

# **Policy for English & Literacy**

## **with Appendices for Handwriting and Drama**

### **Principles**

Literacy develops children's ability to communicate and express themselves creatively and imaginatively. Children gain an understanding of how language works by learning about its patterns, structures and origins.

We aim to:

- teach children how to craft language for particular effects, through an understanding of how texts are created in relation to genre, purpose and audience
- provide inter-active opportunities for children to practise using language in relevant, 'real life' contexts
- provide opportunities for children to communicate independent views and opinions, respond imaginatively and express feelings through spoken and written language
- enable children to make critical responses about the language which they read, view and hear in a variety of media
- develop language skills in ALL curriculum subjects
- recognise the language experiences of children at home and in the wider community
- increase children's understanding of how language is used in the world beyond school.

### **Learning and Teaching**

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in order to meet the needs of all children. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. In Key Stages 1 and 2 we do this through a daily lesson in which children experience a reading or writing activity, a focused word or sentence activity, a guided group or independent activity and an opportunity to review progress and learning. Wherever possible we use high quality texts to model writing from well-known authors and to practise the narrative techniques writers use.

Our use of Assessment For Learning strategies enables the children to understand their progression and next steps on their learning journey. We recognise the importance of phonic awareness in developing the children's skills in literacy and ensure that a rigorous and robust system of phonic teaching takes place. (Read Write Inc.)

### **Planning for Literacy**

The planning of our Literacy curriculum is based on the Primary National curriculum for English (September 2014). Units of work include work on high quality texts, writing, spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. Opportunities are provided for children to write and explore language through experiential learning and drama activities.

### **Speaking and Listening**

- children are taught how to speak confidently, clearly and audibly in a wide range of contexts
- children understand how to adapt their use of language in relation to purpose and audience
- children are encouraged to listen with concentration to a wide range of spoken language in real contexts, such as: live talks, radio, television, film, drama productions
- children participate in pair/group discussions, debates and individual presentations
- children have opportunities to reflect on their own and each other's use of language
- drama strategies provide inter-active opportunities for developing spoken language
- children have opportunities to listen and respond to stories, poetry and novels.

## **Reading**

We encourage children to read from a wide variety of sources and have daily reading sessions in school which include individual reading with an adult and guided reading sessions with a teacher. They are also encouraged to read daily at home and can choose books from class libraries, which are carefully selected for the age group and abilities of each child, or from our school library which has a wider variety of fiction and non-fiction books.

Ours aims are that:

- children read for pleasure and develop research and study skills
- children are taught to read fluently, accurately and with expression
- children read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, poetry and prose and texts from a variety of cultures and traditions
- children are taught to be discriminating readers, being able to understand layers of meaning and make a critical response to what they read
- children explore meanings of text using drama strategies
- children are given opportunities to read on-screen texts
- reading for information and other purposes is reinforced in other subjects
- children are given opportunities to explore the links between reading and writing.

## **Writing**

Writing is seen as a collaborative process and children learn to write independently, imaginatively and confidently using a range of teaching. High quality texts are used to expose children to a wide variety of techniques for writing and teachers model the expected standards to children through shared writing and guided writing sessions.

Our aims are that:

- writing is seen as an enjoyable activity in itself
- children are taught to write fluently and accurately, understanding how to use the main rules and conventions of written English
- children write for a range of purposes: to communicate to others, create imaginary worlds, explore and describe experience, organise and explain information, imagine and explore feelings and ideas, use language creatively to engage a reader, inform and explain, to persuade and present arguments
- children compose both on paper and on computer screen, using different formats and layouts to present work
- children discuss and respond critically to their own and other children's writing, analysing strengths and weaknesses
- they use re-drafting to improve and develop content, style and accuracy of writing
- they are given opportunities to write at length.

ICT is an important means of developing language use in the context of the modern world and is used to support learning in the following ways:

- children have opportunities to compose directly on screen
- children are taught how to use word processing techniques to develop writing skills
- children check for written accuracy, using grammar and spellcheckers
- computers are used in order to read for information –Internet.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar - children should be taught the formal conventions of Standard English including:

- an understanding of grammatical features of written Standard English
- fluent use of spoken standard English according to a range of circumstances

- how word order and choice and punctuation are crucial to meaning and effect
- the relevance of word families, roots and origin of words
- spelling accurately
- how to proof-read their writing to check written accuracy, using dictionaries, spell checks, thesauruses
- recognition of the importance of clear and neat presentation.

### **Resources**

We ensure that children have all the tools for reading and writing and that these are available to staff and children so that children can become independent learners.

We ensure that:

- materials are selected carefully in order to ensure there is no discrimination
- high quality texts are used which develop children's critical awareness of the techniques of writing
- texts develop skills of fluency, accuracy, understanding and pleasure in reading
- the phonics programme is robust and comprehensive
- the handwriting scheme ensures progression of skills.
- A selection on writing implements are available for children to use, including those for left handed writers.
- word mats and paper resources are well presented and used as an effective tool for developing ideas and vocabulary.

