

# Highwood Primary School



*Promoting Resilience – Achieving Potential*

# English Policy

January 2018  
To be reviewed: January 2020



This policy has been impact assessed against protected characteristics (race, gender and disability) and no adverse impact has been identified.

## **1. AIMS**

At Highwood Primary School we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills and that through the English curriculum we help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively with the world at large, through spoken and written language. We also intend to help children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

### **As a school we aim:**

- To provide a rich and stimulating language environment which encourages speaking and listening, reading and writing
- To provide an environment where pupils are encouraged to construct and convey meaning, both in speech and writing, of factual, imaginary and personal experiences
- To provide opportunities for pupils to become confident, competent and expressive users of the language with a developing knowledge of how it works
- To provide opportunities for pupils to be reflective users of language, able to analyse and evaluate its main features
- To foster an enthusiasm for and love of reading for life
- To encourage pupils to have fluent and legible handwriting
- To provide opportunities for pupils to communicate ideas through the use of ICT
- To provide opportunities for role play and drama.

### **We aim that pupils will:**

- Be able to participate in a conversation, listening to others, responding appropriately and taking turns to speak
- Develop the confidence and ability to speak appropriately and perform in front of varying sizes of audience
- Be able to sustain concentration in a range of listening situations
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of non-fiction genres and structure text in a style suited to its purpose
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately
- Have an interest in words and their meanings and a growing vocabulary
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing
- Understand the phonic system and spelling conventions and use them to read and spell accurately
- Be able to use a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual)
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing;
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts
- Be interested in books, read for enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences
- Be able to work confidently and increasingly independently in all areas.

## **2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the Language and Literacy and English sections of the National Curriculum in England Key Stages 1 and 2 Framework Document (2013) and in the Communication and Language

(Prime Area) and Literacy (Specific Area) sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014).

**In the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception)** children are given opportunities to:

- speak and 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 opportunities to communicate.

The prime area of communication and language underpins all literacy learning at this early stage. In the Foundation Stage children build on the language skills that they bring from home. Development of these skills is encouraged through activities such as listening to stories and poems, joining in with rhymes and songs, participating in drama and imaginative play, responding to simple instructions, talking to accompany play etc. The specific area of Literacy focuses on the more formal aspects of literacy. Knowledge about books is developed through activities such as retelling a story in their own words, reading a big book with the teacher, re-reading favourite stories and listening to taped stories.

When a child is ready to begin more formal reading activities s/he will embark upon the school's reading system of colour banded books. Emergent writing is encouraged through role play and children are encouraged to write in role.

The learning environment provides purposes for writing e.g. shopping lists, signs, instructions, recounts etc. When children become more aware of phonics and letter formation they are encouraged to attempt a more focused form of writing using the initial, end and medial sounds in words.

**By the end of the Reception year most children will be able to:**

- Listen with enjoyment to stories, songs, music and poems and to make up their own
- Speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control showing an awareness of the listener
- Interact with others, negotiating plans and activities
- Use literacy skills readily in their play and independent learning
- Enjoy an increasing range of books
- Read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently
- Work securely on Phase 3 of Letters and Sounds
- Show an understanding of the elements of stories such as main character, sequence of events and how information can be found in non-fiction texts
- Use phonic knowledge to read and write simple CVC words and to make plausible attempts at more complex words
- Attempt writing for different purposes and to begin to form simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation
- Hold a pencil correctly and to use it effectively to form recognisable letters most of which are formed correctly and when ready begin to join their writing

**At Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2)** children learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They learn to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds and they are given opportunities to speak and listen throughout all subject areas.

**By end of Key Stage 1 most children will be able to:**

- Speak clearly, fluently and confidently to different audiences
- Listen to, understand and respond appropriately to others
- Work as a member of a group taking into account different views and negotiating roles
- Participate in a range of drama activities
- Read a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts
- Use a variety of strategies in working out unfamiliar words when reading including: phonic clues, contextual clues, syntax and grammar and reading on for meaning
- Read with fluency, accuracy and expression
- Work securely up to Phase 6 of Letters and Sounds
- Know and understand the alphabetical system and be able to use simple dictionaries
- Communicate in narrative and non-narrative forms and to write for a purpose
- Use appropriate and interesting vocabulary
- Develop and extend ideas in a sequence of sentences
- Use capital letters, full stops and question marks
- Use correct spelling for monosyllabic words
- Recognise phonemes and graphemes and to use this knowledge when attempting words
- Use accurately formed, consistently sized and joined handwriting

