



Policy for English

Introduction

This policy document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the learning and teaching of literacy. It was developed through a process of consultation between the Headteacher, class teachers and governors, in relation to existing school policies, and national and LEA guidelines and curriculum orders.

The Importance of Literacy

'English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.' (National Curriculum 2013)

English lessons are delivered in accordance with the principles stated in our Learning and Teaching and Marking policies, supported by our Behaviour and Discipline Policy and our Health and Safety Policy. We hold the professional judgement of teachers as an essential feature in the delivery of English lessons in our school.

Aims

In English, and all subjects, pupils will be taught to express themselves correctly and appropriately, to read accurately and with understanding. Since Standard English, spoken and written, is the predominant language in which knowledge and skills are taught and learned, pupils will be taught to recognise and use Standard English. Our English curriculum 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.

Speaking and Listening

'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' (National curriculum 2013)

The children will be provided with a rich, stimulating, learning environment in which language can flourish, where children's words are treated with respect and where language is a source of inspiration, as well as information.

Pupils will be taught to speak clearly, using language precisely, and cogently, thinking about the needs of their listeners. They will be taught to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively. They will be taught to use language in imaginative ways and express their ideas and feelings when working in role, in drama activities, and in group discussion and interaction. Children will be given 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.

Reading

Pupils will be taught to use a range of strategies to help them to read with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment, having experience of a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, both on paper and on screen.

Teachers at Leftwich:

- aim to make reading as exciting, enjoyable and informative for children as they can, in order to develop a love of reading.
- ensure that word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words
- emphasises in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school.
- teach these objectives through a balance of shared, guided and independent reading sessions and see opportunities to reinforce these across the curriculum.
- understand that good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world
- use the 'Letters and Sounds' document
- aim to focus on comprehension both in English lessons and other curriculum areas, including the higher order skills of inference and deduction
- make links between reading and writing
- involve parents in the teaching of reading, and encourage children to read a widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live
- use the school library as resource for the teaching of reading, as well as an opportunity for children to browse through books of their own choosing during Library sessions
- support book-related events, such as World Book Day and Book Fairs

Reading opportunities are provided every day. Emphasis is placed on creating a classroom environment which encourages purposeful reading and a love of books. Environments are print-rich and displays require children to use their reading skills daily. Children are encouraged to read their own and other children's work, as well as signs, labels, notices and lists etc, which allow them to access all areas of the curriculum, as well as daily routines. Each classroom has

an area set aside to provide children with an inviting environment within which to read and a wide selection of books to choose from.

Individual reading

Individual reading is encouraged at both Key Stages. Teachers use the book-banding system as a prop for the selection of books for children. These bands run from Pink Level to Ruby level, ensuring support throughout both Key Stages. Teachers refer to the Book-banding lists, which offer a correlation between books read and a reading age.

Children change their books regularly and their reading and choice is monitored by staff. Reading diaries are in place for communication between home and school. Parents are encouraged to support their children's reading. Reading Challenges are in place, in each Junior classroom aimed at encouraging all children to read at home, as well as aiming to encourage parental involvement. Should a member of staff be concerned about parental involvement, a standard 'Reading at Home' letter will be sent home with the child. This letter requires a response from the parents.

Guided Reading

Staff deliver guided reading sessions once a week, using sets of books, banded according to the book-banding scheme. Records of sessions are made using the guided reading record sheet, which, in turn, are linked to the National Curriculum statements, which we track using SPTO. Use is made of the Longmans Guided Reading scheme and the Pearsons 'Bug Club' sets of books, which link well and provide differentiation. Staff also use the resource library to borrow books for specific purposes or children. Attention is also paid to the other activities which take place during Guided Reading time, as many members of staff teach Guided Reading as part of a rotation of activities. The other activities in this rotation should be of a high standard, and ensure that progress is being made each session. They include activities such as reading comprehension task, spelling practise and time spent at a listening station.

Writing

Pupils are taught writing skills through a series of lesson based on the 'Talk for Writing' scheme, which has been adapted by the school. The teaching of writing occurs in three phases: imitation, innovation and invention. During the 'imitation' phase the children look at an example of a text and discuss its features. The text may be learnt off by heart, placed on a story map or even boxed up into sections. Children will then move to the 'innovation' stage where they learn to adapt the original text in order to change its focus/topic. Finally, the lessons will move to an 'invention' stage, this is where the children create their own pieces of writing. Throughout all of these stages teachers will focus the children's learning on the key skills needed in order to make progress with the genre of writing.

