

English Policy



Rhodes Avenue Primary School

Spring 2016

'The more you read, the more things you know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go!' (Dr Seuss)

'Read like a writer and write like a reader.' (Frank Smith)

Aims

At Rhodes Avenue, we believe that teaching our children to read and write independently is the one of the greatest gifts that we can bestow.

We aim to:

- foster a love of reading ;
- develop confidence in speaking for different purposes (whether it be a performance, reading aloud or engaging in discussion and debate) ;
- provide rich opportunities for writing based on quality core texts ;
- engage the children with cross-curricular opportunities to develop their language skills ;
- ensure all children are supported in meeting the Early Learning Goals in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and End of Year Expectations for the National Curriculum 2014 ;
- assess children's progress both formatively and summatively to ensure they are making the best possible progress.

Planning and Organisation

Where possible, the teaching of English is delivered in a creative, cross-curricular way and English lessons are based around quality core texts, many from the CLPE Power of Reading project. Curriculum Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage informs the curriculum for pupils in Nursery and Reception classes. In EYFS there is a daily differentiated phonics session, a writing focus day, handwriting focus days and 1 : 1 reading for each child every week. The EYFS environment is language rich and the provision enables children to explore stories. The school follows the National Curriculum for English for speaking and listening, reading (including word-reading and comprehension) and writing (including transcription and composition). The school also uses the Focus English Curriculum materials to support planning and assessment. When resources allow, writing workshops are provided for more able writers in Years 2 and 6. These materials ensure coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. English is generally taught in whole class sessions by class teachers. In Years 5 and 6, the children are ability streamed, and there are booster classes run by the specialist English teacher for no more than 12 children. Teachers produce a medium-term plan at the beginning of every half term and then a more detailed weekly plan each week.

ICT

Teachers and pupils use ICT to support and enhance the English curriculum. This includes using audio-visual equipment for speaking and listening activities, accessing stories or information through DVDs, using the Internet to find information, word processing and desktop publishing.

1. Speaking and Listening

Good speaking and listening skills are essential for developing language skills. As children develop speaking and listening skills, they build the foundations for reading and writing.

Aims:

- To speak with confidence in a range of contexts, adapting their speech for a range of purposes and audiences
- To listen, understand and respond appropriately to others
- To know the grammatical constructions that are characteristic of spoken Standard English and to apply this knowledge appropriately
- To understand variations in language.

Implementation

Many opportunities and activities are planned throughout the curriculum and school life in order to develop children's speaking and listening skills. Opportunities are provided to interact with others to develop these skills and from an early age children are encouraged to communicate with others.

Pupils are encouraged to participate in a wide range of drama activities, both formal (such as class assemblies, school plays and internal and external debates), and informal (such as improvisation, hot-seating and role play).

2. Reading

'To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting.' Edmund Burke

Aims

At Rhodes Avenue we aim for all children:

- To read with fluency, accuracy and understanding
- To read a whole range of texts enthusiastically
- To use their knowledge of words, sentences and texts to understand and respond to the meaning
- To increase their ability to read challenging and lengthy texts independently
- To reflect on the meaning of texts

2.1 Phonics

In Nursery, children are introduced to RML phonics Set 1 in the Spring term. In Reception children complete a baseline assessment in September. In Reception, phonics is taught daily in differentiated groups. As soon as children in Reception have a knowledge of Set 1, they will take home phonics based reading books to read independently.

2.2 Reading to children

All teachers read to the whole class regularly from a class novel or other text outside of English lessons. Parents and Carers across EYFS and both Key Stages are encouraged to read to children each night. There is a parent volunteer reading scheme (Rhodes Reading Buddies) in which parents from the school community are allocated individual children whom it is felt would benefit from one-to-one reading with an adult on a weekly basis.

2.3 Shared Reading

Shared Reading is a whole class activity in which the teacher models reading from an enlarged text selected from a wide range of genres. The text may be a big book, or it may be displayed using the interactive whiteboard. It is through Shared Reading that the reading process and essential reading strategies are demonstrated. In Shared Reading,

children actively participate in reading, make links between the written and spoken word and begin to perceive themselves as readers.

2.4 Guided Reading

Guided Reading takes place in KS1 and KS2. In EYFS, children read 1 : 1 with an adult weekly to build up their fluency and word recognition and books will be sent home for the children to read with their parents/carers.

