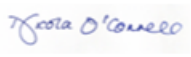
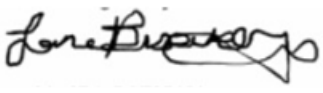
Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School

English Policy

Date: November 2024

Signed:

Nicola O'Connell – Headteacher 

Jane Bisseker – Chair of Governors 

Policy statement

At Holtsmere End Infant School we recognise that English is a core subject within the National curriculum and is a fundamental life skill; it develops the children's ability to communicate effectively – to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. The application of English is a skill they will apply throughout their journey both as a learner and through life. Children are enabled to express themselves confidently and imaginatively as they blossom as speakers, readers, writers and individuals. At Holtsmere End Infant School we strive to foster a passion for reading and writing and equip children with the tools to express themselves confidently.

Aims

At Holtsmere End Infant School we aim to inspire all children to reach their full academic potential. In English this means ensuring a curriculum that is fully inclusive of all children which:

- Helps children to develop a love for the English language through the spoken and written word. We recognise that English is a core subject and a pre-requisite for educational and social progress.
- Helps children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners.
- Encourages children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.
- Enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas.

Literacy is central to children's intellectual, emotional and social development. It has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

Equal opportunities and inclusion

All children will have equal access to the English curriculum regardless of gender, ethnic background, ability or class as outlined in our Equal Opportunities policy.

All children receive quality English teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. Teachers will plan using the pre-key stage one standards for reading and writing for children who are working below the standard of national curriculum assessments.

From teacher assessments, intervention programmes will be implemented to support children to work towards age appropriate objectives for speaking and listening, reading and writing. Teachers and LSAs plan programmes together and monitor progress of these pupils.

Interventions programmes consist of:

- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds keep up sessions
- Use of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds phonics programme to monitor progress
- Individual programmes of work planned by SENCO and class teachers.
- Specific Learning Difficulties support from trained LSA following planned personalised intervention
- SNAP assessment
- SPLD
- 1:1 reading with well-matched full decodable reading books
- Small group support in class through reading and writing activities
- reading fluency sessions
- sentence writing sessions
- Visual aids, specific to individual pupils
- WellComm speech and language programme in the EYFS

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed with the class teacher and SENCO at least half-termly. They will then be modified as appropriate to ensure they are effective and promoting maximum progress.

Pupils that are more able are challenged and planned for according to their needs.

Children with English as an additional language are accommodated through planning and appropriate support, to develop and strengthen their language skills. Staff uses the following support strategies to ensure curriculum access:

- Collaborative group work
- Enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening
- Effective role models of speaking, reading and writing
- Additional verbal support – repetition, alternative phrasing, peer support
- Additional visual support, e.g. posters, objects, non-verbal clues, pictures, demonstration, use of gesture etc.
- Bilingual resources e.g. dictionaries, bilingual staff/pupils, texts, key word lists
- Writing frames, directed activities related to texts

The English Curriculum in Nursery

To ensure children get the best possible start to their education we provide them with a wealth of different experiences to develop their skills in all areas of English:

- Nursery rhymes discussing vocabulary
- Story sacks and puppets
- Inviting book corner, with a vast selection of books that are changed frequently (Both fiction and non-fiction)
- Circle time, sharing news and listening to others
- Story and singing time at story time children are encouraged to join in with repeated refrains
- Children are asked to verbalise drawings and talk about what they are doing throughout the day.
- Children can take home high quality picture books from the library to share at home
- We provide a variety of multisensory resources for children to work on their pencil grip, drawing and mark making.

The English Curriculum in Reception

Within the Early Years curriculum 'Communication and language' is one of the prime areas of learning. Consequently, giving children opportunities to speak, listen and understand in a range of contexts helps underpin all the teaching and learning in Early Years.

'Reading' and 'Writing' are specific areas of learning. Pupils expect written text to make sense and they recognise sentences in their shared reading of texts and in their own play and experimental writing. Children are also encouraged to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. They write simple sentences based on speech and begin to use significant punctuation, for example capital letters for their own name and at the beginning of a sentence. Children are given access to a range of reading materials to ignite their interest. Opportunities for children to develop all these skills are provided through child initiated learning and adult directed teaching and learning. The Early Years curriculum is delivered using a cross curricular approach with teaching and learning linked to half termly topics. Children learn to retell and map stories using 'Helicopter stories'.

