

Newton Flotman

C of E V.C. Primary School



English Policy

Policy agreed by: _____

Date: _____

Review date: _____

Aims

English unites the important skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. We encourage children to speak, listen, read and write for a range of purposes to enable them to use language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. Children will be able to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry, drama and non-fiction texts.

Objectives

- provide a rich and stimulating language environment, where speaking and listening, reading and writing are integrated
- foster an enthusiasm and love of reading and writing
- provide opportunities for children to become confident, competent and expressive users of the English language
- provide opportunities for children to be reflective users of language, evaluate their own and others' work
- develop an awareness of purpose and audience for both written and oral language
- experience different contexts for language use in factual, imaginary and personal experiences
- develop the skills of language to enable communication and access to the rest of the curriculum, providing a vital key for future learning.

Speaking & Listening

Aims

The children will:

- be able to communicate effectively and appropriately
- speak clearly and confidently
- listen with attention and respect and respond appropriately to questions.
- be given the opportunity to develop the skills of social discussion to develop the skills of turn taking, negotiation and reaching consensus
- adopt appropriate vocabulary, tone, pace and style for a variety of audiences and in a variety of different situations

Discussion

Children will have the opportunity to talk and discuss in a variety of situations and to audiences of varying sizes, with a variety of people, both adults and children.

Children's contributions to discussions, questions, statements and answers will be valued and given a positive response.

Children will be taught the conventions of discussion such as turn taking, active listening and relevance. They will be shown the importance of clear speech and will be encouraged to ask questions and give opinions when appropriate.

Children will be encouraged to think before speaking, organise their thoughts and use words carefully.

Children who are reluctant to talk in class discussions will be encouraged gently. Where necessary additional smaller group or individual discussion opportunities will be provided.

The children's vocabulary will be extended through story, books, poetry and discussion. They will be encouraged to use more interesting, varied or suitable words in their speech.

The children should be able to participate in constructive and courteous discussion. They will be encouraged to develop an increasing sensitivity to their audience and modify their speech accordingly.

Assessment

Speaking and listening is a central part of every curricular area and verbalisation is crucial in developing conceptual understanding.

Assessment of Speaking & Listening should be made in relation to every curriculum area as well as in role-play and general play situations. Assessment should take into account the appropriateness both to subject and listener.

Children who enter school with limited language will be given help to develop and extend their vocabulary and sentence construction through positive interaction with adults and other children and through intervention strategies such as Talking Partners.

Children for whom English is a second language will be helped towards learning English while at the same time their native language will be valued and given a positive status. Outside agencies will be approached as necessary.

Standard English

The children will be introduced gradually to the use of Standard English and its appropriateness for certain situations. This will be approached sensitively acknowledging the desirability of regional accents and should not hinder the development of confidence or fluency.

Reading

Aims

The children will:

- read with confidence, fluency and understanding
- be interested in books, read with enjoyment and evaluate and justify preferences
- know and understand a range of genres in fiction and poetry
- understand and be familiar with some of the ways narrative is structured through basic literary ideas of character, setting and plot
- understand and be able to use a range of non-fiction texts
- use a range of strategies which will help them to read with meaning, fluency, accuracy and expression
- be able to handle a full range of reading cues i.e. phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual
- monitor and self-correct their own reading

Parental Involvement

We recognise the considerable contribution made by parents in the process of a child learning to read. We encourage parents to use a method consistent with the recommendations of the class teacher.

Parents are encouraged to read regularly with their children and the importance of shared reading is emphasised. Parents are encouraged to add comments to the reading diary that every child takes home. As the children progress to independent reading they can add their own comments.

Guidance on reading with children is given during the new parents meeting.

Reading Activities

The children have access to a wide range of reading activities throughout the week. They also have access to:

- shared written work and books by individuals and the class
- reading with friends or Reading Buddies
- listening to taped stories
- using ICT to enhance reading experiences
- choosing books from the classroom, library and book fair
- making a variety of books
- book reviews
- book weeks
- reading games

Modeling

Reading should be seen as a high status activity. Teachers will read aloud to the children often, sharing enthusiasm and interest in reading themselves. It will be made clear that books are precious and should therefore be valued and cared for.

