

English Policy

Introduction

This document outlines our ethos, principles, aims and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at Sissinghurst Primary School. It gives guidance for the planning, teaching and assessment of English set within the context of the National Curriculum and our own text based approach.

The expectations of teaching and learning are detailed in our Teaching and Learning policy and underpin an enriching, effective and high-quality English education that is broad and balanced, and knowledge rich.

We aim to foster a love of literature through reading and to ensure that interesting texts, providing new and ambitious vocabulary, enhance speaking and listening and writing following the 'Talk for Writing' approach.

Daily, discreet grammar and English lessons provide pupils with the skills necessary to write fluently and accurately across all areas of the curriculum.

Aims

In line with the new National Curriculum for English we aim to ensure that all pupils:

- speak confidently and listen attentively in a wide variety of situations
- develop a love for reading, decoding accurately and developing comprehension skills, becoming fluent readers by the end of Primary School
- write competently for a variety of purposes in a range of genres
- develop fluent and legible handwriting
- benefit from a rich and stimulating language and literature environment

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils should:

- use speaking and listening to explore high-quality texts, and embed themes and genre specific language through oral re-telling, drama and debate
- read for pleasure and with understanding a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, developing an inherent knowledge of grammatical conventions
- write clearly, coherently and imaginatively, adapting style and language to suit purpose and audience
- understand the phonic system and spelling conventions, using these to read and spell accurately
- use and apply knowledge of formal grammatical conventions
- use a range of punctuation appropriate to age and stage, re-reading work to ensure accuracy
- use discussion and debate to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas

Teaching and Learning

Elements of high quality lessons:

- speaking, listening, reading and writing are explicitly modelled
- ‘Talk for Writing’ strategies are used to develop writing content through the three stages of: imitation, invention and innovation. In addition, oral story telling with actions embeds story language and patterns prior to pupils’ written work.
- talking partners are used effectively to develop pupils’ ideas
- active learning opportunities are embraced, including the use of our extensive outside areas
- teachers demonstrate a strong subject knowledge in phonics, grammar and spelling
- prominent displays of rich vocabulary are used by teachers in lessons, and by pupils to promote independent learning
- pupils have access to support with spelling and vocabulary through displays and table resources
- Early Years enjoy quality shared texts, re-tell stories with actions and have a strong emphasis on phonics using ‘Supersonic Phonics’ – systematic, synthetic phonics programme
- Emergent writing is encouraged through role play in Early Years and the local environment provides stimulating purposes for writing

Planning

English is planned, where possible, to link subject areas together. The National Curriculum objectives for each year group are covered throughout the year. Teachers plan sequences of lessons across weeks and terms to enable progress. Texts are carefully chosen to enrich learning and to enhance the curriculum. Formative and summative assessments are used to identify and target areas of need within each class. Stickers with the ‘Learning Objective’, steps to success and key vocabulary are placed in books for each lesson and shared with the children.

Differentiation/Special Educational Needs

Our SEN policy applies to all subject area and should be read alongside the following information:

- Teaching is organised to enable all pupils to access the highest quality learning opportunities
- Tasks are adapted if/as necessary
- Intervention programmes are used to support children who need more support to meet age related expectations
- Children are provided with additional support such as: task boards, word mats, sand timers, writing slopes, pencil grips

Spelling

We follow the National Curriculum requirements for each year group as set out in the English Appendix 1: spelling.

Pupils in EYFS and KS1 are taught phonics daily using ‘Supersonic Phonics’ which is a comprehensive and systematic, synthetic phonics programme. This provides them with the foundation they need to develop knowledge of spelling rules and patterns.

Pupils in KS2 discuss the meanings of words looking at word-roots, suffixes and prefixes in the line with the expectations for each year group. Spellings are set each week to be learnt as part of homework.

Punctuation and Grammar

We follow the National Curriculum requirements for each year group as set out in the English Appendix 2: Vocabulary, Punctuation and Grammar.

Pupils are taught discrete grammar or punctuation lessons to consolidate key areas and this is applied through daily modelled writing and independent writing across the curriculum. Later in KS2 grammar may be an integral part of English lessons.

Reading

Inspiring and establishing a love of reading is at the heart of our philosophy for teaching and learning. Reading underpins the teaching of English and enables pupils to succeed in all areas of the curriculum.

From the beginning in Reception, pupils are taught phonic sounds and high frequency words using a systematic scheme called 'Supersonic Phonics'. They bring home books that are completely phonically decodable and matched carefully to pupils' learning. Reading books are progressive and designed to introduce new vocabulary, to build fluency and to gradually increase the complexity of sentence structure. Pupils should be encouraged to re-read sentences when beginning to read: an adult can model reading a sentence fluently with the pupil then re-reading fluently.

In Reception, pupils read individually to teachers, teaching assistants and adult helpers. As fluency grows, pupils read in small groups with an adult who supports discussion and develops comprehension skills. In KS2 many pupils will follow Accelerated Reader: they read a text then answer a few questions based on the text in the style of a quiz. This programme will automatically set and adjust levels as pupils make progress, and develops core comprehension skills in a highly motivating way.

Teachers model and teach specific reading skills and develop comprehension skills in reading sessions and within lessons across the curriculum.

Reading progress is monitored and tracked regularly. Teachers discuss progress with pupils in school and with parents and pupils at our Child Learning Review.

We have a well-stocked library with a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books which are regularly updated in KS1 and KS2. Children can also enjoy dedicated reading areas in school where they can relax and enjoy books with teaching assistants and/or adult helpers.

Our classroom reading areas are designed to encourage children to read for pleasure, selecting and caring for books in a relaxing environment.

Assessment

Phonics

Children take the Phonics Screening Test towards the end of Year 1. Children who do not pass follow a structured programme in Year 2 and re-take the screening at the end of Year 2.

Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and Punctuation tests are used to track progress and pupils take part in Statutory End of Key Stage assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Reading

In Reception and Year 1, assessment is carried out by teachers and is based upon observations and questioning.

Pupils take part in the phonic screening test at the end of Year 1.

Formal statutory assessments will be administered at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, in Year 2 and Year 6, in line with the National Guidelines to assess attainment in Reading. This will be a comprehension test based on fiction and non-fiction texts with questions to answer.

Writing

The Talk for Writing approach enables children to read and write independently for a variety of audiences and purposes within different subjects. A key feature is that children internalise the language structures and vocabulary needed to write through 'talking the text', as well as close reading. The approach moves from dependence towards independence, with the teacher using shared and guided teaching to develop the ability in children to write creatively and powerfully. Teachers use this approach to introduce new genres.

In order to track in year progress effectively in English, teachers regularly give verbal feedback about work and will sometimes write a comment where this supports progress. Pupils are expected to read and edit work in KS1 and to draft and re-draft work in KS2. The progress of all pupils is carefully monitored, shared with the Senior Leadership team and discussed in pupil progress meetings.

Reporting

Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress through Child Learning Reviews where targets are shared. In addition, a written report is sent home at the end of each academic year.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

All pupils will have equality of opportunity to reach their full potential across the curriculum regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, ability or physical disability. Our Equal Opportunities Policy and Racial Equality Policy apply to all subject areas. Where appropriate, teaching materials, and individual group activities should reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of society. Stereotyping, in terms of ethnicity, race and gender is not permitted, and pupils' progress is monitored closely, ensuring that no child is disadvantaged. Equally, a child's religious beliefs and cultural differences should always be respected. See our Equal Opportunities policy for further details.