

# English Policy



At Sixpenny Handley First School and Nursery, we believe that language and literacy are fundamental life-skills which underpin the overall development of a child and their ability to access *all* aspects of the wider curriculum. We strive to deliver quality first teaching of reading, writing and speaking and listening skills, to enable children to become confident and successful in their English.

## **Aims and Objectives**

By the end of Year Four, we want all pupils to be confident in the following areas:

### **Speaking and Listening:**

- Listening and responding appropriately to others;
- Speaking audibly and clearly with a growing command of standard English;
- Having a curiosity for words and their meanings, and a growing spoken vocabulary;
- Actively participating in discussions, presentations, role-plays and performances.

### **Reading:**

- Being adept in both their ability to recognise the words on the page but also to understand their meaning within the context of that particular text.
- Reading both fiction and non-fiction texts with confidence, fluency and understanding;
- Being able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their mistakes;
- Understanding and using their Phonic and Spelling systems to help them read with increasing accuracy;
- Having the range of technical vocabulary that allows them to engage in discussions about their reading, as well as the creative vocabulary that allows them to retell a story using their own words;
- Being interested in books, reading with pleasure and explaining their preferences.

Over the years at our school, the children will move through the colour-banded reading stages, before becoming a 'free reader' once they have consistently demonstrated the criteria above. Each colour band contains a progressive range of books from different schemes, including: Oxford Reading Tree (inFact, Story Sparks, Fireflies, Traditional Tales, Snapdragons, Glow Worms, TreeTops, Project X) Pearson (Rigby Star Rockets and Navigators) and Heinemann (Story Worlds). These are used as individual readers for the children to take home, whilst additional sets of texts are used in Guided Reading sessions. Texts are closely matched to each child's reading skills to ensure access to appropriate level reading experiences.

### **Writing:**

- Writing with confidence, fluency and understanding, demonstrating their secure knowledge of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar rules;
- Understanding and using their Phonic and Spelling systems to spell words with increasing accuracy;
- Using cursive handwriting that is fluent and legible;

- Recognising and understanding how to write in a range of genres of fiction, non-fiction and poetry;
- Being able to plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing;
- Having the range of technical vocabulary that allows them to engage in discussions about their writing;
- Recognising themselves as writers, developing their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.

During EYFS and KS1, Phonics is effectively taught using the 'Read, Write, Inc' scheme of work and this is followed by the accompanying Spelling scheme in Years Two to Four (see 'Read, Write, Inc' policy). English lessons are taught in line with the guidance in the National Curriculum (2014), inspired by the quality texts we have selected for each class. The Pen-Pals Handwriting Scheme is used to ensure all children form their letters correctly and progressively learn to use the correct joins.

### **Curriculum Organisation by Year Group**

**Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):** We believe that communication and language, with opportunities to explore reading and writing, underpin a child's future learning. The practice in the EYFS follows the statutory framework documents to support children in meeting their Early Learning Goals. In Early Years, the daily routine will include stimulating and multi-sensory activities that are both planned and child-initiated. These include:

- A wealth of opportunities to develop and experience speaking and listening including helicopter stories;
- Experiences that develop gross and fine motor skills through play and handwriting activities;
- Sharing and enjoying a range of rhymes, songs, stories and books including the selected 'Favourite Five' for each half term;
- Immersion in a print rich environment with opportunities for oral language and written communication, e.g. differentiated phonic-based activities;
- Focus activities that teach children early communication language and literacy skills;
- Reading group activities;
- Big book activities with shared reading and/or writing foci.

**Key Stage One (KS1):** At the beginning of Year 1, the planned work for the children will reflect the style of the EYFS and allow for a smooth transition into KS1.

The teaching of English in KS1 will include:

- Explicitly taught and planned lessons following the guidance of the National Curriculum or following the 'Read, Write, Inc' scheme;
- Speaking and listening activities, e.g. role play, hot seating and other drama activities, as well as group and talking partner opportunities, in order to prepare pupils for the writing process.
- Explicit, daily teaching of systematic phonics for developing reading and spelling following the 'Read, Write, Inc' programme;

- Sentence level work led by quality texts to develop grammatical awareness and punctuation skills;
- Text level work using a range of genres to develop comprehension skills with groups and on a 1:1 basis;
- Explicit handwriting sessions taught and modeled using the PenPals scheme;
- Immersion in a print rich environment that promotes a reading culture and develops children's oral and written communication.
- Creative writing opportunities through weekly 'Let's Write' lessons.