Modeling will also take place in the literacy lesson and during group reading sessions.

Library

The library is open for children to borrow books every morning and teachers need to encourage the more reluctant readers to make use of this facility. The parent helpers will keep a record of books borrowed and when they are returned. Librarians from Class 4 will keep the library tidy and display books on a weekly basis. Children will be taught how to use the 'Cracking the Code' book in order to make independent use of the library.

Book Corners

A comfortable and attractive reading area should be provided in every classroom and in the school library. These book areas should have clear, accessible book displays and a wide selection of books, both fiction and non-fiction.

SEN

It is important to identify those children who experience particular difficulties in acquiring normal reading skills and to take appropriate action to remedy the problem as early as possible.

Children in Year R will be identified through teacher observations.

Additional support will be provided for children who need it using programmes such as Catch Up, PAT (Phonological Awareness Training) and Additional Literacy Support programmes. The Learning Support Teacher is available for advice and support for any child on the SEN register.

Higher achieving pupils will be given the opportunity to develop their higher reading skills further.

Resources

English and SEN resources are stored in the resources room and individual classrooms.

Equal Opportunities

It is important to remember that boys mature differently and can develop at a slower rate than girls. They may therefore require additional support in order to develop their literacy skills.

Each classroom should contain a wide range of books that appeal to both boys and girls.

Group Reading

Children in each class are put into groups for reading based on ability. Each group is heard to read once a week. The focus of the session, together with comments on individual children, is kept in the black reading file.

Writing

Aims

The children will be encouraged to:

- be independent, thoughtful writers, willing to have a go at spelling words for themselves
- be emergent writers
- see writing as an enjoyable activity and gain satisfaction from their writing
- develop the ability to construct and convey meaning with confidence, fluency and accuracy in a variety of written language forms
- extend their vocabulary and select words relevant to the expression of their intended meaning
- develop an understanding of the structure of language and the ability to use it effectively
- understand and use the conventions as found in standard English
- work collaboratively with other children to discuss their written work

Writing in the classroom

Writing is a form of communication often shared with others. Initially, children will use pictures, then symbols and isolated letters, leading to the use of full words and phrases.

The children's early attempts at written communication will be valued and they will be encouraged to 'read' to others what they have written. The children will be given the opportunity to write in all areas of role-play. This should be built into the YR medium term plans. Independence will be encouraged from an early age. The children will be given the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes and in a variety of styles.

While we recognise and encourage writing as a creative, personal skill, it must also conform to certain conventions. The understanding of these will be improved by specific direction and teaching as directed by the Primary Framework. A balance must be maintained between the children's own attempts, which will be valued, and progression towards conventional forms.

The children's writing will be given a high profile. These could be read to others, made into a class book or displayed.

Grammar

Teachers should teach pupils about language so that they have a working knowledge of its structure and be able to use it confidently.

Nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs still form the basis of knowledge about language. We will help children to be aware of how language is constructed by exploring different language forms in written work and discussion activities.

We aim to lead towards an understanding of Standard English and to encourage them to use tenses correctly and appropriately.

Phonics and Spelling

Aims

The children will be encouraged to:

- develop the confidence to try and spell words for themselves
- recognise and explore patterns of spellings
- spell an increasing number of tricky words as listed in Letter and Sounds document
- develop a routine of checking their own spelling
- use word lists, dictionaries and spelling books with increasing knowledge of alphabetical order
- develop strategies for memorising spellings such as mnemonics and phonological awareness

The teaching of spelling

The children will have access to words all around them in the classroom and will be taught to use a variety of methods to help them spell according to their ability. Approaches will include phonics, rhyme and visual recognition.

Phonics/Rhyme

Children make progress in phonics through the following stages:

- rhyme and alliteration
- initial sounds when they first attempt to spell for themselves
- final sound and the length of the word with CVC words
- year 1 children are expected to attempt to spell the whole word in drafting books

Visual

To spell irregular words that do not possess a phonic pattern, children are taught to use the 'Look, Cover, Write, Check' method.

