

English



Review Date	September 2021
Review Frequency	Yearly
Date for Next Review	September 2022
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At Whale Hill Primary School, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills. Through the English curriculum, we will help 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. We want children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

English is at the heart of all children's learning. English enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving these order and meaning. Because reading and writing are 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.

Rationale:

From September 2014, a New National Curriculum was put in place.

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

At school we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this is necessarily cross-curricular and a constant throughout school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (p10 National Curriculum)

We are an inclusive school - we set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We use one-to-one support, small groups and cross-phase work to help with this. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that 'pupils...who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised' (p13)

At the heart of our English teaching is the 'text-based' approach to teaching. In each year group, we plan and deliver key reading and writing activities based on our class texts. This enables our children to develop their writing skills, through thinking in role as a character. We develop their reading skills through deep discussion on our class texts and through the use of Resilient Reader, Vocabulary Ninja and Reciprocal Reading.

1. Spoken Language:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10) They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach the children to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response

to audience and purpose. Listening and responding to literature including participating effectively in group discussions helps them to obtain the oral skills they will need as they grow up.

Ways in which we support this include:

- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate.
- Encouraging talk-time at home.
- Poetry recital
- School Plays
- Class debates
- Class assemblies
- Events within the community
- School Council
- Talk partners
- Drama / role play
- PSHE and circle time

2. Reading:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as 'extreme importance since through it pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (p13) Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13). Schools are expected to have access to library facilities and support and encourage reading at home.

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.

2.1 Our aims and connected provision

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics in Key Stage One, regular reading to adults in school, reading partners and an incentives to read at home.
- The regular phonics sessions in KS1 follow the Letters and Sounds programme.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, library visits and high quality attractive books in classrooms.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read and the various methods outlined above.
- Pupils also need to read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way as per our assessment cycle.
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts during their school career.
- Whole class guided reading sessions occur weekly based on the Resilient Reader approach. Reading journals are used in conjunction with this.
- Key Stage Two pupils, who are struggling with reading or making slow progress, are given accelerated reading support during daily interventions.

2.2 Whole-class guided reading:

- Teachers read with pupils a range of texts focusing on comprehension and specific features in relation to objectives and content domains. This is an opportunity for teachers to model the act of being a fluent reader.
- Teachers demonstrate to the class by 'thinking aloud' the skills required to be a reader. For guided reading, the text chosen should be at a level slightly higher than the majority of the class and the teacher should plan differentiated questions around the text that encourage the children to enjoy, understand, discuss and analyse the written word in a supported environment.
- For children working below age-related expectations, guided reading is sometimes taught in a smaller group session led by an LSA using a suitable text.
- Within whole class guided reading we use Resilient Reader (taken from the Literacy Shed) as a way of exploring the different content domains found in the National Curriculum, allowing children to break down questions into key skills and understand how they are required to approach a text.
- We aim to have regular reading sessions outside of English lessons – a minimum of three times weekly in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of medium to teach reading, including: newspaper articles, video clips, extracts from novels etc., covering a breadth of topics.



2.3 Reading Programmes:

- Children in y5-6 are enrolled in Reading Plus, an online programme designed to improve a child's reading efficiency.
- It allows the children to build their reading fluency whilst still ensuring full comprehension of the text.
- As the children work through a series of texts and progress through the levels, the data is collected for the teacher to view and assess progress.
- Data from the programme is compiled into reports for teachers to analyse regularly.
- We have invested in new I pads to ensure that they are able to access this on a regular basis to maximise progress. Children are encouraged to use the above programme regularly, both in school and at home

2.4 Developing a love of reading:

- We provide each year group with a 'Prize Box' rewarding children who read widely.
- We have a dedicated library area and each class in the school has a collection of books within their reading corner.
- We set up visits from authors.
- There is lots of talk and discussion about reading in a variety of contexts, both formal and informal.
- We have school Book Fairs and always celebrate World Book Day.
- Children are expected to read every night at home, with reading diaries to keep a record of what they are reading. This is monitored very systematically by staff who liaise directly with parents if it is not happening.
- In younger classes, adults communicate in the diaries so that parents are aware of what books children are reading and how they are responding to texts at school.

2.5 Phonics:

Like most primary schools, Whale Hill uses a method of teaching called 'Synthetic Phonics' (known to the children as 'Letters and Sounds') to help children learn to read and spell.

We aim to:

- To teach children aural discrimination, phonemic awareness and rhyme to aid reading, writing and spelling development.
- To encourage the use of segmenting and blending so that decoding skills provide a sound foundation for reading, writing and spelling.
- To ensure the teaching of phonics is lively, interactive and investigative.
- To enable children to use phonic awareness across the curriculum.
- To ensure that children know the 44 phonemes within the English language.
- To teach children to recognise the graphemes within words and associate them with the appropriate phoneme when reading.
- To provide children with strategies to identify and decode 'tricky words.'

