



Leamington Federation

Sydenham Primary School and Lighthorne Heath Primary School English Policy Statement

Aims

Across the Leamington Federation, we follow the 2014 National Curriculum and the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. We use guidance from The Reading Framework: Teaching the Foundations of Literacy July 2021.

We aim to:

- Build on our children's experiences of language learning, recognising their individuality, taking into account their personal experiences and acknowledging differences in their linguistic and cultural background.
- Help our children to use language effectively, to listen with understanding, to express themselves clearly in speech and in writing, to enjoy reading and listening to stories and to use books and other texts for research and information.
- Ensure our children are stimulated to use speaking, listening, reading and writing for valid and worthwhile purposes.
- Provide opportunities for our children to be read to daily from a variety of media.
- Acknowledge the essential role parents have in the development of their children's language learning and to encourage them to take an active role in this learning.
- Give all our children equal opportunities to be equipped with the essential learning skills of literacy, irrespective of ability, race and gender.
- Ensure we provide appropriately differentiated tasks to suit the needs of all our children.
- Make appropriate assessments and keep meaningful records to ensure progression and continuity.
- Provide a wide variety of tasks and situations within a lively and purposeful environment.

Teaching and Learning

In the Leamington Federation, we realise the importance of careful planning to ensure that:

- Each child receives Quality First English teaching.
- English work permeates the whole of the curriculum and is on-going throughout the year, with frequent opportunities for pupils to write at length.

- Literacy skills are achieved through all curriculum subjects.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught and practised across all learning.
- Phonics is taught on a daily basis in EYFS and Y1. The ORT Floppy's Phonics systematic synthetic phonics programme is taught during Reception, Year One and the beginning of Year Two, and provides our teachers with all of the structure and resources we need to deliver really effective synthetic phonics teaching for all children – as well as enriching their vocabulary and language comprehension. Phonics International provides teachers with further phonics resources to support pupils from Year 2 onwards with their growing understanding of the complex alphabetic code.
- Pupils receive developmental feedback (which may be oral or written) and act upon it to ensure they make rapid progress.
- A balance is reached in terms of speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Opportunities are included for whole class, paired, group and individual learning.
- Each child's needs are appropriately met by differentiation, to ensure a broad, balanced literacy entitlement is received.
- Additional adult support is given, where appropriate, for children who have general and specific learning difficulties, including support for pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL).
- Opportunities are given for children to perform to others and to experience a range of live performances.
- Staff receive high quality professional development to refresh their skills and to keep them abreast of developments nationally in literacy teaching.

Link with Royal Shakespeare Company

Our children are benefiting from an enhanced involvement with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). This partnership presents the opportunity for pupils to develop their literacy skills through dramatic engagement.

Exposure to complex language and themes develops the children's inference skills and develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Drama develops confidence and an understanding of purpose, audience and performance. Children have opportunities to enjoy a range of drama experiences in the wider curriculum as well as in the RSC supported work.

The children's experiences through the RSC partnership provide a strong base for a life-long understanding and love of the arts.

Teaching and learning are enriched by:

- Staff Professional Development opportunities with RSC Education practitioners exploring how rehearsal room approaches to Shakespeare can transform attitudes in the classroom
- Access to a local and national network of schools, teachers and theatre professionals committed

to making Shakespeare's work vivid, accessible and enjoyable for children and young people

- The chance to take part in a national festival of work by young people
- Opportunities to contribute to a national programme of research and publications
- A whole-school Shakespeare project, including access to live broadcasts
- Experiencing high quality performances of Shakespeare's work in theatres and in school
- Pupils taking the lead on whole-school projects through the ambassador programme
- Opportunities to write across a range of genres with empathy for character, plot and theme
- Collaboration with local schools to support and embed Shakespeare across the curriculum locally

The Learning Environment

Every classroom is a literacy-rich environment. Each class has high-quality reading material, with a selection of books related to current class topics, as well as dictionaries, thesauruses and reference books. English 'working walls' and washing lines in each classroom display:

- examples of high-quality texts with organisational and language features highlighted as models for pupils' own writing;
- scaffolds and prompts for different text-types, annotated with pupils' ideas and working drafts - these may be shared, collaborative or individual;
- generic examples of grammatical conventions and cohesive devices to provide support for pupils in their independent writing

Speaking and Listening

We teach our children to speak with confidence, clarity and fluency. They learn to use forms of speech appropriate for a variety of audiences. We provide a range of situations and groupings to ensure a progression of increasing complexity.

Our children are taught to listen with understanding, to respond appropriately, making relevant comments, and to listen to the reactions of others. We provide a range of ways to promote good speaking and listening skills e.g. recording devices, iPad apps and the examples of other children and adults within school.

