

# English Policy

## Owston Park Primary Academy



## **Rationale**

English is the gateway to success in other curriculum subjects. Pupils' eyes are opened to the human experience, they explore meaning and ambiguity as well as the beauty and power of language.

At Owston Park Primary School we have a real passion for reading, writing and a love of books. We recognise that the development of language skills is crucial to the progress children make across the curriculum and we are intent on supporting the children to become confident and effective readers. We set high standards for our pupils and expect them to make rapid and sustained progress throughout their time in school. We do this by prioritising the teaching of English, setting challenging goals, embedding a joy and a thirst for reading and putting extra support in place where necessary. English CPD is a high priority so all staff are experts in English and early talking, reading and writing. We aspire to promote a whole community goal of sharing a love of books and reading and to open the children's minds to the world of imagination, a world where anything is possible.

We acknowledge that a curriculum structure for reading should place varying emphasis on different goals as pupils gain expertise – but we also understand that the structures involved in reading in and of themselves make a significant contribution to pedagogy across all curriculum subjects. Knowledge of language, which includes linguistic knowledge like vocabulary and grammar, as well as knowledge of the world for comprehension, underpins progression in spoken language, reading and writing. So, in terms of our curriculum design our first goal is to prioritise progression in the knowledge of language. In the Early Years children are exposed to a rich diet of quality stories, a wide range of books, nursery rhymes and new, ambitious vocabulary. Throughout both phases of the EYFS, children are working towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and start work on phonics. Following on from this opportunities for pupils of all ages to develop their proficiency are planned carefully in English lessons and across all other subjects. There are frequent opportunities for children to practise and apply their knowledge of spoken language across a range of contexts and for a range of purposes.

English, particularly reading, at Owston Park, helps children to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature plays a key role in this development. Reading also enables children to acquire knowledge and build on what they already know. All the skills of language that are essential to participating fully as a member of society are developed through our English curriculum.

Reading involves a range of strategies which help children interpret the marks on the page, assign meaning to those marks and absorb that meaning to make sense of what is written. Children need to develop the ability to read, with understanding, a wide range of text including fiction, non-fiction, print in the environment as well as print accessed via technology. Competence in reading is the key to independent learning, development and progress so therefore the teaching of reading is given our highest priority in school.

## **Aims**

The overarching aim for English in school is to promote high standards of language development and reading comprehension which children transfer into all other areas of their learning as well as developing a love of literature and a widespread pleasure for reading. We aim to ensure that all children;

- Develop a 'love' of reading.
- Be curious about books
- Talk, read and write easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, both for 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 style across 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

### **Guidelines**

At Owston Park we have developed a set of minimum criteria which should be rigidly adhered to but may be freely supplemented according to the knowledge, skills and aptitudes of individual teachers;

- Children begin their phonics learning in nursery – we use Read, Write, Inc. and sessions take place for all children in the early years and KS1 until they are proficient and are no longer required to be on the programme. Interventions are regularly available for those children whose phonics knowledge is still not secure by the time they reach KS2.
- There will be a daily English lesson giving children the opportunity to implement their reading skills across a wide range of activities
- In Early Years, communication and language is at the heart of everything we plan/do
- Oral retelling of nursery rhymes and traditional tales in EYFS & KS1
- Spelling will be taught as per the spelling policy
- Punctuation and grammar need not have a bespoke session but should be taught according to the varying needs of the children in class using books and text types as a starting point for planning
- Each class will have the opportunity to be read to daily
- Each child will have the opportunity to read silently at least twice per week
- Each class will have a vocabulary wall where children investigate words from their reading and learning across the curriculum
- Each child will have a reading book which records their progress along national curriculum programmes of study for reading as well as their aptitudes with the various content domains
- All children will have a library session and have access books in the school library.
- Each classroom will have a reading area with books and props which match their topic
- Every topic will have at least one linked fiction text with associated reading activities
- One term per year will have assemblies dedicated to reading poetry, short stories or extracts from British literary culture
- All topics must have a bespoke reading activity
- Each class will have a reward system in place to encourage children to apply skills and knowledge learned in wider reading to their writing

### **Reading Pledge;**

Beyond these minimum guidelines we have made a post-Covid pledge to 'Plan for Reading' more explicitly. Below are our pledges.