Throughout a series of writing lessons teachers at Leftwich:

- encourage writing for a variety of purposes and audiences
- teach writing skills alongside a commitment to write in other subject areas
- encourage writing opportunities in Reception in all areas of learning, and the environment within the classroom reflects this.
- celebrate good writing by awarding certificates during achievement assemblies, award 'WOW' moments during the week and displaying examples of good work
- create an English Wall in each classroom, which displays prompts for children to access
- create a Learning Wall, which reflects current vocabulary and focus
- encourage writing in a range of books (i.e. Topic and Science)
- teach discrete word and sentence level work linked to the current focus

- follow a clear system of marking writing in line with the school's Marking Policy and marking guidelines given to staff for easy reference and displayed in classrooms
- ensure that an enjoyment for writing is created by using high quality texts, examples of which are set out for each class in the school 'Whole school text lists'. This also ensures a suitable level of challenge.

Handwriting

The school's approach to handwriting is applied in all cross-curricular situations. Although handwriting skills are taught discretely, great emphasis is placed throughout the school on the transference of these skills to children's own writing. It is also acknowledged that word-processing packages are used to present written work and that children need to improve presentation using a range of presentation devices, on screen and on paper, in accordance with the National Curriculum. 'Writing... depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting' (National Curriculum 2016)

Teachers at Leftwich:

- value clear and neat presentation by encouraging children to develop a legible cursive style of handwriting
- make the teaching and practice of handwriting as enjoyable and meaningful as possible
- teach handwriting in accordance with the 'Handwriting and Presentation' strand of the National Curriculum for the appropriate year, allowing for maximum involvement and interaction
- aim to have a short handwriting session of teaching/practice at least weekly
- make links between joined handwriting and more accurate spelling
- use the additional support of the Nelson Handwriting Teacher's book and its Resource and Assessment materials for the appropriate year group, as determined by the needs of the child
- teach correct letter formation alongside the delivery of 'Letters and Sounds'
- aim to have the majority of children joining up writing by the end of Year 2, developing their own style of handwriting as they move through school

Spelling

The two statutory appendices in the National Curriculum on spelling and on vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, have been included in our programme of study.

Teachers at Leftwich:

- make the teaching and practice of spelling and the development of spelling strategies as enjoyable and meaningful to the children as possible
- understand the development of spelling through its stages
- understand the need to develop predominantly phonetic as well as visual strategies, in order for children to become efficient spellers
- plan to teach spelling according to SPaG section of the National Curriculum for the appropriate year, allowing for maximum involvement and interaction
- use the Diagnostic Spelling Test to group children for differentiation when extra support is needed and when homework is being set
- teach Spelling in a discrete word level lesson at least weekly
- make links between accurate spelling and joined writing

- give children opportunities to practise spelling at home and at school on a regular basis. Every Junior child has a spelling book in school with the 'Look Say Cover Write Check' strategy being key
- Spelling homework should focus on an application of the skills being taught.
- follow a clear system of marking children's spelling, in accordance with the school's Marking Policy and marking guidelines given to staff for easy reference and on display in classrooms
- use relevant resource materials for the teaching of spelling i.e. 'Support for Spelling' and 'Phonic Spelling'

In Key Stage 2, emphasis is placed on editing as one means of improving spelling, encouraging children to be self-critical and know 'where they are' as spellers. KS2 classes are encouraged to use the marking symbols used by staff when editing a piece of work.

Phonics

Teachers at Leftwich believe the development of phonic strategies is vital in the development of children as efficient readers and spellers. The reading and spelling of words is taught using a multi-disciplinary approach, with speaking and listening, games and fun being the key features. The 'Letters and Sounds' document remains the main resource used in these groups for the delivery of objectives.

Children's progress in phonics is tracked termly, with the English leader looking at trends over time.

Teaching ensures that work in speaking and listening, reading and writing is integrated.

