



ENGLISH POLICY

September 2015

To be reviewed September 2018

Introduction

At Holme J & I School we believe that the teaching and learning of English is fundamental to the overall development of the child. We aim to deliver quality teaching of reading, writing and spoken English within a broad, balanced and creative curriculum to enable pupils to become confident, successful, and achieve their potential in their learning journeys. We follow the Statutory National Curriculum and other guidance to enable quality teaching and learning to take place.

The aims of the teaching and learning of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their audience
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard, and respond appropriately
- to enable children to adapt their speech for a wide range of audiences and purposes
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used
- to enable children to explore and evaluate their own and others' thoughts, feelings and beliefs, through a range of drama activities
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge and to develop an understanding of the authors' voice
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through immersion in a range of challenging, texts and discussions, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry.
- to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value in learning, structuring thoughts, remembering and communicating through a variety of structures
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction and poetry, and have an understanding of how spelling, grammar and punctuation is an integral part of this.
- to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.

Requirements

The new English programme of study (2014) is based on 4 areas:

- Spoken language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation

Spoken language

At Holme J & I School, we believe spoken language underpins the progression of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary, grammar and understanding. We believe that all staff should ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills.

The four strands to speaking and listening are:

1. Speaking;
2. Listening and responding;
3. Group discussion and interaction;
4. Drama.

These oral skills are directly taught, modelled and encouraged in whole class and small group settings and are a fundamental part of our teaching methodology. We believe that if a child is unable to say something, thus orally rehearsing it, then they are unable to write it. Opportunities across the whole curriculum are planned for to develop these skills. Children regularly play an active part in presentations, topic talks, group discussions, debates, assemblies and drama activities. Children regularly work with talk partners to share and discuss their ideas and this process is modelled by staff. Children are taught how to explain their understanding of books and other reading material to prepare their ideas before they write.

Reading

At Holme J & I School, reading is taught through:

- **The teaching of phonics** in EYFS and KS1 (and KS2 when appropriate)
- **whole class reading** which develops listening skills, a love of stories and reading for pleasure. This is teacher led with children listening and responding to questions about predictions and vocabulary choices.
- **shared reading** which immerses children in the pattern of story and features of text types. This is linked to cross-curricular themes. The teacher initially models the reading - supported visually by a text related to the genre being studied, story map and/or physical movements to help the children recall the text. Once children have internalised the language of the text, they are in a position to read the text together and to start thinking about the key ingredients that help to make it work.
- **guided and 1:1 reading** which targets children's reading skills. Guided and 1:1 reading takes place in small groups or individually with adult input, using a levelled text. In EYFS and KS1, guided reading books are banded into sets. These books have controlled vocabulary and grammar skills and individual progress is recorded in reading files by all staff and reading volunteers. Children are moved onto the next stage **by the class teacher** as soon as they have been assessed and have met the National Standards for that level using the book band sheets. In KS2 books are levelled into abilities within the year groups and categorised into genres. Progress records are completed during each reading session by an adult. Reading is taught with clear objectives that focus on comprehension through retrieval by inference and deduction. Children are taught how to interpret the author's viewpoint and how to voice their own personal response to texts.
- **reading buddies** in school are part of the responsibilities of KS2 children. Children in EYFS and KS1 are supported by children in KS2 daily and share books together.
- **independent reading** at home and at school. Books are sent home with a reading record for communication with parents. In Foundation Stage and KS1 children take home a book daily to share with their parents. Books are changed on a daily basis or as required. These books have controlled vocabulary and grammar skills and children progress through the levels. In KS2 children may choose their own book to take home and these are changed regularly. Some children in KS2 are also given scheme books to further support their reading skills. In school children are given regular opportunities to select books of their choosing and read alone or share them with a friend or reading volunteer.
In the early stages of independent reading, support is given when selecting books. Reading for pleasure is promoted as well as reading to support learning in school.
Reading throughout school is progressive following a wide range of levelled phonic, fiction and non-fiction books in reading schemes that promote interest and challenge, for example The Oxford Reading Tree, Read Write Inc., Nelson Thornes, Ginn etc and popular quality texts, as available in national book shops that have been levelled and colour banded.
In guided reading, where possible, staff and pupils select a levelled book to complement the class topic, or support particular interests.