In Guided Reading, the class teacher reads with differentiated ability groups of around six children at least once per week. The ultimate goal in guided reading is to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully. Guided reading with more fluent readers, whilst continuing to develop reading strategies, places more emphasis on making meaning at increasingly complex levels. Reciprocal Reading prompts may be used for questioning techniques, namely predicting, summarising, clarifying and questioning.

Guided Reading books are kept in a central resource and are banded into 15 levels which the children work through. A mixture of phonics, reading scheme and non-scheme books is used for Guided Reading. There are timetabled slots for Guided Reading each day in KS1 and KS2.

In KS1, the home/school reading record is used by teachers and parents to communicate about the child's progress in reading. Guided Reading books are sent home so that the children can consolidate their learning from the Guided Reading session.

In KS2, children are encouraged to make comments of their own in their home/school reading record although parents will still monitor their child's reading and read with them regularly. Any follow-up tasks for Guided Reading are done in school and the Guided Reading books remain in school. Children take home a reading book from the class book corner or school library each week to read for pleasure. This is monitored regularly by the Class Teacher.

In Year 6, children use a 'planner' to note down comments on their own reading. An annual inventory of the guided reading books is carried out, with depleted stocks being noted and, where budgets permit, replaced. To try to limit the number of disappearing books, new guided reading books are not given to children until the old ones have been returned to school.

2.5 Comprehension skills

In KS1, children develop their oral comprehension skills during Guided Reading sessions and whole-class English lessons. Children in Y1 are encouraged to develop their written responses to a text. In Y2, children continue to develop their written responses to a range of texts. Children in KS2 will complete a weekly written reading comprehension. This will develop their independence and also allow them to develop their own responses to what they have read. We focus on retrieving information accurately, making inferences and also looking at how an author uses language for effect.

2.6 Home Reading

Pupils have regular opportunities to choose books, from either their class book corner or the school library, to take home. In EYFS, children have a Reading Record which parents/carers use to record shared stories at home. When the children in Reception have a certain level of phonological awareness, they take RML (Ruth Miskin Literacy) books home. These are recorded in the Home Reading Log. Teachers and parents use these

books for a dialogue about the child's progress in reading. The home/school reading record may also be used to comment on these books by either parents or the children themselves. In Year 6, children have a planner which they use to record their own home reading. All children are encouraged to read at home every day.

2.7 Library

At Rhodes Avenue, we have a school library with a dedicated part-time librarian. Children visit the library weekly with their class and can also spend time reading in the library during lunchtimes (a rota for each class is displayed in the library). The library has a range of fiction and non-fiction (including magazines and newspapers).

Assessment and Recording

Children's reading is monitored and assessed on an ongoing basis.

In EYFS children are assessed in line with the Early Learning Goals, addressing different age bands throughout the year. This is done formatively through teacher assessment during 1:1 reading.

Formative comments from Guided Reading sessions are made in the home/school reading record. Summative assessments are kept in the Class Assessment Folder.

Children in Reception and Y1 are assessed termly using the PM Benchmark Running Record system. This allows teachers to analyse reading behaviour and identify which book band the child should be reading.

In Y2 and KS2, children who are not on track to meet End of Year Expectations (and who cannot access an independent comprehension assessment) are also assessed using the PM Benchmark Running Records.

All other children (Y2-Y6) are assessed termly using Rising Stars Reading Progress Tests. In the summer term, all children in Y3-Y5 are assessed using the Rising Stars Optional End of Year Reading Tests. Children in Y2 and Y6 sit the KS1 and KS2 SATS. Children in Y1, who are able to, sit the Rising Stars End of Year 1 Reading Test.

3. Writing

At Rhodes Avenue we foster a love of language through writing as well as reading:

At Rhodes Avenue we aim for all children:

- To learn the main rules and conventions of writing English
- To explore how the English language can be used to express meaning in different ways
- To enjoy the creative process of crafting imaginative, fluent pieces of writing
- To compose a variety of fiction and non-fiction writing, choosing the appropriate form and contents to suit a particular purpose and audience
- To use the planning, drafting and editing process to improve their work.

Opportunities for writing will come from our topic work and our core texts.

