 2; teachers use past and sample papers to inform their assessments as they prepare pupils for these assessments.

The school's Assessment and Marking Policies inform high quality feedback and pupils' response to it in Mathematics.

#### Information and Communication Technology

ICT is used in various ways to support teaching and motivate children's learning. Each classroom has a PC connected to an interactive whiteboard. All teachers are provided with a laptop to support their planning and provision and are encouraged to use ICT to enhance teaching and learning in English where appropriate. The school is equipped with three laptop trolleys (each with 30 laptops).

#### Role of the Subject Leader

- ensures teachers understand the requirements of the National Curriculum and supports them to plan lessons. Leads by example by setting high standards in their own teaching.
- leads continuing professional development and learning (CPDL); facilitates joint professional development – especially Lesson Study; provides coaching and feedback for teachers to improve pupil learning.
- leads the whole-school monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in English by: observing teaching and learning in English regularly; analysing assessment data to plan whole school improvement in English; conducting work scrutiny to inform evaluation of progress; conducting pupil interviews.
- takes responsibility for managing own professional development by participating in external training, independent private study, engagement in educational research and scholarly reading.
- keeps parents informed about English issues.
- ensures that the school's senior leaders and governors are kept informed about the quality of teaching and learning in English.
- works in close partnership with the school's SENCo to ensure the learning needs of all pupils in English are met effectively.
- keeps the policy for English under regular review.

Last reviewed: May 2017

Date of next review: May 2019