

Heritage Park Primary School

English Policy



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Introduction

Language is the paramount tool with which we think, plan our actions, communicate with others and interpret our environment. In order to participate confidently in public, cultural and working life, pupils need to be able to speak, write and read standard English fluently and accurately. It is, of necessity, the principal vehicle of all learning. It is the medium for communication and learning in all other subjects, therefore, all pupils are entitled to the full range of opportunities necessary, to enable them to develop competence in English.

Our approach to teaching English

We provide a course of study following the 2014 National Curriculum. The teaching of English is the responsibility of the class teacher who is supported by the subject leader. Lessons are differentiated to cater for the needs of all children.

There are resources in place to implement this policy. The school has a non-fiction library stocked with a wide range of reading material. The book changing area is well stocked with reading books. The range of reading material covers all ages, reading abilities and interest levels. In addition to this, we have also invested heavily into appropriate materials to support the planning and assessment process for teachers. This includes, planning guides and staff training led internally and externally.

English is monitored regularly by the subject leader, and the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring the findings of monitoring lead to positive change and improvement. The Senior Leadership Team organise training according to the targets set out in the School Development Plan. Teachers' individual needs are assessed through performance management meetings, staff meetings, work scrutinies and lesson observations.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2013) 'National curriculum in England: English programmes of study'
- DfE (2017) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DFE (2021) 'The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy'

Our Specific Aims

Our aims are based upon the National Curriculum aims as outlined:

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

Teaching of Reading

The programmes of study for reading consists of two dimensions. It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each:

- Word reading
- Comprehension (both listening and reading).

We believe that all children should be given extensive experience of literature in order to become enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers.

All children are given opportunities to read for pleasure and also for information. They are taught how to use a wide range of sources of information including dictionaries, encyclopaedias, thesauruses and digital reference materials.

In addition to the reading material that the children select for themselves, we seek to introduce them to high-quality literature. This is maintained through our literature spine which is contained within our long term reading plan for each year group. This details which guided reading texts, class novels and poems to teach throughout the year and is planned in collaboration with class teachers. Links to topics have been made where appropriate, but the emphasis upon this document is to ensure children are exposed to a high standard and a broad range of literature.

A systematic approach

In Reception and Key Stage One, we adopt a structured approach to early reading which follows the order of teaching contained in the Letters and Sounds publication. The children are taught the 40+ sounds of English and, with this knowledge, are taken through stages of blending sounds to form simple words, eventually progressing to reading sentences. Parents are asked to support the work introduced in school by using the 'sound books' that are sent home in Reception and at the start of Year One when new sounds are being taught. These are designed to reinforce the learning that takes place in school.

Children in Reception and Key Stage One take reading books home from our decodable library which contains books from Collins Big Cat publications and have been organised into sets of books which complement our phonics teaching. This ensures that the children take books home that contain the graphemes they have been taught in their phonics lessons (or previously taught graphemes once a phonics phase is completed).

The decodable library continues throughout Key Stage One and when the children start Year 3, they continue to access books from the same publisher for

the first half term. Following this, they begin to use Accelerated Reader and sit a STAR reader test to establish their book level.

Children are expected to read daily and home/school dialogue is maintained through a reading diary. Teachers keep a reading log of who has read to an adult each week and adults at school are expected to hear each child reader once per half term.

The children are taught to use a range of strategies to unpick the meaning of a text, including looking at grammatical structure, contextual understanding, word recognition, graphic knowledge and phonics.

In Key Stage One, phonics takes place daily, with each lesson lasting approximately twenty minutes. The phonics lesson on a Friday focuses on consolidation of the teaching from Monday – Thursday.

Guided Reading takes place in each year group and the frequency for this is dependent on the individual year group. Reception complete guided reading lessons three times a week after the autumn term. Key Stage One complete guided reading lessons four times a week. In Key Stage Two, Year 3 and 4 complete Guided Reading lessons twice a week due to the demands of the new Opening Worlds Curriculum and in Year 5 and 6, Guided Reading takes place four times a week.

As a school we place great emphasis on fostering an interest and enjoyment of books. Every classroom has a reading area that offers an attractive and stimulating environment in which the children's love of reading can be nurtured. The reading books in the classrooms contain both fiction and non-fiction books. The library creates an inviting atmosphere designed to encourage learning and independent research. The children borrow books by checking them in and out using the Junior Librarian computer system.

Teaching reading fluency

Children need to be taught how to read fluently. This will enable them to fully understand the text, support comprehension and promote a love of reading. A fluent reader demonstrates pace, use of expression, understanding and appropriate rhythm.

Fluency is automatically gaining meaning from the words on the page. Fluent reading aloud has a natural expression, like speech. Fluency needs to be taught explicitly for this skill to be acquired by children.

