



English Policy

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Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Introduction

- This document is a statement of rationale, aims and strategies for the teaching of English at the Pochin School. Every child in the school has an entitlement and equal right of access to English regardless of ability, gender or race. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to implement this policy.

What is English?

- English is a knowledge of both spoken and written language and the grammar and spelling which underpin them.

Rationale

English is important because:

- it is a core subject in the National Curriculum;
- it is the means by which learning takes place in other subjects and the mastery of English is essential if children are to reach their full potential;
- It is a vital life skill which enables us to communicate, express our feelings, negotiate, solve problems etc in school, everyday life and ultimately in a working environment;
- It opens the doors to understanding others through an exchange of, sometimes opposite, views and allows us to widen our experience of the world around us;
- It is a fundamental part of our national heritage.

Aims

Our aims in teaching English are that all children will, to the best of their ability:

- be able to express themselves clearly and fluently through the spoken and written word and to listen attentively with understanding and pleasure both at school and in their life beyond.
- build up a breadth and flexibility of language which enables them to mould their writing or speech to the audience and purpose.
- understand the importance of the English language in forming our cultural identity;
- read a variety of texts with ease and comprehension for enjoyment and information and to expand their knowledge of the world in which they live;
- apply their English skills across the curriculum to reach their full potential;
- write effectively in a range of different ways and for different purposes, using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Reading

What is Reading?

- Reading is the ability to decode the written word by the use of differing clues and reading strategies, being able to link words into sentences, sentences into text and so, ultimately, read the written word with understanding in all its various forms.

Rationale

Reading is important because:

- it is an essential means of communication in our society, the world of work and most aspects of everyday life; it can expand our understanding, widen our experience and make us more aware of views which may challenge our own;
- it stimulates our imagination;
- it is the foundation for much of the learning which takes place in school and competence in reading ensures that children can become increasingly independent;
- it provides a source of interest, enjoyment and wonder throughout life.

Aims

Our aims in teaching Reading are that all children will, to the best of their ability:

- be equipped with a range of strategies in order that their reading skills will develop;
- be able to read with increasing fluency and accuracy;
- respond to a wide range of texts, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, literature from other cultures and traditions and real world text such as signs, labels, captions and lists from the environment;
- be sufficiently confident to read aloud to an audience;
- read increasingly difficult text with confidence and be able to tackle new and unfamiliar material;
- begin to improve their skills by independently using strategies which help them to expand the scope of their reading – eg dictionaries, word banks, sharing a book with or asking for clarification from an adult, visiting libraries etc;
- carry their love of reading and the appreciation of its importance as a key skill throughout their lives.

Statutory Requirements

The National Curriculum states that ‘it is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education.’

Strategies for the Teaching of Reading

- On entering school children will be tested to ascertain whether a start has been made in learning to read, in order that the child can be slotted into the learning programme at an appropriate level.
- Provision will be made for the children who need to develop reading skills through a range of pre-reading activities.
- Rhymes, poems, songs and stories will be used to build up vocabulary and phonological awareness.
- A programme of phonics and word recognition will be used in the early years. Continuing phonic skills will be taught systematically to help children decode words.
- Children will also be taught to use picture, syntactic and contextual clues to decode text.
- Reading will be practised by the use of shared, class or guided reading and also by silent reading and reading in pairs. Individual reading will be used as appropriate according to age and ability.
- Children will hear an adult reading regularly to understand the importance of punctuation and expression in their own reading.
- Children will be encouraged to build up word banks (personal / class) to extend their vocabulary and to use tools such as dictionaries which will enable them to become more independent in their learning.
- Children will be encouraged to become more curious about texts – asking questions and seeking to broaden their personal experience of the world.
- Extra support may be given to some children with reading difficulties by the teacher, teaching assistants and the SENCo.
- Reading skills will be practised in other curriculum areas to widen vocabulary, to extend children’s reading experience and to inform.
- Children will not only read published texts but also their own and other children’s writing to encourage them to write and read for a specific purpose.
- Use will be made of recorded stories, DVDs, the internet, computers and television programmes to develop reading skills.
- Teaching Assistants and parent helpers will be used where appropriate to aid children’s progress.
- A school/home reading system whereby:
 - i. younger children and less able readers will be asked to take a book home and read with parental support, parents being expected to write/read comments in their children’s homework diaries;
 - ii. younger children will also be given high frequency words to learn to improve sight vocabulary;
 - iii. older children and more able readers will be encouraged to borrow books from the classroom and public libraries to read at home for pleasure and information;
 - iv. parents are engaged to read with their own children.

