



Dringhouses Primary School

English Policy

ENGLISH POLICY

Policy Statement and Rationale

This policy reflects Dringhouses Primary School's aims and objectives in relation to the teaching and learning of English. It sets out a broad framework within which teaching staff can operate and outlines principles of planning, teaching and assessment. This policy is a reflection of our commitment to deliver excellence in teaching and to act in accordance with, or to exceed, statutory requirements. It should be read in conjunction with the 2014 National Curriculum and the Early Years' Foundation Stage Framework, which set out the rationale for teaching each area of the English curriculum and specifies the skills to be developed by the majority of pupils in each year group. The Government's Letters and Sounds programme should also be read in conjunction with references to the teaching of phonics.

The English curriculum develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, opinions and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations. Teachers and pupils in our school usually use the term 'English' to describe the English curriculum. English skills will be taught and practised in many areas across the curriculum, and not just in 'English' lessons.

Our objectives in the teaching of English skills are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly, to communicate effectively through speech and to take account of the perspective of those to whom they are speaking;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points, and sometimes the detail, of what they have heard;
- to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to enable children to become effective communicators, both verbal and nonverbal, through a variety of drama activities;
- to help children become confident, independent readers, developing their understanding of meaning conveyed at word, sentence and whole text level;
- to enable children to develop as enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with a wide range of different types of material, including challenging and substantial texts;
- to foster the enjoyment of writing for a wide range of purposes, and a recognition of its value;
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
- to develop skills in planning, drafting, evaluating and editing their writing;
- to engender in children a love of literature and an appreciation of our English heritage, including word origins and the use of grammar;
- to enable and encourage pupils to apply their English skills across the whole curriculum.

Teaching and Learning Overview

Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in relation to English. We use a variety of teaching and learning approaches in our English lessons, as recommended in the National Curriculum:

Early Years' Foundation Stage

Phonics

Children have a daily phonics lesson as a crucial element in developing their early reading and writing skills.

- Dringhouses Primary School bases its phonics teaching on the Letters and Sounds document that consists of six phases in which the children are taught to recognise phonemes, to blend (encode) and segment (decode) words and read key words (that are not always decodable);
- All children in EYFS are taught daily discrete phonics sessions during which they will revisit, learn a new concept, practise and apply it;
- Opportunities for practising and extending phonic knowledge are provided through Areas of Provision (AOP) where children access games and activities to enhance their learning;
- Daily 'Smart Start' activities encourage and support children with learning new sounds and the spellings of phonically irregular words;
- In addition to daily phonics, children also access computer software, such as Phonics Play;
- Children who need additional support attend daily 'secret phonics' sessions, which review previously taught graphemes whilst pre-teaching the next. In addition to this, individual children receive precision teaching linked to targeted graphemes and additional materials are sent home to support children in their learning. Children also take part in 'Talk Boost' and other small circle time based activities to develop the skills of this aspect of learning;
- Phonic knowledge is assessed half termly using trackers to inform future planning;
- Parents are encouraged to support children with homework provided by the teacher at the end of each week. The new spelling word and sound/grapheme is inserted into a homework book, along with high frequency words, and ideas are provided to support learning.

Reading

We aim to give children continuous experience of the medium of print and text through all their learning experiences and in all the Areas of Learning in the EYFS curriculum. The environment is rich with appropriate text: labels, captions, simple instructions, names, alphabet prompts and children's own mark-making. Adults continuously model reading in the learning environment, embedding in children's understanding the idea that print conveys meaning and is invaluable to us in our lives. Children are taught from the youngest age to value and care for books, to understand their structure, to handle them appropriately and to enjoy sharing them with each other.

Reading in EYFS takes place in a variety of different contexts:

- A dedicated reading area with story based activities; such as a puppet theatre;
- Individual reading time sessions;
- Guided reading in groups of two or three initially, which takes place at least once a week;
- Whole class shared reading;
- Bugclub activities using the computer suite;
- Timetabled dedicated library time.

Reading is assessed on a regular basis using:

- Notes made from guided reading group discussions;
- Assessments taken during phonic sessions;
- Discussion with parents/carers about individual reading material at home.

Parents/carers are encouraged to support their child with reading and asked to make regular comments in the reading journal.

