



English Policy

Our mission is to inspire, nurture and challenge every learner to achieve their full potential.

“English is the language of the future... the most important tool you’ll ever need, no matter what career you choose. You have the right to English. Make it your right!” Benjamin Zephaniah

Introduction:

At Holbrook Primary School we will develop the abilities of all pupils to communicate effectively in speech and in writing; to listen with understanding and to become enthusiastic and responsive readers so that they can cope with the language demands in adult life. We will use a wide range of multi-cultural literature and reference materials, to develop the self-esteem of all pupils and an understanding and respect for all cultures alongside their own. We will liaise closely with services which have an impact on pupils’ achievement in English and Literacy skills, such as Speech and Language Development services, EMAS, Early Years team and advisory teachers to ensure that any gap in individual outcomes is narrowed.

At Holbrook Primary School we aim to develop in all pupils:

- A positive attitude towards all aspects of English.
- A love of reading and writing and an appreciation of good literature.
- The ability to communicate and respond effectively.
- The competence to produce work of high quality.
- Independence and confidence.
- Persistence and stamina.
- A keen awareness of audience in all areas of English, across the range of literacy skills.
- The confidence to tackle and solve problems through the application of knowledge and the effective use of skills.

To ensure we realise our aims, we shall:

- Provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- Develop in pupils an interest in, and a love of, books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum but also enrich their lives
- Value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play
- Teach pupils the craft of writing in order to develop in children the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audience
- Teach the basics – spelling, handwriting and punctuation - to liberate creativity
- Foster in pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing
- Value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Principles of Practice

There are six key principles for teaching English at Holbrook. These are:

1. There will be a dedicated English lesson every day;
2. The whole class will experience direct teaching and interactive questioning;
3. There will be an emphasis on correct modelling by teachers of writing, answering questions and good handwriting;
4. Differentiation will be personalised with all pupils engaged in English lessons related to common objectives;
5. The class book is central to promoting enjoyment of reading and writing.
6. Guided Reading is taught using the Holbrook Approach.

Learning and Teaching

We believe that pupils learn best when their work is purposeful and set in a meaningful context. Therefore, teachers plan English so that it links with other rich and exciting subjects. All learning styles of the children are met (auditory, visual, kinaesthetic) through a wide range of learning opportunities. Key skills are thoroughly taught through guided work and adult supported activities. Independent activities are planned to consolidate and extend learning.

Teachers (and where appropriate, HLTAS) will –

- Strive to provide inspiring and meaningful language experiences. The teacher's role is therefore varied – someone who observes, facilitates, supports, provides a critical audience, models and scaffolds high quality writing and reading.
- Demonstrate high levels of personal literacy skills and have high expectations of our pupils and provide challenging and enriching opportunities in a safe and supportive environment.
- Have a clear understanding of the objectives being taught, openly sharing these with the pupils.
- Plan for well-paced lessons, which drive learning forward and ensure pupils make progress within lessons.
- Pass on their optimism and high expectations for success to the pupils.
- Appropriately use a range of teaching strategies, (including direction, demonstration, modelling, scaffolding, explanation, targeted questioning, initiating and guiding exploration, discussing and challenging ideas generated by the pupils).
- Listen and respond to pupils in a sensitive and supportive manner, discussing and evaluating pupils' successes.

HLTAS/Learning Support Assistants/ other adults will –

- Demonstrate competent literacy skills
- Contribute ideas for lesson planning
- Play an active role during whole class sessions, supporting the learning objective
- Support guided groups and project high expectations
- Support the teacher in the plenary of whole class sessions
- Organise and run intervention groups (across the school), in liaison with the Deputy Head/SENCo/Class teacher.

Planning

We use the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage guidance (EYFS) as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme for English. Long term and medium term planning is carried out with reference to other subjects in the curriculum.

Class teachers complete a weekly/ short term plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of how learning will be differentiated for pupils.

Organisation

English is taught on a daily basis. Links between English and other subjects are made to provide a rich context for learning. The main features of English teaching include whole class teaching (including modelled writing where appropriate), independent or group activity and a plenary (a lesson review where children reflect on the learning that has taken place).

