



Sheldwich Primary School

English Policy

Rationale

English is the most important life-skill that we can teach the children at Sheldwich Primary School as it is through our understanding and use of language that we access all other areas of learning. Through developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in English, children learn to appreciate that communication in all forms contributes to their wider understanding of the world in which they live and the world of imagination. We believe that it is an integral part of the learning process throughout the curriculum and we aim for excellence in English achievement throughout the school.

Aims

- To develop pupils' abilities to communicate effectively in speech and writing.
- To develop pupils' understanding of spoken and written language so that they become enthusiastic, responsive and knowledgeable speakers and readers.
- To help pupils understand how language enables them to experience and appreciate their world and the realms of the imagination in media.
- To help pupils to understand the part language plays in enabling them to express their ideas, feelings and experiences and come to an understanding of the ideas, feelings and experiences of others.
- To help pupils understand the function and importance of Standard English.

We aim to provide pupils with opportunities to interrelate, consolidate and reinforce these skills within a broad and balanced curriculum.

Objectives

To ensure the development of effective speaking and listening so that pupils can:

- formulate, clarify and express their ideas in a variety of situations using language which is appropriate to their needs and the intended audience.
- speak for a range of purposes e.g. to narrate, to analyse, to explain, to reflect and evaluate.
- listen, understand and respond appropriately to others.
- use, with increasing confidence, the vocabulary and grammar of standard English.
- use varied and specialised vocabulary.

To ensure the development of reading so that pupils can:

- master their initial reading skills so that they become independent and enthusiastic readers.
- read a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetic texts fluently, accurately and with understanding.

- find out the information they need in order to research and answer questions.
- understand the variety of written language and the differences between fiction and non-fiction.
- learn how the structure of language works (using grammatical terminology).
- understand and respond to a wide range of texts and sources, including print, media and ICT.
- improve their abilities to analyse, evaluate and criticise texts which they have read.

To develop pupils' writing skills so that they can:

- express themselves clearly and precisely for enjoyment and purpose
- demonstrate their understanding of how writing enables them to remember, communicate, organise and develop their ideas and information.
- write for an increasing range of purposes matching their language to the needs of the appropriate audiences.
- understand the appropriate use and purpose of an increasing range of text types.
- write in a neat cursive style with accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Statutory requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 (2014) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023).

Principles of Teaching and Learning

In our school we believe our teachers must work together to plan, deliver and moderate the teaching of English in order to ensure that expectations are high and those children are able to achieve the best of their ability. We use a variety of teaching strategies such as: teacher demonstration, modelling, explanation, questioning, discussion, guided and shared reading, guided and shared writing and group work to develop children's confidence, fluency and independence as readers and writers and in speaking and listening.

The separate skills of English are best developed through work which integrates and links these skills. We seek to provide activities which are interesting and motivating and lead to worthwhile outcomes. Such activities provide the best context for increasing children's knowledge about the English language. It is also necessary to focus separately on aspects of knowledge about the language at times so that children learn what they need to know in a systematic way. At Sheldwich the teaching and learning strategy is based upon The New National Curriculum for English 2014. Guided reading and additional spelling and handwriting programme sessions are delivered outside of English Lessons, and there are further opportunities to extend English work across the curriculum.

Speaking and Listening

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10). The development of good Speaking and Listening skills is seen as key to developing good general English skills. As such children are explicitly taught how to be good speakers and good listeners as a discrete aspect of English and also across the full English Curriculum, the full academic curriculum and the wider curriculum. There are many and varied opportunities for the direct teaching of Speaking and Listening skills, both explicitly in English related sessions and across the full curriculum. These include:

- planning activities to encourage full and active participation by all children.
- focusing children's responses using questioning techniques.
- ensuring that each adult and other children provide good role models for speaking and listening.
- teaching the children the difference between standard and non-standard forms of spoken English and when each of these can be appropriately used.
- ensuring opportunities and 'scaffolding' for discussion, individually, in pairs and in groups.
- teaching children about how to be a good listener and insisting that children employ these skills at appropriate points during any teaching session and in their interactions with children and adults across the school.
- Providing opportunities for speaking and listening in events such as Poetry recitals, school plays, class debates, events within the community, School Council meetings, drama / role play and PSHE.

Reading

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (p13). Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13).

Schools are expected to have library facilities and support and encourage reading at home.

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children for their engagement and successes at every stage of it.

Our provision:

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics (ELS) in Key Stage One, regular reading to adults in school, learning sight vocabulary and through reading at home.
- Pupils develop skills in reading for understanding using the colour banded system and many of the texts from the Oxford Tree Reading scheme (supplemented with a variety of level-matched and fully decodable texts from other sources and schemes). They often study books which are more challenging than those which they might be able to read independently, with opportunities provided for developing comprehension skills and vocabulary enhancement. They will use this book as the basis for reading, writing, speaking and listening tasks.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, library visits and high quality, attractive books in classrooms.

- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure. Every class is read to by their teacher regularly; either a single story or longer text, which would be read over a period of time.
- Teachers use opportunities in all subject areas to teach and apply Reading skills and comprehension.
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts during their school career.

Guided reading/reading comprehension takes place in the Foundation Stage, Phase 1 and Phase 2 on a regular basis.

Such is the importance of language to effective learning that this variety will be encouraged across all subjects and aspects of the curriculum. A wide range of resources (ICT; picture books; stories; fairy tales; myths; legends; poetry; nursery rhymes; comics; DVDs) will be used to help children discover and explore the rich variety of linguistic experience.

Writing

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length.
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Be grammatically correct.
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations.
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read.

We aim to develop the children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Our approach to teaching writing covers the 'transcription' and 'composition' requirements of The National Curriculum. Teachers are flexible in their selection of these Literacy experts' strategies to suit the needs of the children and text type being taught.

