

Woodlands Primary School

English Policy



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Date Written	January 2018
Date for Review	January 2021
Signed – Headteacher	

This policy has been impact assessed by Michelle Hicks in order to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on race, gender or disability equality.

Aims and Objectives

At Woodlands Primary School we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills. Through the English curriculum, we will help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language, equipping them with the skills to become life-long learners and enthusiastic readers. Literacy is central to the intellectual, emotional and social development of young people; as such it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

The aims of English are

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their audience;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard, and respond appropriately;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to enable children to develop the ability to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- to enable children to explore and evaluate their own and others' thoughts, feelings and beliefs, through a range of drama activities;
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers, exercising their own love of reading, through immersion in challenging texts and discussions;
- to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.

Teaching and Learning Style

At Woodlands Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding of English. English is taught daily through a variety of approaches, including whole class, group work, research and individual tasks. Children have the opportunity to experience a wide variety of texts and use a range of resources to support their learning. Children use digital literacy in English lessons where it enhances their learning, such as drafting their work and using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Children are encouraged to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

There are children of differing ability in all classes at Woodlands Primary School. We recognise this fact and provide appropriate learning opportunities for all

children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. During lessons, a range of strategies are used to ensure appropriate levelled learning takes place. We use classroom assistants to support some children. However, a few children follow their own highly structured literacy programme, delivered by trained adults throughout the week.

English Curriculum Planning

The National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning. Curriculum planning takes place in two phases: a long-term overview across the year and detailed weekly plans.

The yearly overview defines the skills and genres taught to pupils in that specific academic year. The English subject team are responsible for reviewing these plans to ensure balance and progression.

Each year group completes a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and provides details of the content and structure of the lesson. The class teacher adapts these as required for their class, and where appropriate for specific individuals within their class.

Phonics

Key Stage 1 – Phonics is taught systematically following the Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics programme.

Reception concentrate on the Set 1 sounds. Year 1 continue to set 2 and set 3 sounds. Sounds are constantly reviewed and revisited.

Children in Year 2 who have not reached the required standard in the Year 1 phonics test will be taught in small focus groups and will rehearse sounds taught in Year 1. These children will be retested at the end of Year 2. Other children in Year 2 will also review all the complex speed sounds and then start the RWI spelling programme.

In Key Stage 1 RWI reading books will be used to support phonics.

Reading

Reading is promoted as an enjoyable activity and a life skill throughout the school. Our aims are to enable children to

- develop positive attitudes towards reading so that it is a pleasurable and meaningful activity;
- use reading skills as an integral part of learning throughout the curriculum;
- read and respond to a variety of texts whilst gaining increased level of fluency, accuracy, independence and understanding;
- develop different strategies for approaching reading, and be able to orchestrate the full range of strategies.

In order for children to access the rich range of literature available, the children are taught to read by

- listening to texts that are read to them on a regular basis in school. Parents are also encouraged to read to their children at home.
- identifying letters and words in the environment;
- learning to recognise digraphs both in isolation and in real and 'psuedo' words;
- reading books with adults both at school and at home;
- answering comprehension questions about a text they have listened to or read themselves;
- identifying new vocabulary and using dictionaries to help them discover its meaning;
- practising and extending reading across the curriculum.

Children have a wealth of reading opportunities in the course of the school day, in which to develop and extend their skills, confidence and interest. These include

- guided reading
- regular independent reading
- hearing books read aloud on a daily basis
- selecting their own choice of texts
- reading in other subjects across the curriculum
- reading with an adult

Pupils select texts under the guidance of the teacher or Teaching Assistant, for independent and home/school reading. Teachers monitor independent reading and discuss progress with individual pupils on a regular basis. Where pupils are working below age appropriate objectives they will be identified for intervention programmes.

All teachers are responsible for providing a stimulating reading environment, promoting book ownership and recommending books to pupils. Reading is promoted as an enjoyable and enriching experience to both children and parents via a number of events planned over the school year. These include a 'Read-In' and engaging authors to speak to the children, run work-shops and sign books.

Home / School Reading

Reading at home is regarded as a key element of reading development. Parents are encouraged to hear their children read regularly and respond to their child's reading through Reading Record Books/ Homework Diaries.

Reading assessment

Formal reading assessments are undertaken in the spring and summer terms in Years 2 – 6 (inclusive), and in the summer term only in Year 1, so that progress in reading may be tracked during the year, although assessments are also informed by the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the individual child's decoding and comprehension strategies. Typically, this would be done via

regular Guided Reading lessons and discussions with the child about their reading.

Additionally, in Key Stage One, children's reading is assessed on a weekly basis when they read with an adult. Their progress is tracked using our whole school tracking system (reading record sheets appropriate for the children's stage and Target Tracker), Coloured reading book bands are used to help children identify texts which are appropriate to their reading level. Once a child reads confidently at a particular level and can answer a variety of comprehension questions they are moved to the next level.

Children are taught to read using a phonics based approach. This starts in EYFS and continues throughout the school. In Year 1, children take the national phonics screening assessment. If children do not reach the required standard in the screening they attend intervention groups in Year 2 to ensure that they have targeted phonics teaching.

