

Vernon Primary School

English Policy



Introduction:

This document is based upon the practise within our school. It will be formulated in consultation with all of our teaching staff and provides a current picture of our aims, objectives, planning strategies and teaching methods as well as the ethos underpinning them. English is defined as the united skills and knowledge of reading, writing and oral language. In order for children to become literate they must understand that the written word is a representation of the spoken word, and that both have a variety of forms related to purpose.

Language in its written and spoken forms provides the main instrument of learning throughout any school curriculum. It is the key to education and we wish the children to develop their ability and use it effectively and imaginatively in Reading, Writing and Communication and show that they enjoy all aspects of the subject.

This policy has been written to ensure the provision of opportunities and experiences for children, which contribute to English development within a challenging learning environment, which is inclusive of all young people.

Aims and objectives:

- to provide a classroom and school environment which supports language development and stimulates the children's curiosity, interest and enjoyment of English, enabling each child to achieve his/her potential
- to ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all children to develop their English skills
- to provide a variety of practical activities (including innovative drama initiatives) and a range of interesting and inspiring activities that capture the attention of the children and take into account the needs of individual children
- to ensure that the delivery of the English curriculum embodies and embraces the creative, innovative philosophy of teaching and learning at Vernon Primary School
- to foster and encourage a lasting enjoyment and appreciation of literature and non-literary works from a variety of eras, cultures and communities
- to enable pupils to work independently and as part of a team in varied activities and contribute to the development of key skills, such as Computing, reading, writing and communication
- to seek to ensure that all children achieve their full potential in all aspects of English by the time they move from Primary to Secondary Education

Teaching and Learning:

At Vernon Primary School, we believe that teachers must work together to plan, deliver and moderate the teaching of English in order to ensure that expectations are high. Our teaching approaches follow the guidance in the National Curriculum for English 2014. English skills are taught during an English lesson, but are also encouraged in other key areas of school life, such as class or year group presentations, sports reports, drama productions, RE and Personal Development discussions. We embrace opportunities to promote English skills in all areas of the curriculum, as is regularly shown by the various displays in both Key Stages covering a variety of topics. Children have the opportunity to share their most successful pieces of work as part of termly study books.

Teaching staff at Vernon Primary School have undertaken the relevant Curriculum training and are fully committed to using the Curriculum 2014 for English in order to support the planning, implementation and achievement of reading, writing and communication objectives. The staff are also able to use creativity and pupil enthusiasm to deliver inspiring activities based around chosen themes and create cross-curricular links where possible.

Each class organises a daily English session, supplemented by handwriting, spelling, guided reading, comprehension, EPGS (English punctuation, grammar and spelling) and guided writing activities. The children are grouped in a variety of ways and a range of teaching strategies are used, including:

- demonstration
- modelling
- explanation
- questioning
- discussion
- paired work (talking partners)

Areas of teaching and learning identified as particularly effective in the school:

- writing tasks broken down into smaller steps, with feedback and discussion at each stage
- writing is directed to specific audiences beyond the teacher and purposes beyond mere exercise of skills, including the use of topic books
- skilful links are made between reading and writing, so features of text are noted and modelled (by shared teacher text or teacher models)
- oral work is well used as a prelude to, and accompaniment to, writing, with conscious teaching of vocabulary
- there is a balance between support (plans, frames, collaboration etc.) and independence, which is well maintained with scaffolding provided as appropriate
- there are offers of choice between topic or content (valuing individual ideas) but with clarity over the form required
- there is a balance between ‘timed’ pieces (plan and final text) and re-drafted work
- the teachers’ excellent knowledge of language and writing pedagogy to underpin this ‘balance’ of teaching techniques
- outstanding use of innovative drama techniques used as a stimulus for different writing forms and genres.