The English Curriculum in Key Stage One

The National Curriculum for English is adopted across KS1; teaching and learning opportunities centred on the national curriculum objectives for reading and writing are planned for. Where possible the curriculum is delivered in a cross curricular way linking with termly topics and thus promoting pupil engagement and giving a context for teaching and learning. Storytelling is used to enhance this teaching.

We follow HFL essential writing to help teachers deliver an effective English curriculum, ensuring that key skills are prioritised and taught within rich and engaging contexts. Teachers work towards independent learning and plan for different working groups. Teachers follow the teaching sequence for writing. Teachers employ a range of generic teaching strategies.
These include:

- Vocabulary development
- Shared and guided writing
- Explicit teaching and modelling of spelling, punctuation and grammar

Planning

The curriculum planning in English is carried out in three phases (long-term, medium term and weekly). The English coordinator oversees this process and liaises with class teachers to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school. The long- term plan maps provided by HFL Essential Writing maps out genres, stories and texts taught in each year group to ensure a range of texts and genres are covered. Class teachers use the given long term and medium term plans and follow the unit plans. These outline the specific learning objectives and the teaching and learning to occur in individual lessons. These plans outline how individual needs and groups of children's needs are met through differentiation of this learning.

Teachers plan together with year group colleagues to ensure consistency of opportunity for all children. Teachers ensure the use of quality text to reflect the National Curriculum expectations. Clear objectives are set for each session and are shared with pupils. Teachers differentiate according to the needs of the pupils and use intervention programmes for targeted support.

English is encouraged and developed across our curriculum and links are made where appropriate. Computing is used where it enhances, extends and complements English teaching and learning. Reading and writing opportunities are planned across a whole range of subject areas. Additional adults are used to support the teaching of English. They work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of children or individuals.

Speaking and Listening

At Holtsmere End Infant School, all children will:

- Develop the necessary skills to use the English language confidently, accurately and appropriately.
- Be able to speak clearly fluently and cogently.
- Be able to listen to the spoken word attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy.

Aims:

- To encourage children to voice increasingly independent ideas in a variety of settings and for a variety of audiences.
- To encourage children to ask questions and voice opinions in appropriate ways.
- To make children aware of the need to give and receive clear instructions.
- To foster tolerance and acceptance of other people's views, whether they differ from or agree with their own.
- To promote listening, considering and responsive skills through discussions and observations.

Approach:

At Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils will be taught to:

- Speak with clear diction and appropriate intonation
- Choose words with precision
- Organise what they say
- Focus on the main points
- Include relevant detail
- Take into account the needs of their listeners
- Listen, understand and respond to others
- Sustain concentration whilst listening
- Remember specific points
- Make relevant comments
- Listen to others' reactions
- Ask questions to clarify their understanding
- Identify and respond to sound patterns in language (for example rhyme, alliteration and wordplay)

Phonics/Spelling

The 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' scheme is used to teach phonics and spelling. We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
We follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress:

- Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
- Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.
- In Year 2, children who are fully confident with 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' phonics scheme begin 'Read Write Inc Spelling'.

Reading

The children have access to a wide range of books to support their reading development including picture books, poetry, non-fiction and classic children's novels. Reading skills are taught and modelled through regular shared reading.

At Holtsmere we have scheme of 'Readit2' which is used across EYFS. The aim of this scheme is to focus on disadvantaged children and providing them with daily 1:1 high quality story sharing. This programme is carried out by trained LSAs. The children will gradually build up a repertoire of books that they know really well with

the aim that they are able to retell them from memory. This will also enhance their story writing as it gives them the knowledge of vocabulary and a sense of how a story is structured.

Across KS1 we have employed a trained 'Reading Champion' who focuses on reading with disadvantaged children on a daily basis. The Reading Champion uses the child's individualised reading book and models how to read with fluency and expression.

At Holtsmere we use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' reading scheme. We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children. We use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids. Children's books are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

Children take reading books and library books home and they are encouraged to read their reading books with an adult at home. Parents are required to record comments in their reading record book every time they share a story with their child. Children have access to high quality picture books from the library so that they can enjoy and share these with adults at home.

Reading for Pleasure

Each classroom has a designated reading area that encourages children to access a wide variety of books throughout the school day. The playground has a reading shed where children have access to books and puppets to reenact stories. Teachers carefully plan each week the stories that they would like to be shared with the children. Pupils have opportunities to vote for the story they would like to hear be read aloud every day. They regularly share books with an adult or their peers within the classroom.