**Key Stage Two (KS2):** At the beginning of Year 3, the teacher assessments at the end of KS1 will enable the planned work to follow a smooth transition.

The teaching of English in KS2 will include:

- Explicitly taught and planned sessions following the guidance of the National Curriculum;
- Explicit teaching of spelling strategies and rules using the Read, Write, Inc spellings programme and Spelling Frame resources;
- Sentence level work led by quality texts to develop grammatical awareness and punctuation skills;
- Text level work involving reading a range of genres in order to develop comprehension skills and support writing;
- Exposure to a range of text types, which are modelled by the teacher first during shared writing sessions;
- Explicit handwriting sessions taught and modelled using the Pen-Pals scheme;
- Immersion in a print rich environment that promotes a reading culture and supports children in their development of reading and writing, and speaking and listening skills.

### **Phonics:**

Phonics is taught explicitly in EYFS and KS1 using the 'Read, Write, Inc' scheme of work. This is a powerful teaching tool, which ensures that young children will be well-equipped to read and spell words with fluency and confidence, with the additional aim of all children passing their Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year One.

-Please see the 'Read, Write, Inc' policy for more information

### **Spelling:**

From Year Two to Year Four, the children build on what they have learned during their 'Read Write Inc' Phonics sessions, through the subsequent programme for Spelling. This consists of 15 minute lessons that teach new spelling rules and patterns through engaging and interactive space-themed lessons. These are designed to help children meet the curriculum expectations by the end of each academic year.

In addition to this, each child has regular spellings to learn in school and at home through the use of 'Spelling Frame'. These are words which match the spelling rule they are learning with additional common exception words from the year group lists.

### **Punctuation and Grammar:**

At our school, we recognise that punctuation and Grammar are building blocks for written communication. New skills are introduced through stand-alone English lessons and then opportunities for further exploration, repetition and rehearsal are incorporated into future

lessons. The children are encouraged to acquire these new skills through interactive, engaging games and activities; listening and talking with partners and in groups; through absorbing language from the books they enjoy; and through trying different ways of putting words together to make sentences, slowly building up an understanding of what is right and what doesn't quite make sense. They are encouraged to use dictionaries and thesauruses to build their vocabulary and check their work for accuracy, as well as 'magpie-ing' ideas from their peers or texts being read in class. A high standard of spoken and written English is always encouraged across the school and corrections are carefully and sensitively modelled by the adults in class, when errors are made.

### **Reading:**

At Sixpenny Handley First School and Nursery, we believe in promoting a love of reading for *all* children and achieve this in a variety of ways, including: creating special book areas and displays in all classrooms; holding 'book events' such as themed days for World Book Day and sponsored reads; holding bi-annual book fairs; having and welcoming school library in the entrance of the school for everyone to enjoy; hosting and attending author visits; and generally raising the profile of reading through a print rich environment. Each theme has a carefully selected range of high quality texts – 'Our Favourite 5' to inspire a love of reading and to ensure exposure to a range of genres.

In EYFS and Year 1 the children take home 3 books:

- A Read Write Inc book
- A book match to their phonics teaching
- A library book for pleasure to be shared at home

In Year 2 – Year 4 the children will take home 2 books:

- A reading book matched to reading skills
- A library book for pleasure

### **Reading is taught through:**

#### ***1. Whole class reading that develops listening skills, a love of story and reading for pleasure.***

This is teacher led reading with children listening and responding to questions, predictions and vocabulary choices, appropriate to the age and level of the children. In all year groups this happens on a daily basis.

#### ***2. Shared reading that immerses children in the pattern of story and features of text types.***

This happens in English sessions when introducing a text and prior to writing. The teacher models as an expert reader and draws out the key elements of the content.

