

Heritage Park Primary School

English Policy



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Introduction

Language is the principal tool through which pupils think, plan, communicate, and make sense of the world around them. Proficiency in language, particularly in Standard English, is essential for pupils to access the curriculum fully and to participate confidently in public, cultural, and working life.

At our school, we recognise that English is not only a subject in its own right but also the medium through which learning in all other subjects takes place. It underpins pupils' academic progress and personal development across the curriculum.

All pupils are entitled to high-quality teaching and learning opportunities that enable them to develop fluency and accuracy in speaking, reading, and writing Standard English. We are committed to ensuring that every pupil receives the support, guidance, and challenge necessary to build strong language and literacy skills, which are critical to their success both within and beyond the school environment.

Our approach to teaching English

We provide a course of study following the Early Years Foundation Stage and 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 libraries that are well-stocked with a wide range of reading material. The range of reading material covers all ages, reading abilities and interest levels, as well as providing a balance between fiction and non-fiction. 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, relevant subscriptions to resources, 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 (2024) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DFE (2023) 'The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy'

Our Specific Aims

Our aims are based upon the educational programme set out in the Early Years foundation stage statutory framework for Literacy, and the aims set out in the National Curriculum aims for English.

Early Years foundation stage:

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

National Curriculum:

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 long-term reading plan for each year group. This details which guided reading texts, class novels and poems to teach throughout the year, as well as planned opportunities for listening to nursery rhymes, fables and traditional tales in Reception and Key Stage One. Links to topics have been made where appropriate, but the emphasis upon the text choice 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 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 digital reading log. Staff monitor home reading in order to ensure early intervention can take place if a child is not reading frequently enough, and to reward children who have read daily. Staff also keep a reading log of who has read to an adult each week and adults at school are expected to hear each child read 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 and phonics.

In Key Stage One, phonics takes place daily, with each lesson lasting approximately twenty minutes. The phonics teaching is then revisited regularly throughout the day to reinforce the new learning. Additionally, 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 and Key Stage One complete guided reading lessons three times a week from the spring term onwards. In Key Stage Two Guided Reading lessons are completed twice a week due to the heavy emphasis upon vocabulary development and comprehension contained within the Opening Worlds Curriculum.

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 and 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 lessons
- 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 which involves the teacher selecting a unit based on their year group and allows the children to produce extended writing, focused on a stimulus or 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

greater emphasis on revisiting prior learning and supports teachers by providing 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. 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. All children in Key Stage Two are encouraged to join their writing using the Nelson Handwriting scheme of work.

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 will write in pencil. When children reach Upper Key Stage Two, they will write in blue handwriting pen, other than in maths books, in which they will 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 delivered 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 Letters and Sounds phonics programme for Reception and Key Stage One, and the National Curriculum for Key Stage One and Two. Spelling is taught daily in Reception and Key Stage One, as part of their 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	3 or 4	2 or 3
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. The ability to communicate is 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
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- Use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes
- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and responding to comments
- Use spoken language to develop understanding
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of their audience, selecting and using appropriate registers for effective communication
- Consider and evaluate the viewpoints of others

Implementation

All children are valued for the contribution they make and 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, spoken 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.

We support the development of spoken language through a carefully planned progression document which is broken down into the following areas of speaking and listening skills:

- Pitch, tone, register and awareness of audience
- Spoken sentence structure
- Discussions
- Debate
- Improvisation
- Performance
- Presentations

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 in which the children sit a reading test paper, requiring them to write down

their answers to a range of reading comprehension questions. We use a published assessment resource from Year 1 summer term onwards, other than Year 2 and 6 who will complete 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 word-level reading. Phonics assessments take place on a half-termly basis in Reception and Key Stage One, 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, also 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. The extended piece of writing will usually be completed over more than one lesson to allow for the children to become fully immersed in the writing process.

In Reception, class teachers use the Early Learning Goals for writing to make their judgements over whether a child is working at the 'expected' standard or whether they are 'emerging'.

In Key Stage One and Two, class teachers make assessments of the children's extended writing, using 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.

All teacher assessments of writing are uploaded to Insight and analysed by the English subject leader.

Moderation meetings are led by the English subject leader throughout the year, 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 use a published assessment tool in Years 1-6, in addition to Year 2 and 6 completing past SATs practice papers. Marks from these will be analysed through a question level analysis tool to inform where a child may need further support and/or intervention.

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 help to commit them to their long-term memory.

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Children identified as SEND and/or who may experience literacy difficulties will receive additional support within the classroom from the class teacher, 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 the provision set out 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 may experience fine motor difficulties that could mean they find it difficult to access handwriting lessons. 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. As children progress through school, this intervention may also include developing their typing skills in order to allow them to type extended pieces of writing, thereby reducing the physical demands that handwriting may pose. All interventions used will be based on advice given from the SENCo and/or external professionals, e.g. Occupational Therapist or Educational Psychology.

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

We endeavour to provide a stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to listen, talk, read and write, 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.

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

Supporting documents

- Writing long term plan
- Reading long term plan
- Grammar, punctuation and spelling long term plan
- Intent, implementation, impact documents for reading and writing