

Fairhouse Primary School



English Policy

Updated: Autumn 2018

To be reviewed: Autumn 2020

Aims and objectives

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. 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 participating fully as a member of society.

At Fairhouse Primary School, the overarching aim for English is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The aims of our English curriculum are 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; and
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Teaching and learning:

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English. Writing, reading, speaking and listening, spelling, grammar and punctuation sessions are delivered in a range of ways to cater to the differing needs and abilities of the children we teach. As such, we are constantly adapting our approach to incorporate innovative teaching styles and resources. English skills are used, applied and reinforced in all subject areas. As there are children of differing ability in all classes, suitable learning opportunities are provided by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child.

Early Years Foundation Stage

One of the 4 specific areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage is literacy. Within all activities, children are encouraged to link sounds and letters to begin to read and write. Weekly planning centres around a particular book, with a range of activities planned in order for children to explore the story in more detail. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest and are encouraged to communicate about these in a range of ways. Communication and language is another key focus of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations. In our Early Years Foundation Stage, the children begin the Read, Write Inc. programme, gaining knowledge of the sounds different letters make and being taught how to blend and segment. These skills form the basis of Read, Write Inc, allowing children to continue to make progress on the programme.

Writing

Our writing curriculum covers the following narrative and non-narrative text types: recount, persuasive writing, procedure, discussion, explanation, journalistic writing, description, scripts, story writing and poetry. There is a progression of text types across year groups and key stages, with children in upper school experiencing the full range. Children identify and learn about the features of each text type and how to apply them to their writing. They are taught the 'building blocks' of each text type prior to the unit, allowing them the chance to learn how to use the key features of each specific text type. Throughout the year, the children also undertake writing projects, where they write using a range of text types based on a particular theme. All stages of the writing process are taught: planning, writing, editing and redrafting. Fairhouse writing progression documents detail age-related skills and objectives for each unit as well as appropriate differentiation for those working above or below the expected level.

Reading

Reading is taught using a range of resources, strategies and texts. Children are provided with appropriately levelled reading books to learn reading, decoding, phonic and contextual strategies. Whole class 'Reading for Meaning' sessions teach the different comprehension skills to enable children to demonstrate an understanding of texts read and take place three times a week in each year group. In key stage two, the reading sessions follow the Comprehension Express scheme of work, where children are taught the key skills of how to be a confident reader. Children are encouraged to explore a range of texts and to read for enjoyment; each year group has a reading buddy and library slot weekly, where they explore books with a partner from a different year group and have a chance to visit the library. The school library is also open after school two days a week for the parents to be involved in the choosing of reading books. In daily 'Listen Up' sessions, children enjoy listening to a range of texts read by the teacher and discussing and commenting on them.

Phonics

Read Write Inc Phonics is firmly in place in KS1, aiming at creating fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers. Read Write Inc. is a complete literacy programme designed to get children writing and reading quickly. Rather than being taught in isolation, phonics is taught alongside reading and writing, encouraging children to use phonic knowledge in all areas of their learning. The children work in small groups at their own level and are assessed regularly to ensure that they are making rapid progress and ensuring that the sessions are suited to their ability. A few children who are still working on the scheme in KS2 have 1:1 sessions daily in order to catch up with their peers, whilst still accessing the reading and writing lessons during the day.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation

Spelling sessions are taught as a whole class, following the Read Write Inc Spelling scheme. Children all have a spelling lesson on a Monday, where they are given a new set of spellings and are tested on the spellings from the previous week. Spelling has recently become part of our weekly homework and children are encouraged and rewarded for practising their spellings, regardless of the outcome. Grammar and punctuation lessons cover all objectives in the National Curriculum. Children learn about language structure, Standard English, vocabulary and language strategies and punctuation. These skills are consistently used and applied in writing composition lessons.

Handwriting

We have recently introduced a new spelling scheme in order to rapidly improve children's handwriting. Children in all year groups have a 15 minute spelling session daily, where they practise a range of handwriting skills from patterns and letter formation to dictation. We place a high value on handwriting and have also recently introduced a pen licence. Children must consistently show neat, joined handwriting in order to gain their licence, allowing them to write in handwriting pen in all books other than mathematics.

Speaking and Listening

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak is vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills are continually being developed throughout our English curriculum. They are given opportunities to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. 'Have Your Say' session take place each week to provide children with opportunities to discuss, debate and share ideas about different issues and topics. Children are encouraged to reflect on their own and others' contributions.

Planning and organisation:

We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Our Fairhouse Writing Scheme details what we teach in the long-term and identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year. Our medium-term plans give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning outcomes for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning. All forms of planning are regularly reviewed by the English subject leader and Senior Leadership Team.

Contribution of English to the teaching in other curriculum areas:

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, 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. We give children opportunities to discuss ideas, role play, debate and use other English skills within all curriculum subjects. We also plan writing activities within the wider curriculum, allowing children to use their writing skills and knowledge of text types in lessons other than writing.

Teaching English to children with special educational needs:

At Fairhouse Primary School, we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. We set in English across the school, meaning that children can access the learning at a level appropriate to them. We also have a small SEN group, who work on basic English skills as a small group daily. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. Pupil progress meetings take place four times a year and allow teachers and leaders the opportunity to assess each child's progress and put new targets and strategies in place for each child throughout the year. When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different actions to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Assessment and recording:

Teachers assess children's work in English through everyday marking and formal assessments. Assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help teachers to adjust their daily plans. Teachers match these assessments closely to the teaching objectives. In Years 1 - 5, assessments take place in Reading, Writing, and Grammar Punctuation and Spelling at the end of each half term. These are used to assess progress against school and national targets and enable teachers to set targets for the next school year and summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents. Children will be assessed against age related expectations, which we have called 'Standards'. The categories for assessment are: Emergent, Secure and Advanced. Any child not able to meet age related expectations will be assessed against the appropriate year group / standard. Year 6 children undertake half-termly assessments in order to track their attainment and progress. Any children who are not making good progress or are below age-related expectations are offered tuition after school and are also given the opportunity to attend half term study clubs in the run up to SATs.

Monitoring and review:

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader and Senior Leadership Team. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the planning and teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. Progress meetings are held with the class teacher and the subject leader / senior leadership team to set targets, discuss strategies and evaluate progress against these targets.