

NORTHCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

Introduction

At Northcote Primary School, we strive for excellence in English achievement throughout the school. We aim to develop children's abilities within a cross-curricular programme of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. Across all classes, pupils are given opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and use of spoken and written English, within a broad and balanced curriculum. There are lots of opportunities for children to consolidate and reinforce taught English skills and to apply them in a range of contexts.

Regular reports are made to the governors on the progress of our English provision. We have a reading Governor, who works closely with the English team to monitor the progress of English in the school.

Aims

- To teach our children how to read and write with fluency, understanding and confidence, developing a range of independent strategies to take responsibility for their own learning
- Be encouraged to develop a love of reading and to read for enjoyment, through our 'learning to read, reading to learn' continuum
- Develop our children's ever-growing vocabulary, through an interest in words and their meanings
- Experience a range of text types and genres, across a range of subjects, to develop understanding
- Learn to write in a variety of styles and be able to apply characteristic features of texts to their own writing
- Develop a technical vocabulary with understanding of grammatical terminology
- Learn how to apply grammatical terminology in their own writing
- Have the opportunity to write for purpose and pleasure

ORGANISATION OF ENGLISH

Speaking and Listening

The development of good Speaking and Listening skills is seen as key to developing good general English skills. As such, children are explicitly taught

how to be good speakers and good listeners as a discrete aspect of English and also across the full English Curriculum, the full academic curriculum and the wider curriculum.

EYFS organisation

- Planning is completed each week from the children's interests and always includes communication and language skills, reading and writing.
 - EYFS use the statutory Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception to measure attainment in English. We use the non-statutory development matters to guide the children in their learning throughout their time in Nursery and Reception.
 - We teach all children at the age band they are working within ensuring that children are both supported and challenged.
 - The continuous provision, both indoors and outdoors, ensures that children have access to high quality provision in order to further support their learning and development in English. Enhancements are added in as appropriate.
 - Nursery children's emergent writing is added to displays and also to their learning journeys. Reception children have a writing book that contains writing that is both child initiated and also adult led. This is moderated at the end of the year in order to assess the child's writing skills.
 - Children in Nursery access books independently and also with adults. We also share a home time story each day. Children/families can also take home books to read that are freely available in the cloakroom.
 - In reception children take home a reading book, at a level that is appropriate to share at home, they read and write in groups and 1:1 with adult support and independently.
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- Children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The children have the opportunity to talk and communicate in an increasing range of situations and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and English skills.
 - English is planned on a weekly basis and assessed using the criteria from the Early Learning Goals.
 - English is taught both as a discrete subject and within the whole Early Years Curriculum to give children opportunities to use their English skills in real life situations.
 - In addition to the English teaching, there are also daily systematic synthetic phonics sessions using the Local Authority recommended 'Letters and Sounds' framework.

Writing - KS1 (Years 1 and 2) and KS2 (Years 3-6)

- Planning is based on the National Curriculum and Liverpool Council Plans and coverage is monitored by the English Lead
- An overview of each year group's topics are available on the website
- WALTs in children's books outline the learning for each lesson and are referred back to in the children's AFL
- At the end of a unit, each child completes an 'extended write' in a separate book, to demonstrate their understanding of the skills taught
- There are a wide range of books available in each class, to promote reading for pleasure
- Each class hosts a 'reading pod' where children can access a range of books, in a calm, comfy environment
- All children are assessed termly for their reading and then given a book from the correlating book band, to support reading at home
- When children move up a book band, they are given a certificate in their Key Stage assembly (held weekly) to recognise their hard work
- Each class has a 'reading champion' who attend meetings each half term with the Reading coordinator to discuss new reading ideas and complete book reviews
- There has been a GPS coverage document devised to ensure coverage across Year groups by the English lead. A 'Basic skills' style document has also been produced to support children with the practice of the skills taught.
- Teaching and learning is differentiated to best match the needs of the class (or set) and the individuals within it; within the context of the aspect of English that is being taught.

Marking

All written work is marked by class teachers using a green pen. CARE (Check and Respond Everyone) comments are made by teachers and responded to by children using red pen. Marking ladders are used by children in their extended write books to assess their own work and then used by teachers in their marking. GPS is self/peer marked.

Writing Ambassadors (KS1 and KS2)

Our writing ambassadors are chosen by teachers so there is a representation of all sub-groups in our school. They meet regularly with Miss Manley and our English Governor to review areas of the curriculum and have their say in developing teaching and learning at Northcote.

APPROACHES TO READING

Shared reading (Years 1-6)

All children are given the opportunity to access an age-related text, as part of a shared reading session. In these sessions, children are encouraged to: predict; highlight unknown vocabulary; explore the meaning of unknown vocabulary; visualise; devise and answer questions and are encouraged to compare and contrast different texts. Skills are labelled and dated in shared reading books and text types are listed in the front of books, to show coverage.

