



West Rainton Primary School

Policy for English

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Mrs S Firth

Mission statement

Since being a small child, I have always had a passion for English; it all began when I was teaching my dolls English as a seven year old girl. I've always had a fascination with books, reading many classics as a child, and being an avid reader from an early age. It's part of my real passion for education, to ensure that children develop a love of reading and writing, which can both be so commonly lost now, in this era of technology.

As a teenager at secondary school, my final set of English work was based on 'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen; a superb literary example of iconic writing. I've developed my love of language from this and it is a pleasure to hear texts like this read aloud. Ironically, another of my favourite texts is 'Trainspotting' by Irvine Welsh; a text with entirely different language and context, yet a highly enjoyable, and incredibly well-written text.

Since beginning training as a teacher, over twenty years ago, and having taught from Nursery to Year 6, at one time or another, I have had the opportunity to enjoy many texts over the years. I've had countless favourites; in particular I enjoy 'The Tiger who Came to Tea,' by Judith Kerr, 'Born to Run' by Michael Morpurgo and 'Tadpole's Promise' by Jeanne Willis. From high quality texts, it is highly pleasurable discussing the content and using them as a stimulus for creative writing. Additionally, the use of other fantastic books, including ones without text, such as 'The Snowman' by Raymond Briggs, can be inspiring for pupils who need to develop their vocabulary choices, and promote real thinking in regards to language that they want to use in their own writing. This has been developed greatly over the last seven years in particular, at our school.

These days, I've moved on to a Kindle; not because I don't enjoy handling books, I just read so many that it is easier, especially when I travel.

The English curriculum that we have carefully put together, intends to provide our children with the best possible skills, to allow them to access the wider curriculum readily, and give them a strong foundation for their future. I'm immensely proud of how the subject of English has developed and become one of our many pillars of strength, here at West Rainton Primary School.

Mrs Susan Firth

At West Rainton Primary, the following four key drivers underpin our learning, and are developed through the school's individual subject curriculum planning, our extensive extra-curricular provision and our abundantly rich 'hidden' curriculum:

Aiming high

Undoubtedly, we want our pupils to be inspired by our provision, and to ignite strong aspirations and high expectations of themselves and their future. Promotion of strong attendance is fundamental in this, to ensure that pupils access as much learning as possible. Through the use of visits, visitors and enriching experiences, we will build knowledge and understanding of career possibilities as well as a hunger to embrace new and exciting opportunities. We will ensure we plan regular opportunities for children to develop self-belief and to see the benefits of taking risks and overcoming challenge. Our pupils will be supported to light up future pathways to fulfilling lives of employment choices, prosperity and future happiness.



Skills for learning and life

Equally as important to us is the development of the whole child. Feeling safe, happy and valued is a fundamental right of all pupils. Our inclusive-rich ethos provides the backdrop to our personal development and wellbeing provision which is skilfully interwoven into all that we do. All pupils are supported to develop a strong understanding of the importance of good physical and mental health, whilst also learning a whole range of factors and influences that can have a negative impact on us. Making, nurturing and maintaining healthy relationships, both on and offline, equips children with the strength and security to recognise what they want and need in life. We believe a strong understanding of e-safety forms a crucial part of being a healthy, well-rounded 21st century global citizen.



Growing healthily

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Knowledge of the world

When our pupils leave us at the end of Y6, we want them to feel so proud of themselves as people that they have the personal strength and self-confidence to find their place as positive global citizens. Through our carefully-planned provision, our pupils will experience a diverse and inclusive-rich experience that allows them to bank cultural capital as well as developing a secure



understanding of the importance of equality. As well as a secure knowledge of British values, our pupils will have their minds and horizons broadened through diverse social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences. Pupils will be regularly encouraged to revisit and extend their world-view, fostering tolerance, sensitivity and empathy to interact positively with others.

The following section remains prevalent in case of a future outbreak, which hinders our ability to operate as normal:

COVID-19

Amendments to the curriculum were made in response to the procedures put in place in March 2020, and extensive planning and organising has been done to ensure that a full return of all pupils was safe and well-managed in September 2020, and once again in September 2021:

- Daily English lessons and/or phonics lessons, accessible by Teams or by packs delivered to homes (with social distancing and hygiene procedures adhered to) by school staff, if a pupil tests positive and needs to isolate.
- Procedures in place in regards to borrowing school reading books; cleaned by staff, or quarantined for 72 hours before allowing others to borrow them.