In response to this we can expect to observe these responses from the children in our care:

- ✓ enthusiasm, engagement and perseverance with tasks
- ✓ work completed independently by children in choice situations (children wanting to write at home, at playtimes etc)

‘Nobody else is quite like me’

- ✓ children are keen to share, discuss and publish their work
- ✓ pride taken in the quality of their work (including presentation, but mainly the style and content)
- ✓ respect for the writing and views of others
- ✓ positive reaction to feedback from teacher and peers, motivated by the desire to improve
- ✓ a positive and respectful approach to regular, ongoing group and paired collaboration

We teach English in our Foundation Stage, relating the literacy aspects to the objectives set out in the Early Year Foundation Stage Framework.

Planning:

The planning of English is a process in which all teachers are involved. Weekly plans are drawn up by individual class teachers or developed in year groups and adapted accordingly. These are then monitored by the Head teacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, SLT and subject leader. English plans are edited by class teachers as the week progresses to ensure children's motivation and achievement. The plans are based on the National Curriculum 2014, using the 'Essentials' milestones as a reference point for objectives progression in Years One to Six; plans in Reception are based on the 'Early Learning Goals'. Towards the end of the Reception Year, the teachers aim to use the elements of a daily English lesson to ensure a smooth transition to Year One.

In order to plan their English teaching, teachers start from a thorough knowledge of the children's existing knowledge, skills and understanding; they are clear about the unit outcomes they intend the children to achieve. As children move through the primary phases, teachers should build on knowledge and skills gained from assessments in the previous stage of learning: Key Stage 1 building on the information from the Foundation Stage Profile and in Key Stage 2 moving forward from the end of Key Stage 1 assessments into the next phase of learning.

Teachers in both key stage 1 and 2 have also included EPGS (English punctuation, grammar and spelling) warm-up activities in their weekly planning. This 5 minute starter or plenary provides the children with an opportunity to recap, consolidate and extend their knowledge of punctuation, grammar, spelling patterns or language features in a range of written texts. It is also used as an opportunity to create mind maps or verbal stories to support the lesson.

All subjects of the curriculum are rich sources for learning new vocabulary and for developing speaking, listening, reading and writing. English teaching across the curriculum:

- ✓ Broadens and enhances children's command of English skills by providing them with a range of different contexts in which to use and practise these skills
- ✓ Embeds the teaching of the English skills which are central to the language of a particular subject within that subject
- ✓ Enhances the learning of the subject itself and the attitudes of children towards that learning

To secure high quality English planning, teachers:

- familiarise themselves with the specific year group milestones (objectives) within the new curriculum, as well as the year groups above and below which they are teaching
- review their current English planning to make sure that communication, reading and writing are integrated in their planning, both within discrete English teaching and across the curriculum
- identify any areas or gaps in current planning which require attention and ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for monitoring the implementation of their plans

- make sure the English curriculum promotes both discrete teaching within subjects and extends English learning across subjects
- make explicit the unit they are covering from the Genre Coverage framework created by the Subject Leader
- date all plans to ensure coverage is explicit
- investigate the attainment and interest of the children in their classes
- use available adults effectively inside and outside the classroom

Planning for inclusion:

The National Curriculum 2014 sets out a number of key principles essential to planning and teaching:

- Setting suitable challenges
- Responding to pupils' needs
- Overcoming potential barriers for individuals and groups of pupils

These principles highlight the importance of settings and schools planning English teaching in order to meet the needs of all children. Planning should also ensure that the needs of children within specific groups, such as those with Special Educational Needs (SEND), gifted and talented (G&T) learners, are addressed in full. Planning for inclusion should be an integral part of a wider, coherent approach to effective English planning.

Marking and Assessment:

Marking of the children's work is carried out regularly and thoroughly in accordance with the school's Marking Policy. Comments are made in order to guide and encourage the children by identifying positives linked to the objective and then targets for future writing.

In marking and feedback to children, value should be placed on:

- High quality marking to provide clear feedback linked to the objective
- Presenting children with the next step for their development
- Well developed teacher knowledge which informs assessment
- Succinctness as well as elaboration, where appropriate to the task
- Presentation and accuracy (to a lesser extent)
- Highlighting spelling corrections in new and tricky vocabulary, in line with the spelling progression document.

Teachers are expected to model cursive handwriting within their marking and during shared writing, modelling.

