



Witton Gilbert Primary School

English Policy

1. Introduction

All children have a statutory entitlement to access the Programmes of Study for English as set out in the National Curriculum 2014. The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. At Witton Gilbert, we believe that these skills are crucial and lead to lifelong learning.

The scope of the English curriculum is wide and encompasses the development of the pupils' ability to:

- speak confidently and competently in a range of contexts for different purposes and audiences.
- understand, respond to and comment upon speakers' use of language.
- take different roles in groups, contributing and responding to others' suggestions and responses.
- use dramatic techniques to explore, create, share and evaluate ideas.
- read fluently and automatically, using phonic knowledge and blending skills to decode unfamiliar words.
- spell words accurately through use of segmenting and application of their knowledge of word structures and patterns.
- access texts for pleasure or information.
- understand and interpret texts on both an organisational and literary level.
- engage and respond to a range of texts and the intended effects of authors.
- express themselves creatively for purpose, pleasure and learning.
- write in a range of forms, making stylistic and structural choices to suit both purpose and reader.
- organise ideas cohesively and use varied sentence structure and punctuation to convey meaning effectively.
- develop a fluent handwriting style.
- use ICT tools to present work appropriately.

This policy should be referred to in conjunction with the policies on assessment, marking, behaviour and safeguarding, as well as the guidelines for English. Policies for the core and foundation subjects should also be referred to in order to ensure cross-curricular links to English whenever possible.

2. Format of teaching:

Foundation Stage

The Read Write Inc. Programme is used to teach English in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the day opportunities for using skills taught within the RWInc. lessons are planned for, shared with the children and explicitly encouraged.

In the Foundation Stage, children are given opportunities to:

- speak, listen and represent ideas in their activities
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for written communication.

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 1 classes carry out a Read Write Inc. lesson every morning. They are grouped according to their reading ability, using the results of teacher assessments which are carried out every 6-8 weeks. Outside the Literacy Hour, classes have quiet reading times, guided reading and opportunities to write extended pieces of writing.

During Key Stage One, children learn to:

- develop confidence when speaking and listening.
- read and write with increased independence and enthusiasm.
- use language to explore experiences and imagination.

Key Stage 2

Key stage 2 classes carry out an English lesson every day where specific skills are taught. The Literacy and Language scheme of work from Read Write Inc. is used as a guideline for this teaching and learning time, although staff use their discretion to ensure it meets the needs of their cohort while extending the ability of the pupils in the class. A wider range of fiction and non-fiction books are also used to inspire reading and writing. These skills are then consolidated in other areas of the curriculum, for example note taking in history or report writing in science.

Some pupils access a differentiated curriculum through the Fresh Start programme which is delivered using a small group ethos. Outside the specific literacy lesson, classes have timetabled daily spelling lessons using Oxford Owl resources, silent reading/guided reading and Extended Writing lessons.

During Key Stage Two, children learn to:

- change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences.
- read a wide range of texts and respond to the different layers of meaning within them.
- explore the structure and use of language.
- write with expression and interest about their learning.

3. Aims

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening provide the foundation for further language development. A pupil's spoken language reflects the local culture and heritage of the individual and is therefore crucial to his or her identity and should be valued and built upon. However, pupils are also entitled to gain knowledge, competence and confidence in the use Standard English, thus empowering them to use whichever is most appropriate to purpose, audience and situation. To reflect this, we aim to provide pupils with opportunities to:

- speak in a variety of forms for different audiences, purposes and situations (both formal and informal).
- reflect upon their speech and make appropriate choices.
- talk in group situations, valuing the contributions of others and responding appropriately.

Reading

Reading is one of the most powerful tools of learning both in and out of school – in addition to providing daily opportunities for reading within the classroom, we recommend a minimum of 3 home reading sessions each week, with a specific space for recording these home readings within the school organiser document. Pupils who read at home are rewarded as part of the school rewards system. Reading facilitates independence and allows pupils to share experiences they may not otherwise encounter. It provides opportunities for pupils to gain both understanding and pleasure from a range of texts. To support them in this, we aim to help pupils to:

- master the basic mechanical skills of reading.
- read with accuracy, fluency and expression.
- develop and use higher order reading skills which will contribute to their overall comprehension of texts.
- understand the value of information texts as an aid to learning.
- develop a love of literature and an understanding of the pleasure reading can bring.

Writing

Confidence and competence in the use of the written word is essential to the communication of meaning. A pupil's ability to write effectively affects performance in all areas of learning and living and is very much a developmental process. Staff encourage writing from its emergent start, through developmental attempts to its final, independent stage. Throughout these stages, we aim to provide opportunities for pupils to:

- develop a sound understanding of grammar and sentence structure
- explore and develop knowledge of the variety of functions and formats of writing
- communicate meaning effectively through appropriate language choices according to intended purpose and audience
- understand, value and use the process approach to writing in order to improve the content and presentation of their writing through planning, drafting and re-drafting
- write individually and collaboratively, experiencing praise and receiving constructive criticism and support
- experience the pleasure of publishing their writing and sharing it with a wider audience
- experiment with language play for enjoyment.

Spelling

We value and encourage children as they move through the developmental stages of learning to spell, but we also recognise the importance of mastering and using accurately conventional spelling in order to convey meaning clearly in writing. To support this goal, we aim to develop pupils' knowledge of:

- sound-symbol relationships.
- regular patterns in words and non-standard forms.
- the structure of words; compound/complex words, prefixes, suffixes, roots and origins.
- high interest words associated with topics and specific curricular areas.
- a variety of strategies to enable independence in spelling, such as word banks, dictionaries, displays, mnemonics etc.
- spelling rules.