Strategies for Ensuring Continuity and Progression

- A variety of books (both fiction and non-fiction) collated into a progressive reading scheme will be used with all children until they are capable of independent reading. Reading across more than one scheme will be used where appropriate.
- The reading levels within classroom collections will be organised so that children are able to progress at their own speed with opportunities to use developing reading skills with texts containing appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure which match their stage of development.
- Children will also have access to a range of books with varying levels of difficulty which they will be encouraged to read for pleasure and information. Older children will visit the library on a regular basis to enable them to take more control over their reading material.
- The children will be continually assessed both formatively and summatively, adapting approaches to their learning where necessary.

Strategies for Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- Children's reading progress will be constantly monitored and assessed by comments written by teachers, teaching assistants and parents in their homework diaries.
- From Year 2 and onwards reading ages tested and recorded annually, together with the results of baseline assessment and SATs tests when appropriate, on a class record sheet.

Reporting

- Reporting to parents verbally in the Autumn and Spring terms through interviews and by written reports at the end of each academic year.

Writing

What is Writing?

- Writing is the ability to communicate effectively through the written word. It is being able to set down information, instructions, feelings and ideas coherently and logically so that the content can be clearly understood by the reader.

Rationale

Writing is important because:

- it is a crucial life skill as a vehicle of communication in everyday life and the world of work or for pleasure, allowing the children to express themselves emotionally, creatively and imaginatively or to exchange information or personal opinions with others;
- it is a way in which children demonstrate their progress in and understanding of subjects in the National Curriculum;
- it reinforces learning and is a means of monitoring and checking that learning has taken place.

Aims

Our aims in the teaching of writing is that all children will, to the best of their ability:

- enjoy writing for a variety of purposes and to understand the power of language as a means of self-expression;
- be able to communicate effectively through purposeful writing using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation to enhance their work;
- be able to write flexibly and with increasing fluency and speed, choosing vocabulary, style, punctuation and grammar which suits the purpose and audience for which they are writing;
- develop clear, legible handwriting which enables them to write fluently and with increasing speed;
- present work appropriately using different layouts in a neat, attractive manner and to understand the value of organisation and presentation to the experience of their audience / reader;
- To develop a range of writing skills that they will carry with them and build on throughout their lives and which will support them in the working environment they find themselves in;
- To develop a variety of spelling strategies (including phonics), a substantial vocabulary and a grammatical awareness to provide a sound framework for their written work.

Statutory Requirements

- The National Curriculum document states that it is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in the dimensions of transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing). In addition, the pupils should be taught how to plan, draft, revise and evaluate their writing.'
- It also states that, 'Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting'
- Finally, in reference to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation: 'Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than 1 meaning...Pupils should be taught how to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English'.

Strategies for the Teaching of Writing

- On entering school, children will be taught correct letter formation using a variety of strategies including writing over letters, then underneath and through kinaesthetic and tactile approaches leading on to copy writing.
- Independent, emergent writing will be supported by the use firstly of sentence books, word sheets, then word books (personal dictionaries), dictionaries with an increasing number and variety of words and thesaurus. Children will be encouraged to build up class or personal word banks through their reading / spelling lists.
- Writing skills will be developed through shared, guided and independent writing with the teacher modelling the writing process as appropriate to the National Curriculum's expectations.
- Children will progressively be taught the correct layout for different types of writing and how to record information in different ways.
- Increasingly, children will be able to choose the correct style of writing suitable for the purpose and audience and vary their choice of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and sentence structure accordingly.
- Children will be exposed to collaborative writing in groups of various sizes but will also be expected to develop more independent strategies based upon what they have been taught, writing fluently and quickly as their skills progress.
- Children will at all stages be encouraged to plan, draft, read, analyse, edit, revise and evaluate their own writing with teacher support as appropriate. They will also have the opportunity to evaluate each other's work in small collaborative groups / pairs or as a class.
- The children's writing will be shaped by discrete lessons on spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and handwriting in line with the statements contained within the National Curriculum. These will be reinforced, encouraged and 'celebrated / praised / rewarded' in children's independent work.
- The children will be encouraged to write for 'real' purposes whenever the opportunity presents itself – this could be in the form of letters, speeches, diaries, accounts, reports etc.
- The children will be encouraged to look for ways in which to improve their writing by learning from increasingly sophisticated reading – examining texts of all genres for vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, style and content which will enable them to replicate specific types of writing increasingly accurately to affect their reader's experience / understanding.
- Use will be made of the IT as another means of presenting text.
- One to one and small group support will be given where possible to children needing extra help by the class teacher, teaching assistants and SENCo.

Strategies for Ensuring Continuity and Progression

- Use of agreed handwriting schemes throughout the school.
- Weekly graded spelling tests based on appropriate National Curriculum statements.
- Monitoring and evaluation of writing is regularly addressed through work sampling across Key Stages.

