



Policy for English

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English Policy for Walmley Infant School

Ethos

At Walmley Infant School, we believe that our children should develop a love of learning and show care and respect for each other within the context of a happy, secure and challenging learning environment.

Equality and Diversity

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that all children are treated equally, regardless of their background, gender, race or ability. We are an inclusive school and teach English to all children respecting individual needs. Through teaching English, we provide learning opportunities for all pupils. We strive to meet the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs, disabilities, More Able and Talented and those learning English as an additional language. (See Policy for Equality and Diversity).

Meeting the needs of all learners

Throughout school there are children with extremes of skills and children who have had a wide variety of experiences before they come to school. Our school aims to provide the children with stimulating and challenging activities which cater for the wide range of abilities throughout our school:

- All children will experience success. Children may be participating in a common task, carefully chosen to be manageable for children with a variety of both special education needs and those who are More Able and Talented or be undertaking a common task, with a specific group of children being given guidance by the teacher whilst other groups work independently.
- Use of questioning throughout a lesson to assess and review learning to challenge and support all learners. If necessary, lessons will be adapted to meet all learners' needs. E.g: if an activity is too easy/difficult adapt it for specific children there and then
- Valuing children's own self and peer assessments to assist learning, planning and future scaffolding

- Judging learners' understanding with accuracy and using this to inform future learning opportunities and planning: using success criteria, self and peer assessment, questioning, prior knowledge assessments as well as subject specific assessment procedures
- Identifying where a learner is, and provide necessary stimulus to ensure that learners recognise and accept the next stage of learning
- Having high expectations and using personal and social targets (linked to the Behaviour Policy) to motivate all learners to achieve to their full potential.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)

SMSC is intrinsically linked to the English curriculum. Through planning for English we aim to develop a positive attitude towards individuality and a respect for different cultures. Learning resources are carefully selected to support and develop awareness of different cultures and faiths. Moral and social responsibility is promoted using a variety of different texts.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In 2017 Walmley Infant School became a UN Rights Respecting School.

The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to.

We aim to respect and promote the rights of the children through the teaching of English.

Aims of teaching English at Walmley Infant School

Through teaching English we aim to:

- develop a love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment
- develop a 'phonics first' approach when reading
- enable children to read a varied selection of texts whilst gaining an increased level of fluency and understanding
- enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners
- encourage children to listen with concentration to identify the main points of what they have heard
- teach children effective communication both verbal and non-verbal

- help children become confident, independent writers, with appropriate focus on spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary
- foster the enjoyment of accurate and meaningful writing, with a recognition of its purpose and value
- teach children the importance of evaluating and improving their spoken English, reading and writing.

Planning, Teaching and Learning

We recognise that English is a subject in its own right but also the medium for teaching and learning across the whole curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their learning in school.

At Walmley Infant School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our writing lessons. The National Curriculum Programmes of study in English and the EYFS requirements are used when planning units of work. Each year group is responsible for ensuring full coverage of the National Curriculum/EYFS Curriculum. A variety of genres are introduced and taught. Children are encouraged to identify key aspects of each type of writing. English plans are displayed in the classroom and are updated weekly during Year Group PPA. Planning is a skills-based journey of learning which is regularly adapted to meet the individual needs of the children.

Writing, reading, handwriting and phonic lessons are identified on class timetables. During planned lessons children are taught as individuals, as a group or whole class. Lessons will include the learning objective and success criteria and allow for the different learning needs of pupils. The teacher and teaching assistant facilitate a good pace, support pupils, clarify misconceptions/difficulties, assess the learning taking place and identify areas for future teaching. Lessons will contain modelling of successful writing strategies, and they will consider the vocabulary learnt throughout the unit of work, which could be linked to other areas of the curriculum. Learners will be appropriately challenged and there will be time allowed for a plenary at the end of the lesson where learners will share and may edit their writing in KS1. This provides opportunities to evaluate what has been learnt and success criteria will be reviewed to address any misconceptions. Children will be given opportunities to peer assess and identify areas for future learning as appropriate.

Speaking and Listening

Spoken Language underpins the development of reading and writing and helps children develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. The

quality and variety of language that pupils hear is vital for developing their vocabulary, grammar and their understanding of reading and writing.

Children are encouraged to speak in full sentences using standard English. We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect, or other language is of prime importance.

In Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) children will be taught to listen attentively in a range of situations. They regularly listen to multimedia stories, discuss key events and respond to what they hear. Pupils will be taught to give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately. In Reception children begin to use talk partners, this involves developing good communication skills such as: taking turns, making eye contact and learning that other people have opinions and ideas that are different from their own. This is continued and developed throughout the school.