Handwriting

Presentation of written work reflects the awareness of the writer of the needs of his or her audience. Our ultimate goal is for pupils to achieve a fast, flowing, legible style of writing. In order to achieve this, we are aware of the need for a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the key stages. In Foundation Stage, children are taught letter formation through the Read Write Inc programme and correct letter formation is consolidated in Year 1. In Year 2, children are introduced to cursive handwriting script. Our programme of handwriting

- ensures correct formation and orientation of letters.
- develops consistency and appropriateness in size and spacing.
- encourages a pride in presentation.
- eases the transition from printing to joining.

Drama

Drama and role-play offer valuable learning tools to enable children to understand and empathise in role. In addition to teaching pupils about dramatic representation in line with the National Curriculum, staff at Witton Gilbert Primary School produce two key productions each year; a Christmas Nativity led by Key Stage 1 pupils, also including Foundation Stage children and a Key Stage 2 end of year production led by the year 6 class. The staff truly appreciate the role of educational drama strategies as:

- a learning tool across the curriculum.
- an effective factor in the development of oral and aural skills.
- a means of developing empathy with others and an understanding of self.
- a way of encouraging interaction with texts.
- a form of self-expression and a means for developing an awareness of the wider world.

4. Progression, Continuity and Differentiation

- Progression and continuity are dependent upon teachers' assessment of present achievement in knowledge, skills and concepts as well as previous learning experiences. This knowledge then shapes the planning of future teaching. To this end, assessment, target setting and planning processes are followed by all staff (see section 5). Teachers aim to ensure that all of their class reach age related expectations. Support and intervention is carefully planned where needed.
- The National Curriculum Framework is followed to ensure continuity throughout English.
- Differentiation can be provided in a number of ways: by outcome, by adult support, by differentiating resources, by differentiating through planning or by task differentiation.
- Teachers differentiate in short term planning in the way in which is considered most appropriate for the child, group or objective being taught.

5. Inclusion

We are committed to providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils and apply the three principles for inclusion to planning and teaching. Suitable learning challenges will be set for all pupils with the aim of maximizing achievement for all pupils at an appropriate level for each individual. Teachers will respond appropriately to pupils' diverse learning needs and be aware of the needs of differing genders, special educational needs, disability, as well as different cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds. We are committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and this will be reflected in the curriculum offered to pupils and in the conduct of staff and pupils.

6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The assessment and recording of literacy is part of the overall assessment of the child and should be seen alongside all the other areas of development. Assessment in English reflects the general principles and procedures laid down in the school's assessment policy. Key elements of our English assessments are:

- colour-coded highlighting of learning objectives on both medium term and weekly planning which are then used to inform future teaching
- written evaluations on weekly planning sheets to identify the next steps for learning for all pupils.
- Twice yearly tests to provide reading and spelling ages for pupils
- National Curriculum levels of achievement for reading and writing decided on the basis of termly teacher assessment and tracking
- Regular formative assessment, which shows children's attainment in relation to Year group/age expectations
- SATs tests
- optional standardised tests in non-SAT year groups.

Formal written reports are provided each year and this information is shared with parents. Additionally, two other meetings are held each year with parents to discuss progress informally and to share targets for progress.

7. Rights Respecting School

At Witton Gilbert Primary School, we are committed to promoting a rights respecting ethos based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in all aspects of school life and the best interests of the child is at the heart of our policy and practice. The articles set out in the Convention of the Rights of the Child document are known and displayed by all children and adults in the school and we encourage rights respecting language and behaviour at all times. The children are taught that we all have rights and responsibilities, in our school community, locally and globally; as well as the difference between wants and needs. We recognise that children have the right to say what they think about matters affecting them and to have their views taken seriously and we encourage them to play an active role in their own learning and to speak out and act for the rights of all to be respected locally and globally.

8. Role of Governors

Our school governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies. They support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively and ensuring the appropriate use of monies spent to provide the best we can offer for our pupils. They monitor pupil attainment across the school and ensure that staff development and performance management promote good quality teaching whilst also meeting the needs of the individual. Our English subject leader and governor responsible for the English component of the School Improvement Plan, meet on a termly basis to review the current picture within the subject area and to plan where to next focus the staff, resources and training with regard to the best provision possible. This is also undertaken in conjunction with the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership team, of which the English subject leader is a member.

9. Use of resources

- The majority of the teaching resources for each year group in English are stored within the classroom, at the teacher's discretion. These include teaching notes, photocopiable resource sheets, posters and training materials.
- A centrally stored reading scheme library is available for access to a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Individual and group access is at the teacher's discretion.
- A school library is in the process of being updated and will be relocated within school.
- Class collections of books appropriate to age and ability are available within classrooms for reading enjoyment.
- All classes feature age and ability appropriate displays, including alphabet friezes in the school handwriting style, word walls to aid children's independent writing and simple/complex sounds posters.
- A regular allocation is devolved each year from school budget for English resources. Decisions are made regarding expenditure in consultation with staff and governors. Priorities are established through review of the school improvement plan, the English development plan and requests from staff. Resources are then purchased on the basis of this information.

10. English as a life skill – cross curricular learning

- We recognise the unique position of English as a medium for learning in all areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for children to explore and develop language use in other curriculum areas are identified by teachers at the planning stage.
- Media education provides particularly strong links with English by enabling pupils to analyse the way in which language is used for effect with target audiences. Radio and television programmes, computer software, newspapers such as First News, comics, photographs and advertisements are all used on a termly basis to ensure pupils have access to a full range of texts.
- ICT links are also promoted whenever possible to assist and enhance English skills. These include opportunities for pupils to compose, revise and edit texts as well as use desk-top publishing facilities to improve the presentation of work.
- Specific English software is also available to develop skills such as spelling, interactive reading etc.
- Access to the Internet is also used when appropriate to enhance research skills.

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