Planning

There is a strong emphasis on the key skills which link all curriculum areas particularly the development of speaking and listening. Thematic planning is central to our philosophy of how children learn best. Our planning for English is in line with the EYFS document, Letters and Sounds document, the National Curriculum (September 2013) and the exemplification material of 2016. Our planning follows the three steps taken from 'Talk for Writing', this is a powerful model as '... it is based on the principles of how children learn ... it enables children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version' (Talk for Writing website September 2016)

Planning is used to set clear achievable goals, ensure work is matched to pupils' needs, experiences and interests, ensure progression, continuity, and broad subject coverage, and provides criteria for assessment and evaluation of teaching and learning.

At Foundation Stage, the Communication and Language (Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking) and Literacy (Reading and Writing) provision is in line with EYFS guidelines. Daily planning is based on children's interests, observations of children, monitoring of Learning Journeys and this impacts on teaching and learning. Communication and Language, and Literacy opportunities are clear in all areas of the classroom.

The English medium term planning in Key Stage 1 and 2 gives an overview of the objectives for each unit of work being taught, as specified in the National Curriculum.

The unit plan, used in Key Stages 1 and 2 shows objectives, main activities, differentiated group activities and AFL opportunities. It also follows the 3 stages on imitation, innovation and invention for each genre of writing

Planning for Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing draws on a number of documents used in school e.g. Literacy Strategy support documents and flyers, Developing Early Writing, Grammar for Writing and Letters and Sounds. Planning for the teaching of handwriting follows the objectives and guidelines as set out in the National Curriculum, with additional support from the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

The use of Information and Communication Technology across the Curriculum

- Pupils will be given opportunities to apply and develop their Computing capability through the use of ICT tools to support their learning in Literacy
- Pupils will be given opportunities to support their work by being taught to: -
 - Find things out from a variety of sources, selecting and using the information to meet their needs and developing an ability to consider its accuracy and value
 - Develop their needs using ICT tools to amend and refine their work and enhance its quality
 - Exchange and share information, both directly and through electronic media
 - Review, modify and evaluate their work, reflecting critically on its quality, as it progresses.

Assessment, recording and reporting

Assessment is ongoing. Lessons are taught based on the achievement and needs of the children as identified by the previous lesson and level of skill acquired. A note is made of children who exceed, meet or do not achieve the objectives, on daily/unit plans and the class intervention book

AFL is key to all lessons, and used to inform the SPTO tracking of children. The children's writing and reading are levelled three times during the academic year against age related expectations (ARE).

Resources used to level children's English work are:

Foundation Stage Profile

Letters and Sounds assessment guidance

National Curriculum statements shown on SPTO for Writing, Reading and Speaking and Listening

Exemplification documents provided by DfE and the Literacy Company

Guided Reading grids

Benchmarking Kit

Year 6 SATS

SWIST

Suffolk Reading Scale

Targets are set using the outcome of these assessments and children are encouraged to be involved in this process.

In Reception, children's progress is measured against the Foundation Stage Profile. Regular discussions are had with Smallworld Nursery regarding attainment in Communication and Language, and Literacy.

A piece of unaided writing is assessed at the end of each unit, and marked against the SPTO system, targets from which are shared with each child (and their parents) on a termly basis

Strong emphasis is placed on peer support strategies to enable pupils to identify the next steps in their learning.

Achievement in English is formally reported to parents in the end of year written report.

Resources

Every class is provided with basic equipment and resources for the needs of the class. There is a central store for more specialised equipment, books and resources.

The school's central library provides opportunities for children to access a range of books to support the teaching of literacy and delivery of objectives. It is stocked with books bought by school, and supplemented by books supplied by the County's resource library.

Inclusion

In recognition of our school's adherence to the principles of equal opportunities we aim to cater for SEN, all ranges in ability, gifted and talented children, ethnic diversity, gender issues, disability issues and social inclusion. Our planning, resources and delivery of the curriculum will reflect this. Emphasis is placed on meeting the diverse needs of children through a variety of learning and teaching styles.

Intervention programmes for the teaching of English currently running are:

Early Literacy Support

Further Literacy Support

Speech and Language programmes, as directed by the S and L Service
Wave 3

Toe by Toe

Stairway to Spelling

Ricky's World

Review and Evaluation

Policy review will be undertaken annually by the subject leaders, and where significant issues arise, discussed by the whole staff. Monitoring by the leaders is on-going and takes a variety of forms: classroom observations, wall walks, sampling and scrutiny of planning and work etc.

Policy date: September 2016

Policy review date: September 2018

Signed:

Chair of Governors: _____ Date: _____

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____