3.1 Modelled writing

Modelled writing is a whole class activity in which the teacher models writing of a particular genre or technique for the children. The teacher demonstrates how to craft a fluent piece of writing containing all the necessary elements for a given genre. As the teacher writes, they identify for the children what particular features they are including in their writing and why. In this way, the teacher gives the children a model for best practice.

3.2 Shared writing

Shared Writing is a whole class activity in which the teacher models writing from the whole range of genre. The features of each text type are investigated through reading and discussion, and these are referred to during shared writing. The children offer their own contributions and creativity is valued and encouraged. Improvements and revisions are made during the process.

3.3 Guided writing

Guided writing takes place within the English lesson. In Reception, children will take part in a guided writing activity weekly with the classteacher. Generally, teachers will start lessons with a 'warm up' game or activity, such as those in Pie Corbett's 'Jumpstart English', the purpose of which could be to improve spelling, develop grammar skills, widen vocabulary, or foster creativity in the children's writing. The main focus of a lesson may be on a specific writing technique, such as metaphor or simile, or building up skills to feed into writing, such as dictionary skills, or a specific area of grammar, for example, complex sentences. These techniques and skills are taught through the use of quality texts and built up in a clear progression through the school. A variety of differentiated writing frames provide support to help children to write.

3.4 Have-a-go writing

In Years 5 and 6, children are given the chance to 'have-a-go' at a certain type of writing before any teacher input. This enables the teachers to assess what prior knowledge the children already have and therefore plan for consolidating skills and developing new ones. It also allows the children to see the progress from the beginning to the end of a writing unit.

3.5 Extended writing

In Reception, from the Spring term, children are encouraged to develop their writing skills by completing longer pieces of independent work (e.g. retelling a known story). All children in KS1 and KS2 are given an opportunity each week/fortnight to create a long piece of sustained independent writing. When children write they are encouraged to refer to the text features of the particular genre in which they are writing through the use of success criteria, which are referred to by both teacher and student when assessing whether the learning intentions have been achieved. The success criteria are often generated by the children themselves, following text analysis of a given genre before the writing process starts.

3.6 Mini-writes

Children in KS1 and KS2 will also have the opportunity to practise any new skills (e.g. using reported speech, expanded noun phrases or a range of sentence openers) in 'mini-writes.' These give the children a chance to apply their new skills. The teacher can also use these 'mini-writes' to identify target areas for the children.

4. Spelling

Accurate spelling is a vital tool for communication in writing despite the increasing use of computers it remains an important life skill. It should emerge from clear understanding of phonetics and spelling patterns of the English language. It should not, however, inhibit a child's creativity or stifle the writing process.

Aims

For all children:

- To spell confidently most of the words they are likely to use in their own writing (Reception: 1st 45 words, Y1: First 100 words, Y2: Next 200 words, Y3/4 word list, Y5/6 word list)
- To be able to make sensible attempts to spell words which they have not seen before
- To be able to use a dictionary effectively to aid their spelling.

4.1 Teaching Spelling

Teachers use a variety of methods in their teaching of spelling. These include:

- Focusing on key words
- Study of rhyme
- Investigating word families
- Teaching phonics
- Learning weekly words either following a pattern or from own writing

Spelling is taught through activities and investigation. In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, spelling is linked to phonics, teachers using the RML (Ruth Miskin) programme. In Reception, there is a different spelling focus word each week. From Years 1 to 6, spelling is taught weekly within English sessions following the English Curriculum and using the Progression in Phonics (KS1) and Focus English (KS2) resources. The First 100 High Frequency and Next 200 High Frequency words are also taught.

Good spelling and good handwriting are taught in partnership. Children practise clusters or strings of letters that belong to the English writing system. Independence is also encouraged through the regular use of dictionaries.

Assessment

Spelling is assessed on an ongoing basis through the marking of children's writing and through weekly spelling tests.

4.2 Marking Spellings in written work

When marking a child's work, the recommended number of spelling corrections is three of four words because the main assessment focus is transcription. Also errors tend to be high frequency words or topic related-words and these words will be the assessment/marking focus for spelling, punctuation and grammar. The correct spelling is written and highlighted for children to refer to, and correct.

5. Handwriting

The function of handwriting is communication. Though important, it is just one of several secretarial skills which support a child's creativity.

