

WESTLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

English Policy

Key Aims of the 2014 National Curriculum

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

English in Early Years is based upon the Foundation Stage Profile for:

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, practitioners should give particular attention to:

- Providing opportunities for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other;
- Incorporating communication, language and literacy development in planned activities in each area of learning;
- Giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books;
- Giving opportunities for linking language with physical movement in action songs and rhymes, role play and practical experiences
- Planning an environment that reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books;
- Providing 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;
- Providing 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.

Introduction to the National Curriculum 2014

In the National Curriculum for 5 - 11 year olds, English is developed through four key areas:

- Spoken Language
- Reading – Word Reading & Comprehension
- Writing – Transcription & Composition
- Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

It is important to note that each is closely interrelated with the next, so it becomes increasingly difficult to consider one without the other (s).

Spoken Language

The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing.

Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write.

They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across the six years of primary education form part of the national curriculum. These are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

Reading

The programmes of study for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading).

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction.

All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech.

Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure chest of wonder and joy for curious young minds. It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.

Writing

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words.

Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar & Punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language.

They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English.

They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' listed. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. A non-statutory Glossary is provided for teachers.

Throughout the programmes of study, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching. See addition Grammar and Punctuation Policy for more detail.

Westlands' delivery of the National Curriculum

Timetabling

A considerable number of areas within the English Curriculum are discrete subjects and will be taught within English lessons and across the whole primary curriculum. Spoken Language, Handwriting, Grammar & Punctuation all come into this category. In addition to this, each key stage 1 and 2 class will also have a guided reading session each week where further practice of these skills will take place. The specific purpose is to develop word reading skills, vocabulary development and comprehension skills. All children will read 1:1 with an adult each week.

FFt Success for All Phonics is taught daily to all children in EYFS and KS1. This is taught within classes. Letter formation is explicitly taught during this session and an independent handwriting session will be taught in KS1, so pupil can begin to learn how to join letters.

Handwriting is taught explicitly daily, and within all subjects, including Maths. We will use Collins scheme resources to provide tasks to develop handwriting skills.

Spelling is taught and tested weekly. It is also taught discretely across the curriculum. Spellings are sent home to learn on a weekly basis following the spelling programme laid out in the new curriculum document. Spelling rules and letter strings are taught and then tested – including other examples to those sent home to be learnt.

Spoken Language is taught throughout all subjects and is assessed across the curriculum. English sessions should develop these skills in the form of debate, drama and discussion.

English is taught daily in KS1 & KS2. Within these sessions all aspects of English are taught. These sessions will cover the broad spectrum of objectives involved in the four elements of the English curriculum.

Recording of work

All children in KS1 and KS2 will have a book for English which will cover the work done in the weekly learning. An additional book will also be used for the work undertaken in the grammar sessions, featuring grammar and handwriting skills. An additional book will also be used for guided reading to record the written responses to guided reading tasks.

Planning

All sessions should be planned using the schools planning proforma. Objectives for the lessons being taught should be taken straight from the new curriculum document. All lessons should be fully differentiated and accessible to all children, providing challenge whilst also developing areas of development.

Spoken Language

The children should:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- Select and use appropriate registers for effective communication.

The teacher should:

- Provide an example of clear diction, accurate instructions, reasoned argument, imaginative language and considerate attention to speakers.
- Give opportunities for a variety of speaking and listening situations within the classroom, including collaborative discussion work, debates and question and answer sessions.
- Be aware that listening is a skill which increasingly needs to be taught to children and should provide specifically designed activities to this end.
- Encourage listening and reasoned argument as a vehicle for the avoidance of physical confrontation and aggression.

The school should:

- Maintain the importance of speaking and listening skills as facilitators for the whole curriculum.
- Actively encourage listening on a whole-school basis, in particular through assemblies.
- Encourage listening and reasoned argument as a vehicle for the avoidance of physical confrontation and aggression.

Reading

The children should:

- Relate reading to their own experiences and environment.
- Have a daily opportunity to read silently or share books with the realisation that reading time is valuable and should occupy everyone's attention, including that of the teacher.
- Acquire research skills necessary for the use of dictionaries, atlases and other information books and resources.
- Develop the ability to read aloud to others.
- Be able to discuss books they have read, relating to plot, characters and themes.
- Acquire an increasingly large sight vocabulary.
- Be able to bring in books from home and to share them with others.
- Be encouraged, through the reading schemes, to continue the reading process at home.
- Recognise that reading is an essential part of all areas of learning.
- Gain confidence and enjoyment to promote lifelong reading.

The teacher should:

- Read aloud (fiction and/or non-fiction) every day.
- Keep records of children's achievements in reading.
- Value books and show an interest in them by setting a personal example.
- Hear children read, share books with children on a regular basis. This includes hearing every child read at least once a week
- Provide attractive and imaginative reading areas including various types of books, labels, captions, instructions and questions.
- Share with their class a Class Novel that is read to the children daily.

The school should:

- Create and maintain a stimulating environment for children to experience and explore reading at their own pace with confidence and enjoyment to promote lifelong reading.
- Maintain reading as a valued, high-profile activity which accesses the whole of the curriculum.
- Provide a varied library of books.
- Provide suitable resources to enable children to grow up 'reading for pleasure'.

Writing

The children should:

- Experience a wide range of writing activities including fiction, non-fiction & poetry
- Relate writing to their own experiences and environment.
- Discuss their writing frequently, talking about the various types and purposes of writing.
- Be aware of the need to write legibly and to use layout and space effectively to aid the reader.
- Experience grammatical vocabulary such as: sentence, verb, tense, noun, adjective and pronoun, both in the context of their own writing and through specifically designed activities.
- Read examples of 'good' writing in various forms and begin to recognise the criteria for such writing.
- Have experience of and become accustomed to drafting and redrafting their work.
- Write in response to a wide range of stimuli.
- Become increasingly aware of the role of reference books such as dictionaries and thesauruses.
- Become increasingly aware of the correct modes of punctuation and spelling through the learning of rules and some rote learning of common exceptions.