Writing

Writing opportunities are provided throughout each day to encourage emergent writers. The teaching of writing involves three separate and distinct stages:

- **Shared writing** allows the teacher to introduce or revise a particular style of writing. Through modelling, the teacher is able to demonstrate how to write, commenting explicitly on what he/she is doing and why. It is within this stage that pupils are able to contribute to ideas and suggestions while the teacher scribes to produce the text.
- **Guided writing** allows the teacher to work alongside a group of children of similar ability. Support and scaffolding is provided enabling pupils to apply the principles they have learnt in shared inputs.
- **Independent writing** provides opportunities for pupils to produce and refine the skills acquired through shared and guided work;
- In addition, AOP provide opportunities for less prescriptive writing tasks where children can choose an independent writing activity;
- Writing is assessed by the teacher using independent tasks and focused group work, as well as completed phonics and smart start activities;
- Parents/carers are asked to support their child with accurate letter formation and ensure the correct pencil grip is used during weekly homework tasks.

Handwriting is linked to the direct teaching of phonics and the application of graphemes that have been taught. This starts in EYFS when children are taught graphemes that contain two or more letters (diagraphs, constant clusters, letter strings and key words as joined units), which explicitly link the teaching of handwriting with the teaching of spelling.

Throughout these stages, we aim to provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills to:

- hold a pencil/pen appropriately;
- write from left to right and top to bottom of a page;
- start and finish letters correctly using cursive script;

- form letters of a regular size and shape;
- put regular spaces between letters and words;
- form lower and upper case letters;
- join letters linked to cursive script;
- encourage pride in presentation;
- ensure a consistent teaching approach and modelling of joining across the school;
- ensure the needs of different learners are met and measures put in place to support children with difficulties, for example: left handed writers or children whose fine motor control skills need more development.

We plan the teaching and development of English skills 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.

Key stage 1

Our timetable ensures that pupils have a substantial daily lesson which focuses specifically on the development of English skills, for example, engaging in a whole-class reading or writing activity, a whole-class focused word or sentence analysis activity, a guided group or independent reading or writing activity, or a whole-class session to review progress and learning.

Phonics

- Daily phonics sessions are taught to all Y1 pupils. At the end of Y1, all pupils sit a phonics screening test which assesses if they have met the nationally expected standard. Pupils are then taught the next phase (6) and spelling rules and conventions. Any pupils who do not reach the national requirement at the end of Y1, continue to receive additional phonics teaching on a daily basis and re-sit the screening check at the end of Y2;
- As with EYFS, pupils are tracked half-termly to monitor progress and identify any gaps. This impacts on the daily sessions as pupils are grouped by the phase they are working at;
- We incorporate daily interventions to address gaps that have been highlighted from the phonics tracker; these small groups work on their targeted sound in the time that smart start activities are taking place first thing on a morning;
- The teaching sequence follows a 'revise, teach, practice, apply' methodology and is based on the Letters and Sounds progression;
- Resources used to teach phonics include flashcards showing new sounds and key words, Phonics Play activities and Jolly Phonics actions;
- Parents are encouraged to support children with reading on a regular basis as well as homework provided by the teacher at the end of each week. The new spelling word and sound/grapheme is inserted into a homework book, along with high frequency words, and ideas are provided to support learning.

Reading

At the planning stage, teachers identify the skills children need to be taught from the new National Curriculum in line with National Expectations. Reading in KS1 underpins all English lessons and takes place in a variety of different contexts:

- Guided group reading with adult support at least twice weekly to decode and develop pace, as well as develop comprehension skills;
- Whole class shared reading;
- Chrome books and iPads to support independent reading through a range of software, such as Bugclub that converts text to speech;
- A library that promotes reading with a weekly timetabled slot for each class to visit;
- Stimulating and attractive book displays to engage and inspire children;
- Pupils in need of greater support, read regularly on a one-to-one basis with an adult.

Reading is assessed on a regular basis using:

- Book banded books;
- Notes made from guided reading group discussions;
- Information from the individual phonics trackers;
- Evidence of comprehension levels using book-banded activities and texts from BugClub;
- Discussion with parents/carers about individual reading material at home;
- Library records of books and texts pupils have borrowed.