Talk is valued highly in the classroom as a tool for learning. Every pupil has a weekly Talk Partner with whom they share and develop ideas. This also helps to develop good listening skills. The use of 'talk partners' as a classroom strategy means that all children get the opportunity to think, discuss and express themselves orally. Working in a pair or triad supports children to feel more confident to rehearse and express their ideas.

All pupils are assessed in the autumn term of Reception, and interventions are used to support pupils with speaking and listening skills below age related expectations, taking into account the needs of those children who arrive in school speaking little or no English. The Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) programme is used to improve the oral language skills of children in Reception who have been identified as needing additional targeted support to develop their language. The programme focuses on

expressive and receptive vocabulary, listening and narrative skills through discussion of key thematic images and the retelling, creating and summarising of stories.

Home Learning in Reception is used to encourage the involvement of parents in developing their child's speech and language acquisition, through following a recipe; talking about a particular story or learning a particular song for example.

Through Talk for Writing, pupils learn by heart a range of traditional tales, story genres and non-fiction model texts as a basis for their writing. They use actions and text mapping to support their learning of grammatical structures and new vocabulary. They are given opportunities to perform these with expression and meaning, and to perform to others.

Children who speak other languages in addition to English are tracked on our EAL Proficiency in English register, and their language skills are recognised as a strength and resource that underpins their development of English. These children are supported in small groups by our EAL co-ordinator, through pre-teaching of vocabulary, reading and reading comprehension activities.

Reading

We strive to build the reading culture of the school, ensuring the teaching of reading supports all pupils to become fluent, skilled and highly engaged readers; and to teach pupils to use strategies for developing and monitoring their reading comprehension.

Children read for entertainment, for interest and for information. They learn to appreciate the necessity of reading for learning across different areas of the curriculum and for their personal lives.

In our school we provide a range of reading materials including e-books, decodable phonic readers, sets of books suitable for group Guided Reading and individual fiction and non-fiction texts, in order to meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and to support the needs of every child.

Each class in the school has a collection of high-quality books within their classroom and reading corner and children have access to the school library. Picture books are carefully chosen and used with all age groups to encourage inference and deduction using the pictures to hypothesise about character, plot and emotion. Books are carefully unpicked over a period of time to allow children to become fully immersed, as well as to support them to develop all of the reading comprehensions skills needed to become a skilled reader.

Pupils participate in:

- Whole-class Guided Reading sessions at least three times a week with a teacher, plus, where possible, a second session with a teaching assistant for children identified as talented and gifted or with an EAL or special educational need.
- Paired reading with a Talk Partner in class.

- Whole class reading led by the teacher using the interactive whiteboard or visualiser.
- 1-1 reading with a teacher, teaching assistant, trained volunteer or trained paired reader from an older class.
- Weekly library sessions where pupils can choose their own books to take home to read or share.
- Opportunities to choose books from the classroom reading area and, in EYFS and KS1, to enjoy using story sacks and participating in role play.
- Regular reading challenges that are targeted at home. This information is shared through our weekly newsletters, via email and texts sent home to parents and carers.

Children in Year One with low attainment in reading work with our Every Child A Reader teacher to enable swift progress to catch up with their peers. All of our Teaching Assistants are trained to lead *Boosting Reading At Primary (BR@P)*, a ten-week 1:1 intervention to boost reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension for children in Year Two to Year Six with lower attainment.

Writing

Our children learn to write for a range of purposes and to organise the content according to the task. Teachers share the purpose and planned audience for each piece of writing to give pupils the knowledge they need when choosing the content and tone, and to give them value to their work.

All staff participate in training in Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' approach. Through repetition, the children learn the rhythm, language, sentence structure, and organisation of each model text. Actions, and story maps are used to support their memorization of the text and the specific punctuation required.

Children 'box up the text' to understand how it has been constructed. This gives them a deep understanding of the oral language, which then supports the development of their independent writing, through the teacher-led process of 'imitation', 'innovation' and then 'independent application'.

All teachers have participated in C.L.P.E. '*Planning a text-based curriculum*' training, which engages children in high quality texts using a range of approaches such as conscience alley, gallery walks, engaging in art and illustration and hot-seating. These teaching sequences increase children's knowledge about reading and writing, including contextualised opportunities for spelling and grammar, the use of language for effect on a reader and how to use language for different purposes and forms of writing.

Our English lessons build the skills that pupils need in order to write in a range of genres, from different perspectives and for different audiences and purposes. There are regular opportunities to apply skills through pieces of extended writing and pupils are encouraged to edit and improve their work. Younger pupils, or those with a special educational need, are offered scaffolded writing frames to enable them to write independently.