Speaking and Listening

Our aims are to enable the children to

- leave our school with the ability and confidence to communicate clearly and effectively to a range of audiences;
- express themselves – their thoughts, feelings and understanding – effectively;
- be attentive listeners and respond appropriately by asking questions and evaluating what they have heard;
- listen and talk effectively as a member of a group, observing the conventions of discussions, encouraging others and building on others' ideas.

In order to promote high quality speaking and listening, teachers create situations which allow the modelling of dialogue, listening, values and participation.

Through all curriculum subjects, children will have a wide variety of opportunities, to develop and extend their confidence and competencies. These include

- speaking to a variety of audiences
- listening in a variety of situations
- participating in group discussions
- partner talk
- drama activities
- theatre activities (productions)

Writing

In both key stages, children explore fiction and non-fiction and a wide variety of writing texts: narrative, diary, poetry, information and explanatory, instruction and persuasion. Writing skills are taught in dedicated lessons every day, as well as being reinforced in all other curriculum subjects. Writing is taught using a variety of rich texts, with which to engage children's interest and to develop their spoken and written vocabulary. Teachers use the Talk for Writing approach, enabling pupils to gain confidence and fluency in oral retelling and expression, and teaching them to articulate their thoughts and ideas before writing them down.

Wherever possible, teachers create opportunities for pupils to write for a specific purpose: one which will engage their interest and stimulate their imagination and ideas for writing.

Editing skills are introduced in Key Stage One and are developed and modelled by teachers across Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. All children are taught to edit their own and their peers' writing as an integral part of the writing process.

Writing assessment

The learning intention of each lesson focuses on the key skills children need to develop in order to become fluent and expressive writers. These skills are assessed regularly by teachers, and this assessment informs the planning of lessons.

Teachers use "cold writes" and "hot writes" to assess progress within a unit of writing. Our regular writing assessments use levelled objectives to assess pupils' writing and these levels are recorded to track progress. Children's progress in writing is recorded and tracked on Target Tracker.

Regular moderation is undertaken within school and with other schools. This ensures a consistency of levelled work across the school and between local schools. A child's level is determined over a number of pieces of writing across a range of genres to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum form the basis of assessment.

Handwriting

Children are encouraged to write in the fully cursive style as soon as they enter Woodlands Primary School. Handwriting practice takes place daily in Key Stage One and at least weekly in Key Stage Two.

Spellings

Key Stage One: Spellings are taught systematically, concentrating on the Year group common exception words. Year 2 will start the RWI spelling programme when all Year 2 common exception words have been taught. In Year 2 spelling homework will be sent home each week, based on the spellings taught that week.

Key Stage Two: Spellings are taught systematically through a minimum of 4 dedicated lessons weekly, in ability groupings, across each year group. However, spellings are also taught and discussed as they arise in specific lessons or when identified as a class need. Children are routinely asked to practise words spelt in error in their written work.

In Term 6, children in Years 2 to 6, are assessed using the GL Single Word Spelling Test, which is age appropriate. The results are recorded and used to track children's progress.

The statutory list of words (from the new curriculum) that the children should learn has been separated into year group lists. These words are incorporated into the spellings sent home for the children to practise and learn.

Homework

Key Stage One:

Year One have daily reading, weekly spelling, and termly speaking and listening to prepare. Year Two have daily reading, weekly spelling, termly speaking and listening to prepare, and a weekly task (usually Maths or English). Both Year One and Two have phonics tasks at certain times of the year.

Key Stage Two:

Children are set weekly homework (including spellings) in order to strengthen their learning. Occasionally homework will be given over a two week period, where the children research a topic in week one and present the information in week two.

Assessment and recording

Teachers assess children's work in English continually. The daily assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson allow them to adjust their teaching and planning for subsequent lessons. Termly assessment via Target Tracker allows Year Group Leaders and the Senior Management Team to track progress and attainment in all of the subjects covered in the English policy.

Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked and applied to every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

Mathematics:

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during lessons and they communicate clearly through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

Digital Literacy:

The use of computing enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use digital literacy as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the Internet when researching a topic and use a variety of software formats to present their work. Children use the planning and proofing tools available on the computer when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use digital literacy as a resource for learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions raised in a variety of texts and experiences. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children of differing abilities and backgrounds to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children research and debate topical issues and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

Teaching English to children with special educational needs and disabilities

At Woodlands Primary School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. All staff provide help with communication and literacy through

- using texts that children can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using digital literacy and other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative means of communication (such as communication in print);
- using translators and amanuenses.

EAL (English as an Additional Language)

EAL learners are assessed on entry to the school. If their need is deemed sufficient, they are given the opportunity to engage in 1:1 or small group sessions with a member of staff who has specific training in this area. Children who appear to be fluent in English will continue to be monitored closely to ensure they are accessing increasingly complex curriculum material and subtle nuances of meaning.

Resources

Resources to support the teaching of English are regularly reviewed and refreshed. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate literacy resources. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computer and other technological equipment. The library contains books to support children's individual research, as well as fiction and poetry.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English team. The English Leader gives the head teacher an annual summary report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and indicates areas for further improvement.