The success of English teaching is dependent on meaningful contexts where links can be made to other curriculum areas or classroom activities. Starting points for learning should arise from exciting texts, poems, various print materials, artefacts and other first- hand experience. Teachers encourage pupils to use their developing reading, writing and speaking and listening skills in other subjects.

In the Foundation Stage, Communication forms the basis of one of the 3 prime areas with Literacy as a specific area. The emphasis is on teaching literacy skills through role play, stories, storytelling and big books.

Reading

Reading skills are taught in more than one context.

Shared Reading

Some English lessons will include a shared reading aspect. The teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader, providing a high level of support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The pupils join in, where appropriate, with the reading of the text. The texts selected are quality texts that reflect the teaching objectives. Shared reading will include the class book and a poem being read on a daily basis.

Guided Reading

Guided Reading is taught as a whole class in the vast majority of cases. Younger pupils and pupils in need of extra support will have supplementary sessions. In addition, learning support assistants and HLTAs will teach some groups providing extra adult time for teaching key reading skills. The Holbrook Approach is used to teach Guided Reading. The Holbrook Approach is exemplified in Appendix One.

The process for the selection of the Guided Reading text is as follows: excerpts from relevant texts are used (often taken from the class book for the term). Most groups of children will work from the same text although a teacher may choose to use something simpler with children who struggle with decoding, depending on the focus of the learning. The excerpt will be approximately 100 words in length – This is at the discretion of the class teacher. In Key Stage One the length of the text will begin at 50 words and then increase accordingly.

Once a text has been selected class teachers will:

- 1) Identify the features – teachers identify approximately ten features in the text to assess its usefulness for the purpose using the coding. This is used as a prompt for teachers; children are given a blank text. A key is used to do this:
 - Words that the children may find difficult to decode are UNDERLINED
 - Language features that the teacher wants to discuss (such as unfamiliar punctuation, figurative language etc) are CIRCLED
 - Concepts that may be difficult for the children to conceptualise are identified with a SQUARE.

- 2) Design the questions to focus on the specific skill that is being taught within the lesson, e.g. fact retrieval questions, inference questions etc.

The teacher's role is supportive, modelling a reflective, appreciative approach to content, and prompting the reader if necessary to consider a balanced range of information and problem solving. Discussion is facilitated by the teacher, with the emphasis being on children doing the talking. Children are encouraged to share ideas and opinions within an environment which supports the theory that not every question has a right answer.

Each teacher keeps notes made during each guided session and these are recorded using the Pupil Reading Profile. Next steps are shared with the pupils so that they know what they can do to improve. Teachers use these notes to inform on-going assessment and to determine the band in which a child is working at the end of the term.

It is intended that guided reading provides a forum for children to demonstrate what they have learned about reading and to further develop and extend their reading and comprehension skills. Information from guided sessions will be shared with parents where relevant.

Individual Reading

Pupils have access to a range of picture books, transition chapter books and longer texts to support the development of their individual reading skills. Pupils start the reading scheme in Foundation Stage and continue on this scheme until they become competent, independent readers. They can then choose from a wide variety of books in KS2.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that pupils are taking home books appropriate to their reading level regularly and for communicating effectively with parents their child's progress through the use of the reading record.

All classrooms have a range of reading books that vary in difficulty. All scheme reading books are graded by publishers. Pupils in KS1 and KS2 have a Reading Log which is used to record the books that they have read. Teachers keep a record of books which is recorded on the Pupil Reading Profile. Parents are expected to sign the Reading Log on a daily basis when their child has read for 15 minutes.

Reading Magpies

In KS1 and KS2 pupils have the option of completing 12 different activities relating to reading. The purpose of these activities is to develop 'Reading for Pleasure.' Children are able to collect a different Reading Magpie card for every activity which they complete. Pupils who complete an activity are celebrated in assembly on Friday. The Reading Magpie activities change every Block.

Reading across the Curriculum

Teachers use a variety of texts in a range of subjects. Reading skills are practised and enhanced across the curriculum.