Aims:

For all children:

- To have a handwriting style that is fluent, joined and legible
- To be able to write comfortably at speed
- To understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively

5.1 Teaching Handwriting

Handwriting and spelling are taught together as memorising a spelling pattern (e.g. ough) can be consolidated by writing it. Handwriting is therefore taught both within and outside of daily English lessons. In the Nursery, children participate in the 'Write Dance' programme to promote motor skills and introduce handwriting in a creative, sensory environment. In Reception, children practise their handwriting twice a week focusing on the sounds of the week covered in their phonics sessions. These sessions will either involve gross motor skill practice (e.g. using malleable materials) or smaller letter formations on paper. In KS1 handwriting is taught through the learning of letters and sounds and teachers follow the RML phonics letter formation and pencil control scheme supplemented by the Penpals scheme. In KS2, handwriting is taught through practice of spelling rules and patterns. For those children whose fine motor skills take longer to develop, there are motor skills intervention groups to support them with developing their pencil control. Children are taught joined formation from the moment they have adequate pencil control. In Y3-Y4, teachers use the Penpal scheme and children practise in red handwriting books with double lines. In Y5, children practise their handwriting regularly as part of their spelling practice. In Years 4-6, handwriting books with simple lines are used to encourage the transference of handwriting skills into independent work. Joined writing is encouraged as soon as children are secure in the movement of each letter. Children are encouraged to use a fully cursive script.

Assessment

Formative assessment is carried out informally on a daily basis through questioning and discussion. Extended writing is marked in a formative way following the guidance set out in the School Marking Policy. Children are given specific, targeted feedback to improve their writing, which is followed up by both pupil and teacher.

Writing: In Reception, children's progress towards the Early Learning Goal for 'Writing' is assessed termly using age bands. In KS1 and KS2 children's writing is tracked termly using the Target Tracker Statements which set out the End of Year Expectations for each year group. These statements are then used to decide which stage the child is at (i.e. Beginning, Beginning Plus, Within, Within Plus, Secure or Secure Plus). At the end of the year these assessments are combined with formative teacher assessments to judge whether a child is Beginning, Beginning Plus, Within, Within Plus, Secure or Secure Plus within their year group. Occasionally children will be assessed using statements from lower year groups.

Reading: In Reception, children's progress towards the Early Learning Goal for 'Reading' is assessed termly using age bands. In KS1 and KS2 Children complete a Rising Stars reading comprehension assessment each term. In KS1 and KS2 children's reading is tracked termly using the Target Tracker Statements which set out the End of Year Expectations for each year group. These statements are then used to decide which stage the child is at (i.e. Beginning, Beginning Plus, Within, Within Plus, Secure or Secure Plus). At the end of the year these assessments are combined with formative teacher assessments to judge whether a child is Beginning, Beginning Plus, Within, Within Plus, Secure or Secure Plus within their year group. Occasionally children will be assessed using statements from lower year groups.

Grammar: In KS1 and KS2 Children complete a Rising Stars grammar assessment each term. At the end of the year these assessments are combined with formative teacher assessments to judge whether a child is Beginning, Beginning Plus, Within, Within Plus, Secure or Secure Plus within their year group. Occasionally children will be assessed using statements from lower year groups.

Spelling: In KS1 and KS2 Children complete a Rising Stars spelling assessment each term. At the end of the year these assessments are combined with formative teacher assessments to judge whether a child is Beginning, Beginning Plus, Within, Within Plus, Secure or Secure Plus within their year group. Occasionally children will be assessed using statements from lower year groups.

Handwriting: Children's handwriting is assessed on an ongoing basis through the marking of children's work and during handwriting sessions.

Speaking and Listening: In EYFS, the three Early Learning Goals for Communication and Language are assessed termly using age bands. Speaking and listening skills are assessed through teacher assessment in KS1 and KS2 according to the National Curriculum requirements and are recorded in the annual report to parents.

At the end of each Key Stage, the children take the national SATs papers in Reading and Grammar, which combine to give a summative assessment. In 2016, these will be presented as a raw score and a standardised score.

Procedures for policy monitoring and dissemination

The school will publicise this policy, in writing, to staff, parents and carers and pupils annually. All members of staff and governors will receive a copy of this policy. Copies are available on the school website and at the school office. This Policy has been approved by the Governing Body and the School Leadership Team and staff, it will be reviewed in line with the curriculum policy schedule.

Staff responsible:

English Leader
School Staff
SLT
The Curriculum Committee