Strategies to develop fluency:

- Daily story time, read aloud by an adult

- Ensuring children are reading the correct level of text
- Providing the opportunity for children to re-read texts
- 1:1 reading with an adult
- Guided reading where groups pre-read extracts and revisit these during the lesson
- Group reading where pupils read simultaneously as a group
- Paired reading where a more fluent reader is paired with a less fluent reader
- Electronic assisted reading, e.g. listening to an audiobook or reading subtitles

Teaching of Writing (including grammar and punctuation)

The programmes of study for writing consists of two dimensions. It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

Our aim is to provide a wide range of writing opportunities and ensure continuity and progression for all pupils. In addition, class teachers develop the children's writing ability through the creative approach where the children have access to first-hand experiences (e.g. trips and science experiments)

We use a long term writing planning document, devised by the English subject leader. This involves the teacher selecting a unit based on their year group and allows the children to produce extended writing, based around the stimulus of a carefully planned out text. The document provides the writing outcomes that teachers must ensure are covered across the year. It allows for half termly opportunities for narrative writing, termly opportunities for poetry and regular opportunities for non-fiction writing.

In addition to this, the document provides suggested stimulus points for inspiring writing and signposts teachers to useful resources we have available at our school.

We also have a long term planning document for grammar, punctuation and spelling which ensures full curriculum coverages of each objective. It also places great emphasis on revisiting prior learning and supports teachers by provided a termly view of which objectives are to be covered.

Handwriting

We believe that, despite the increased use of typing, the skill of handwriting remains important in education, employment and in everyday life. All children are encouraged to join their writing using the Nelson Handwriting scheme of work. The aim is for all children to write in a fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting script. The emphasis on joined handwriting features in some areas of the Key Stage One curriculum and it is a requirement to achieving the expected level for writing from Year 3 onwards.

The teaching of handwriting is delivered as separate lessons and is embedded throughout the week. Children in Reception and Key Stage One have daily, 15 minute handwriting lessons and children in Key Stage Two are taught handwriting three times a week, each lesson lasting for 20 minutes.

Children are also given daily opportunities to practise their handwriting throughout all lessons. Teachers use the interactive Nelson software, as well as live modelling using the visualiser.

Children in Reception to Year 4 write in pencil. When children reach Upper Key Stage Two they will write in blue handwriting pen, other than in maths books in which write in pencil.

Teaching of Spelling

The teaching of spelling is an important aspect of the writing process. At Key Stage One, the main focus of spelling teaching is through the phonics stages, along with the teaching of common exception words appropriate to the age group. At Key Stage Two, there is more emphasis on teaching spelling strategies and ensuring the high frequency words are taught and assessed, as outlined in the National Curriculum.

Implementation

In Reception, children are encouraged to spell and write independently to develop as confident writers, in line with the phonics phases they have been taught.

All year groups are taught to look for common patterns in words and we aim to develop an interest in these words. Common exception words and high frequency words are taught throughout each year. Children will therefore visit these words several times during the year.

The spelling scheme of work is based on the National Curriculum and weekly spellings are set for the children based upon this scheme. Spelling is taught daily in Reception and Key Stage One, as part of our phonics provision. In Key Stage

Two, a twenty minute spelling lesson is taught on a Monday, which introduces the specific spelling rules for the spellings that week.

Children are taught a range of strategies for spelling including

- Keeping individual lists of words to spell
- Sounding out and using phonemes
- Segmenting and blending
- Using visual skills e.g. common letter strings
- Building from words with similar patterns and meanings
- Spelling by analogy with other known words
- Using word banks, dictionaries and digital spell checkers
- Building up spelling by syllabic parts
- Using known prefixes and suffixes
- Practising new spellings regularly

The children also investigate spelling conventions and rules to build up a bank of new vocabulary and spelling words linked to topics in other subjects.

Spelling homework

Parents are encouraged to help their children to learn spellings.

For Key Stage One and Two, spellings are set every Monday on Spelling Shed and a copy of these are also provided into homework books. Children are set words containing a spelling pattern and common exception/high frequency words as follows:

	Amount of spelling pattern words	Amount of HFW or Common Exception Words
Year 1	4	2
Year 2	4	3
Year 3	4	4
Year 4	4	5
Year 5	5	5
Year 6	5	5

Spellings are tested on a Friday and children then take their spelling test books home on the same day to share their result at home.

Speaking and Listening

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing.

English is a vital way of communicating in school, in public life and internationally. Speaking and Listening enables pupils to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and to communicate with others effectively; it enables them to adapt what they say in different situations.

We promote the importance of all children being able to communicate with others. We consider the ability to communicate a vital skill that all children should master in order to become fully integrated members of our school and wider community. To communicate effectively, all pupils are taught the importance of clear, fluent and interesting language.

Aims

Our main aims are to enable pupils to:

- Speak with confidence in a range of contexts, adapting their speech for a range of purposes and audiences
- Listen, understand and respond appropriately to others
- Talk effectively as members of a group
- Participate in a range of drama activities and to evaluate their own and others' contributions

Implementation

All children are valued for the contribution they make, no matter how formal or informal. They are encouraged to value the contributions of others. Children are given opportunities to work in groups of different sizes and talking and presenting work to different audiences, including friends, the class, the teacher and other adults in school.