How parents/Carers can support reading at home

EYFS parents and parents of children joining year groups further up the school are invited to an introduction meeting at which information and strategies are shared with parents so that they can support and extend their child's reading daily.

Assessment of Reading

All reading is assessed against the Age Related Expectations during guided reading sessions, follow up activities and individual reading interviews. Formative and summative assessments are used to inform teacher judgements and set pupil targets. At the beginning of each year, the children sit age related baseline tests. Each child is then assessed regularly throughout the year. These results inform each pupil's progress over the academic year, leading to their end of year attainment relative to age related expectations.

The Reading Environment

Around school the print rich environment encourages children to interact with displays and to follow instructions and signs, promoting functional language. Within the classroom the reading areas are attractive and inviting and books are clearly accessible. Audio CDs, story props and puppets also enhance the reading environments and the school library is used daily, providing reference and reading materials for children and staff.

Writing

The curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

Our aims and connected provision

- We teach phonics/grammar/spelling discreetly, in all year groups every day for 30 minute sessions and then teach it's application in context through the curriculum
- We correct grammatical error orally/ written work (where appropriate)
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice
- We encourage and promote 'talk for writing'
- We provide writing frames and scaffolds to support the less confident
- We provide opportunities for children to complete extended writing/ Big Write sessions which take place once every half term
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising
- We give clear and constructive feedback, following our **Feedback for Learning Policy** so that children know what is good about their work and how it can be improved. Children follow up feedback by completing these next steps (see **Feedback for Learning Policy**)
- We use success criteria for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively
- We encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed

- We use hot-seating and other drama techniques to help pupils to think about alternative points of view
- Support for pupils with learning and motor difficulties is given through use of apparatus and fine/gross motor skill activities

Phonics and Spelling

In the Foundation Stage and KS1 we follow the phonics programme *Letters and Sounds*. We believe this is a powerful and progressive teaching tool which ensures that young children are well-placed to read and spell words with fluency and confidence by the time they reach the end of KS1. Phonics is taught discretely each day. At the end of Y1 children complete *The Phonics Screening Check* to confirm if they have learned phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. This is a short, child-friendly assessment which the children enjoy and it serves to identify those who require extra support. The *Phonics Screening Check* consists of forty words - twenty real, and twenty 'alien' words, that the pupil must decode and read. Children who have not met the phonics targets by the end of Y1 are given extra support in Y2. They are then reassessed at the end of Y2 using the current year's *Phonics Screening Check*. Phonics continues to be taught throughout lower KS2 for children who have still not reached the expected level.

In KS2 spelling is taught discretely using the National Curriculum suggested spelling patterns and key words for topic work. Spelling is taught discretely each week in KS2 and then spelling strategies are modelled through all areas of the curriculum. The following strategies are used to teach spelling in KS2:

- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learn
- Display of key words linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- Learning about the etymology of words (where the words and spellings originate)
- Strategies such as the development of mnemonics (e.g. Seven ants in distress for 'said')
- Focus on spelling patterns
- Using dictionaries, thesauruses and similar programmes
- Carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate

Handwriting

Handwriting and letter formation is taught discretely throughout school using the Nelson handwriting scheme. Staff model the correct way of forming letters with joining flicks, and joined up writing begins towards the end of Y1 and especially in Y2, when the individual child's fine motor skills are so ready. High standards of presentation and correct letter orientation is emphasised at all times and through all forms of writing across school.

Vocabulary Development:

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' since it allows pupils to access a wider range of vocabulary when writing and for pupils to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active

- Progressive/ systematic
- Making links from known words
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning
- Subject specific - accurate, including mathematical and scientific words
- So that children are able to progress from naming, describing, retelling and justifying language

Preparing to Write

To prepare pupils to write, teachers follow a sequence which enables children to orally imitate the language they need for a particular topic before analysing it and writing their own versions. Through creative activities children are able to rehearse the tone of the language they need which is then followed by shared writing activities with the class teacher. This in turn leads into guided and then independent writing.

Early Years

The English curriculum begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a number of different areas. Firstly within the 3 prime areas there are aspects which are key:

Personal Social and Emotional Development;

Developing relationships with others, learning how to manage their behaviour and feelings and establishing self-confidence and a positive approach to new experiences, all needs to happen in order for young children to be able to talk to their friends and react positively when faced with new experiences, including those more English based.

