

Curriculum Policy for English

DATE OF REVIEW: Autumn 2024

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TO BE REVIEWED BY: Teaching and Learning committee



Introduction

All pupils are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. English is a core subject in the National Curriculum and this policy outlines the Intent, Implementation and Impact of the subject, as it is taught in our school. The Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. As a core subject, English is compulsory and remains at the heart of teaching and learning throughout the EYFS and each key stage. Through our teaching, we aim to develop pupils' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, therefore enabling them to communicate and operate effectively and appropriately within their various networks, throughout their lives. The school policy for English reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole teaching staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body.

Intent

With English at the heart of learning, every pupil develops in all aspects of their being: culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually; thus, empowering them to become knowledgeable, instrumental and successful members of their ever-changing society. The National Curriculum 2014 states that 'pupils who do not learn to speak, read and write confidently are effectively disenfranchised' thus impacting directly upon their life chances. Therefore, from the beginning of their time at Hatherleigh, pupils are immersed in a language-rich environment where they are rapidly equipped with a strong command of the spoken and written word.

High-quality texts and stories are an integral element of our provision and, through these, the seeds for a life-long love of reading, writing and affinity with literature are sown. Reading is held in high esteem due to its significance in enabling pupils to acquire knowledge, stimulate writing and achieve success in all areas.

It is our belief that every child deserves the very best opportunities in life; and as a result, key English skills are exercised and developed through all subjects and every social interaction. With the incorporation of knowledge from across the curriculum, English becomes the vehicle through which the entire spectrum of learning comes into fruition.

The acquisition of high-quality vocabulary, alongside excellent speaking and listening skills, ensures that our pupils are equipped to express themselves cognitively, socially and emotionally, therefore impacting positively on their mental health and general well-being. By awarding English the high status it deserves, we make it our mission to ensure that every child at Hatherleigh is equipped for learning, and for life.

Implementation

Daily lessons are planned using Hatherleigh's Curriculum Overview and Progression of Knowledge, Skills and Understanding documents, which have been devised to encompass the unique needs of our pupils from the EYFS to Year 6, whilst adhering to the statutory guidance of the EYFS Framework and National Curriculum. A systematic, rigorous approach is rooted in our knowledge of incorporating deliberate practice of existing skills and knowledge, alongside the addition of new layers of learning.

Our dedication to inclusive practice means that, regardless of their ability, pupils are aided to access learning with the highest possible levels of independence, due to carefully designed tasks. Where necessary, pupils requiring extra help are sensitively supported, with minimal disruption to quality-first teaching. Our ambition is to narrow the gap between different groups of pupils and to ensure that their life-opportunities are equal, irrespective of background or ability.

Speaking and Listening

Spoken language (oracy) and the associated listening skills, underpin the development of reading and writing across the curriculum. All teaching staff, through daily provision and other curriculum opportunities, demonstrate an on-going commitment to the continuous development of pupils' confidence and competence in this area. In addition, pupils from EYFS to Year 6 are offered a variety of opportunities to showcase their oracy skills to a wider range of audiences such as termly class assemblies. Pupils identified as needing support in their oracy development are identified early in EYFS through the use of speech and language link and appropriate support is put in place throughout their school journey including participation in narrative groups and the NELI programme.

Phonics, Reading and Spelling

Reading is a key skill which underpins all else. Throughout the school we foster a love of reading and model positive reading attitudes. For example, each pupil is exposed to hearing a high-quality text read to them on a daily basis in the form of a 'class read'.

Little Wandle is used as a foundation for phonics teaching. Children in the EYFS and Year 1 have daily, discrete, phonics lessons following a pattern of revisit, teach, practise, apply. Children then progress onto the 'No Nonsense' spelling pathway from Year 2. However,

phonics is revisited as necessary through the children's school career and children are reminded of phonics sounds and spelling patterns through the use of sound mats and other resources.

Pupils have access to high-quality early reading books which have been carefully matched to each of the phonic stages within phases 2-5. These books offer a range of engaging topics and include fiction, non-fiction and poetry and introduce children to a wide range of vocabulary. Pupils are asked to read their early reading book five times to encourage prosody and fluency. Once confident in their phonic application, children are then further scaffolded in their reading journey by reading purple to lime book-banded books before becoming a 'free reader' and choosing books from our well-stocked library. In addition to book-banded reading books, each class has a class reading area which contains specially selected titles to promote 'Reading for Pleasure' amongst our pupils. These collections consist of books that are rich in language, written by a wide range of authors. On a weekly basis, each child from Reception to Year 2 has the opportunity to take one of these books home as a 'sharing book' to treat as their own as they share them with family and friends.

