



Beechwood Primary School

English Policy

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 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...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, 2014)

1.2 At Beechwood Primary School we strive to develop the following characteristics in our pupils:

Reading

- Excellent phonic knowledge and skills
- Fluency and accuracy in reading across a wide range of contexts throughout the curriculum
- Knowledge of an extensive and rich vocabulary
- An excellent comprehension of texts
- The motivation to read for both study and for pleasure
- Extensive knowledge through having read a rich and varied range of texts.

Writing

- The ability to write fluently and with interesting detail on a number of topics throughout the curriculum
- A vivid imagination which makes readers engage with and enjoy their writing
- A highly developed vocabulary and an excellent knowledge of writing techniques to extend details or description
- Well-organised and structured writing, which includes a variety of sentence structures
- Excellent transcription skills that ensure their writing is well presented and punctuated, spelled correctly and neat
- A love of writing and an appreciation of its educational, cultural and entertainment values.

Communication

- An exceptional talent for listening attentively so as to understand what is being said
- A rich and varied vocabulary that gives clarity and interest to conversations
- Clear speech that can be easily understood by a range of audiences
- An excellent grasp of the rules used in English conversation, such as tenses and the grammatical structure of sentences
- A highly developed ability to tell stories that capture the interest and imagination of the audience

- A delight in initiating and joining in conversations
- Respect for others when communicating, even when views differ.

2 Teaching and learning style

2.1 At Beechwood Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, guided by the National Curriculum and *Read Write Inc.* programmes. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding of English.

2.2 Children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are taught a daily English lesson where they learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme. These children are grouped homogeneously according to their reading ability rather than their age. Children in Lower Key Stage 2 also follow this programme if they need to catch up rapidly. We teach these children to:

- decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- read 'tricky' words on sight
- understand what they read
- read aloud with fluency and expression
- write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- acquire good handwriting.

2.3 From Year 2, children who have completed the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme are taught a daily English lesson which utilises the resources of the *Read Write Inc.* Literacy and Language programme. During these lessons children are taught to:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary
- use grammar correctly
- 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; elaborating and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- become competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations to others and participating in debate

Each daily English lesson is expected to begin with a grammar or vocabulary skill-development activity and end with a whole-class opportunity to discuss and reflect on the learning that has taken place.

2.4 We teach a thematic curriculum during the afternoons and children read and write non-fiction texts and poetry as part of their topics. They learn to apply the skills they have acquired in a cross-curricular way.

2.5 In all classes we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, while in others we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their ideas. We use teaching

assistants to support some children, and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

- 2.6 In addition, we teach children in all classes to work effectively with a partner to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

3 English curriculum planning

- 3.1 English is a core subject in the National Curriculum and we implement the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum Programme of Study for English.
- 3.2 We carry out curriculum planning for English in two phases: a long-term overview across the year and detailed weekly plans. The National Curriculum Programme of Study for English, in conjunction with *Read Write Inc.* planning resources, define what we teach across the full academic year and identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach each year. The subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.
- 3.3 Teachers and teaching assistants who deliver the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme follow the prescribed (short-term) plans for the teaching of English. This ensures consistency and rigour in the teaching of early literacy skills. Considerable time is spent resourcing these lessons to enable teaching to be engaging and motivating for the children.
- 3.4 Class teachers, working in teams, complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English to those children beyond the phonics programme. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also gives details of what each group of children will be learning and their independent task. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, ensuring that copies are also passed to the other adults in class who work with the children. The subject leader monitors these plans on a monthly basis.
- 3.5 Teachers are required to plot the intended development of learning/skills across a unit of English work on a 'Learning Journey' template. These are shared with the children each day, and displayed on a working wall within the classroom, in order for children to increase their understanding of the intended outcome and how each activity or lesson builds towards this.

4 The Foundation Stage

- 4.1 We teach English in the reception classes as an integral part of the school's work. When children first enter the school, we emphasise the alphabetic code. The children rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings – 'tricky words'.

Once children have securely grasped their knowledge of the initial 'speed sounds' of the alphabetic code, the format of the daily English lessons for these children in the

Foundation Stage is the same as for those children in Key Stage 1 as they join the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme.