### **Nursery;**

- Make 'reading' central to our planning so the whole week is based around our 'hook book'. This is always a quality text that contains rich vocabulary, rhyming words, repeated refrains etc. The books are chosen to link in with the current topic or following the children's current interests.
- All areas of provision to be enhanced with pictures/text/vocabulary and challenges linked to the current linked texts.
- Story books, puppets, nursery rhyme and story props linked to familiar texts to be freely available in the reading area to enable children to retell stories and nursery rhymes. This is to encourage independent story telling. Children are encouraged to choose and peruse books freely as well as sharing them when read by an adult.
- As well as the weekly 'hook book' to have story time every day before children go home. Familiar stories to be selected so that children can join in or books to be selected for their rhyming, alliteration content etc.
- Phase one 'Letters and Sounds' standalone sessions 3 times a week – particularly in autumn and spring term. Phase one falls largely within the Communication & Language and Reading areas of learning within the EYFS; exploring sounds in the environment, instrumental sounds, voice sounds, rhyming sounds and alliteration. This sound exposure will enable children to develop their ability to tune into speech sounds, moving onto oral blending and segmenting activities in the later stages of Phase One.
- Continuous provision to be regularly audited – to ensure that the indoor and outdoor provision is a rich and varied environment that will support children's language learning through Phase One.
- Quality story books to be taken home each week and then discussed in small groups during 'book review' every Friday.
- Children to be tracked and supported during child-led activities (continuous provision) against the EYFS Rose Learning Trust Development Tracker statements for reading.

### **Reception;**

- Tricky words and reading sheets will be sent home.
- We will expose the children to more quality traditional tales.
- We will ensure a quality story time each day.
- Lots of environmental print to be displayed in the classes.
- Phonic videos to be made and sent to the parents for the children to practice.
- Phonic cards and mats to be available all day.
- Interventions to be established for individual children.
- Planning and learning intentions to be sent home to the parents each week, to support learning in school.
- Phonics grab boxes to be set up for continuous provision.
- Rose Learning tracker statements used as a focus for planning in each area.

### **KS1;**

- Decided that whilst it would prove difficult because of the fluency barriers to give the children chunks of texts to read independently, we would build more opportunities for teaching reading into wider curriculum lessons - e.g. building reading into science and history lessons to develop reading skills whilst enhancing understanding of a topic area.
- Decided to explicitly include challenging texts as sources of information for shared reading in wider curriculum esp. in history, e.g. looking at and reading Captain Scott's diary together whereas previously we'd have paraphrased it for children.

- Bottom 20% of children identified from diagnostics and PSC. These children to have extra, bespoke support during quality first teaching and a specific intervention designed to directly address their diagnosed need.

#### **Y3/4;**

- Make more cross curricular links with English curriculum ie; increase reading opportunities in wider curriculum sessions.
- Ensure children are reading in class daily.
- Ensure all lower ability (bottom 20%) readers (and DP children) are targeted for reading practice weekly one to one. Ensure they also receive appropriate pedagogical support during quality first teaching.
- Ensure all children are tested diagnostically for phonics levels as a baseline.
- Teachers to target more able children and children who are less able but very confident (MA readers) for reading out loud in reading sessions.
- Try to ensure text types are varied and authors are varied.
- Reading in maths and science more regularly targeted.
- Once each half term children will read a child friendly journal article created by an academic related to the subject.

#### **Y5;**

- Children to access a wider variety of more challenging texts.
- Make more time for independent/quiet reading time.
- More opportunities for children to read aloud to the teacher.
- Allow time for class story/text read by teacher.
- Cross-curricular reading to be increased – at least one opportunity per week.
- Ensure bottom 20% readers and PP children access extra 1:1 reading with an adult with differentiated comprehension questions.
- Formal interventions for children who are working slightly below ARE.
- Reading domains are clearly displayed in the classroom and referred to each reading lesson. Children to have specific instruction in the mechanics of recognising answering each domain.

#### **Y6;**

- Reading to happen 3 days per week, where we read the book and answers questions relevant to the content domain.
- Children to take home their reading books and bring them back as per rest of school. They will be listened to each week at least once, with more opportunities, when we read aloud our guided reading text or when they are asked to read information from the PowerPoint slides.
- Wider and more frequent reading in other subjects, such as history, geography and science.
- Baseline assessment and end of year targets will allow us to identify the children who need additional interventions once a week.
- We will make more links between our reading novel and our topic, making inferences from the knowledge we have learnt in topic lessons and transferring them, to further aid our understanding of the text.
- Main content domains to be displayed in every Y6 room and referred to in each guided reading lesson.
- Make more opportunities for reading in the non-core subjects, reading that is of the children's level and can challenge them.
- Give out a reading book that the children keep in school that they can read when they have completed any work, at dinner times, or any other free time. These will be matched to the children so that they are suitable but also challenging of their ability.
- Ensure more opportunities for reading for vulnerable groups, especially quality texts.