The school takes part in 'book week' and visits made by poets, storytellers and authors are used to enrich and support the development of reading in our school. The school website is updated regularly to promote reading for pleasure. The website lists recommended reading books for each year group.

Writing

Writing is closely related to reading, with the two activities reinforcing each other. Similarly, we aim to develop a positive attitude to writing and to extend the children's abilities to express their thoughts and ideas on paper, thus enabling them to communicate clearly through the written word. We use high-quality core texts, for children to experience the link between reading and writing. These texts are mapped out clearly in our English Long Term Plan. Children have lots of opportunities for mark making in the early years and letter formation is introduced gradually in line with the handwriting policy. Children are encouraged to rehearse their ideas orally before writing on the page and there are regular opportunities for planning and reviewing work. Children are taught to write a wide variety of text types and to write for "real" audiences, regularly creating whole class books to become published authors. Good presentation is strongly encouraged. Children are also taught to proof read and reread their writing to check or add any grammar or phonics that they may need to edit. During year 1 the children are required to have a secure sense of a sentence in preparation for the Year 2 requirements. The school uses Helicopter Stories' in Early Years to form the basis for literacy teaching. This model enables the children to imitate the key language of texts.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

The National Curriculum gives a clear developmental programme for the introduction and acquisition of knowledge about grammar and punctuation. The English sessions are well suited to the practical development of this knowledge through the sentence level work provided in the teaching sequences based on the Primary Framework. Grammar is taught in context across the English sessions and explicit SPaG focused sessions during starters. Pupils have set terminology for year 1 & 2 and this terminology is used by teachers to model the correct use and to ensure consistency of its use within the classroom.

In year 1 & 2 children will learn to add prefixes and suffixes: apply simple spelling rules and write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include common exception words. Spellings will also be taught in the daily teaching sequence of phonics and spelling sessions. Within explicit Oracy sessions, children will learn new words and their meanings to extend vocabulary.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment system.

Teachers use effective assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps.

Individual targets are set accordingly. This provides the children with next steps to improve further. Marking is in line with the school marking and feedback policy.

Staff meet regularly once every half term to moderate children's writing and reading through practical sessions to ensure assessment and reporting is consistent and accurate throughout the school.

Analysis of assessment data is used to set targets. See teaching and learning policy.

The teacher keeps records that enable them to deliver an effective, creative and relevant curriculum that builds on prior attainment and meets the needs of all pupils.

Staff Development

Teachers are expected to keep up to date with subject knowledge and use current materials that are available in school or online. Teachers have their own logins for HFL Education Hub where they can develop their own CPD.

Training needs are identified as a result of whole school monitoring and evaluation, performance management and through induction programmes. These will be reflected in the School Development Plan. The English coordinator arranges for relevant advice and information to be disseminated. The English coordinator leads or organises school based training.

Additional adults who are involved with intervention programmes receive appropriate training that may be school based or part of central training.

Resources and Accommodation

A comprehensive range of resources are available in school. Teacher resources are located in classrooms and in the intervention area. 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' books are kept in a central area of the school which all staff can access. The school library area contains a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Each class has a designated reading/book area. The English subject leader is responsible for ordering and auditing resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and quality of teaching is the responsibility of the English coordinator and the Head Teacher. Having identified priorities, the SLT construct an action plan that may form part of the School Development Plan. This forms the basis for any monitoring activities and clearly identifies when, who and what is to be monitored and how this will take place e.g. classroom observation, planning scrutiny, work sampling etc.

The English coordinator takes in a sample of books fortnightly across year groups to monitor work and checks planning on the server weekly.

Parental Involvement

Parents have the opportunity to attend phonic/reading meetings that are held annually. Teachers share information and ideas on how to support children with their reading and phonic skills. This information is also available on our website and links to other useful websites are also located here. Parents are encouraged to support their children with reading at home. We also hold termly reading breakfasts and share updated high quality texts with parents during these sessions.

Governors

The subject leader keeps the governors informed about the English curriculum, achievement and teaching and learning. This is done through regular reports and governor visits to discuss current actions.

Conclusion

This policy also needs to be read in conjunction with:
Assessment policy
EAL policy
Equal Opportunity policy
Feedback and marking policy
Handwriting policy
Health and Safety policy
Phonics policy
Oracy Policy
SEN policy
Teaching and learning policy

Review

November 2026