

Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School



English Policy May 2024

Introduction

At Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School, we believe the development of Literacy skills is central to improving a child's life chances. All teachers have high expectations for all children to achieve and enjoy English and to be able to use the skills confidently in a range of contexts. We strive to ensure all children can communicate clearly and become masters of language. Rich texts are at the heart of our teaching and a love for reading is promoted throughout school.

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and the 2014 National Curriculum.

Aims

We aim to deliver a high quality English curriculum that will give our pupils the opportunity to:

- Develop a deep love and understanding of English literature and language.
- Use the English skills that they have acquired in a range of contexts.
- Be able to communicate clearly in both spoken and written forms.

Intention:

To fulfil our aims the children will:

- Become avid readers who can read fluently and widely and are able to express preferences and opinions about the texts that they have read.
- Read for pleasure and will have had access to a wide range of texts, genres and authors.
- Have had early experiences of reading which will have been delivered in engaging ways which will have developed the children's love of reading.
- Be able to write with confidence and accuracy for a variety of purposes, e.g. a report about firefighters.
- Be able to produce grammatically accurate texts and be able to apply spelling rules correctly.
- Write with a neat handwriting style.
- Have developed a wide range of vocabulary which they use to understand texts and that they can use when speaking formally and informally.
- Apply these English skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Implementation

The Early Years Foundation Stage

English in Early Years is based upon the Foundation Stage Profile strand of Communication, Language & Literacy. Communication, language and literacy depend on learning and being competent in a number of key skills, together with having the confidence, opportunity, encouragement, support and disposition to use them. This area of learning includes communication, speaking and listening in different situations and for different purposes, being read a wide range of books and reading simple texts and writing for a variety of purposes. To give all children the best opportunities for effective development and learning in communication, language and literacy, all staff will:

- Provide opportunities for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other
- Incorporate communication, language and literacy development in planned activities in each area of learning
- Give opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books
- Give opportunities for linking language with physical movement in action songs and rhymes, role play and practical experiences
- Plan an environment that reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books
- Provide opportunities for children to see adults writing and for children to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script
- Provide time and opportunities to develop spoken language through conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups, with particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children for whom English is an additional language, using their home language when appropriate.

National Curriculum 2014

The English programme of study is based around four aims;

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG)

By the end of key stage 1 pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the programme of study.

The new National Curriculum 2014 gives detailed guidance of what should be taught under the following headings;

- Spoken language
- Reading - Word reading
 - Comprehension
- Writing - Transcription
 - Spelling
 - Handwriting and Presentation
 - Composition
 - Grammar and Punctuation

Spoken Language

Developing strong speaking and listening skills is fundamental to the teaching of English at Hallcroft School. Teachers place a high emphasis on spoken language and plan for the discrete teaching of skills as well as incidental learning opportunities. Our approach is firmly based on teaching how language changes in different contexts. We believe children need to develop strong oracy skills to enable them to internalise language patterns and understand how language changes in different situations. This enables our children to understand and manipulate language for different purposes and audiences. To do this teachers provide authentic contexts, giving children opportunities to use a range of spoken language. Teachers provide a range of purposeful opportunities through role play, drama, discussions and debates. The strong emphasis on spoken language is evident in the Early Years and continues throughout the school. Teachers model the use of Standard English masterfully, increasing children's repertoire of vocabulary and sophistication of spoken English.

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be '*taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English*' (pg10). They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

The focus on the spoken word gives children the ability to cope with written language by discovering:

- How it works
- That language changes in different contexts
- That there are differences between written and spoken English, and standard and non-standard
- Rules of spoken language
- Creative thinking and self-expression

Reading

Reading is a skill essential for life and at Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School we want our children to leave school with a love of reading. Therefore, all staff promote and value reading as both an enjoyable activity and as a life skill. At Hallcroft, reading is taught through the discrete teaching of synthetic phonics (Anima phonics) which provides the children with the skills to decode texts. The children's comprehension skills are developed through the teaching of quality texts.