Pupils are also given frequent opportunities to write at length in other subjects from a range of

perspectives and in a variety of styles.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Spelling

In EYFS and Year One, children have daily phonics sessions following the Floppy's Phonics programme. All pupils in Y1 undertake the statutory phonics screen. Those who do not reach the required level have further phonics teaching and are re-assessed during Year Two. The teaching of the alphabetic code is continued right up to Year Six using Phonics International resources when necessary. Alphabetic code charts are used by the children to support their writing.

Children are taught to investigate spellings, to look for patterns and investigate word families and to relate spellings to the sounds used to say words (using morphology, etymology, phonology and orthography), in order to develop accuracy, confidence and understanding in spelling words. They are expected to monitor their own spellings and to check words they are unsure about, and a range of dictionaries are available for children to use in class. Children have individual 'magpie' books which they use in class to capture words they have heard in books, and also to check their spelling as they write.

The teaching of spelling follows the Rising Stars programme, which is aligned to the National Curriculum programme of study.

Punctuation and Grammar

Punctuation and grammar skills are taught explicitly during English lessons and discrete SPAG lessons in KS2. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to identify and comment upon punctuation marks and grammatical structures when scrutinising texts in all subjects. They are also given regular opportunities to apply these skills when writing.

Regular dictation sessions allow children to practise spelling, punctuation and grammar. The session is reactive and responds to particular needs within a class, offering the opportunity to consolidate skills taught and to close gaps in understanding.

Handwriting

We use the Penpals handwriting scheme to support our high expectations of presentation. Neat, clear handwriting is valued because it enables the writer to self-monitor what has been written, it enhances pupils' self-esteem, and fluent joined handwriting helps children to learn spellings more easily.

Penpals uses the same letter formation as the Sassoon font that is used in many of the children's reading books, for displays and for resources that the children use in class. The scheme uses interactive fine- and gross-motor warm-ups and practice exercises. From Reception, the children are taught the 'letter families' that are each formed with similar starting movements:

Long-legged giraffe: l i t u j y

Curly caterpillar: c a d o s g q e f

One-armed robot: r b n h m k p

Zig-zag monster: z v w x

Children who have difficulties with pencil control are given extra support, so that they do not learn inefficient habits that will interfere with fluent writing later on.

In Year One, when children are confidently forming letters correctly, they begin to learn some of the easier letter joins. Through Year Two and Year Three children learn to join more letters, and also learn when it is more efficient not to join. Further through KS2, children develop a fluent and more personalised style.

Joined handwriting is encouraged as soon as children are ready, as it supports fluency, and also confident spelling. Guidelines are used to support consistent letter formation, with ascenders and descenders positioned appropriately.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupil progress is recorded half-termly during Pupil Progress meetings with the Associate Head Teachers. It is monitored half-termly by the Senior Leadership team, who meet with class teachers to discuss individual and group progress.

Writing is moderated against the National Curriculum end of year expectations. Staff moderate across the federation and across the local consortium.

Quality and quantity of writing, in English lessons and across the curriculum, is assessed through work scrutinies, book trawls and informal drop-ins.

Reading progress is assessed against the National Curriculum end of year expectations by gathering evidence of reading skills in guided reading and across the wider curriculum. Pupils complete NFER reading assessments termly.

Home/School Reading Diaries are kept to facilitate communication with parents/carers and to monitor progress.

Records are kept of Guided Reading sessions.

Phonics attainment is tracked half termly in Reception and Year One, and regular assessments are carried out for all children not yet securely using phase 5 phonics in their writing/reading in KS2.

National Testing

Reception pupils are assessed using the Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of the autumn term. EYFS profiles are completed for Reception pupils no later than the final week in June. In the summer term, children in Year Two and Year Six take the national statutory assessments, and Year One pupils take the statutory Phonics Screening Check.

Equal Opportunities

At Sydenham and Lighthorne Heath Primary Schools, we provide equality of access to all aspects of the curriculum to all members of the school community. Staff will endeavour to help all children to reach their full potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability in accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities and Inclusion policies

Race Equality Statement

At Sydenham and Lighthorne Heath Primary Schools we offer a curriculum that reflects our cultural diversity. We teach children to be aware of the diversity of cultures within our schools, and to see them as a positive factor that enriches the experiences of the whole school community. We recognise and celebrate different languages that are spoken and understood by staff and children in our school, and we value those languages and the impact that fluent first languages have on the development of children's English learning.

Review

This statement is part of a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises.

This policy will be reviewed: September 2023

Signed by the Head teacher

Juliette Westwood

Chair of Governors:

Richard Butler