Class Reading Areas

To support reading in class and to encourage an exciting reading environment, there is a dedicated reading area in each classroom which has, as a minimum:

- A bookcase of attractively displayed fiction and non-fiction.
- Reading Magpie Poster prominently displayed
- A book stock that changes throughout the year
- Magazines, audio books and other materials to support reading
- The class book will be clearly displayed.

In addition:

- Box collections from the library service may be used to supplement book stock.
- Pupils may be involved in organising class reading areas and in requesting books for purchase
- 'Author of the term' linked to class topics or pupil interests may be used
- Posters promoting books may be on display.

School Library

All pupils have access to the school library. Teachers can book the library for learning sessions. Teachers decide whether to take a whole class, half a class or a small group at a time for library skills practice and access to the library stock. Wider use of the library is encouraged through these sessions. In addition, the library is open week after school for Key Stage Two Home Learning club.

Reading Scheme

Oxford Reading Tree is the main scheme used by the school. Pupils from Foundation Stage onwards will read books from this scheme and make progress through the levels. Books from other schemes with phonics based texts are used which supplement the phonics teaching programme.

Every teacher has a responsibility to spark within children a love of reading and develop high level reading skills so that they can access the curriculum.

Writing

Writing skills are taught in more than one context

Shared Writing

Writing opportunities are embedded across the curriculum in order to provide a rich context for writing and to give children real purposes and audiences for their written work. Shared writing takes place within the English lesson. The teacher models the writing process to the whole class as an expert writer, articulating the process. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific writing strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The pupils join in individually or through partner work, with the writing, where appropriate.

During follow up activities, pupils share ideas and experiment with writing, with the support of the teacher. The learning objective is shared with pupils.

Writing Portfolios

From Y1 onwards, pupils complete work at the end of each taught genre of writing. At the end of each unit of work a final written piece will be edited and then published by the child. It will be collected as evidence for their Writing Portfolio.

Every teacher has a responsibility to spark within children a love of writing and develop high level writing skills so that they can express themselves and communicate across the curriculum.

Presentation

We believe that all pupils want to present their writing in the best possible way, especially for display and redrafting. Our Presentation Policy and Handwriting guidelines provide detailed information.

Handwriting

Pupils will be taught handwriting using pre-cursive and cursive script (Continuous Cursive) from Reception through to Year 6.

EYFS

In EYFS pupils are taught handwriting under the Physical Development area of learning. The teaching of handwriting takes place explicitly once a week. It is taught through English and Phonics on a daily basis.

KS1

Handwriting is taught on a daily basis.

Lower KS2

Handwriting is taught twice a week discretely and is reinforced through English lessons. Pupils working below the expected standard receive additional support.

Upper KS2

Pupils working below the expected standard for handwriting are identified and receive additional support as required.

Phonics, Spelling and Key Words

Efforts are made to contextualise pupils' learning of spelling as much as possible, and to make the experience a meaningful and enjoyable one, e.g. by linking to poetry and stories. In the Foundation Stage, pupils are introduced to phonics through a structured multi-sensory programme.

As soon as possible, pupils are encouraged to check and edit their own writing and to take responsibility for their own spelling development. A separate spelling policy details the approach we take to teaching spelling and encouraging good spelling across the school.

Key Word expectations are set for each year group and are based on the spelling lists in the National Curriculum. These are shared with parents and are checked and tested by the class teacher. Key words and/or spellings are weekly expectations of home learning.

The school follows the LETTERS AND SOUNDS phonics programme.

In KS2 pupils are taught spelling at least twice a week and are tested on a weekly basis.

Speaking and Listening

The development of language is crucial. It is important because of its association with the development of higher order thinking skills and the impact that language can have on the quality of life itself. Spoken Language is important in the progression of children's thinking as it assists them in making reference to things in the past, present, future or elsewhere in the world outside their immediate experience.

Children's talk should be used to underpin and extend their thinking. Linguistic competence is of paramount importance because it is a key to personal and social development. We use language to provide structures to enhance children's learning. It is important that classrooms are positive and secure environments where pupils feel valued and are respected by others, so feel able to speak confidently and communicate effectively.

