

ENGLISH POLICY

The study of English is essential as by writing and speaking fluently it allows children to communicate their emotions and ideas to others and, through their reading and listening others can communicate with them. Therefore all children are encouraged to enjoy English and become more enthusiastic about all aspects of the subject by developing their skills, knowledge and understanding through practical experiences, which have relevance and purpose in everyday situations. It is important that children develop and celebrate the skills of literacy to become lifelong learners and support them as they continue to grow and develop. They should be able to apply their skills in different situations across the curriculum and in daily life outside school. We believe that the learning and development of English is one of the most fundamental skills any child can learn, and ultimately supports their growth in all areas of their study and enables them to become functioning members of society.

The study of English is split into five key areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Spelling and Grammar, and Handwriting. These five areas are routinely interwoven and each area supports the others.

READING

Reading is a key life-skill which enables children to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. In order to engender this we aim to:

- Ø teach phonic skills and applications when decoding unknown words; and other appropriate skills to support their reading and development of understanding.
- Ø treat each child as an individual recognising and building on his/her language experience.
- Ø provide a meaningful and stimulating reading environment; which relates to the real world; providing opportunities to explore a rich variety of texts, which are both multi-cultural and non-gender-stereotyped and include: fiction and non-fiction; children's own writing; stories, plays, and poems to be read aloud.
- Ø teach reading through a well-structured reading scheme; providing appropriate reading material to extend children's reading skills and knowledge and to develop fluency.
- Ø promote "reading for pleasure" by encouraging an element of choice within the reading materials provided, in order that children should begin to form opinions about their reading and an appreciation of our literary heritage.
- Ø encourage children to use reading as a model for writing i.e. discuss, structure, form, style, vocabulary choices, etc.
- Ø teach children reference skills and how to apply those skills to develop their ability to read and research knowledge from books and ICT sources.
- Ø promote informed liaison between home and school, encouraging parents to share in their child's reading development.

Reading will be taught in a variety of ways including phonic skills; whole class shared and modelled reading; group/guided reading; and individual reading. In our teaching:

- Ø We provide good models of reading aloud to children.
- Ø We make stories, poems and non-fiction texts enjoyable and encourage active listening.
- Ø We have conversations with children about books and encourage them to make critical judgements about the texts they read.
- Ø We listen to children read and keep group and individual records of progress.
- Ø We offer opportunities for children to read aloud to a range of audiences, and celebrate each child's achievement as a reader.
- Ø We actively teach a range of cueing strategies, with particular reference to synthetic phonics, in support of reading development.

Parental Involvement:

- Ø We encourage parental involvement with children's reading development through a Home School communication book.
- Ø Parents are encouraged to work in school on a volunteer basis and have been trained in delivering a good quality, positive reading experience.

WRITING

Writing is a developmental process, and what the child is able to do at each stage will be highly valued and praised. Children will be taught to write in order to be able to communicate meaning to a wide range of audiences; matching the style of their writing to the needs of their audience, the context and purpose of their writing. They need to be able to structure their writing so that it is clear and coherent; and to understand that correct spelling, punctuation and grammar help to make the meaning of their writing clear to the reader. They will be taught to use as wide a vocabulary as possible so that they are able to express their ideas and engage the interest of the reader. We recognise that a child's ability to communicate in writing affects performance in many areas of the curriculum.

- Ø Children will be given opportunities to write in a variety of forms and for a range of audiences, including themselves, being given a meaningful purpose for writing.
- Ø Children will be encouraged to write independently from Year R.
- Ø Children will be helped to understand why it is sometimes necessary to plan and draft writing, and to revise and evaluate it so that it is fit for purpose.
- Ø Children will be taught to use spelling and punctuation correctly in order to make meaning clear.
- Ø Writing skills across the curriculum provide real purposes and audiences for a range of types of writing.
- Ø Children will be encouraged to 'have a go' and all attempts will be valued. Children will be helped by an adult to compose at greater length than they could manage alone. Collaborative writing will be encouraged, sometimes in mixed ability groups.

HANDWRITING

Handwriting is a taught fine motor skill and almost all children should be able to achieve a legible, attractive style of handwriting. The standard of the handwriting and presentation is part of the assessment of the content of a child's writing. Therefore our school places emphasis on the teaching of an appropriate handwriting style.

A child's ability to write comfortably and legibly affects performance in many areas of the curriculum and has an effect on their self-esteem. Children are therefore helped to develop an appropriate handwriting style with which they are comfortable.

The development of gross and fine motor skills will be given particular emphasis in Reception. Children will develop pre-writing skills through emphasis on pattern work using a range of tools and working with different media. From the earliest stages emphasis will be placed on helping children to hold their pencils with a correct grip and on developing correct posture. Writing will be encouraged in the context of structured play with children having opportunities to 'write' in the role play area.

As the children move up through the school joined handwriting script will be taught and practised as part of other subjects, for example asking the children to write a learning intention or date in their neatest script.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Speaking and Listening are essential life skills and support the cognitive, social and linguistic development of the children. Our meaningful, stimulating and challenging curriculum enables children to develop their ability to listen effectively, and communicate clearly and accurately through speech. Speaking and Listening is a vital part of the learning process and the appropriate skills will be taught and put into practice in all curriculum areas.

We provide opportunities for the children to develop important collaborative skills including: turn taking; willingness to listen to others; the ability to negotiate and compromise, and to discuss and debate. They experience a wide and rich range of language as part of their learning, and we encourage them to become confident and competent in spoken language and listening skills.

SPELLING AND GRAMMAR

Spelling is a developmental process: from pre-communicative, pre-phonetic, phonetic, transitional to 'correct'. An understanding of the developmental spelling stage of each child aids teachers in their teaching, and all children's best attempts at spelling will be valued and built upon. Spelling is an important aspect of writing but it does not dominate the marking and assessment. The content of children's writing will be valued despite the 'secretarial' skills of spelling and handwriting.

Spelling is a visual-motor skill, therefore children need to develop visual strategies in order to spell correctly, phonic knowledge alone will be inadequate. Children will be encouraged to look carefully at words, helped to understand how the English spelling system works, and how our history has influenced our spelling. Children need to develop as confident, competent spellers because the ability to spell most words is a key life-skill; enhances their self-esteem and affects performance in other areas of the curriculum.

Similarly the correct use of English Grammar will be developed over time as it gives a conscious control and choice to the use of language. Although concepts will be identified and discussed in isolation, the majority of the teaching will be through integrated learning and refining of work.

In Key Stage 1 children develop their spelling in parallel with their reading through the use of synthetic phonics. This will be taught in mixed age groups, split according to their phonic knowledge, and will be regularly reinforced by good practice in classrooms.

In Key Stage 2 children will follow the National Curriculum Spelling programme to develop their skills.

We want the children to develop as confident users of language, so they will be encouraged to write independently from Reception, attempting as much of a word as they can manage and using grammar which mirrors their spoken ability. Children will be actively discouraged from becoming dependent on the teacher for the spelling of words. They will be taught to use dictionaries and word banks, and spell-checkers on the computer to gain access to correct spellings of words. Children will be taught to look for common letter strings and patterns in words and an interest in words will be fostered. Spelling games will encourage children to look closely at words. Where possible, children will be encouraged to identify their own spelling errors. Grammar will be corrected as appropriate and developed through re-drafting and revision.