- Look for opportunities across the curriculum to encourage the WTS children with their reading and particularly their retrieval and inference practice as it has shown to be beneficial, particularly with history and analysing sources.
- Bespoke intervention for bottom 20%.
- Provide more resources for the children to read at their own pace to help aid them in a lesson such as additional information in science, rather than racing through the information on a PowerPoint.

## Lesson Structure

Our English lesson structure follows a strict format based on the recommendations in EEF 'Improving Literacy' guidance.

### 1. Talking

High quality interactions with adults are important at this stage, we talk with, rather than just 'to' children. We use a wide range of implicit and explicit approaches including planning the teaching of vocabulary, modelling and extending children's language and thinking during interactions and collaborative activities provide opportunities for wider learning through talk. We use Let's Think in English structures as the basis for teaching dialogue and thinking. In a dialogic classroom everyone has an opportunity to contribute through scaffolded self-efficacy, everyone listens, everyone is respected, consensus is gained, no-one is wrong. It is about socially constructing understanding and children are challenged to work at the upper limits of their current ability.

### 2. Fluency

Depending on their age and stage children will first work on Read, Write, Inc. to ensure solid foundational phonics understanding. During this stage children will be regularly singing songs, learning poems and reciting rhymes. There will be reading aloud from picture books with repeated refrains and rehearsed with or without use of the book. This will develop into 'read-a-long' and echo reading to develop prosody. As children move into KS2 echo reading continues, and teachers introduce guided oral reading and other 'Readers' Theatre' activities.

### 3. Comprehension

Teachers begin to introduce the terminology around reading domains using modelling and structured support. For children who are less confident strategies are taught more specifically and in a more structured way from the beginning of Y4. These strategies will be modelled (with scaffold if needed) but children will be increasingly encouraged to use these strategies independently, with less and less support from the teacher.

### 4. Composition

We teach writing as a process of planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Writing is incorporated into the English lesson journey – we do not have separate writing and reading lessons. We employ such strategies as;

- Hook/purpose for writing
- Familiarisation with text and identify features.
- Teach SPaG (and add to writer's toolkit)
- Lots of modelling (I write, we write)
- Plan (can be orally in KS1)
- Then write first draft (but with no tick list)
- Before editing, pull out examples of work where children have used the features successfully and share them with class.
- Then children edit and improve the content of their work (might be a discussion about editing)

This process does not preclude the inclusion of reading – in fact children will use a range of resources to support their writing, read and re-read their work and the works of others and make regular reference back to the base text.

### 5. Transcription

Transcription refers to the physical processes of handwriting, spelling and proof-reading. Children must develop fluency in these skills to the point where they become automatic. Teachers will provide a lot of practise and support children with effective feedback. Explicit teaching of spelling is also required – this may take place in a session beyond this format.

Children will not be expected to proof read every section of every piece of work every time. Also, in early years and KS1 we understand the value of dictating sentences to children to build up muscle strength and writing fluency.

Steps four and five are included in this policy because we understand that the process of talking, understanding, reading, comprehending and writing are interleaved and cannot be separated from each other as skills in other subject disciplines can.

### **Individual reading**

All children in EYFS take home a story book each week. PIP children in reception also take home a reading book with no words and the readers take an appropriate reading book.

All children in KS1 are assessed against their Read, Write, Inc. level and given an appropriate RWI Book Bag Book or Oxford Reading Tree book which are between 80%-100% decodable. We aim to hear each child read individually once per fortnight. Reading books are sent home once per week to practise with parents/carers and recorded in planners. Progress through the scheme is recorded and the class teacher is responsible for making decisions about moving on through the scheme. In KS2 specific children will be heard read individually depending on their need.

### **Adults reading aloud**

Teachers will read aloud a range of texts and stories, usually on a daily basis. We believe that giving children the opportunity to hear an adult read aloud allows them to comment on and make sense of the events and experiences within a text. These sessions allow teachers to deepen the children's understanding by asking literal and inferential questions. Most importantly however story time allows our teachers to share their passion for reading.

### **Assessment**

We use high quality assessment and diagnosis to target and adapt teaching to pupils' needs. Rapid support where needed is provided but targeted formative assessment ensures teaching is appropriately targeted within the lesson to reduce the need for intervention. For those children requiring further support we use a range of tools to diagnose needs and difficulties in order to match pupils to the appropriate intervention.

Appendix 1  
**Writing Journey**