How parents/carers can support their child with reading:

- Encourage their child to read daily and share in the pleasure that books offer;
- The school library is open after school each day and also has resources for parents to use;
- We ask that parents regularly sign and make a short comment in their child's reading record;
- The frequency of children's reading is openly displayed on each classroom wall in KS1 and certificates are awarded to encourage pupils to read as often as possible.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

We incorporate objectives from the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling documents from the National Curriculum to ensure children are able to construct sentences accurately. There is a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching; the independent activity gives an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance pupils' learning.

- We follow the 'No Nonsense' spelling programme in Y2 which sets out the year's objectives into weekly patterns and rules;
- Each pattern or rule is taught and practised daily;
- 'Words of the Week' are displayed on classroom walls; these are the common exception words and high frequency words children are expected to know by the end of Y1 and Y2. A list of these words is shared with parents/carers in the autumn parent's meeting;

- Each class has access to dictionaries from the library to help extend children's vocabulary and encourage them to incorporate this into their writing;
- Spelling words are given as homework at the end of each week and the rules explained to parents/carers to further support children;
- The teaching and learning of spelling is supported by a variety of resources, such as word banks, phonic resources and dictionaries;
- Spelling errors are identified by the teacher during marking and children respond by practising each mis-spelled word three times;
- Children are given a half termly dictation so that they can apply the word in context;
- Precision teaching and additional activities are put in place for children who are identified as needing additional spelling support;
- Daily grammar and spelling starters are incorporated into lessons to expose the children to key objectives and develop further key skills needed to reach National Expectations;
- We use Grammar Hammer resources weekly to develop technical vocabulary, definitions of grammar and punctuation. In Y2, children are involved in the marking process and can track their own progress based on a 'traffic light' system.

Writing

Learning Projects are carefully selected in both key stages to help provide further opportunities to engage and motivate pupils to read and write. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum, and will often use incidental opportunities to teach and reinforce English skills in other subject areas.

- Children are presented with daily writing opportunities through phonics activities, spelling, cross-curricular topics or a genre of English writing;
- Texts and writing genres link to the half termly learning project learning project to ensure high stimulation and motivation as well as purpose;
- Children work in a variety of ways to support their learning; work may be differentiated, they may work in mixed ability groups, have talk partners, work individually or be a similar ability;
- Children are motivated to write through drama activities;
- Teacher modelling and scaffolding through shared writing, helps children record their ideas in the ensuing drafting and editing process;
- As part of the writing process, children are taught to plan in a variety of ways (using drawings, labels, story hills, flow diagrams, storyboards etc.);
- Classrooms have writing provision areas to encourage independent writing activities;
- In every classroom, writing is promoted on class displays;
- The use of chrome books, iPads and access to the internet enhances the writing experience and supports children's learning;
- Children in need of support have access to various resources such as spelling mats, word banks, pencil grips, privacy boards, writing mnemonics, word banks;
- Writing is assessed using the NAHT guidelines and their exemplification for Y1 and Y2 are assessed against the end of Key Stage 1 Interim Assessment Framework.
- Writing is moderated frequently within the KS1 team, the school cluster group and across the authority through Pathfinder. Half termly book sampling take place to ensure continuity within the team and progression across the key stage;
- Parents are encouraged to support their child with homework writing activities.

Handwriting

Throughout KS1, children are expected to adopt the cursive script style of handwriting. This reinforces phonics and spelling and corrects letter reversals. Children are taught about the leading line in and loop off. They are given visual clues wherever possible and become familiar with 'ladder' letters (l,l,t) or 'caterpillar' letters (a,c,o,) Particular attention is paid to the correct letter formation, size and consistency. They are taught to write on the line with the correct spacing between words and to make ascenders and descenders long or tall. Handwriting practise is often combined with spelling activities as children become more secure in their use of handwriting patterns.

Key Stage 2

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

As with KS1, we incorporate objectives from the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling documents from the National Curriculum to ensure children are able to construct sentences accurately. Daily grammar and spelling starters are incorporated into lessons to expose the children to key objectives and develop further key skills needed to reach National Expectations.