As these children are part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the English aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore words and texts, to enjoy them, to learn about them, and to use them in various situations.

5 Handwriting

5.1 We follow the Penpals for Handwriting scheme. Handwriting practice takes place at least twice per week in Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2, and at least on a weekly basis in Upper Key Stage 2.

6 Spelling

6.1 Children are taught to spell in a systematic manner through the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme. Once children complete this programme, they are introduced to the *Read Write Inc.* Spelling programme which continues through to Year 6.

7 Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

7.1 The skills that children develop in English are linked and applied to every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

7.2 Science, History, Geography, Design Technology, Art, Music, Physical Education and Religious Education

Spoken language is important in pupils' development across the whole curriculum. They develop a capacity to explain their understanding and use the conventions of discussion and debate. The reading of non-fiction texts helps children to research subjects and increase their knowledge. They communicate their ideas by writing non-fiction texts in a variety of genres, for example:

- persuasive writing – to take a position on an issue and justify it (e.g. leaflets, advertisements, flyers, brochures, letters, arguments)
- instructions – to tell someone how to do or make something (e.g. recipes, experiments, games rules, craft instructions, directions)
- non-chronological reports – to document, organise and store information (e.g. leaflets, projects, topic books)
- explanations – to give an account of how or why something happens (e.g. explain how, why ...)
- recount writing – to retell an event or series of events (e.g. newspaper reports, diaries, journals, biographies, historical accounts, science experiments)
- discussion writing – to discuss an issue and offer two or more points of view (e.g. articles, reviews, travel guides)

7.3 **Mathematics**

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during lessons and they communicate clearly through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

7.4 **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the internet when researching a topic and use different software to present their work. Children use the planning and proofing tools available on computer when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever they feel it is appropriate.

7.5 **Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)**

English contributes to the teaching of personal, social and health education, and the wider issues of citizenship. We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children research and debate topical issues and events; discussing lifestyle choices and meet visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

7.6 **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions raised in a variety of texts and experiences. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children of differing abilities and backgrounds to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

8 **English and inclusion**

8.1 At Beechwood Primary School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Work in English lessons takes into account the targets set and/or provision specified for individual children in their SEN School Support Plan or Provision Map.

8.2 Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts that children can more easily read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids and recorded materials;
- using alternative communication, such as signs and symbols;
- using translators and amanuenses.

9 **Assessment for learning**

- 9.1 Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the learning objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress. Children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.
- 9.2 Teachers use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work. Teachers use the Assessing Pupil Progress grids to assess children's writing on a half termly basis. Reading assessments are carried out by the subject leader for children on the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme on a half termly basis to ensure teaching groups remain homogenous. Children beyond the phonics programme have their reading formally assessed on a termly basis.
- 9.3 Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments they are able to set targets for the next school year, and to summarise the progress of each child before reporting it in the child's summative progress report. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.
- 9.4 Long-term assessments are based on end-of-year tests and teacher assessments. Children undertake the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and NFER tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers also make annual assessments of children's progress based on the level descriptions of the National Curriculum and the Assessing Pupil Progress Grids.
- 9.5 Marking of English work is in accordance with the marking policy. Children are encouraged to self-evaluate against learning intentions.
- 9.6 The subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. Teachers meet regularly to review individual examples of work against the national exemplification material produced by the STA.
- 9.7 Staff are keen to improve their subject knowledge and the subject leader takes an active role in disseminating best practice and making recommendations for staff development.

10 Resources

- 10.1 There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a variety of age-appropriate small apparatus. All classrooms have a reading area with a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computer. Access to the Internet is also available in the ICT Suite and by using tablet devices. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research. All classrooms have an interactive white board.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1 Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves

supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for English in the school. The subject leader carries out an annual whole-school review of the subject to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and identify areas for further improvement. The leader has specially-allocated management time on a daily basis in which to undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school, model good practice to colleagues and review marking and samples of the children's work. The named governor responsible for literacy meets regularly with the subject leader in order to review progress.

11.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

English Policy

Review April 2016

Next review April 2018

Governor's Chair of Curriculum & Welfare _____

Head Teacher _____