

# WHEATLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL



## English Policy

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## Aims

At Wheatlands Primary School we believe the study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

## Objectives

Our objectives in the teaching of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to teach children effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities;
- to help them to become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word-, sentence- and text-level knowledge;
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts;
- to foster the enjoyment of writing, and a recognition of its value;
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
- to have fluent and legible handwriting
- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work.

## Curriculum Planning

English is a core subject in the New National Curriculum and we use this as a basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study.

We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The New Primary Curriculum details what we teach in the long-term. Long term targets are set at the end of year. These are set for each cohort and individual for reading and writing. Children are then *tracked* according to their predictions and results.

Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the Curriculum, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The subject leader is responsible for reviewing these plans.

Class teachers complete a rolling short-term plan of up to two weeks, for the teaching of English. This illustrates the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives details of how the lesson will be structured. Written work culminates in an independent piece of writing at the end of a unit of work or a theme linked to our topic. This plan also includes details of what each group of children will be learning and with whom. The class teacher keeps these individual plans for evaluation and discussion with support staff.

English activities are planned so that they build on the children's prior learning. While we give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, we also plan in progression so that there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the school.

## The Foundation Stage

We believe that communication and language with opportunities to explore reading and writing underpins children's future learning. The teaching of Literacy in our reception class is an integral part of the school's work. The children are taught to read through the Read, Write Inc. programme. In reception we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – common exception words. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals. We aim to meet the statements of goals by the end of the reception year.

In Nursery we have established a language rich environment. As soon as they enter Nursery there is the opportunity to talk and communicate in a wide range of situations, respond to adults and each other and listen carefully in order to extend their vocabulary. When ready, Nursery children are also introduced to the Read, Write, Inc. phonics programme. Mark making is encouraged and valued as these early marks are the start of becoming a writer. Further progress is then secured for the transition into reception. They have the opportunity to explore and enjoy words and texts and to use them in various situations. We promote a strong relationship between children, parents and teachers at this early age to embed a positive attitude to learning. Daily reading is encouraged at home, either child to adult or adult to child. Children play at reading, imitating what they have seen, turning pages, looking at pictures and reading the words in a special time.

### **Reading at Wheatlands**

Teaching our children not only to become proficient readers, but to develop a love of reading is of vital importance at Wheatlands Primary School. Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. In fact, there's evidence to suggest that reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than their social or economic background.

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme. The programme is for:

Pupils in Year R to Year 2 who are learning to read and write;  
Any pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly.

In addition, we teach pupils to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

We group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing will lag behind progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding. Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils; they are soon able to read these texts for themselves. Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible. The sooner they complete it, the sooner they will be able to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level.

### **Guided Reading**

Guided Reading takes place daily in all year groups. Guided Reading is often a quiet time across the school where children have the opportunity to read in a guided group with their Teacher or their Teaching Assistant. During this time, the children may also take part in other reading, spelling, punctuation or grammar activities. Teaching staff note in children's Reading Records when they have read with them in a Guided Reading session, and maintain ongoing assessment records of the children's reading progress.

### **Reading Books**

When the children begin school in Reception, they begin by "reading" picture books, and then progress on to books with words at their teacher's discretion. Teachers assess when children are ready to move on to the next reading level and so this continues through the rest of the school.

### **Rewarding reading at home and school**

At Wheatlands Primary school, we celebrate independent reading by rewarding children who read to an adult. They have the opportunity to place their name on our honours in the school library. Children should aim to read to an adult 200 times over the course of a school year.

## **Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas**

The skills that children develop in Literacy are linked to, and applied in, 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 at school. Whenever possible, literacy work is linked to a particular themed topic for each year group. Literacy as with topic is skills based and children are aware of the success criteria for reading and writing.

### **Writing at Wheatlands**

At Wheatlands, we use a range of writing stimulus, such as novels, short stories, images, films and short clips. We teach writing through a range of different methods:

The writing Process:

#### **Familiarisation and Talk for Writing. (Exposure to many samples of a writing genre).**

The writing process begins by looking at examples with a focus on a model text or paragraph. The children work with talking partners to become familiar with the language and structure of the text. Drama, text mapping or story boarding may be used to further familiarize the children.

#### **Modelled writing (Writing for the children).**

This is usually a whole class session where the teacher is demonstrating how to write by 'thinking aloud' as he/she composes and interacts with the text in front of the pupils. This allows the children to hear the thinking process that is going on during the writing process. Modelled writing is not an interactive writing time between teacher and pupils.

#### **Shared writing (Writing with the children).**

This is a joint construction of the text between the teacher and the children. The teacher is acting as the scribe but the children have ownership of the text. As they are not directly engaged in the physical demand of the writing, they are better able to concentrate on the compositional aspects of the work and contribute a wide range of ideas.

#### **Planning writing**

Before the children are able to write independently they are supported to plan their writing.

#### **Independent writing (Writing by the children).**

Before the children are able to write independently they are supported to plan their writing. Children need many opportunities for independent writing in a variety of forms, based upon both teacher guidance and their own choice of topic. The purpose of independent writing is to put into practice the ideas, structures and skills that they have seen demonstrated in modelled and shared writing. During independent writing children are given opportunities to and encouraged to edit and improve their writing.

## **English and Inclusion**

At Wheatlands Primary School, we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. It forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our Literacy teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. We study a range of factors to ascertain what could be possible reasons for underachievement – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take action to enable the child to achieve relative success. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected outcomes. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Intervention for children who are identified as having SEN will be recorded (with targets set) and monitored through our Assertive Mentoring system and followed up in discussion with parents and children in regular mentoring meetings.

### **Assessment for Learning**

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress. Children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work against the writing checklist and their own targets.

Teachers use medium-term assessments for both reading and writing. The half termly assertive mentoring criteria sheets (which generates a child's standard) are used to measure progress in reading from Year 2 to Year 6. The reading leader carries out a half termly phonics assessment on all children on the RWI phonics programme. The children are also assessed against the national curriculum objectives for writing half termly. Children's strengths and areas for development are recorded then used to inform future planning.

Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. The targets are issued to motivate children at the start of each key stage and each year. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.

These long-term assessments are based on end-of-year tests and teacher assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.