By its very nature, language is cross-curricular. This means children are given many different opportunities to explore its uses. All children are encouraged to express themselves and listen carefully and respectfully to others.

In Reception and at Key Stage 1, children are given the opportunity to tell stories through imaginative play and drama. They are encouraged to listen to and repeat traditional rhymes and poetry. In many areas of the curriculum they are asked to predict outcomes and explain their reasons why. They make choices giving clear simple explanations.

In addition to the skills outlined above, Key Stage 2 pupils develop their abilities through the teaching of a higher order range of skills and are given opportunities to respond to others. They learn how to evaluate what they hear and are encouraged to express themselves confidently to a variety of different audiences, formally and informally. As the children progress through the Key Stage, they are expected to listen with increasing care to others and question politely

opposing points of view. In discussions and talks, they are encouraged to consider their choice of vocabulary, deciding on its appropriateness in context.

It is accepted that children have a variety of different accents, this is important to the individuality of children and adults but we model clear speech and appropriate intonation of Standard English.

Assessment within English

For all summative assessments, teachers will update their assessment records on a regular basis, using the Insight software. This will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team (including the subject leader).

Reading

Formative assessment of reading is on-going throughout the year and is used to support the class teacher's planning. Summative assessment is conducted termly through an assessment week in which the children sit a reading test paper. We used PIRA as our assessment tool in Years 1-6, in addition to Year 2 and 6 completing past SATs practice papers. After assessments have been completed, the results will be analysed in order to identify where further support is required.

We recognise the importance of assessing reading comprehension as well as the ability to read words on a page. Phonics assessments take place on a half-termly basis and analysis of the results takes place in order to identify gaps in understanding.

Children in Key Stage One, who are due to sit the Phonics Screening, participate in termly practice assessments to help familiarise them with the format of the assessment.

All children from Year 4 upwards, will take the STAR Reader test in September, December, March and July to set their reading range and also generate a reading age. Children in Year 3 will take their STAR Reader tests in November, March and July.

Writing

During each writing unit, the children will produce a piece of extended independent writing. The length of this will be relevant to the age and ability of the child. Ideally, the extended piece of writing will be completed over more than one lesson to allow for the children to become fully immersed in the writing process.

Class teachers make assessments of the children's extended writing, supported by assessment checklists for their year group. These checklists must be met in

full and cannot be used as a 'best fit' model. Teachers will update their assessment records on a regular basis in order to identify strengths and any weaknesses that may be emerging in a child's writing. This will be completed using the Insight software.

Termly moderation meetings are led by the English subject leader so that staff can feel confident in assessing children's work and to ensure that progression is monitored carefully throughout the school.

Grammar and Punctuation

We used GaPS as our assessment tool in Years 1-6, in addition to Year 2 and 6 completing past SATs practice papers. Marks from these will be uploaded to an online tool to identify where further support may be required through interventions.

Spelling

In Reception, children are tested on spellings as appropriate and as part of their phonics assessments. Ongoing spelling assessments are made and children are helped to identify areas that need to be worked on.

For children in Key Stage One and Two, a weekly spelling test is held on the words they have been learning for their homework. Once the children have been taught all of their sets of common exception words or high frequency words, the teacher arranges a test of a selection of these words. The children will then work through the sets again, in order to commit them to their long term memory.

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Children identified as having SEND and/or experience literacy difficulties will receive additional support within the classroom from the class teacher and the class teaching assistant and/or 1:1 teaching assistant. The SENCo, along with the class teacher will monitor the progress of these children through their Personal Support Plan and/or EHCP targets and staff discussions. Staff will follow recommendations made in the child's PSP when planning their lessons and preparing resources, in order to ensure they are providing Quality First Teaching to all pupils.

For some children, this may involve setting work in line with their ability. For example, this may mean that some children learn a different set of spellings to their peers. All children experiencing these difficulties will be assessed on an individual basis.

In addition to literacy difficulties, some children experience fine motor difficulties that may mean they find it difficult to access handwriting practice. Some children

who have very poor pencil control and find the physical act of writing challenging, may receive targeted intervention programmes to help them to develop the required skills. This will be used with advice given from the SENCo and the Occupational Therapist, where appropriate.

Monitoring and review

English is monitored regularly by the subject leader. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for ensuring the findings of the monitoring lead to positive change and improvement. Staff individual needs are assessed through performance management meetings, staff meetings, book scrutinies and lesson observations.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the subject leader and any changes made will be communicated to all teaching staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Feedback and Marking policy and the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy.

Conclusion

By following this policy for English, we seek to develop the language and literacy skills of all our pupils across the entire curriculum.

We endeavour to provide a stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to listen, talk, read and write freely having been given a broad, solid grounding in the use of oral and written language.

We strive to enable our pupils to see that communication through a variety of language skills is necessary for their personal lives, for their learning and for living and working in society.

Supporting documents

- Writing long term plan
- Reading long term plan (including Literature Spine)
- Grammar, punctuation and spelling long term plan
- Intent, implementation, impact documents for reading and writing