Guided reading

Guided reading is seen as a key area in which children develop a love of reading. Throughout the phases, small groups of roughly six children (less in foundation stage) are introduced to a lively range of texts specifically chosen for their needs and ability.

Within a typical week, every child in EYFS reads 1:1 with an adult in the room twice per week, in KS1/2 children working below ARE (Age Related Expectations) participate in a timetabled guided reading session, allowing the teacher to assess progress of individuals, identifying strengths and areas for development. During each session, children read and respond to pre-planned questions in an individual/group discussion.

Reading for pleasure

At Northcote, we are committed to promoting Reading for Pleasure across the curriculum and providing all children with daily opportunities to develop their love of literature. Each classroom has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts available for the children select from. Typically, children will read independently during registration times. We now have an outdoor 'Reading bus' which promotes reading for pleasure for children across the school.

In the Foundation Stage, children can select books at any time throughout the day. In addition, they will listen to stories daily as a class or in smaller groups, sometimes in audio format, and be encouraged to respond.

Class novels are used in KS2 as a way of sharing and modelling the reading of longer fiction texts amongst a large group. Although class novels may form part of specific English planning, they are often read at other times of the day when opportunities can be found in the timetable.

Commented [MW1]: Are we certain that all classes do this?

Reading Champions

To further promote reading for pleasure, each class has an allocated Reading Champion who is responsible for reviewing ability and interest appropriate texts in class. They recommend texts to their peers and parents, which helps to promote reading for pleasure both inside and outside school. They are also responsible for sharing their views and the views of their peers at regular Reading Champion meetings and taking part in the preparation and promotion of events in our Reading for Pleasure Calendar.

Wider Reading opportunities (including parental involvement)

In addition to texts used in English lessons and independent reading, we are also committed to providing our pupils with regular opportunities to engage with new or unfamiliar authors/texts.

We have an extensive Reading for Pleasure Calendar which includes events such as regular author visits and workshops, outings to Reading based facilities such as Central Library and Calderstones' Story Barn, reading celebrations linked to national events such as National Story Telling Week, World Book Day, World Book Night, Chatterbooks sessions (for EYFS, Key Stage 1 and 2) and Build-a-Bridge sessions (for EYFS).

Resources

Phonics

From Reception through to Y2, Letters and Sounds is taught in 15-20 minute blocks outside of the English lesson, typically 5 times per week. In EYFS and KS1 children are divided into groups that represent the stages that they are working at. LSAs are often used to support a group. Children are assessed at the end of each phase, and records are kept to show children's progression through the phases.

In Reception, Jolly Phonics is also introduced to support Letters and Sounds. This provides a kinaesthetic and auditory stimulus for developing phonic awareness.

Children who have not completed all phases of Letters and Sounds by the end of KS1 continue to develop their phonic skills in Y3. Beyond Y3, individuals are

supported further as required, up to the end of KS2. Pupils identified with IEPs receive support individually or in small groups through the LSAs.

Resources

Book Bands - All home reading books from Reception to Y6 are organised by book bands, giving children a clear framework to choose relevant texts and set targets to improve. Guided reading books throughout the school relate to the same colour-coded book bands, providing a clear and consistent approach, understood by children, teachers and parents. Nursery children select books of their choice from a wide range of texts.

Use of LSAs and other adults - Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) regularly monitor the progress of children through the book bands in two ways:

- checking home reading records
- carrying out PM Benchmark assessments

A number of other adult helpers regularly offer their time to support the reading of individual children with Special Educational Needs, throughout the school.

Home Reading

It is vital that children engage in reading with an adult at home on a regular basis. Children take a reading book and reading record home, and are expected to read for a minimum of four times a week. Parents sign the card and are encouraged to comment on their child's progress. Home reading records are monitored by the class teacher and/or LSA to ensure children maintain their progress.

Children have access to the school library, where they can select a book to read in parallel with the school home reading scheme. Selection and return of these books is monitored by class teachers and LSAs.

APPROACHES TO WRITING

Phonics and spelling

Throughout the school, the development of spelling is addressed both in class and at home.

Nursery children take home activities to support Letters and Sounds phase 1. Reception children take 'flash cards' home to support reading and phoneme blending and all reading books are phonetically decodable.

In KS1 differentiated spelling lists are given to the children to learn at home and are tested weekly in class. Spelling lists are set half-termly using the national curriculum spelling list, and are given to the children to refer to in class as well as at home. They are also published on the school's website within the relevant class page.

Spelling tasks are often carried out during guided reading time. As with handwriting, care with spelling must be maintained in all areas of the curriculum.

Emergent writing (EYFS)

All children are encouraged to develop writing skills through mark-making in a variety of media including paint, shaving foam, sand, markers on balloons etc. Role-play supports early writing by giving children reasons for writing e.g. making signs, shopping lists, making greetings cards, letters to characters from stories etc.