- Clearly defined objectives for each Year Group / class through planning documents based upon National Curriculum document to ensure that there are no repetitions / omissions.
- Monitoring of work by English Co-ordinator on regular basis to ensure that the programmes of study are being followed correctly.
- Monitoring of results through analysis of annual assessments / Raise Online.

Strategies for Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- Continuous assessment by day to day marking of children's writing.
- Constant monitoring of the quality of written language in curriculum areas other than English e.g. use of self correction, punctuation, spelling, handwriting and variety of vocabulary and expression.
- Recording and analysis of results of weekly spelling tests and end of year assessments (administered in May).
- Analysis of Raise online / Baseline Assessments.

Reporting

- Reporting to parents verbally in the Autumn and Spring terms through interviews and by written reports at the end of each academic year.

Speaking and Listening

What is Speaking and Listening?

- Speaking is the ability to communicate in order to express thoughts and ideas orally and to respond appropriately to the thoughts of others. Listening is to receive others' thoughts and ideas audibly, using what they glean to inform their next thoughts, words or actions.

Rationale

Speaking and listening is important because:

- it is an essential means of communication in our society, the world of work and most aspects of everyday life, enabling us to express our thoughts and emotions and to communicate ideas, information and solutions and underpins the development of children's reading and writing skills;
- it is a crucial skill in the learning process and the means by which knowledge and skills are communicated and expressed and offers a means by which we can challenge and expand our experience and knowledge of the world around us;
- it provides the opportunity to appreciate the variety of language through the spoken word;
- it offers a platform from which we can learn other languages.

Aims

Our aims in teaching Speaking and Listening are that all children will, to the best of their ability:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers;
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge;
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary;
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions;
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings;
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments;
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas;
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English;

- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates;
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s);
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others;
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication;
- develop lifelong skills which will enable them to be effective and respectful citizens and work colleagues.

Statutory Requirements

The National Curriculum document states that: Pupils should be taught to develop their competence in spoken language and listening to enhance the effectiveness of their communication across a range of contexts and to a range of audiences. They should therefore have opportunities to work in groups of different sizes – in pairs, small groups, large groups and as a whole class. Pupils should understand how to take turns and when and how to participate constructively in conversations and debates.

Teachers should also pay attention to increasing pupils' vocabulary, ranging from describing their immediate world and feelings to developing a broader, deeper and richer vocabulary to discuss abstract concepts and a wider range of topics, and enhancing their knowledge about language as a whole.

Pupils should receive constructive feedback on their spoken language and listening, not only to improve their knowledge and skills but also to establish secure foundations for effective spoken language in their studies at primary school, helping them to achieve in secondary education and beyond.'

Strategies for the Teaching of Speaking and Listening

Language development and communication skills are important and opportunities will be given in the following ways to ensure that children extend and enrich their vocabulary, learn to speak clearly, listen attentively and use English confidently by:

- taking part in conversations and communicating with others in imaginative play;
- listening regularly to stories, songs and poems and learning some by heart;
- handling and sharing books and reading aloud to peer group or the class;
- the use of audio tapes, DVDs and television programmes;
- working in pairs or groups in discussion activities;
- participating in class drama lessons and debating and other activities as detailed in the Primary Framework;
- Providing opportunities so that all children can regularly make a contribution in class question and answer sessions;
- giving opportunities for speaking in public in assemblies, church services and plays;
- by child representatives on the School Council.
- Working collaboratively with their peers or children from other classes.

Strategies for Ensuring Continuity and Progression:

Continuity and progression will be ensured by giving children increasingly more challenging opportunities and monitoring their progress during:

- KS1**
- show and tell or Talk for Writing sessions;
 - news reporting and recounting experiences;
 - reading and talking about their own work to the class;
 - drama lessons;
 - Class plays;
 - Creative play opportunities / collaborative work;
 - Shared texts / class or guided readers.

- KS2**
- show and tell sessions;
 - teacher directed group or class discussions;
 - individual presentations on a topic of the children's own choice;
 - class debates or speeches;
 - Shared texts / class or guided readers;
 - Class plays;
 - Collaborative work.

Strategies for Reporting

- Annual report to parents.
- Continual teacher assessment.

Role of the English Co-ordinator is to:

- To be involved in the purchase and organisation of resources for English.
- To keep up to date with developments in English, to disseminate information to colleagues when appropriate and to maintain, develop and update relevant policies and Schemes of Work / Programmes of Study.
- To monitor and evaluate the standards, teaching and progress in English throughout the school and to disseminate the findings to the teaching staff, Headteacher and governors.

Resources

- Class library.
- Reading and handwriting schemes.
- Fact and fiction books.
- Computers and software.
- TV's and videos.
- Headphones, audio tapes and stories.
- CDs, DVD's.
- Internet.
- Thesauruses, dictionaries, spellcheckers.