

WHEATLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL



English Policy

September 2024

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 school has adopted the Galileo Trust writing curriculum which includes – in detail – the skills to be taught in each year group in the long-term.

Our medium-term plans, which we base on the curriculum overview, are in the form of a writing provision map for each year group, showing the purpose, genre and skills required for each piece of writing to be taught. These plans define what we teach and ensure appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The subject leader is responsible for reviewing these plans.

Class teachers complete daily planning 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. This planning is in the form of Smart Notebook slides which clearly show the writing process – read and respond, prepare, plan, draft, evaluate and edit and publish. Written work culminates in an independent piece of writing at the end of a unit of work or a theme linked to our topic. These daily teaching slides are shared across each year group, ensuring all children access the same entitlement.

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.

Early Reading

Upon entering Nursery children are immersed within a language rich environment. Stories and rhymes form an integral part of children's learning, with a wide variety of high-quality books and text shared daily with children. Within play children are encouraged to talk and communicate in a wide range of situations. They are supported to respond to adults and each other and listen carefully. Modelled language from adults encourages and supports pupils to extend sentence structures and develop a wide range of vocabulary. When ready, Nursery children are introduced to the Read, Write, Inc. phonics programme and learn pictures and sounds that correspond with sounds they will later learn in Reception.

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 storytelling in their own words.

The language rich environment continues as children progress into Reception. High quality texts build upon children's experiences in Nursery and children are introduced to Talk Through Stories. Within Talk Through Stories children are immersed within carefully chosen stories and are taught meanings of specific vocabulary within a variety of contexts. They are encouraged to use newly taught vocabulary within their everyday conversations, a practice modelled by teachers across the setting. Children continue to learn how to read through the Read, Write Inc. programme, rapidly learning sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Strong Start practices support children to establish strong foundational knowledge and progress quickly. As the scheme progresses, children are introduced to high-frequency words that do not follow the phonetic code and are provided with regular opportunities to read them within a variety of contexts. Consistent assessment practices ensure that children are always taught to their specific ability.

Partnerships with parents encourage children to read daily at home, supporting their progress in school. Reading material and books are closely matched to children's specific ability to ensure they experience success with this.

Early Writing

As soon as children enter Nursery they are encouraged and supported to become confident mark-makers. The environment provides children with a wide variety of resources with which to make marks, linked to topics, their developing interests and fascinations. Mark-making practices are also frequently modelled by adults to provide relevant contexts for making marks. Provision within Nursery also aims to develop children's gross and fine motor skills in order to provide children with the core and fine motor strength needed to develop their early writing. Children identified as needing additional support access a variety of interventions to develop strong foundations for writing e.g. Write Dance, Dough Disco. As children's mark-making skills develop, children are encouraged to recognise and begin to write their name for a variety of purposes. As children's phonic knowledge grows, children are also encouraged to begin to represent initial sounds in familiar words with letters.

Children continue to make progress in their mark-making and writing skills as they transition into Reception. Continuous provision continues to provide for children to write within a variety of topic or open ended, interest-based contexts. This continues to be modelled and supported by adults

within the context of play throughout Reception year. Carefully chosen resources develop children's fine motor strength within a variety of ways. Children have access to the outdoor trim trail, outdoor provision and PE lessons to develop gross motor movements and strengthen their core.

Children's progress through the Read, Write Inc, phonics scheme teaches children correct letter formation and children begin to write words linked to their growing phonic knowledge. Early writing activities link closely to children's phonic knowledge so that they can experience success as early writers. As children's confidence grows, they are encouraged to use high-frequency words and supported to make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words and sentences. This practice is in line with Trust curriculum progression documents and progresses children towards the achievement of Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception.

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.

Whole Class Reading

Whole Class Reading takes place daily in all year groups. During this time, the children develop their fluency and comprehension by reading aloud and discussing a wide range of age specific texts

independently, in pairs and in groups. A key purpose of these lessons is to help the children draw on their background knowledge to construct a coherent mental model of what they are reading or listening to discussing a wide range of rich and challenging texts though teacher led discussion. Once the children are beginning to gain in confidence with the text, as a means of deepening their understanding, we use the acronym VIPERS across school. These are the six key areas of reading comprehension the children need to be adept at utilising in order to gain a full understanding of what they are reading. Orally, during the session, the pupils will employ an array of these skills within one lesson. During the independent task, the pupils will tackle one or two focus areas, completing tasks designed to exercise specific reading skills.

Children in KS2 additionally have access to Reading Plus- a self-led programme designed to increase the reading speed and stamina of our pupils, as well as giving them access to a wealth of additional texts.

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, using the RWI and Accelerated Reader schemes.

Three times a week, the teacher will read aloud to the class a book which has been chosen in collaboration with the children. These sessions will provide opportunities for the children to listen and concentrate, as well as hearing a model of fluent reading.

Daily 'Book Talk' sessions will take place in classes across KS1 and KS2, where the children will have the opportunity to read their chosen books, recommend books, read with a partner in order to support their intrinsic motivation to read.

Rewarding reading at home and school

At Wheatlands Primary school, we celebrate independent reading by rewarding children who read to an adult. Children should aim to read to an adult 200 times over the course of a school year. Weekly class assemblies also provide the opportunities for children to celebrate their reading, recommend texts and the opportunity to discuss a range of literature

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, though always through the writing process of:

Read and Respond

The writing process begins by introducing the stimuli for writing (this could be a book, a piece of model text an animation etc). The children identify and discuss language, grammar, structure and organisational features, becoming familiar the text.

Prepare

The children are introduced to the writing task by identifying the context, audience and purpose. They will discuss and share ideas and gather information and vocabulary banks. They are taught to understand that language can have different functions (e.g. to enhance, evoke response, persuade or aid meaning), how to build cohesion through the use of paragraphs and will begin to experiment with a formal style of writing.

Plan

The children plan writing through discussing and recording ideas, continuing to refer back to the context, audience, purpose and the model text. Children are exposed to a range of planning formats – being encouraged to understand that different planning formats can be used for a range of genres.

Draft

The children draft and write through rehearsing and composing sentences, experimenting with language and sentence structures, selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning. There is a focus on organisational devices and how these work in the particular style of writing. It is recognised as good practice in this stage of the writing process for the children to complete a shared write. 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.

Evaluate and Edit

Once the drafting stage of the writing process is complete, the children are given opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of their own and others' writing. They can propose changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to enhance effects and clarify meaning. The children are encouraged to ensure consistent use of tense and correct subject/verb agreement, selecting appropriate register. They precis longer passages and proofread for spelling and punctuation errors.

Publish

An opportunity for the children to perform/publish their own compositions. When publishing their independent writing, the children have a separate writing book that only has their final compositions in.

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 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.

Teachers use medium-term assessments for both reading and writing. The children are assessed against the national curriculum objectives for writing. Children's strengths and areas for development are recorded then used to inform future planning. All teachers are involved in termly writing moderation meetings and use a sample group of pupil's work to ensure consistency in writing assessment across the year group.

The reading leader carries out a half termly phonics assessment on all children on the RWI phonics programme.

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.