

Lostock Hall Community Primary School



English Policy

Headteacher: Mrs Laura Webb

English Subject Leader Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1: Mrs Isobel Parker

English Subject Leader Key Stage 2: Mr Michael Biggs

English Link Governor: Mrs Louise Little

Rationale

The teaching and learning of English is key to the development of a child's early language and will ultimately impact upon how each child makes sense of the world around them. Our main aim, therefore, is to nurture and develop confidence in oral and written communication in our children, allowing them to express themselves effectively, communicate their needs, develop friendships, enjoy a world of imagination through reading, develop strengths in other areas of the curriculum and, ultimately, integrate fully into the world around them.

Main aims:

- To create an interest in the language rich world around us and the ways in which we can communicate;
- To develop children's ability to communicate effectively using spoken language in both informal (e.g. conversations between friends, with adults in school and at home) and formal situations (e.g. reading in front of an audience, formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in drama productions or debates);
- To continually develop spoken and written vocabulary to allow children to express themselves clearly and have a better understanding of the world around them;
- To teach children to become fluent and expressive readers, who have a good understanding of what they read and foster an enjoyment of reading for a range of purposes;
- To develop confident and expressive writers who are able to write clearly for a range of purposes and audiences and understand and select the correct language features to use;
- To encourage appreciation and develop knowledge of our literary heritage.

Section 1 - Speaking & Listening

Aims:

- To formulate, clarify and express ideas in a variety of situations, selecting language that is appropriate for their intended audience;
- To listen effectively and respond to others' ideas and opinions;
- To develop conversational skills (e.g. turn-taking, taking on board others' views and not interrupting);
- To listen well in a whole class situation, allowing effective learning to take place;
- To use appropriate intonation, expression and volume for the purpose and intended audience;
- To develop and enrich the range of spoken vocabulary;
- To develop the use of Standard English when speaking in all situations, ensuring accurate grammatical forms.

General Summary of Learning

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are given many opportunities to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings. Time and opportunities are provided to develop spoken language and listening skills through conversations between children and adults in both 1:1 and small group situations. Language is regularly linked to physical and creative development through role-play, practical experiences and action songs/rhymes. Children are given time to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings through a wide range of situations. High quality interactions are prioritised and take place between early years practitioners and children throughout the day, particularly during time spent playing in the continuous provision.

Key Stages 1 and 2

As children enter Key Stage 1, there continue to be many opportunities for children to develop their spoken language skills and express themselves clearly in both whole class, group and 1:1 situations. Children begin to learn more about effectively listening and responding to the ideas and opinions of others during whole class teaching and group work.

Throughout school, from Reception to Year 6, every year group has a role play area, which changes termly and is linked to the topic. This allows children, in small groups and using guidance from the teacher, to further develop their speaking and listening skills.

Elements of speaking and listening are also an integral part of the taught units of English, developing spoken skills through oral rehearsal of sentences, performing from short scripts, reading aloud, group work, reciting and performing poetry, speaking in front of or presenting to an audience or participating in formal debates.

Grammatically correct spoken English is also an important part of developing spoken language at our school and adults in school use positive reinforcement (e.g. repeating the grammatically correct English back to the child if an error is made) and model the correct use of spoken Standard English.

Vocabulary

Developing spoken and written vocabulary is something we place a strong emphasis on throughout school. Each class has a vocabulary wall display, which is continually updated with new and adventurous words. Across school, children are regularly taught new words, using different techniques and words are then added to the vocabulary display in order to be revisited and used within spoken and written language.

Talk Boost & Early Talk Boost

Children in the early years (Early Talk Boost) and Years 1 and 2 (Talk Boost) who have been identified as needing further support with their language and communication skills are screened under the Talk Boost assessment criteria. Small groups of the Early Talk Boost and Talk Boosts run each term, led by trained members of staff, who monitor the impact of the programme on each group.

Section 2 – Reading (comprising word reading and comprehension)

Aims:

- To foster a love of reading and books;
- To develop initial word reading skills, making accurate use of blending and segmenting to decipher unfamiliar words and building up 'on-sight' vocabulary in order to eventually read a wide range of texts with fluency, accuracy and ease;
- To understand what is read on a literal level;
- To develop higher order reading skills such as inference and deduction so that texts can be understood at a deeper level;
- To develop and extend vocabulary;
- To use reference material to research and find out information;
- To encourage good independent reading habits and develop life-long readers;
- To respond to and evaluate texts that they have read, making independent reading choices and making recommendations to others.

General Summary of Learning

Early Years Foundation Stage

Throughout the Foundation Stage, children first learn to read by learning phonemes in a certain order and blending these phonemes together to read simple CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) and then longer CCVC, CVCC & CCVCC words, following the Pearson Bug Club scheme. Blending is taught as the primary strategy to decipher unfamiliar words whilst at the same time, children are taught to read a bank of key words they are able to recognise on sight – tricky or high frequency words, to aid fluency later on in the Reception year. Children take part in weekly guided reading sessions, where the main focus will be on word reading and fluency, but where they will also begin to talk about what they have read in order to develop comprehension of the text and a love of books.