Children learn how to follow instructions and make independent choices. Children are encouraged to ask and answer questions and use their own experiences as well as new experiences in response to stories or new encounters. Adults model speaking in full sentences and encourage children to put their own responses into complete sentences. Opportunities throughout school provide a rich environment for EYFS children to develop their speaking and listening skills. These include songs, games, assemblies, special occasions, performances, visits, visitors and frequent encounters with new vocabulary.

In Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2) pupils continue to practise and develop their communication skills using talk partners across the curriculum. This helps them to learn to take turns, listen and clearly explain their own ideas. Pupils are exposed to a rich oral language and are encouraged to answer questions in full sentences, using Standard English.

They have frequent experiences to encounter new words through an environment that is rich in vocabulary. They also experience new vocabulary in different contexts across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to play with words and ask about new words they encounter. Children have the opportunity to listen to a variety of multimedia fiction, non-fiction and poetry and they are encouraged to link what they hear to their own experiences. Pupils also experience re-telling stories orally and adapting well-known stories in their own words. They will continue to have many opportunities across the curriculum to use their communication skills in full sentences these include topic projects, assemblies, visits and visitors to school.

Elements of Talk for Writing is used throughout the school as a means of developing language and where appropriate, writing.

Reading Scheme

We use Ransom Reading Stars as our core scheme which has a strong phonic approach and is closely linked to the Unlocking Letters and Sounds phonics scheme from which Phonic teaching is planned.

Reading in Nursery

Children are read to each day and are introduced to a range of texts, including fiction and non-fiction books. Children are encouraged to retell and extend stories in order for them to develop their book language. Each week the children have a library session and take a library book home.

Phonics in Nursery

Children in Nursery are encouraged to hear and make their own sounds before formal introduction of phonemes and graphemes. They are encouraged to rhyme and take part in a variety of rhythmic activities to develop early reading skills.

Reading in Reception

Children are grouped by ability for Guided Reading. At the beginning of Reception all children will be read with one to one. During Spring 2 or Summer 1, when the children are ready, some children will then be read with in groups during Guided Reading. This reading consists of a balance of phonics, word and sentence level reading. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences thus linking them with the book and fostering a life-long love of reading. Some children will receive an extra one to one reading session with an adult throughout the week to assist in building children's confidence in reading.

Phonics in Reception

The school follows the *Unlocking Letters and Sounds Programme* (DFE). Staff begin teaching phonics in the first few weeks of term 1 in Reception and children make rapid progress in their reading journey. Children begin to learn the main sounds heard in the English Language and how they can be represented, as well as learning Common Exception words for Phases 2, 3 and 4. They use these sounds to read and write simple words, captions and sentences. Children leave Reception being able to apply the phonemes taught within Phase 2, 3 and 4.

Workshops in Reception

A Reception Curriculum Workshop for parents is held early in Autumn term to share our approach to phonics and reading and to pass on information and resources that will help at home. This is an informative workshop where parents/carers are informed about the phonics and reading teaching that their children learn in school and any suggested activities that can be used at home.

Key Stage 1

Guided Reading in Key Stage 1

Guided Reading lessons take place daily. Children are grouped according to ability and read books appropriate to their reading level, using the Ransom Rising Stars books that are matched with our phonics programme. Children learn with a teacher in groups. Within group reading the teacher and pupils focus on specific sounds, common exception words and key vocabulary words. They will then practise fluency and comprehension skills. When children are not learning with an adult they learn independently. The independent tasks aim to develop a love of reading, comprehensive skills and phonic knowledge. Children also take an unread book home each week. If any additional adults are present for a Guided Reading lesson, they will support group reading.

Phonics/SPAG in Key Stage 1

Children have five Phonics lessons per week. SPAG coverage is planned into weekly writing lessons so that children can apply their learning directly in their writing. Key Stage One teachers use the National Curriculum to plan lessons to ensure full coverage of programmes of study. The *Unlocking Letters and Sounds* Document (DFE) is used to support planning. Teachers use the terminology and resources from this document when teaching phonics. Children are assessed in phonics according to the *Unlocking Letters and Sounds* programme.

Workshops in Key Stage One

Curriculum Workshops for both Year 1 and Year 2 are held early in Autumn term. The workshops focus on different aspects of the curriculum with a strong focus on English. Parents are informed of our approaches to teaching all areas of English and are given suggested activities to support their children at home.

Library

All children throughout the school choose a book from the school library each week to take home. If the book is not returned, parents are asked to pay £5 or supply a book in good condition for the library.

