



English Policy

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Introduction

At Rattlesden Primary Academy we believe that English is a fundamental life skill. English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. 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.

Aims

The aims of the teaching of English are 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 are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Teaching and Learning

At Rattlesden Primary Academy we use a variety of teaching and learning approaches in our English lessons, as recommended by the National Curriculum 2014. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. We aim for a balance of whole class, group and independent learning; the independent activity providing an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance their learning.

Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and are able to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries, thesauri and phonics aides.

Children use computing in English lessons where it enhances their learning, for example, in drafting or publishing their work or using learning apps to combine words and images to convey meaning.

English work is often inspired by themes which interlink different curriculum areas and we encourage children to use and apply their learning in all areas of the curriculum.

In all classes, children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through adaptive teaching, while in others we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use teaching assistants to support children, and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

English Curriculum Planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum 2014. In reception through to Year 6, children are taught English within their classes. Through adaptive teaching and the support of teaching assistants, all children will receive high quality teaching and appropriate support in order for every child to reach their full potential. Children may receive additional support if necessary outside of the English lessons, and this will include children who receive support for a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND).

Curriculum planning shows the development of skills and knowledge throughout the school. We refer to the National Curriculum 2014 statutory requirements for each year group and sometimes include the non-statutory guidance to help with planning. 'Learning Intentions' and 'Success Criteria' are shared with the class in order that the children understand what they are trying to achieve and how to do so. For spelling, grammar and punctuation we refer to the statutory appendices in the National Curriculum 2014.

In Foundation Stage and Year 1 and 2, children follow the Supersonic Phonic programme to support the teaching of phonics, reading and writing. Children are assessed and taught, using Supersonic Phonics resources.

The Foundation Stage

Children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. 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 range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations.

Approaches to Phonics

The teaching of phonic skills is embedded within English teaching in each class. Additional provision is made each day in discrete sessions in the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and 2. In Year 3 we continue the scheme to support children not meeting age related expectations These comprise of learning different graphemes, focusing on oral and aural phonological skills and sight vocabulary. During these sessions, children are also explicitly shown how to apply their developing skills to their writing. All children are grouped in accordance to their individual needs and are in phase appropriate groups. Delivering of phonics after year 1 is through the delivery of alternative spellings for those pupils who did not achieve the pass score in the Year 1 Phonic screening. All children who are not meeting age related expectations receive additional support. Children have access to books in accordance with their phonetic knowledge. The book matches their sounds knowledge, continually tracked and assessed.

Approaches to speaking and listening

Opportunities for speaking and listening permeate every session. A range of teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We aim for children to be able to speak clearly, fluently and coherently, to be able to listen attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy, and to contribute to group discussions effectively.

We achieve this by:

- giving our children confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value their conversations and opinions. We also encourage a respect for the views of others.
- being aware that as adults, we provide a model of speakers and listeners in our day-to-day interactions with them and with other adults in our school.
- helping them to articulate their ideas and provide purposes and audiences for talk within a range of formal and informal situations and in individual, partner, group and class contexts.
- by providing opportunities to perform to a larger audience, in assemblies and productions, where children's efforts and skills are acknowledged by staff, parents, carers, visitors and peers.
- by providing a range of experiences where children can work collaboratively and participate in opportunities to reflect on, talk and explore real and imagined situations through role play, hot-seating, drama and discussions.
- by developing the children's ability to listen with attention and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and, where necessary, asking and responding to questions appropriately.
- Philosophy is timetabled and taught throughout the school by trained staff.

Approaches to Reading

Pupils have opportunities to undertake guided, shared and independent reading tasks throughout the school. A diverse range of group reading books and a staged reading scheme are available. Our books are phonetically decodable to matched sound knowledge. After this, children move to banded books.

Staff are deployed throughout the school to work with children in order to improve their fluency, intonation, decoding skills and comprehension. Home reading is encouraged and is an integral part of the child's development. In order to have strong communication between teachers and parents/carers, each child has a reading record where both the staff and parents can write comments about how the child is progressing with his/her reading. Our new library is well-stocked with a diverse range of titles, including many current titles which reflect children's ever-evolving tastes. We keep the library stock up to date and our mission is to ensure representation for all children.

High quality texts and passages are chosen using the Pie Corbett Reading Spine as core reading material throughout the school, appropriate to the expectations of the year group, or ability of the children, and teachers use this to model the application of the agreed reading skills.