Spelling

- The weekly plan features a daily 10 minute activity using words from the Assertive Mentoring lists;
- Each word list is also sent home weekly for pupils to learn with their parents/carers;
- Word lists are tested using dictation each week and pupils who are struggling receive precision teaching with class teaching assistants;
- Errors in writing are highlighted in pink and practiced in the margin;
- Commonly mis-spelt words by the class are sent to the Spelling Jail to be released when everyone spells them correctly;
- The marking of spelling is done using a 4 tier system.
L1 – teacher gives the spelling, L2 – teacher writes sp next to some mis-spelt words and the pupils uses a dictionary to self-correct, L3 – pupils work in pairs to correct each other's spelling errors and L4 – pupils self-correct;
- Spelling is reinforced through handwriting sessions and smart start activities.

Grammar and Punctuation

- Weekly discrete SPAG sessions are dedicated to a specific area of learning however opportunities are exploited across the curriculum;
- Grammar Hammer occurs weekly to reinforce definitions, technical vocabulary, punctuation and spelling;
- Sample tests and a range of activities and tasks set by the teacher;
- SPAG specific homework to reinforce learning.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar is assessed through:

- Weekly recording of Grammar Hammer and spelling test/dictation scores;
- Records of summative and formative assessments;
- Daily marking.

Parents/carers support children with their learning of spelling, punctuation and grammar through:

- Homework tasks relating to spelling rules and conventions;
- Punctuation and grammar homework activities;
- Meeting with teachers and being aware of standards and expectations.

Reading

- Guided reading takes place daily with an expectation that each group will work with an adult 1-2 times per week;
- Guided Reading is structured around Literature Circles and Reciprocal Reading;
- Whole class texts are also used as a shared reading experience to support writing;
- The use of the IWB and visualiser promotes excitement and inspiration around texts;
- The pupils' independent reading books are changed as and when necessary and monitored closely;
- Every classroom promotes reading through a designated reading area;
- Each class has a dedicated library session timetabled into the week;
- Comprehension is taught in small groups and activities are set from BugClub and Rising Stars.

The assessment of reading in KS2 is by:

- Notes made during guided reading sessions;
- Individual Reading Journals;
- Half termly comprehension tasks using Rising Stars tests;
- BugClub comprehension papers;
- Discussions during Learning Review meetings;
- Children's home/school reading records.

Parents/carers can support their child with reading by:

- Listening to their child read and share in the experience of enjoying books;
- Ensuring comprehension tasks set as homework are completed;
- Commenting and signing their child's reading record;
- Supporting them with online reading resources provided by school, such as BugClub.

Writing

As with KS1, writing is linked with the learning projects wherever possible to give both purpose and motivation to writing.

- Children are presented with daily writing opportunities;
- Texts and writing genres link to the termly learning project where appropriate to ensure high stimulation and motivation as well as purpose;
- Children work in a variety of ways to support their learning; mixed ability groups, individually or by ability groupings;
- Children are motivated to write through drama activities;
- Guided writing and teacher modelling are used daily. Examples of good work are shared or improved together;

- Pupils in KS2 have draft books as well as their English books. The drafting cycle is set up so that pupils draft their work first, receive instant feedback, edit their work the next day and then redraft into their English books.
- Children respond to marking and feedback and edit and improve their initial draft;
- Classrooms support and promote the teaching of writing;
- The use of chrome books, iPads and access to the internet enhances the writing experience and supports children's learning;
- Children in need of support have access to various resources such as spelling mats, word banks, pencil grips and privacy boards;
- Writing is assessed using the NAHT guidelines and their exemplification for Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 are assessed against the end of Key Stage 2 Interim Assessment Framework.
- Writing is moderated frequently within the KS2 team and half-termly book scrutinies take place to ensure continuity within the team and progression across the key stage. Writing is also moderated within the cluster and across the authority through Pathfinder training;
- Parents are encouraged to support their child with homework writing activities.

Handwriting

Throughout KS2, children continue to be taught to write cursively. They are taught to take pride in the presentation of their work and take care of their writing books. If handwriting and presentation have reached an acceptable standard by Year 5, then children transfer from pencil to pen. It is expected that by Y6, all pupils are writing in pen.

Interventions

If children are identified as needing additional support in English then the following interventions may be put in place:

- Rapid phonics
- Precision teaching
- Reading Inference
- Read, Write Inc Fresh Start
- Handwriting support
- Talk Boost

Monitoring and review

The headteacher and English subject leaders will monitor the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis. The headteacher and subject leaders will report to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy annually and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements.

Policy Review date: 14 November 2017

Signed: Chair of Standards & Effectiveness Committee

Next Review Due: Autumn 2020