Children are taught the alphabetical names alongside phonics. Whenever a spelling is given to a child, they should not be just spelled aloud but written at the same time therefore, combining visual and oral clues.

High frequency words are displayed in the classroom or on a word card for children to use. These words are taught in school and then reinforced through regular homework.

Children should also say the alphabetical names for reinforcement as they write the word and be discouraged from copying letter by letter. Parents are asked to encourage their child to follow this method at home and to memorise the whole word. Children find common words in wordbooks that they can read/write for themselves.

Every class should aim to have a daily phonics session designed specifically to teach various spelling patterns

Spelling should be presented as fun and various games, word searches etc. will be used to encourage and inspire children to search for patterns.

Correction of spelling

The level of spelling correction is dependent both on the nature of the work and the ability of the child. Children should understand the difference between work for an audience and their own rough drafts or notes.

Spellings which we would expect a child to know will be corrected by pointing out 2 or 3 words for the children to practice using the 'Look, Cover, Write, Check' method. Common mistakes can be drawn together as a lesson focus and used to teach or reinforce spelling rules.

It is important that the correction of spelling is not demoralising for the child and therefore corrections will focus on words that the child should know. There should always be positive encouragement and praise for any correct parts of a word spelt.

Assessment

In YR and Y1 a variety of activities should be used to practice and assess both high frequency words and word patterns. At the end of YR, 1 and 2 the teacher should assess the number of high frequency words the children can spell in order to inform both planning and the next teacher. A phonic checklist is also used.

From Y3, children are assessed against progress on the Primary Framework words. Spellings are sent home in accordance with our homework policy and are tested regularly.

Serious spelling difficulties should be referred to the SEN

Co-coordinator and indicated on the child's IEP (Individual Education Plan).

Handwriting & Presentation

Aims

- children will progress towards fluent, legible and joined up handwriting
- most children will be using joined up writing in all their work by the end of Key Stage 1
- children will take a pride in the presentation of their work

Objectives

The children will be taught to sit correctly. The correct pencil grip will be emphasised from YR and a supply of well-sharpened pencils will be provided. Rubber pencil grips should be available for those children who experience difficulties. Older children can use handwriting pens for display or in books as appropriate.

Children will have the opportunity to watch the teacher write and form letters. The teacher will talk through the formation of the letter and encourage the children to do the same.

Class displays should set an example of good presentation and handwriting. Any child's work on display should be well written.

Left-handed children

Left-handed children should, where possible, sit to the left of a right-handed child to avoid arms colliding. The paper should be positioned to the left of the body and tilted to a comfortable angle. Left-handed children should be allowed to cross 't' and 'f' from right to left as this a more natural movement for them.

Reception

Children in YR require a multi-sensory approach with plenty of tactile experiences, left to right activities, fine motor skills practice and flowing pattern work to promote dexterity.

They are taught the correct formation of individual letters and should practice the letters in family groups. Letter formation will be practiced using a variety of multisensory media – sand, paint, play dough, gloop etc.

From KS1

Children will receive a short regular weekly lesson of handwriting where they are taught joined script using the Jarman scheme once they have mastered correct letter formation. They will be encouraged to use the joins they have been taught in their everyday writing.

Year 2 children will be taught to write both their first and surnames in joined script.

By the beginning of Y3, most children should be ready to use joined script throughout their work.

Drama

Aims

- respond appropriately to questions.
- contribute to discussions on a 1:1 basis and as part of a small group or as part of a class group.
- give instructions and directions.
- listen to simple instructions and carry them out accurately
- use drama to support reading and writing, providing a purpose

Children should be encouraged to use a range of dramatic forms to express feelings and ideas both verbally and non-verbally. Children should be encouraged to appreciate drama, both as participants and observers. The beginnings of drama skills are developed through role play in the foundation stage and KS1. Drama skills will be taught throughout the curriculum ensuring cross curriculum links. This is reinforced by each class planning drama sessions through Mantle of the Expert each term.