Please see the separate Phonics and Reading Policy.

Writing

The National Curriculum states that children should:

- Develop the stamina to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct

We aim to develop children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Teachers model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals, whilst children have the opportunities to write at length in extended and independent writing sessions regularly for a range of purposes across the curriculum.

Pupils are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model. There are also opportunities to improve their writing inspired by drama techniques and film clips. They may be asked to produce their writing on their own or as part of a group. We teach discrete handwriting sessions throughout the school to help children develop fluent, clear and legible writing, joining is introduced and developed in Year Two (please see Handwriting Policy).

Writing follows the sequence of:

Immersion and Orientation - this is the stage of unit where children are immersed in the text type. Children will become familiar with the language and rhythms and patterns that are involved within the text. It is impossible to write a sentence pattern without being able to say it. This helps children to internalise the patterns of language. Key vocabulary is identified and displayed to be referred to throughout - it is vital that children understand what words mean and this is where staff use 'Word Aware' to enable children to develop a deeper understanding.

Exploring and Zooming in - looking closely at the text, analysing language patterns and playing with language. This is the part of the unit where a writer's toolkit may be created and further exploration into grammatical features and deeper meanings may be explored. Children may explore other similar texts, they may draw upon underlying structures and language features of the original model to create their own version.

Imitating and Inventing - using internalised techniques and structures pupils now start to imitate and invent a new idea; this may be a character, story line, text etc. At this stage pupils will move to becoming more independent writers. Pupils will be encouraged to write within the same text type but may choose different topics that interest and intrigue them.

Modelled, shared, guided and independent writing will be evident throughout this sequence and will support both independent and groups of pupils following teacher's formative assessments. Assessments will inform shared writing and will inform the groups that are needed for guided writing. Stages do not have a time frame, teachers plan around the needs of the pupils in their class and the process is cyclical. Rich texts will be used as a stimulus for the writing sequence, a range of texts may be used throughout alongside the main text.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG)

Spelling, punctuation and grammar are essential for communication and, when children write for a purpose, they become aware of this need. Therefore at Hallcroft, spelling, punctuation and grammar are integral to the progress that children make in English.

Punctuation and Grammar

Foundation 1 and 2 - Pupils in Foundation 1 and 2 are introduced to the basic principles of grammar and punctuation appropriate for their age range. They learn through a wide range of activities such as singing rhymes, conversations with adults, stories, phonics, reading and writing.

Key Stage 1 - a more formal approach is taken with weekly grammar and punctuation teaching taking place in phonic and English sessions. The children's learning is also supported through weekly spelling and in teacher led writing and reading activities. Pupils are taught to use the

correct vocabulary and grammatical terms to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language.

Spelling

We want our pupils to become fluent and effective writers and we believe accurate spelling is a means to that end. Competent spellers need to spend less time and energy thinking about spelling to enable them to channel their time and energy into the skills of composition, sentence structure and precise word choice.

Foundation One - Little questions are provided for pupils in their free play to extend their current learning, knowledge, skills and understanding.

Foundation Two - Pupils in Foundation Two take part in a daily phonics session where they blend and segment words. Pupils are sent keywords home that progress to spellings as appropriate.

Key Stage 1 - Pupils in Key Stage 1 take part in a daily phonics and SPAG session. These allow pupils to learn new skills and build on what they already know to enable them to apply spelling strategies to their writing. Spellings are sent home and pupils are tested on these on a weekly basis.

Spelling strategies need to be taught explicitly and applied to high-frequency words, cross curricular words and individual pupil's words. In Key Stage One, proof reading should be taught during shared and guided writing sessions and links should be made to the teaching of handwriting.

Learning Environment

Our classrooms and displays are used as learning tools. Using the learning environment all skills are transferrable and learning is applied across a range of contexts, ensuring intrinsic links between reading, writing, phonics, grammar, spelling and punctuation are made and pupils are regularly given time to consolidate learning. Through the learning environment pupils are empowered and supported to build independence when working.