To begin with, children in the Foundation Stage will read books that are fully decodable, closely matched to the phonemes they are learning or have recently learnt, to allow children to embed this learning and apply it to their reading. Children all have a reading diary, which is kept as a log of their reading and an ongoing assessment tool, which can be written in by adults in school or at home.

Daily storytime is an integral part of the Foundation Stage, where children will listen to stories being read by an adult and respond, encouraging comprehension of the text, effective listening skills, a love of books and stories, early evaluative skills and the development of an internal bank of story ideas. Key words are also an integral part of the Foundation Stage, which includes daily reading on flashcards and access to key words during continuous provision activities.

Key Stages 1 and 2

During Key Stage 1, children continue to develop their bank of 'on-sight' vocabulary with increasingly complex texts. Effective blending continues to be encouraged as the main strategy for deciphering unfamiliar words. Children will continue to stay on colour-banded reading scheme books until they are able to access shorter novels and become more fluent in their reading. From Year 3 and 4 onwards, we try and move as many children on from the colour-banded books as possible, so they can widen their range of reading material.

Throughout Key Stage 1, children take part in a weekly guided reading session with the class teacher. Here, the emphasis will be on word reading and building fluency alongside basic comprehension skills. Children who require further support to develop reading fluency will also have a further 1:1 or group reading session/s throughout the week. Reading diaries are kept as a log of reading and an ongoing assessment tool and can be written in by adults in school and parents/guardians.

In Key Stage 2, children will have daily whole class reading sessions. These lessons incorporate vocabulary work, fluency work and reading strategy work and have comprehension at their heart. These lessons will be based upon the class novel or a standalone text which supports or enhances the wider school curriculum. Children also have access to Reading Plus which monitors and assesses pupils reading level and provides them with rich variety of texts for their level. This will sometimes be used in whole class reading time as well as at home as part of children's homework. In Key Stage 2, children choose their own independent reading book from the bookshelf in class, in order to encourage them to make appropriate reading choices in terms of interest and also challenge, selecting the right book for their own reading ability. Children are supported by staff to make appropriate choices.

Throughout both Key Stages, every class also has an ongoing class novel, which is read to the class at appropriate times. Reading to children is something that we view as vitally important, something that contributes to the enjoyment of reading for all and should be continued up until the end of Year 6.

Other strategies employed to develop a love of reading are:

- Visits from authors;
- Bookfairs;
- A library well-stocked with interesting books;
- Inviting reading areas in each class, with a bookshelf of continually updated books;
- Class novel sets (1 between 2)
- Book events, such as book week or World Book Day
- Outdoor reading areas, with magazines and picture books.

Reading Buddies

Children in Key Stage 1, identified as needing further support with their reading, are paired up with independent readers in Upper Key Stage 2 – reading buddies. Reading buddies are supported and trained up by the English Subject Leader in order to provide support with reading and phonics activities twice a week with a specific child in Key Stage 1 throughout the year.

Further reading support

All children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 read with an adult twice a week throughout school. Those identified as needing further support also have an extra reading session/s throughout the week with a TA or the teacher.

Technology to support reading

In the Foundation Stage, alongside physical reading books that are sent home, children also have access to further phonics-based reading ebooks via an online library linked to the Pearson Bug Club Scheme. They can login at home, read the interactive books and complete the quiz at the end. Throughout Key Stage 1, children then have access to Reading Eggs, an online reading programme that is interactive, personalised and progressive. This can be accessed through computers and iPads/tablets both at school and at home.

Section 3 – Writing (comprising transcription & composition)

Aims:

- To express and communicate ideas in a clear, organised and precise way;
- To adapt writing according to the audience and purpose they are writing for and the genre or style of writing;
- To write legibly, eventually using a neat & joined up handwriting style;
- To develop and extend editing and redrafting skills, allowing children to shape a piece of work effectively;
- To make accurate use of a wide range of punctuation, to ensure clarity of writing;
- To use a wide range of interesting and adventurous vocabulary;
- To develop sentence structure, making use of good quality complex sentences in upper Key Stage 2, with a variety of clauses;
- To continue to develop the accuracy of spelling and make use of strategies for correcting errors;
- To develop understanding of English grammar and the accurate use of grammar in writing.

General Summary of Learning

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Foundation Stage, children learn to hold a pencil with the correct tripod grip. They begin to assign meaning to marks that they make, moving on eventually to recognisable letters and words.

Towards the end of the Foundation Stage, words are ordered to create simple sentences that carry meaning. Children begin to put their learning from daily phonics sessions into practise by using the correct sounds in recognisable words.

Correct letter formation is taught from the Foundation Stage and to encourage this, children are taught handwriting stories to help them remember how to form each letter. Children are taught to form letters correctly in the printed style in the Reception year, with a focus on handwriting 'families' (letters that are formed in a particular way). Handwriting letter formation homework is sent home from the Autumn term.