### **Equal Opportunities /Dyslexia**

The full and effective participation and progression of all children is achieved by ensuring the progress of children is carefully monitored and support provided when necessary. Children's progress is tracked regularly to ensure all children are making good progress. Interventions are planned where children are falling behind and these are closely monitored for their effectiveness.

If there is further cause for concern, the SENCO will be involved and if considered necessary children will be screened for dyslexia using internal screening tests or an outside agency. Children with dyslexia are given extra support as appropriate to support their learning. The school library contains oversized print books for dyslexic learners.

### **Developing Literacy at Home**

Staff recognise that the role of the family is central in supporting the child's language development as a speaker, reader and writer. Children are encouraged to read at home (monitored through reading diaries up to Year 5 and reading journals in Year 6). In KS2 literacy activities are sent home as part of the weekly home learning activities.

## Appendix A

### Handwriting

- Our aim is for children to develop legible, fluent, efficient handwriting.
- We recognise the need for a high standard of presentation and to this end regularly teach handwriting using Read Write Inc. in EYU and KS1, enabling the children to develop legible handwriting in both cursive and pre-cursive styles. This is further developed in KS2 where teachers produce their own materials using a range of different resources including 'JOINIT' which provides the school's handwriting font on all the computers in the school.
- In handwriting, as in other skills, children will develop at different rates. Early intervention is essential at every stage, to prevent the acquisition of bad habits which are then difficult to correct.
- Children who join the school with established fluent joined handwriting will be allowed to continue with their current style of handwriting.

### Skills to be taught:

- **Gross and fine motor skills:** activities to develop gross and fine motor skills are essential to the development of good handwriting.
- **Posture:** children are taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet on the floor.
- **Pencil grip:** children are taught the correct pencil grip. Supports are provided for those that may need them.
- **Position of paper:** left handed children are encouraged to tilt their paper slightly to the right to improve their view of what they are writing, and to reduce smudging later on when they write in ink. Right handed children may find it helpful to tilt paper slightly to the left. Paper should be steadied with the free hand.
- **Paper:** early writers write on unlined paper in order that they are able to write at a size appropriate to their needs. As soon as children are beginning to control the size of their writing they will use lined paper, to encourage the correct placing of letters on the line.
- **Correct letter formation:** children are taught to form letters correctly, paying attention to the starting point for each letter, the direction of pencil movement, the shape and orientation of the letter, the relative heights of the body of each letter and any ascender or descender. Pre-cursive formation is introduced to children in Reception or Year 1. Teaching will be multi-sensory and appropriate to the needs of the child.
- **Joining letters:** children are introduced to cursive joined handwriting as soon as they have mastered the shape of individual letters.

## Appendix B

### Drama

Drama is used regularly in English lessons as a tool for exploring 'talk for writing' and character or setting studies. It is occasionally taught through direct subject teaching and often integrated within a topic or other curriculum subject. Children in EYFS are introduced to drama through simple games, activity poems, action rhymes, structured play, character exploration and other activities based on traditional stories, simple speaking and listening activities and the opportunity to present and respond to improvisation.

Drama conventions to be used include working in role, hotseating, freeze frame, communal voice and teacher-in-role.

Drama is of central importance in developing language use and the curriculum provides opportunities for children to:

- create, adapt and sustain different roles individually and in groups
- explore meanings of texts – characters, actions, themes, emotions and ideas
- participate in spoken performances, dramatic interpretation, improvisations
- write original scripted plays
- evaluate their own and each other's contribution and effectiveness of performance
- experience drama for a sense of achievement, enjoyment and to develop self-confidence and self-esteem
- deepen understanding of other curricular areas
- develop respect and consideration for each other by encouraging turn-taking, acknowledgement of ideas, appropriate and safe behaviour and focused listening
- develop imaginative and creative processes and responses
- develop the capacity to express ideas and feelings by encouraging constructive responses to drama work, sharing ideas and selecting appropriate drama methods
- develop the ability to work constructively as a member of a group using skills of leadership, discussion, negotiation and the blending of different people's ideas
- develop oral and physical skills, including using language and movement appropriate to role
- offer the opportunity to experience aspects of theatre by rehearsing and presenting their work to others

### Assessment

Assessment will take the form of classroom observation whilst children are devising, performing or assessing drama in order to determine the quality of their work and to what extent they are meeting learning outcomes. It will also take the form of questioning, during and after the drama, in order to ascertain their knowledge and understanding of a concept. Where appropriate pupils should be involved in their own assessment in order that they develop a capacity to appraise, reflect upon, respond to and talk about their own learning using appropriate drama terms.