We use a teaching scheme called 'Letters and Sounds' to teach Synthetic Phonics. This scheme is split into 6 Phases with then children starting Phase 1 in EYFS and moving through to Phase 6 by Year 2-3

All Year One children take the 'Phonics Screening Check' - a statutory assessment required by legislation. Those who do not meet the pass mark will be given support and intervention programmes in Year Two and further if required.

3. Writing:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

Our aims and connected provision:

- We teach grammar during a skills session each day.
- We correct grammatical errors orally and in written work (where appropriate)
- We have a systematic approach: we revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas from phonics, through to grammar and spelling.
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice.
- To ensure high quality texts are used, there is a whole school reading list.
- We provide writing frames and or images to support the least confident.
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising
- We mark extended pieces of work in-depth and set targets with and for the pupils.
- We use success criteria checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate, so they can evaluate effectively.
- We encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed.
- We use drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view.
- Support for pupils with learning and motor difficulties
- Meetings with parents to help them support their child

4. Vocabulary Development:

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' (p11) since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active
- Progressive/ systematic
- Making links from known words
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning
- Include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations
- Subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words
- Strategies to help children clarify meaning.



4.1 Our aims and connected provision:

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:

- Use of Vocabulary Ninja resources in English lessons and foundation lessons wherever appropriate.
- A daily spelling session following the RWI Spelling Programme.
- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learnt
- Display of key words on the working walls
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- In-depth word based lessons looking at patterns
- Using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar programmes
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate

5. Spelling:

- The systematic teaching of phonics in KS1 using the Letters and Sounds scheme and the recurrent teaching of spelling strategies and conventions at KS2 using the 'RWI Spelling programme.
- Developing an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar which are taught implicitly and explicitly from Year 1 through to Year 6 using the appendices in the new National Curriculum and the RWI spelling resources.
- Regular dictionary and thesaurus work.
- Use of word banks and spell checks.
- Regular opportunities to identify and use spellings within a context.

6. Marking, Planning and Assessment:

Planning:

- Long term plans can be found on the staff shared area for Key Stage One and Two.
- Pupils are taught in single age classes in streamed ability groups.
- Medium term (half –termly) planning is produced as a sequence of learning.
- Schemes of work for phonics, grammar and spelling are used to ensure developmental learning building on prior knowledge.
- Pupils identified in pupil progress meetings who are falling behind, will receive intervention through either quality-first teaching or small group interventions with a TA.
- Pupils with EAL will be given additional English support from an Arabic speaking TA.

Marking

Marking is used as part of our formative assessment to inform planning as well help the children to improve their work. Work is marked using red pen. Draft books are used for the children to practise the writing process, then make corrections. English books are used for comprehension practice and publishing writing in neat.

Assessment:

- Staff assess pupils learning during and as part of every session, they adapt their practice accordingly.
- Formal assessments of reading, writing and spelling are carried out in both Key Stage 1 and 2 termly. The results are analysed and inform reports to parents, target setting for children and a teacher's future planning.
- Writing is assessed using the new NC descriptors-these are broken down into small steps on our writing assessment grids.
- All staff attend moderating sessions within school and some staff attend external moderation sessions.
- Children's progress in English is assessed using nationally prescribed tests with the Phonics Screening test taking place at the end of Year 1 as well as the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 SATs.
- End of Key Stage Assessments are analysed by the Assessment Co-ordinator and Head teacher and feed into the school SEF, development plan and performance management.

7. Professional development:

- The English Co-ordinator attends training and reports back to all staff.
- The coordinators have given staff training in the Resilient Reader and Vocabulary Ninja approach.
- Staff are expected to attend relevant courses during the school year.
- Moderation takes place in house, within the cluster.
- Evidence of moderation is kept by the subject leader.

8. Specific groups:

- Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly by the assessment leader and the English leaders, pupils who are slow moving or making little or no progress are discussed in PPMs and plans made.
- Pupils with EAL are given additional support in all aspects of English.
- Pupils who are gifted and talented receive additional support and challenge tasks.
- Pupils with SEN will have English based targets on their care plan. These are reviewed termly.

9. Handwriting and Presentation:

- At Whale Hill, children are taught to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed.
- We believe a cursive style with correct letter formation should be taught when the children are ready.
- Please see the Handwriting Scheme and Presentation Policy for more details.
- The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading: • transcription (spelling and handwriting) • composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).