The teacher should:

- Write alongside pupils, sharing and discussing their writing.
- Respond positively and with interest to all attempts at writing.
- Provide a healthy writing environment, including experimental or emergent writing areas for Key Stage 1.
- Teach handwriting on a regular basis.
- Reinforce correct spelling, punctuation and grammar where appropriate. This should include the teaching of basic rules of spelling, grammar, punctuation, as well as the more common exceptions.

The school should:

- Highlight writing as an important and valuable tool for all aspects of a child's education.
- Prominently display writing of all types, including the children's own writing.

Class Organisation and Teaching Style

The young child needs to build on the language experiences they bring to school. We have created situations for expansion of language through social and curriculum interests. The classroom environment produces a setting for learning through the opportunities given to the child. Classrooms which facilitate learning have to be carefully thought out, planned, prepared and managed; providing opportunities for children to be talkers, readers and writers.

Meaningful activities help the child to develop and these are supported by carefully selected, presented and arranged resources. The child when necessary, has the space needed to work alone. When a different approach, such as for example when a group or class discussion arises, the teacher will be mindful of the need and care to encourage the children to be thoughtful of each other.

Groupings should be flexible; children will acquire the skill of working together without too much fuss. Displayed within the classroom, a variety of books will promote interest and children may use them to seek out information. These should be made easily accessible for the children.

The main book area is sometimes doubled up as a role play area for discussion and drama activities within the classrooms of the younger children. An exciting part of the classroom is the book area which invites the children to develop a habit of reading. Interest is sustained if books are displayed clearly and are often changed. Pictorial displays around the school always provide interest and promote discussion, especially to the younger child. A bright and colourful environment stimulates the child's language power and so develops communicative skills.

Inclusion

In planning work the teachers will aim:

- to provide breadth and balance of language activities for all children
- to provide a differentiated English curriculum to meet the needs of all the children through the continuity of experiences
- to set suitable learning challenges for individuals or small groups of children
- to respond to pupils diverse learning needs
- to liaise with the Special Needs Co-ordinator to ensure that provision is made for all children with S.E.N.
- to relate activities for S.E.N children to their targets. Targets should be identified on short-term planning.
- to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

S.E.N. Provision

Pupils identified as needing extra support in English will be given the appropriate help in the classroom. Providing for pupils with special educational needs should take account of each pupil's particular learning and assessment requirements and incorporate specific approaches which will allow individuals to succeed, such as using texts at an appropriate level of difficulty and planning for additional support. Children's targets will be clearly identified on planning.

Use of ICT

There are many opportunities to use ICT in English and all staff at Westlands Primary School are encouraged to do so when appropriate. Reference to websites or E-Learning opportunities should be included on short term planning.

Assessment

The school policy for assessment is common for each core curriculum subject. Throughout the pupil's progress in English, assessment will be informal, formal, incidental and continuous. The various types of assessment are taken into account, each serving a different purpose. (See Assessment Policy)
Records are kept of the child's coverage of the programme of work and their progress. These are used to inform staff and other schools, as the child transfers from year to year.

In the EYFS, teachers assess children's learning using the Foundation Stage Profile. Most of the observations for assessment are based on those activities that children initiate and engage with independently across a range of provision.

Children are formally assessed (please refer to the Assessment Policy) every half term in all aspects of English. Children will be tested using a standardised reading test (PIRA / NTS assessments) and a grammar and punctuation test (Rising Stars). Children's writing will be assessed every half term using the key objectives for the year group and highlighted accordingly. All children have an individual reading record where children will be assessed to ensure rapid progress through the Book Bands is made. (See Assessment Policy).

We use English Assessment Grids to inform our teacher Assessments of children's strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing. Principally, teacher assessments, national tests and monitoring (both in school and by other agencies, such as OFSTED) will inform our work in English and help us to articulate appropriate targets.

Parents are kept informed of their child's progress through termly parent interviews and informal parent meetings which take place as and when the need arises. A written report of the child's progress, which includes possible ways forward, is given to parents at the end of the academic year.

Resources

A variety of resources are available in school. These include children's reference books, teachers' resources, books/notes, audio equipment and access to TV/radio/online programmes. Resources are shared between all staff, including visiting students. Resources are kept on bookshelves outside all classrooms, the library and the staffroom.

Each classroom has a selection of non-fiction for ongoing topic work. Reading scheme books are Book Banded and kept in the group rooms for KS1.

Staff submit resource requirements to the coordinator, as well as notifying them of any damaged stock. Resource purchasing is in accordance with normal school procedures and is based upon the English budget. The amount of this budget reflects the degree of priority given to English in the School Development Plan.

Equal Opportunities

We will strive to provide equal opportunities and fair and equal access at all times in English for all our pupils. We welcome into our school pupils from many different backgrounds and we will demonstrate in our practice that we value all of them as young learners entitled to full access to the primary English curriculum. Teaching and learning opportunities within English should be planned to enable the full and effective participation of all pupils. Planning should set high expectations and provide relevant learning opportunities for achievements for boys and girls and for pupils from all social backgrounds and ethnic groups. Teachers should assist pupils to high standards by using a variety of teaching strategies to motivate pupils; develop self esteem; make the most of resources from a variety of cultures; avoid stereotyping; and provide appropriate support.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the English coordinator, in consultation with the staff, and as and when elements of English are identified or prioritised within the School Development Plan.