Organisation, Planning and Evaluation of the English Curriculum

In the Foundation Stage we use the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, working towards the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children 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 practice and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about and use words and texts in a range of situations. Regular phonic sessions are taught. In the first term, initial sounds are introduced.

To inform our planning in Key Stage 1 and 2 we use the New Primary Framework. Our long term plans identify the units to be covered each year. Medium-term plans give details of the main teaching objectives for each unit. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. Class teachers complete weekly plans for the teaching of English, which include a teaching sequence comprising of a speaking and listening, reading and writing phase in order to cover a unit. A unit lasts from 2 to 5 weeks.

Teaching and learning styles

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles to teach English. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English. We do this through a mixture of whole-class, group teaching and independent activities. Teachers will use their professional judgment to determine the activities, timing and organisation of each part of the lesson to suit its objectives. This will make for a varied and creative English teaching programme. The children also have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources to support their work. There is still an emphasis on speaking and listening building on the skills children all classes have a role play are designed to encourage speaking and listening, reading and writing skills through imaginative play.

In KS1 and KS2 during Guided Reading sessions teachers and teaching assistants work with groups of children on an appropriately levelled text.

In Foundation Stage, the children will experience Communication, Language and Literacy as part of the six areas of learning. Speaking and listening skills are vitally important as they underpin all learning at this early stage. Development of these skills is encouraged through activities such as listening to stories and poems, joining in with rhymes and songs, participating in drama and imaginative play, responding to simple instructions and talking to accompany play. Knowledge about books is developed through activities such as retelling a story in their own words, reading a big book with the teacher, re-reading favourite stories and listening to taped stories.

Emergent writing is encouraged through role play and children are encouraged to write in role play. The local environment provides purposes for writing for example, shopping lists, signs, instructions and recounts. When children become more aware of phonics and letter formation they are encouraged to attempt a more focused form of writing using the initial, end and medial sounds in words. We encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the 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.

Meeting the needs of individual children

When teaching English we recognise the fact that there are children of differing abilities in all classes and we take into account the needs of all children, including the targets set for the children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities matched to the needs of all children including the very able, those with barriers to learning and participation and those with different cultural or linguistic origins.

We ensure that we achieve this by:

- setting tasks with a higher level of challenge for the more able children
- grouping children by ability when appropriate and setting different tasks for each ability group
- providing resources of different complexity, matched to the ability of the child
- using teaching assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children

Assessment

We assess children's work in English on a daily basis as we make informal judgements when we observe them during lessons. This allows teachers to adjust their daily plans. A termly writing assessment is completed where an unaided piece of work is assessed and moderated by school staff. This information is used to track individual children's progress. At regular intervals, in line with the school assessment policy, teachers review pupils' work using APP guidelines to build a profile of their attainment. From this, each pupil is assigned an overall National Curriculum level for reading and for writing. This information is used to set curricular targets to strengthen pupils' learning and inform their own future teaching by making links to the relevant objectives from the renewed Framework. Monitoring of the data by subject leaders and class teachers will lead to support being given where children are not on track to achieve their end of year target.

The assessment children's reading is done through notes and jottings from guided and individual reading. There is also a termly reading assessment which is used to track progress. Through monitoring, those children who are not achieving their targets can be identified and appropriate support given. Targets are also adjusted to take account of better than expected progress. Children undertake national tests at the end of Year 2 and 6, where appropriate. These are used alongside teacher assessment to measure children's progress. In the Foundation Stage observations are collected during adult led and child initiated play and these are used to inform their assessments for the Foundation Stage Profile.

Glossary of Terms

ALS	Additional Literacy Support
Contextual	Using the passage to gain meaning
Graphic	Written representation
Magic line	Indicates spelling unknown
Mnemonics	A device to aid memory when spelling i.e. said = save animals in danger
PAT	Phonological Awareness Training
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a word
Phonic	Sound
Phonological awareness	Awareness of sounds within words
Reading Buddies	When children pair up to read to each other
Syntactic	How words are used together in a sentence