Teachers provide pupils with a variety of opportunities to talk in different situations and for different audiences and support them to speak with clarity, confidence and fluency using appropriate forms of speech.

Talk Boost is a feature of KS1 classrooms.

Pupils are encouraged to:

- ask relevant, varied and thought-provoking questions
- listen with attention, patience and respond appropriately to others
- to follow increasingly complex instructions
- use a variety of drama techniques including 'hot seating', 'tableau' and 'conscience alley' to explore issues
- express themselves, their feelings and their emotions accurately
- explain a process using the correct technical vocabulary

Special Educational Needs

All pupils will have full access to English lessons. Any additional support that is required will take place during the guided/ independent sessions, allowing the pupil to benefit from the rich classroom literacy environment.

Pupils may be withdrawn at other times during the school day, such as the key stage intervention programme time. For pupils with identified SEND targets are set matching the needs of the child. Pupils with SEN will have the opportunity to work with the teacher, teaching assistant and independently.

In class, the teacher will set differentiated tasks to support less able, and extend the more able.

More Able and Higher Attaining Pupils

More able children will be challenged and motivated by greater differentiation of materials and tasks. The class teacher will also aim to identify pupils who may be gifted in English and provide them with appropriate learning opportunities.

All pupils will be taught so that they remain in the zone of challenge. Questions which stretch and extend thinking will be used.

Equal opportunities

Teachers at Holbrook Primary School are aware of the issues related to gender and literacy learning and, in particular, the difference in performance by boys and girls in national tests. If boys and girls are to have equal access to literacy learning, teachers need to consider these in all their complexity. However, until boy performance in reading and writing improves, teachers will give thought to the strategies that engage and enhance the quality of work of boys. In particular, the link between talk and writing will be emphasised.

Celebrating Diversity

At Holbrook Primary School we celebrate language diversity. Books in classrooms and the library, as well as displays around school, reflect the fact that we live in a multi-lingual and multicultural society. Teachers will endeavour to enrich their literate environment by including translated signs, notices and numerical symbols. A particular effort is made to display our own bi-lingual children's home languages. EAL children work with children who present good models of language. Support may be offered by teachers from EMAS. Books and resources will also support our work on equalities by representing different families and non- gender conforming characters.

Assessment and Recording

The teacher carries out formative assessment on a daily and weekly basis to inform planning. It involves identifying children's progress against teaching objectives, determining what a child has already achieved and moving them on to the next stage of their learning development.

Children take formal tests, in Reading, Writing and EGPS (SpaG), each term. These tests measure progress and are used to support teachers' judgements in the assessment of children. These tests, along with on-going assessment, are used by teachers to inform medium term planning. Assessment bands are communicated to parents every Block basis and, when age appropriate, to children.

Marking and feedback in English is linked to the Learning Objective and Signs of Success. Over time, assessment should build a picture of pupils' abilities to be effective communicators, enthusiastic readers of fiction and non-fiction, creative and imaginative users of language and careful, evaluative listeners.

Teachers are expected to highlight up to three spellings in English work and these should be corrected by the child. This could include looking the word up in the dictionary and writing it out three times correctly / less able and younger pupils have the word written out for them but are still expected to write the word out themselves. In Year 6, written work that is labelled 'EV' (Writing Evidence) is marked in accordance to the latest guidelines from the DFE – Teacher Assessment Exemplification: KS2 English. In such cases, spellings will not be highlighted.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of teaching in English, the standards attained by pupils, and their progress will be a regular part of the school's monitoring of learning, teaching and pupil progress.

Reading and Writing is moderated across the school collectively by teachers. Moderation takes place on a rolling timetable throughout the year, every week.

The subject leader for English will review the progress of pupils using available data and follow this up with work scrutiny, classroom visits, learning walks, lesson observations and pupil interviews.

The governors with responsibility for English will receive regular reports from the subject leader and will carry out their own monitoring exercises and report to the curriculum committee and the full governing body. Governors will be invited to visit classrooms to enable them to carry out their responsibilities.

Conclusion

This policy will be reviewed in line with the governing body's schedule of policy review. It should be considered alongside other relevant policy statements.

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