English Policy

Introduction

There are four main purposes to this policy:

It establishes an entitlement for all pupils

It establishes expectations for the standards to be achieved

It builds on what pupils have learned previously and promotes continuity and coherence across the school

It states the school's approaches to this subject in order to promote public, and particularly parents' and carers', understanding of the curriculum

Purpose of Study

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to write and speak 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 participate fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

Aims

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of 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 other and participating in debate.

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 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 other and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should 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 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 speaking and listening across the six years of primary education form part of the National Curriculum. At West Rainton Primary School, staff are skilled in ensuring that progression is evident throughout the school, and evidence this for each cohort of pupils, to inform future planning. These are reflected and contextualised within reading and writing domains which follow.

Reading

The Programmes for Study for reading at Key Stages One and Two 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 words printed (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. At West Rainton Primary School, this is taught using the Read, Write Inc programme for structured, progressive phonics teaching.

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 wide range of stories, poems and non-fiction. Our approach to English in all year groups is through the reading of a quality novel every term, or half term as appropriate. The novel chosen is dependent on the reading ability of the class, and the skills being developed. The English co-ordinator plans a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum for each academic year, and holds the rights to alter the curriculum at any time. This ensures that all pupils are challenged appropriately. 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. This is particularly successful in the use of novels set in one or two generations ago. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house 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 One and Two are constructed similarly to those for reading:

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

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 have been incorporated into the Programmes of Study for composition.

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 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. At West Rainton Primary School, pupils are taught a wide range of writing skills and tasks through the use of a novel. This may include diary entries, letters, character and setting description, and many other writing styles. The ability to adapt and develop their skills in this way emphasises their ability to write for meaning.

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arises 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 and punctuation. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simple to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. Throughout the Programme 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.

Learning during the three Key Stages in school

In Reception, the children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. The Programmes of Study for English are set out year-by-year for Key Stage One and two-yearly for Key Stage Two. The single year group blocks at Key Stage One reflect the rapid pace of development in word reading during these two years.

Expectations

By the end of Key Stage One, the performance of the great majority of the pupils should be working at expected Year 2. Some pupils will be working at greater depth within Year 2.

By the end of Year 4, the performance of the great majority of pupils should be working at expected Year 4. Some pupils will be working at greater depth within Year 4.

By the end of Key Stage Two, the performance of the great majority of the pupils should be working at expected Year 6, with some pupils working within greater depth.

Strategy for implementation - entitlement and curriculum provision

English is a core subject of the National Curriculum and pupils undertake English as a discrete subject on a daily basis. The teaching of English is also reflected and reinforced in other subjects, as we are focused on the teaching and learning of the basic skills at West Rainton Primary School. It is vital that pupils realise from an early age that they need to learn and utilise life skills throughout their daily living. The work covered in Key Stage 1 builds on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils in Reception develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through play activities and direct teaching from which the pupils undertake planned tasks. Planning is in-line with the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014.

Teaching and learning

All lessons have clear learning objectives which are shared and reviewed with the pupils effectively. A variety of strategies, including questioning, discussion, concept mapping and marking, are used to assess progress. The information is used to identify what is taught next. Writing is assessed using our writing checklists, which can be found at the beginning of all pupils' English books, from Year One upwards. This ensures that pupils have a sound awareness of what they need to do to progress further in their writing. Activities are challenging, motivating and extend pupils' learning.

Assessment and Recording

Teachers' assessment takes place after each piece of work and each unit against the success criteria provided. Writing is assessed as detailed above. Reading is assessed using half termly tests, and teacher assessments. At the end of each term this is used to input summative tracking without levels on the schools SIMS data system. This in turn is used to help complete the annual report to parents. We also assess our Year 6 pupils using English SATs from previous years in order to validate our teacher assessments prior to moving them on to their next phase of learning.

In line with the engagement model, published in July 2020 by the STA, pupils who are working below the standards of the National Curriculum year group that they are in, will be assessed using the areas of engagement specified. This document is statutory as of September 2021, and is in use at West Rainton Primary School.

Continuity and Progression

The school ensures curriculum continuity by following the curriculum map which is altered annually and by close liaison between staff at the planning stages.

Pupils with Special Needs and/or disabilities

Pupils with diverse learning needs are provided for through:

- ✓ Teachers planning for the pupils full participation.
- ✓ Setting high expectations.
- ✓ Providing opportunities for all pupils to achieve.
- ✓ Creating effective learning environments.
- ✓ Providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches.
- ✓ Setting learning targets.
- ✓ Liaison with SENCO and the development and delivery of appropriate SEN support plans
- ✓ Liaison with outside agencies, e.g. psychological services.
- ✓ Appropriate intervention (As set out in the Code of Practice)
- ✓ Allowing pupils access to specialist equipment and approaches where necessary.
- ✓ Liaison with the adviser for gifted and talented pupils.