Approaches to Writing

- To develop our children as writers we:
- treat children as writers, from the earliest stage, who have ideas that they will want to communicate, building on writing skills they have acquired and their knowledge of print from their environment.
- Ensure that a variety of high-quality texts (including visual texts) inspire and provide models for good writing.
- provide experiences where the children can acquire confidence and a positive attitude to writing.
- develop and sustain writing skills by providing opportunities for children to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- use guided writing sessions to model writing skills, teaching children how to compose, amend and revise their writing.
- teach children to become critical readers of their own writing by using self-evaluation and checking their work independently for sense, accuracy and meaning.
- teach grammar and punctuation in the context of children's own writing, as well as through discrete lessons.
- teach children to develop their ability to organise and present imaginative and/or factual writing and poetry in different ways.

- teach strategies for spelling to enable children to become confident and competent spellers.

From Year 2 onwards, the school follows the Jane Considine spelling programme which enables the children to recap on the previous year's spelling patterns and then introduces new patterns and sight words. This programme is in line with the National Curriculum for spelling. Opportunities are provided to practice spellings in class and at home throughout the week. Identified children may receive extra spelling and phonics support from TAs. As our school we have decided not to send spelling lists home, in-line with the Jane Considine scheme.

We use 'Focus 5's' to pick up on individual spelling errors taken from the children's writing which are reviewed and updated regularly.

Handwriting

Handwriting begins in the E.Y.F.S with mark-making and patterns. All pupils are given access to a wide range of writing tools and mediums to practise the early fine motor skills. The needs of left-handed children or those with physical difficulties are also taken into consideration and where necessary accommodated with resources or specific intervention.

Pupils are encouraged to develop fluent lines of correctly orientated letters from an early age and emergent writing is encouraged. We believe that discrete handwriting sessions where children's formation and pencil grip can be readily overseen should take place at least once a week and more frequently in the foundation stage. Correct posture and positioning of paper or books are also emphasised during these sessions. Letter formation and handwriting is taught and modelled using a range of resources. A cursive formation of letters is used from EYFS.

The national expectation at the end of year 6 is that children will join their handwriting. Staff use Letterjoin scheme to ensure children reach this point as soon as possible. As the children move up through the school they are encouraged to think carefully about the presentation of their work and to develop clear, legible and fluent hand-writing.

Resources

There is a budget for English and the Library. The school is well-resourced with a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and thesauruses and a range of other support materials. In addition to fiction titles, the library contains a wide selection of non-fiction books and graphic novels to support children's individual reading and research skills.

Assessment and Recording

Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. Informal 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 teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own or their peers' work, and use the purple pen to edit and improve their writing. -

Twice a year, every child in the school takes part in the same independent writing challenge, and these tasks alternate between fiction and non-fiction. Children are guided towards a theme or purpose for their writing and provided with some visual stimuli and a chance to discuss or plan some ideas for this. Children enjoy these tasks as they offer an opportunity for them to use their own ideas and imagination to make their writing their own. Teachers assess these pieces to determine individual action points or whole-class areas for development as they see fit. These tasks are moderated periodically so that a picture of writing across the school can be taken, and so teachers can truly understand the journey that the children take as writers from early years to the end of Key Stage 2.

For reading, the school uses PIRA and GAPS assessments termly towards the end of each term. Data from the assessments is used to assess pupils' summatively as well as formatively, showing progress between points in time, as well as question-level analysis of curriculum areas. In this way, teachers can target individual, group and whole class areas of concern. Additional teaching assistants and a team of reading volunteers are also deployed to ensure children, particularly those who are vulnerable to falling behind their peers, are supported daily with their reading.

Twice a year we moderate a piece of writing across the school based on the same theme, such as a recount of a school visitor or picture/object stimulus. This allows us to confirm that our levelling judgements are correct, and in-line with DfE Exemplification documents.

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 to child's parents or carers. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.

Children are set writing targets for improvement. We also have 'non-negotiables' which are in addition to the individual targets, such as legible writing and checking for correct spellings of known words.

Y2 and Y6 take part in Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) in the summer term.

Equal opportunities and Special Educational Needs

Our English curriculum is developed in a flexible way, which gives equal access to all children regardless of gender, race or ability. Teachers provide adaptive learning opportunities matched to the needs of the children.

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. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader has leadership and management time in order to enable her to review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school and gain pupil perceptions. The subject leader reports to the Headteacher and SLT.

English Subject Leader

The English Subject Leader is Sam Sharma.

The subject leader retains samples of children's work in a portfolio taken from the whole school writing task. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. In addition, writing progression books build up a bank of writing samples for the individual child demonstrating their writing journey and progress.