In the short term, teachers will carry out continuous assessment of children's progress in all aspects of the English Curriculum and where appropriate this will be noted down on the weekly English planning (children are identified as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' the objectives). This formative assessment will then inform future planning.

In the medium term, teachers will make formal assessments of children's progress at the end of each term, using Writing Assessment Grids and professional judgement of expectations. This has recently been reviewed in light of new government changes to assessment. These assessments will then be moderated throughout the school. The outcomes of such assessments will inform future planning. Formal assessments at the end of each year inform the teacher's assessment of pupils.

In the long term, there will be summative assessments towards the end of the Year 2 and Year 6.

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Targets:

Children are all given individual targets based around their next steps from their class teachers. The children have the opportunity to discuss these with the teacher so that they are able to identify their own progress and self assess (this responsibility increases through the Key Stage) These targets are regularly monitored, developed and extended in line with each child's individual needs and aspirations.

Responsibilities:

The Role of the Subject Leader:

- Monitoring the teaching and learning of English across the school
- Informing others of CPD opportunities where appropriate
- Support colleagues in their development of detailed plans and in assessment and record keeping
- Assisting with requisition and maintenance of resources required for the teaching of English
- Monitor progress and continuity from each year group
- Scrutiny of work, planning and books
- Tracking under-achievers and high-achievers
- Staying aware of current changes and developments in the subject and keeping staff up to date with these where appropriate and offering advice on new resources.

The Role of the Class Teacher:

- To develop and update skills, knowledge and understanding of English.
- To identify CPD needs and attend training sessions
- To keep up-to-date records of assessment.
- To plan and teach effective, inspiring English sessions, through short, medium and long term plans.
- To provide valuable, regular feedback to pupils, both verbally and in the process of marking
- To inform parents of their child's progress in English
- To ensure teaching assistants are aware of the role they play in English lessons.
- To ensure the implementation of the spelling progression document and new initiatives in Reading and Spelling.

The Role of the Teaching Assistant:

During whole class work teaching assistants can:

- Provide extra support for all children particularly low achievers and extend more able children
- Prompt children who lack confidence
- Help children to use specific resources to find an answer
- Observe the participation of a group of children to feed into assessment

Within the main part of the lesson they can:

- Oversee the work of a small group and maintain focus
- Encourage the participation of children in group work
- Look for and note any common difficulties that children have so that teachers can address them in future lessons.
- Ensure children interpret questions correctly
- Assess children during independent work or whole class

Parent/Carer Involvement:

- Parents/Carers are invited into school three times a year to share their child's work and discuss their child's progress and are encouraged to speak to class teachers when queries arise
- Parents/Carers are invited to an Open Evening in the summer term

- Parents/Carers are welcomed into school to work within the classroom
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to support their child with English homework in Years Two to Six (see Homework policy).
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to access the school website for further opportunities to enrich and extend their child’s learning beyond the classroom environment.
- Parents/Carers are given new Reading stems and sample questions to enable further support with their child’s reading at home.

Reporting to Parents:

Children’s progress is reported to parents in an annual written report at the end of the year; a written feedback sheet during the Spring Parents evening; and verbally throughout the year during parents evenings and on an informal basis, in line with the school’s ‘open door’ policy of communication.

Homework:

English homework is provided from Year 1 onwards. This may take the form of reading at home, developing book review skills or more formal written activities (see homework policy for homework progression throughout the school). This provides parents with an opportunity to work with their child at home and see their progress. These activities are valuable in promoting children’s learning in English. Throughout the school children are encouraged to read at home regularly and discuss the texts that have been read. Children are also given spellings and spelling pattern work regularly (see ‘Spelling Progression’ document). Children will also be given opportunities to practise their reading comprehension skills beyond the classroom.

Monitoring and Review:

We are aware of the need to regularly review our policies to take into account the new initiatives, changes in curriculum or developments in technology.

Stella Walker

Subject Leader for English
Assistant Headteacher

Chair of Governors :

Date: November 2016

Date to be reviewed: November 2018