- ✓ More able pupils are planned for appropriately.
- ✓ This is supported by our equal opportunities policy.
- ✓ Continuous consultation with and involvement of parents.

Equal Opportunities

The teaching of English in our school takes consideration of our equal opportunities policy and inclusion. We recognise children as individuals and base our teaching upon our knowledge of their specific needs. A range of teaching methods and resources allow children with a wide range of abilities to achieve their full potential. Interventions are also carried out in a timely manner where appropriate.

Organisation

English is taught as a discrete subject, and is enhanced through cross-curricular learning as regularly as possible.

Curriculum

Teachers plan using the curriculum map written by the subject leader on an annual basis. They are also supported with ideas of how to develop the subject within the classroom, as part of our shared responsibility for the progression and development of all of our pupils. High expectations are at the very heart of our learning in English, and it is vital that pupils are challenged in their learning. Each half term, pupils read a class text, with a range of non-fiction texts to supplement this, as part of our school reading spine. Often, cross-curricular work is carried out, including art work to enhance the learning experience for our pupils. Our school also has a spelling framework to follow, which has been written in accordance to the National Curriculum 2014 requirements. Pupils are issued with spellings each week to learn, after being taught the pattern in the class first. They are differentiated with their ability in mind, and with the view to matching age-related expectations. Pupils are also taught the punctuation and grammar elements for their age group, which is mapped out for teachers annually. Differentiation is also a key part of this, as pupils should be taught what they need to learn next, with challenge and progression always in mind. The teaching of handwriting is also an essential part of the English curriculum, as pupils at West Rainton Primary School are taught to always strive to produce their best level of presentation.

Learning Resources

Learning resources are kept in the library, and sets of texts are kept in the Deputy Headteacher's classroom.

The Learning Environment

Classrooms should have displays of children's writing. Displays should show a greater percentage of pupils' writing than teacher work and/or writing. The classroom should have relevant vocabulary on display, and writing prompts.

Extra-curricular opportunities

From time to time teachers plan to undertake fieldwork, visits to places of scientific interest and invite visitors to the school in order to support the learning objectives for units of work where relevant.

Homework

Pupils are expected to read every night at home for 10-15 minutes and parents are asked to sign their reading record to show their support. Pupils also have spellings to learn each week in school. They also have access to Spelling Shed, an interactive tool to support spelling progression. On some

occasions, teachers may send additional homework, such as reading comprehension or a writing task as appropriate.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have an important role to play in helping their pupils learn key English skills, through reading nightly and supporting the learning of spellings. This will be explained to parents when their children join the school and teachers should take the opportunity of reinforcing this appropriately during interviews with parents.

The Contribution of English to other Aspects of the Curriculum

The teaching of English is promoted throughout the curriculum.

Science

Pupils are expected to apply their writing skills when writing up experiments and investigations. They can also extensively promote their skills in spoken language.

History, Geography and RE

The development of extended writing is encouraged through all aspects of these subjects. Pupils should be taught to demonstrate their writing skills through tasks in other aspects of the curriculum.

SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural)

Many of the novels on the curriculum map have moral aspects for the pupils to discuss. This plays a key part in English lessons, and allows pupils to relate to the events taking place.

Leadership and management - Staff development and training opportunities

The Headteacher discusses development needs so that the needs of individual members of staff are identified within the school's performance management programme. Staff attending training are expected to share the useful points with other relevant staff. EYFS, KS1 & KS2 teachers discuss needs with the Headteacher and English co-ordinator to ensure that planned units of work are adequately resourced.

How the subject is monitored and evaluated

All teachers are responsible for monitoring standards using the assessment procedures described in this policy. This is overseen by the English co-ordinator termly. The English co-ordinator also carries out a fortnightly book scrutiny, to monitor the learning taking place in each classroom. The English co-ordinator is also responsible for the production and implementation of the action plan. The English co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning, and that planning is adapted in accordance to this. The English co-ordinator plans a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum for each academic year, and holds the rights to alter the curriculum at any time. This ensures that all pupils are challenged appropriately.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years in line with the school's policy review programme. The Headteacher is responsible for reporting to the Governors' about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

Mrs S Firth

September 2025