Our provision

- Teachers model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals.
- We encourage and promote 'talk for writing'.
- We provide writing frames and templates to support the less able.
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising.
- Children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions at the end of each unit.
- We mark extended pieces of work in-depth and set targets for the pupil.
- We use steps for success for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively.
- Children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model and for a variety of purposes and audiences.

The text types which are required to be covered by The National Curriculum (2014) are outlined in our long term plans for each year group to ensure that there is a breadth of coverage.

We recognise the important role that ICT has to play in our school in the development of English skills; there are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by drama techniques and film clips. Children will also be given the opportunity to produce multimodal texts and develop their understanding of visual literacy. Interactive technology is used on a daily basis to enhance the teaching of English.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught and practiced regularly in KS1 and through targeted intervention in KS2 to help children develop fluent, clear and legible joined up writing (see Handwriting Policy for further details).

Spelling

Spelling taught across the school is informed by New National Curriculum for English and assessments from the previous term. In Phase 2 this includes the daily spelling activities and weekly tests. In Phase 1 this includes High Frequency Words (see spelling policy for further details).

Grammar and punctuation

Phase 1 and 2 English lesson planning includes grammar and punctuation focused lessons. Grammar and punctuation skills, where possible, are linked to the text type being taught so that skills can be embedded and applied through whole class teaching and in the children's writing. Discrete lessons may be used to support learning of more complex areas of grammar.

Differentiation and Special Needs

Teachers effectively use a variety of differentiated work to cater for all needs in the classroom. This could involve planning for specific resources and approaches that are appropriately matched to individual pupils. The class teacher, AENCO and the English Coordinator liaise to ensure that individual needs of pupils are met and that appropriate targets are set and regularly reviewed. Children with learning difficulties are diagnosed and provision is made for individual needs. Where necessary, outside agencies are involved (SEND policy). Adult support is used in school to support groups/individual children. Programmes such as Stareway to Spelling, Toe by Toe, and reading comprehension activities will be used to support pupils who are not making expected progress in English.

Breadth and Balance

There must be a balance of the four areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. As these four areas are interrelated and their learning is an ongoing process, in Phase 2 we build and extend on the foundation of English knowledge and understanding established in Phase 1.

We recognise that although we need to maintain a balance and ensure necessary breadth, there may be times when our teaching requires specific emphasis for a specific purpose but these skills must be developed within a framework that is meaningful for the child.

A range of genres and texts will be selected to ensure that children get a balance drawn from a variety of sources (linguistic, cultural and historical).

Variety

English teaching will ensure that children will be engaged in a variety of activities matched to their specific needs. Play, storytelling, talking about their own experiences and ideas, drama and improvisation provide a sound base at Phase 1 with an emphasis on pupils exploring and expressing their own world in both Phases 1 and 2. Teaching and learning styles will mix direct instruction; modelling; group collaboration; pair work; practical activity; performance; individual research and investigation with other appropriate strategies to encourage effective learning through language. The use of ICT will be a strategy feature in ensuring pupil engagement.

Equal Opportunities

Children of all ethnic groups, abilities and both genders have equal access to the curriculum and positive images in terms of such groups are promoted throughout the school both in use of language and provision of resource.

Health and Safety

As with all curriculum subjects, English adheres to the guidelines of our school Health and Safety Policy.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting (please refer to the School's Assessment Policy)

Children's standards and achievements in English are assessed in line with the School's Assessment Policy.

Assessment in English for years 1-6 includes:

- On-going Assessment for Learning (AfL) practices within class and group sessions, including the sharing of and reference being made to Learning Objective and Steps to Success and self and peer assessments of understanding, outcomes and progress.
- Marking of children's work; against the shared Learning Objective and for accuracy of answer (for all written work) and diagnostically (regularly in line with School expectations).
- Formal assessments which refers to the National Standard. The expectations are set according to the age of the children.
- On-going phonic assessment for years R-2 using ELS. Phonics screening occurs in Year 1, with retakes in Year 2.

The Foundation Stage Profile is used to assess children throughout and at the end of the academic year. Assessments are used diagnostically by teachers to evaluate learning and inform teaching, and by teachers and senior leaders within the Accountability Process to evaluate individual and groups of children's standards and achievements and provision and to inform future provision and school development.

Assessment information for English, both achievements and effort, is reported on in detail during the school year at parent teacher consultation meetings, which includes information about the next steps for learning in the subject as well as in mid and end of year reports which outlines each child's attainment and effort within English.

There is opportunity for formative assessment of all aspects of English teaching, Guided Reading, Basic Skills sessions and within other curriculum areas. In addition to formative assessment, there are opportunities for summative assessments of reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar, and for peer and pupil self-assessment (see Assessment Policy). Results of summative assessment are recorded termly for reading and writing. Data is assimilated 3 times per year and reviewed at Pupil Progress meetings.

The Role of Subject Co-ordinators

The English Co-ordinator will:

- Take a lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in English throughout the school.
- Support colleagues in their development of detailed short-term plans and the implementation of the scheme of work and in assessment and record keeping.
- Regularly monitor various aspects of the English curriculum being taught within the school, including planning, lesson observations, assessment, marking and pupil interviews.
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for English, including maintaining and updating the school's reading scheme.
- Keep up-to-date with developments in English and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate.

Resourcing

English funding will be within the school budget plan for each financial year. Meetings will review the needs of English when resourcing, personal development and training needs will be discussed.

Review

This policy will be reviewed as appropriate in response to local or national initiatives, evaluations of monitoring procedures and as detailed in the school development plan.

This policy has been reviewed in line with the Single Equality Scheme and does not have a negative impact on one or more of the dimensions of equality.

***Reviewed by SG: Sep 2023
To be reviewed: Sep 2025***