Outdoor provision gives children experience of mark-making with water, chalkboards and paints on a larger scale.

These strategies continue throughout KS1 for those children with SEN who continue to require support.

Shared Writing (Nursery and Reception)

In Nursery and Reception, shared writing is a key method for developing writing skills. As with Shared Reading, this allows teachers to model good practice in writing, explaining their thoughts and ideas as they write. Examples include book-making about class trips, creating information book about farm animals and sharing weekly news.

This practice is continued throughout KS1 and KS2 so that children have experience of watching a skilled practitioner construct orderly, imaginative writing whilst at the same time having the opportunity of contributing their own ideas. Consequently, children feel more confident to write independently.

Guided Writing/Independent Writing (Reception)

In Reception, guided writing takes place on a regular basis from the Spring Term onwards, or before if the child is ready. During these sessions, ideas are shared and support is given in writing about the children's lives, interests,

thoughts and ideas. Writing resources are readily available as and when children want to engage in independent writing in the Foundation Stage.

In KS1, guided writing sessions take place alongside guided reading. Cross-curricular links are already used as a vehicle to enhance learning during these sessions. For example, children complete chronological reports, diary entries, letters, recounts etc. during the Victorian unit.

In KS2, short independent writing tasks are undertaken in a range of cross-curricular topics, as well as within English lessons. This is seen as an important way of developing children's diverse and creative use of language in a variety of genres, across a range of subject areas.

Extended writing

Children from Y1 to Y6 participate in a weekly extended writing session known as 'Extended writing', which is completed in a separate book. In these sessions, the task is explained and the working wall may be referred to, as part of the planning stage. (In some cases, where a unit is spread across two weeks, the write will be completed at the end of the unit, rather than weekly). The coverage of a range of genres in these sessions allows teachers to accurately assess children's writing and plan for specific targets. WILFs (What I'm Looking For) are used by teachers and pupils to support this process.

GPS

GPS is now taught from Year 1 to Year 6. In Key Stage 2, all children have a separate GPS skills book, where their GPS work is recorded. Children should complete GPS sessions daily, usually after the afternoon register. In these sessions they are taught about different word classes, sentence structures (inclusive of the Alan Peat sentences taught in KS2) and also how to use a range of punctuation correctly. At the end of the main task, work is peer marked and changes are made in red pen. There is a GPS coverage document to ensure coverage and progress through and across year groups.

ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

Progress in English is assessed in a number of ways, and at different times during the school year:

Assessments

- In the Early Years, children are assessed as working at the emerging, expected or exceeding level each half term. Examples of written work are kept in writing books. (Reception)
- Currently, children carry out assessment tasks at the end of each half term using the Rising Stars and NFER materials (alternating) in order to give teacher's an understanding of children's reading and their comprehensions skills. (yr1-yr5)
- Year 6 used past SATs papers each half-term to support assessment
- Children are assessed using the knowledge gained from Rising stars and PM benchmarking in reading in order to be given a 'stage' on our assessment grid and to be highlighted as working at age related expectations or below/above.
- Phonics assessment (Letters and Sounds) Reception- Yr2
- Book bands - PM Benchmark (Reception to Y5)
- Internal moderation between year groups
- External moderation with local schools (termly)

INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. More Able Students (MAS) children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Intervention programmes are used to support children who are identified as struggling to achieve the levels expected of their age group.

- Ginger bear (Nursery and Reception)
- Read Write A2Z (Reception- yr1)
- After school target children (phonics - KS1)
- Outside agencies: Children benefit from a range of visiting partners e.g. speech and language therapy from Alder Hey Speech and Language services; VRH volunteers (Volunteer Reading Help)

Intervention programmes are monitored, and the children's progress is tracked to evaluate their effectiveness, ensuring children are given the best opportunity to fulfil their potential. These programmes are outlined in the school's SEN provision map and individual One Page Profiles, which are reviewed termly.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Throughout the school, parents are expected to monitor children's homework tasks, such as spellings and home reading. They are encouraged to maintain an ongoing dialogue with the teacher, through formal and informal meetings, and by making comments in reading cards or homework books.

Parents are invited to a weekly awards assembly in the school hall. In KS1, home reading and progression through the book bands is celebrated. Samples of children's writing are often show-cased in the KS2 assembly. There are also many sessions ran throughout the year where parents are invited to come and share our love of English - these are advertised on our website and on weekly newsletters.

CONCLUSION:

This policy is in line with other school polices and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following:

Teaching and Learning Policy
Assessment and Record Keeping
Responding to pupils' work / Feedback / Marking policy
Special Educational Needs Policy
ICT Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Handwriting policy

Members of staff responsible:

Carly McDermott, Kimberley Manley and Michelle Weston

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