Communication and Language

Children's ability to listen to others within a range of situations, including listening to stories, and to follow instructions and to develop their understanding of what is being asked of them needs to happen, as well as the development of their speech. These early communication skills are so important before children are introduced to the more formal writing associated with the teaching of English.

Physical Development

Children need to develop their physical skills, both large motor skills such as crawling, drawing with whole arm movements, coordination skills, and preference for a dominant hand, and fine motor skills changing from whole arm movements to hand and then finger movements as they learn to hold a pencil correctly and use it with control.

Within the other aspects of the EYFS curriculum early English skills are seen in:

Literacy

Children learn early mark making skills, developing into letter shapes and then linking sounds to letters as they begin to write simple words. They learn about rhyme and alliteration, and develop an increased awareness of print and words in the environment. As they link sounds to letters they begin to spell phonetically plausible words. Children learn to handle books carefully, join in with repeated

refrains, have favourite books and begin to learn and use story language such as character, beginning, end, title, blurb etc. They learn to blend sounds to make words and to read words accurately, and to talk about the stories they have heard.

Expressive Arts and Design

As young children learn to differentiate with sounds, to clap rhythms and to play imaginatively with others they learn skills which will develop into being able to hear sounds within words, distinguish syllables, learn to spell and to act out and retell stories.

Writing Opportunities

- **Shared writing** which is modelled by the teacher and where children participate and contribute their own ideas. The emphasis is on the generation of ideas, grammatical awareness, spelling and phonics, text level skills and other key strategies needed in writing. Shared writing is used in most subjects across the curriculum and lessons are planned to provide children with opportunities to write for a purpose.
- **Guided writing** which targets children at *their* point of writing. Guided writing takes place in small groups and 1:1 with a teaching focus, using targets and writing already modelled. The main part of the session is spent with the child writing and the adult supporting when necessary.
- **Independent writing.** Throughout school children are given opportunities to develop their confidence and practise their writing skills. All writing activities have a purpose and quality is promoted through book making, publication or presentation to an audience. Writing is modelled and supported from emergence to quality writing. Independent writing is supported through the use of dictionaries, thesauruses, word banks, writing frames, story plans, story maps and working walls.
- **Writing environment.** The school environment celebrates quality writing through displays of work in both handwritten and typed form as well as signs and labels. All classrooms have attractive and well-equipped resources for writing which children can access. Each class also has a working wall which is interactive and can be used to record, visualise and assist learning. Opportunities for writing are planned for and accessible throughout the learning environment and the school day. Functional and creative writing is demonstrated and promoted by staff and visitors.

Assessment of Writing

The assessment of writing is both formative and summative, requiring teachers to assess writing skills across a range of texts against Age Related Expectations. Assessment is of Transcription (spelling and handwriting), Composition and Grammar and Punctuation (at sentence and text level, and punctuation). Assessment through marking and feedback informs next steps which are completed by the children at their target level.

Use of Computer Technology

ICT is used to enhance the written communication experience and support effective teaching and learning. All classrooms have an interactive whiteboard and computers and all children in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 have the opportunity to use the computer suite. There are a range of writing and teaching programs on all computers to support the teaching and acquisition of English skills and for presentation of work. Using a desktop, laptop or iPad is seen as integral to the written communication process and is accessed by pupils from EYFS then throughout their time at Holme J & I School.

Specific Groups

- Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly. Pupils who are making little or no progress are discussed and interventions put in place.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium may be given additional English support and this is monitored for effectiveness termly
- Pupils with EAL are given additional support in all aspects of English
- Pupils who are gifted and talented receive additional challenge and where appropriate a differentiated curriculum

Targets in English

Based upon formative and summative assessment, targets relative to age related expectations are set for each pupil in all year groups. These are celebrated when met, and the next target set to ensure progression.

Equality in English

Gender equality is promoted by ensuring texts do not stereotype, and that all pupils have access to quality texts reflecting cultural and gender diversity. SEN and EAL pupils are supported using pictorial and visual clues to support comprehension. Pupils achieving at a high level are supported by providing texts that allow them to deepen and enrich their literacy development and encourage critical thinking skills.