We have literacy rich classrooms which have evidence of;

- Differentiation offering all pupils the opportunity to make progress in Literacy learning.
- In KS1, the Common Exception words are on display and/or accessible on tables to support pupils.
- Current phonic and spelling learning displayed.
- Each classroom has a well-resourced reading area.

Daily English Activities

Foundation Stage

- Daily Phonic session
- Handwriting, including physical handwriting, taught discretely in Foundation Two in an active and fun session.
- Early writing activities and opportunities will be provided daily - writing tables, role play area, reading area - and extended using the 'Little Question'.
- In Foundation Two pupils take part in guided and individual reading.
- Grammar taught in context.
- Daily 'Word Aware' session.

Key Stage One

- Daily phonics session
- Whole class reading as well as individual reading
- Handwriting practice within phonics teaching
- Handwriting taught sessions
- Extended writing taught across the curriculum
- Daily English session
- Word Aware sessions

Resources

A variety of resources are used to support the teaching of English both at home and at school.

- The school website - pupils can access games and activities related to reading via the school website. Parents can also access the 'Helping your child at home' page.
- Oxford Owl - offers guidance for parents on how to support children with reading at home.
- Purple Mash website - Children can access English games and activities to support what is has been taught in class.
- Power of Reading - the Power of Reading website gives access to teaching sequences and materials from CLPE's highly successful Power of Reading Project. These can form the basis of the school literacy curriculum from Nursery to Year Two. Offers support for teachers in selecting and using rich texts.
- Well-resourced book areas.

Equal Opportunities

All children regardless of gender, age, creed, ethnicity, (or any protected characteristic) aptitude or ability have equal access to the range of activities and experiences offered in English.

Special Needs

All children will have access to all areas of the English Curriculum. Children with SEND will be given differentiated tasks, according to their individual needs and abilities.

How to help at home

- Every half term the school website is updated with the quality texts that we are reading in class; enabling parents to support learning at home.
- Fridge Words are sent home from each class on a Friday. The children have learnt the meaning of each of these words during our 'Word Aware' sessions. Parents are encouraged to talk to their child about what the words mean.

Assessment and Recording

- Each term every child in EYFS is assessed using the EYFS Development Matters document and given an attainment level (based on their knowledge of Communication and Language (Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking), and Literacy (Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing).
- In KS1 the children are assessed on a half-termly basis and are expected to know, apply and understand the skills and knowledge outlined in the National Curriculum English programmes of study for Year 1 and Year 2. This data is tracked using the school data system (Scholar pack).
- Towards the end of Year 1 all children will take part in the national phonics screening test. They will achieve either a pass or fail. If a child fails, the screening test they will retake it in Year 2.

Responsibilities and Review

Roles of Subject Leader

The subject leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating English through lesson drop-ins, book scrutiny, planning scrutiny, discussions with pupils and teachers and environment walks.
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Reporting to governors and SLT
- Guidance and support and training for parents and carers
- Keeping up to date with recent English developments

- Attendance at termly English lead meeting and moderation with other schools
- The English subject leader will review this policy and the curriculum as required.

Expectation of all Teachers

- Planning covers all English objectives throughout the year and this will be tracked using the yearly overview
- A high level of presentation is expected across all subjects
- Guided group work is planned for and delivered
- Topics offer pupils the opportunity to contextualise and apply discrete literacy learning for a wide range of purposes
- There is an assessed written piece planned for every half term; this could be cross curricular
- Learning objectives/Big Question are displayed in class and evident in books
- Marking is directly linked to the learning objective/Big Question in sessions
- Skills taught in English are reinforced and embedded throughout all areas of learning
- Yearly overviews are used to create medium term plans to ensure coverage of all skills
- Weekly plans are based on medium term planning and based on the most recent assessment.