Writing

Writing in Nursery

Nursery children are encouraged to make marks during independent activities and during teacher focused activities. When children are ready, they are taught to trace and copy their names, write letters and are encouraged to practise letter patterns. Children are encouraged to feel confident about mark making.

Writing in Reception

Children continue to be encouraged to make marks and experiment with writing for themselves through personal writing symbols and conventional script and write in a variety of learning situations throughout the environment. Phonics lessons teach the formation of letters as the children learn the sounds. The writing process is taught in small groups led by a teacher/T.A. where children practise word, caption and sentence level writing. Drawing Club was introduced in Reception in Autumn 2024. It helps children to refine their fine motor skills, use their imagination, increase their vocabulary and bring excitement to writing through high quality texts. Children use sound mats which are linked to phonics and allow children to use and apply what they already know. There are also common exception words displayed in the classroom to support their writing.

Children are given a variety of mark-making tools and opportunities to experiment with them e.g. chalks, brushes of different sizes, whiteboards and pens, paints, pens, felt-tips, pencils.

Independent opportunities for writing are provided on a daily basis e.g. role play /outdoors / labels for models to be saved.

Handwriting in Reception

Children are taught to form letters using the Unlocking Letters and Sounds formation within lessons. A tripod grip is practised and constantly encouraged. They learn lowercase letter formation, letter families, name writing and number formation.

Writing in Key Stage One

Children have four writing lessons per week. A variety of genres are introduced and taught. Children are encouraged to identify key aspects of each type of writing. 'Pedagog' stamps are used to allow the children to identify their strengths, encourage self-assessment, inform their learning and next steps.

Handwriting in Key Stage One

Handwriting lessons take place daily after phonics lessons and before Writing lessons. Children are encouraged to sit correctly prior to writing with their "feet flat and bottoms back." In Year One children are taught the mastery of name writing formation, number formation, lowercase letter formation and uppercase letter formation. They are taught to form letters in the correct size relative to one another. This is a pre-cursive handwriting style with exit flicks. In Year Two children will learn how to write in a pre-cursive style with entry and exit flicks (See Appendix 1) and throughout the year some children who are ready will be encouraged to join letters and to take their pen off at the end of a word prior to dotting and crossing letters. Children who have achieved a joined-up style of handwriting with correct formation will receive a pen to write with in school. All teachers model this script when teaching the children. Children are encouraged to use the tripod grip.

Those children who find handwriting particularly challenging because of fine motor control difficulties or other special educational needs, will be individually assessed and provided with appropriate equipment to facilitate writing e.g. a tilted writing wedge, an ergonomically designed pen or pencil with a grip or assistive technology.

ICT

We recognise that ICT is an integral part of our children's lives and use it as a tool for teaching and learning. Children are introduced to age-appropriate websites that specifically support and develop reading and writing skills. ICT is used to inspire and motivate children across the curriculum as well as improving specific ICT skills e.g. iPad skills, text effects and manipulating a variety of writing layouts and templates i.e. newspapers, letters and posters.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment is linked to high expectations, and it is viewed as an integral part of teaching and learning. Using the principles and processes of assessment at Walmley Infant School, we aim to:

- monitor progress and support learning
- recognise the achievements of pupils
- guide future planning, teaching and curriculum development
- inform parents and the wider community of pupil achievement
- provide information to ensure continuity when the pupil changes school or year group
- comply with statutory requirements.

When assessing the children, teachers will help them to identify their strengths and areas for development, enabling them to identify future learning needed to make progress. This will be done through observation, sharing learning objectives and success criteria and through questioning, effective feedback, peer and self-assessment, target setting and using other techniques, for example, talk partners.

Please see Assessment Policy and Marking Policy.

The English Leadership Team

The English Leadership team will:

- Update the school policy
- Maintain an overview of trends in English education by reading appropriate literature
- Be familiar with the resources available in school and from outside agencies
- Promote English education within the school and provide advice and support when required
- Organise and expand English resources

The Head teacher will ensure that staff are fully able to deliver the subject appropriately and that pupils are receiving their entitlement.

Teachers and Support Staff will ensure appropriate delivery of the subject.

Monitoring and Evaluation of English

Monitoring and evaluation of English throughout school will comprise the following:

- Annual review of the English Policy
- Review of planning-timing of this to be determined by the Senior Leadership Team

Cursive Letter Formation

Cursive Down Letters	l	i	t	u	y	j	r	n	m	p	h	b	k

Cursive Curly Letters	c	o	a	d	g	q	e	s	f

Cursive Zigzag Letters	r	w	x	z