Key Stages 1 and 2

Throughout Key Stage 1, children continue to develop their handwriting style, ensuring letters are correctly formed and of a more appropriate size and that there is a clear distinction between lower case and upper-case letters, also in terms of size. Ascenders and descenders are becoming clearer. Children begin to be taught easier, bottom joins in the summer term of Year 1, which is then continued into Year 2 where further joins are taught, but with the key focus still on correct letter formation. The cursive handwriting style is taught in the latter part of Year 2 and throughout Year 3, with the aim of some children joining at the end of Key Stage 1 if they are ready and the rest joining by the end of Year 3. Handwriting continues to be taught discretely, at appropriate times, throughout Key Stage 2. By Upper Key Stage 2, some children are given pen licences, allowing them to write up redrafted pieces of work in handwriting pen, encouraging a neat handwriting style.

Writing skills are taught through planned units of work in English, following the 'I'm a Clever Writer' approach, where children will learn specific elements of writing (grammar, punctuation, effective composition) which they will then apply to a short piece of writing. This is progressively built up throughout a unit of work culminating in a 'Star Write' at the end of a unit where children will write an independent, longer piece of writing applying the skills that they have learnt throughout. Children are also taught the skills of editing and improvement, learning that drafting, editing and improving are continual, integral and inter-linked elements of the writing process. Visual methods, including the use of video clips, are used alongside good quality texts to create interest, engage the pupils and stimulate writing.

Writing lessons are underpinned through the use of high-quality texts, exposing pupils to a wide range of text types throughout each year, with a variety of non-fiction, fiction and poetry texts being taught. These high-quality texts are chosen to ensure that pupils have access to texts that reflect the diversity of different communities. Pupils write for a purpose: their writing is always meaningfully linked to their topic/theme or class text. They learn to organise and structure it appropriately and recall previous knowledge that they can build upon. These are the elements of writing that they have learned about in previous year groups and should be confident with. Any inaccuracies are picked up swiftly by teachers and steps are put in place to support pupils with gaps in their learning.

Section 4 – Phonics & Spelling

Aims:

- To learn all 44 phonemes;
- To learn alternative ways of spelling the same phoneme and make the correct choice of grapheme when spelling a word;
- To learn and become fluent in the ability to hear, read and spell increasingly complex words;
- To learn to read and spell a wide range of words that aren't phonetically decipherable;
- To become confident in spelling the majority of words correctly in writing.

General Summary of Learning

Early Years Foundation Stage

Following Letters and Sounds, children take part in a daily phonics session, where they learn particular phonemes and read/spell words containing these phonemes using blending and segmenting strategies, using the Pearson Bug Club scheme. Fully decodable early reading books are used to support the early teaching of phonics in the Foundation Stage. Children also have access to self-directed phonics activities through continuous provision both inside and outside. Lists of spellings are sent home from the Spring Term onwards.

Key Stages 1 and 2

Daily phonics sessions continue throughout Key Stage 1, using the Pearson Bug Club scheme throughout Year 1 and into Year 2 if required, however the majority of children will have moved on from the phonics scheme in the latter part of Key Stage 1. Children are streamed throughout the year group, so that sessions can be differentiated and children targeted in their learning to encourage good progress. Lists of spellings are sent home each week, to support the learning in school.

Three times weekly phonics / spelling sessions continue throughout Key Stage 2, the focus moving from learning phonemes to learning particular spelling rules and patterns, looking at word building and on prefixes and suffixes using the Spelling Shed programme. A spelling focus is introduced on a Monday, when a list of words will be sent home to learn as homework, daily spelling games and activities take place throughout the week and a spelling test takes place on a Friday.

Spelling journals are used to support this learning in Key Stage 2, which are fully accessible to children throughout the school day. Part of the spelling journal is a personalised list of 'tricky words' for each child to learn, taken from words that they may have mis-spelled in their independent writing.

If necessary, year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2 will have a small 'catch up' group, revising phonemes from previous year groups.

Assessment in English

There is regular assessment and monitoring across school in all key areas of English, to ensure children are maintaining the right level of progress as they move up through school. Below is an annual summary of assessment in each stage:

Early Years Foundation Stage

- Key word reading test (ongoing)
- Phonics and writing assessment (termly)
- Writing skills assessment sheet per child (ongoing)
- Reading skills assessment sheet per child (ongoing)
- Reading diaries (comments) as an ongoing assessment tool
- Weekly spelling tests (Spring term onwards)

Key Stage 1

- Year group spelling test (termly)
- HFW checklist per child
- Reading diaries (comments) as an ongoing assessment tool
- Word reading and comprehension test (termly)

- Writing skills assessment sheet per child (ongoing)
- End of unit 'Star Write' as an ongoing writing assessment tool
- Weekly spelling tests

Key Stage 2

- Schonell spelling test (termly)
- Year group spelling test (termly)
- Reading diaries (comments) as an ongoing assessment tool
- Reading comprehension test (termly)
- Reading skills assessment sheet per child (ongoing)
- Writing skills assessment sheet per child (ongoing)
- 3 pieces of assessed writing per year (termly)
- Weekly spelling tests