The teaching of reading, with a strong focus on enjoyment, is strategically placed to inform and inspire pupils' writing with all pupils across the school taking part in a guided reading session at least once weekly. Again, high-quality texts are carefully chosen and, where appropriate, link to the pupils 'phonic stage'. Using our reading objectives, these guided reading sessions are effectively sequenced to deepen learning term-on-term and year-on-year and build the skills of comprehension, vocabulary, prediction, summarising and inference.

Daily reading/phonics, and a weekly guided reading task, form part of our homework expectation and, where this is not completed, a supportive environment within the school day is provided to accommodate this important practice.

Progress in phonics is tracked throughout EYFS and Key Stage 1 by the Little Wandle assessments and the use of the Phonics Screening Check (PSC). Gaps and weaknesses are identified and support put in place to address these. Reading is tracked throughout the school by the use of guided reading notes, reading objectives and, in Years 2 and 6, standardised tests 3 times a year. Moderation between colleagues and other schools also forms an important part of our assessment procedures.

Writing and Vocabulary

When planning our teaching sequences, exciting texts are chosen and often enhance the topic's learning by providing a cross-curricular stimulus for the delivery and application of English skills and knowledge. Pupils are immersed in a wide range of high-quality literature (both fiction and non-fiction), whilst taking inspiration from Literary Greats, both past and present. This familiarises pupils with a range of authors and encourages exploration of how good authors manipulate their reader through the use of grammar and vocabulary. In

addition, the topic texts incorporate underlying themes that promote the British Values of: Tolerance, Mutual Respect and Democracy.

Teaching sequences are carefully planned following the principles of the 'talk for writing' approach. Sequences are devised in such a way that the individual strands of English all contribute to the written outcome. Spelling and punctuation and grammar skills are taught cumulatively and are designed to facilitate deliberate practice and deepen learning. Each teaching sequence is crafted with meaningful opportunities for pupils to apply these skills within the context of their written work. Relevant aspects of spelling and grammar are incorporated into the success criteria for the written work produced, inciting pupils to exercise these skills with increasing independence and control.

Cumulative vocabulary acquisition from the Early Years is central to all learning. Current research illustrates a clear link between the number of words a child understands (and applies) and their academic and socio-economic success. With this in mind, lessons across all subject areas teach pupils both creative and academic vocabulary and challenge them to decipher the meaning of new words; drawing on their knowledge of morphology and etymology and then to draw on this to make effective vocabulary choices in their own writing.

Editing and redrafting, as well as consideration of audience and purpose, are explicitly taught as integral features of the writing process. This reinforces the understanding that, in the context of real-life, authors undertake this process as a precursor to the publication of their work. Self, peer and teacher assessment all feature within this formative journey. Pupils capitalise wholeheartedly upon the opportunity to showcase their talent using beautiful handwriting and presentation skills, which are also progressively secured. Cursive handwriting is discretely taught from EYFS until they have clear and legible joined handwriting.

Where possible, marking and feedback is provided during lessons, which guide pupils to independently modify and correct their work. Progress is tracked throughout the school by the use of our writing objective sheets. Moderation between colleagues and other schools also forms an important part of our assessment procedures.

Extended Curriculum Opportunities

Hatherleigh celebrates English-related, national events, such as 'World Book Day' and 'National Poetry Week', whereby carefully planned and exciting activities are delivered to enhance English provision, and which further promote a love of reading amongst all groups of pupils. Extra-curricular clubs such as 'physical phonics' and 'drama' are offered.

The school library is regularly used by classes, offering a calm environment in which to enjoy reading and books. This time is planned creatively by teachers to include research, and the chance to share and recommend stories, with the aim of inspiring pupils to read more widely. Pupils from Year 6 take on the role of librarians.

Impact

Through exposure to high-quality literature, language and stimulating experiences, our pupils enjoy writing creatively across all subject areas; for a range of purposes and audiences. Work produced is well organised and considered, regardless of subject; demonstrating depth in learning throughout all strands of English. Across the curriculum, pupils show ambition, confidence and the ability to adapt their approach to a range of different tasks. They consciously select the most appropriate channel through which to express themselves, demonstrating confidence, competence and a strong command of the English language throughout all aspects of speaking and listening, reading and writing. This freedom of expression strengthens their emotional wellbeing and ensures their success within wider society, as they learn to communicate with audiences at all levels. Effective, sequenced teaching of the necessary skills and knowledge enables pupils to become Masters of English, who skilfully interweave the associated skills of proofreading, editing and redrafting and spelling, punctuation and grammar into their work. As they complete the Primary Phase of their education, pupils at Hatherleigh are well-placed and ready to embark on their Secondary school journey. As fluent speakers, readers and writers, our pupils have the ability to acquire and understand the new knowledge that will ensure their success and satisfaction, both now and in the future.