#### ***3. Guided reading that targets children's reading skills.***

Guided reading takes place in small ability groups with teacher input. Sets of guided reading books are book banded and stored together. Plans are completed for each reading session based on the objectives for each group and assessments are made using grids. Each child in the school has a guided reading session with their teacher once a week and parents/carers are informed of their child's strengths and weaknesses in that area via the home-school reading record.

#### ***4. Independent reading in school and at home.***

Individual reading books are sent home with a reading record for communication with parents. Books are levelled and book banded and are stored in a clear and organised way in the library and classrooms so children are able to access them easily.

### **5. The reading environment.**

The print rich environment encourages children to interact with displays, to follow instructions and signs, promoting functional language. Within the classroom the reading area is attractive and inviting, books are clearly accessible. Themed displays are encouraged along with opportunities to bring in books from home. Books are also displayed and promoted around the classroom and the whole learning environment of the school. Classes also visit the library once a week and children are able to select books that meet their interests.

### **Writing:**

We believe that writing should be a creative/developmental process both at a functional and an imaginative level. All attempts at writing are valued and we know that all children have potential to be successful writers. The compositional and transcriptional skills are taught alongside the creative aspects. Immersion in reading, talk and preparation for writing is essential to the writing development process. We are also in contact with the middle school to ensure new initiatives are supported in order to aid transition and ensure that our children are equipped and prepared for their next stages of learning.

### **Writing is taught through:**

#### **1. Shared writing that is modelled by the teacher as the expert writer with contributions from the children.**

This is teacher-led writing with children watching and contributing ideas. Shared writing is not exclusive to English lessons and can be taught within other subjects. The emphasis may be on the generation of ideas, grammatical awareness, spelling and phonics, compositional, transcriptional, presentational and text level skills or other key strategies needed in writing. Not all of these can be modelled in one session, but the teacher as the expert writer leads the cumulative writing process.

#### **2. Opportunities for developmental writing.**

In EYFS, children should experience writing in a range of settings and opportunities for developmental writing should be available through all areas of learning and throughout the learning environment. Children's own attempts at early writing should be celebrated and promoted, alongside the direct teaching of the key skills that will enable the children to progress through the stages of writing development.

#### **3. Independent writing.**

Throughout the school, children need opportunities to develop their confidence and practice their writing skills. All writing activities should have a quality purpose, such as through book making, publication or presentation to another audience. Writing is modelled and supported from immersion to quality writing. Independent writing is supported through the use of dictionaries, word banks, writing frames or plans and phonics displays and is differentiated for the range of ability groups in each class. In Year One, children are given the opportunity to apply their new skills through creative 'Let's Write' lessons.

### **Handwriting:**

Handwriting and letter formation is explicitly taught throughout the school using the Pen-Pals scheme of work. The correct way of forming letters and subsequent joining is modelled by the teacher and patterns of letters are taught in a clear sequence.

### **Speaking and listening:**

We believe that a child's speaking and listening skills are fundamental to all aspects of their development and that confidence in these areas will not only help them to progress in English, but the wider curriculum also. These crucial skills are directly taught, modelled and sensitively encouraged in learning partners, small groups and whole class situations.

### **Assessment:**

At Sixpenny Handley First School and Nursery, we use a range of assessment tools. In KS2, formal assessments take place in the first and final terms of the year to assess a child's progress in their reading, spelling and punctuation and grammar. In Year Four, these assessments are externally moderated and this information is then passed onto the middle schools as part of the transition process. In Year 2, children take their SATS in the summer term and are tested on their Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar skills, as well as their reading ability. These then provide each child with a standardised score which can be used to place children into a band: Pre-Key Stage, Working Below Expected Standard, Expected Standard or Exceeding. Year One are regularly assessed on their Phonics Skills to ensure that they are on track to pass the Screening Check which takes place in the Summer Term and appropriate interventions are put in place to ensure that all children have the best possible chance of meeting the expected standard.

### **Accompanying Policies:**

- Read Write Inc: The Teaching of Reading, Writing and Phonics
- Assessment and Monitoring
- Marking and Feedback

### ***Policy written by Alex Hill (English Subject Leader)***

#### **Article 3**

*All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.*

#### **Article 28**

*Children have a right to an education.*