**At Key Stage Two (Years 3-6)** children learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

**By the end of Key Stage 2 most children will be able to:**

- Speak with confidence in a wide range of contexts, adapting their speech as appropriate
- Listen attentively to, understand and respond appropriately to others identifying key features of language used for a specific purpose e.g. to persuade or instruct
- Work as a member of a group qualifying or justifying an opinion and to take up and sustain different roles
- Participate in a wide range of drama activities
- Read a range of more challenging and demanding reading material fluently, accurately and independently
- Interpret meaning beyond the literal
- Ask and answer questions about a text and express opinions, supporting a view by reference to the text
- Use library skills to locate books and reference skills for information
- Use appropriate reading strategies when seeking information e.g. use of chapters, headings, skimming text
- Write in a lively and thoughtful way in a range of forms
- Sustain and develop ideas in interesting ways
- Organise writing for purpose and to engage and sustain readers' interest
- Use effective vocabulary, selecting words with precision to create a desired effect
- Use increasingly complex, grammatically correct sentences to extend meaning
- Organise sentences into paragraphs
- Use increasingly accurate spelling

- Use appropriate punctuation, including commas, apostrophes and inverted commas
- Use fluent, legible, joined handwriting.

### **3. SUBJECT ORGANISATION**

#### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the EYFS children have daily discreet phonics lessons. Children have opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult led and child initiated activities.

#### **Key Stage 1**

In Key Stage 1 children have daily discreet phonics lessons which are taught in ability groups and daily mixed ability literacy lessons with an emphasis on real texts. Children take part in both guided and individual reading sessions and have regular story times to develop a love of reading. Literacy skills are developed across the curriculum through the themed topics. Provision is made for children who require extra support through specific intervention programmes and differentiated class teaching.

#### **Key Stage 2**

In Key Stage 2 children have daily literacy lessons including grammar for writing.

Phonics sessions continue in the Autumn Term in Year 3.

Additional literacy sessions include guided reading, handwriting, spelling and the class novel or story. Literacy skills are developed across the curriculum through the themed topics where skills taught in literacy are applied in subjects such as history, science and geography. Provision is made for children who require extra support through intervention programmes and differentiated class teaching.

### **4. SPOKEN LANGUAGE**

Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We model our own language to the children which encourages Standard English both in speaking and writing. Pupils are given opportunities to speak in pairs, small groups and in front of their class. They are given to opportunity to speak to larger groups in assembly and all participate in class assemblies at least twice a year. Pupils may be involved in larger presentations such as Performance assemblies or celebrations such as Christmas throughout the year. They share their news, feed back information from reading and research, and give opinions in circle time and across the curriculum. Through the same range of activities, children are encouraged to listen to others, respect turn taking within conversations and ask appropriate questions.

'Talk for Writing' is used regularly in order to help children structure and organise their writing. Strategies such as story mapping with the associated vocabulary spoken aloud are used throughout the school. Role play and drama activities may be used in literacy to encourage imagination and plot development. Pupils will be encouraged to use a range of dramatic forms to express feelings and ideas both verbally and non-verbally. Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate drama, both as participants and observers.

### **5. READING (including word reading and comprehension)**

Teachers model reading strategies, teach comprehension skills and look at texts in detail during shared reading sessions within literacy lessons. Children also have the opportunity to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during guided reading sessions. Daily discreet phonics lessons in EYFS and KS1 enable children to decode efficiently. This is continued into KS2 where necessary. Guided reading sessions take place across the school and in KS2 this is a daily 30 minute lesson. The teacher led guided group within these sessions works on specific reading foci whilst the independent groups work on follow up reading tasks set by the teacher to build on their learning in

reading. The guided group is assessed during these sessions using the HfL assessment grids.

A range of reading scheme books are colour banded and used to support early readers. Children read books from their colour band until they are assessed as having reached a level where they can become 'free readers' (currently ARE in Y3) and choose books independently from the class and school library. Teaching assistants support reading activities and monitor individuals' reading books to ensure that children have more frequent opportunities to read with an adult.

Children in the EYFS and KS1 take home a levelled book from school according to their ability. Parents are encouraged to hear their child read the book and then record how they have got on. This encourages teacher – parent communication. In addition to this, children have the opportunity to choose books from the school library. Each child has a home-school reading record that teachers and parents can use to share information about a child's reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their child at least three times a week. Guidance for Parents on reading and phonics is provided at parent meetings and through information letters during the year.

In KS2 children choose books to take home and read. Children who still require a more structured approach to reading remain on the book banded system. These books are levelled to help these children to continue to grow in confidence as readers, with a text that is appropriate for their reading age.

We encourage all readers to share a book at home with an adult or older sibling. We believe that this not only helps to develop inferential skills, but also supports a lifelong love of reading. Throughout KS2 children become more independent in recording what they have read in their reading journals.

We recognise the value of adults (both in school and at home) reading aloud to children, in order to improve their grasp of story language, enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers.

## **6. WRITING (including transcription and composition)**

We aim to develop the children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader.

Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. To support our teaching of writing we use many of the strategies advocated by the Pie Corbett foundation included in 'Talk for Writing'.

Sequences of lessons begin with vocabulary generating sessions and individual lessons often begin with a vocabulary challenge. Teachers model writing strategies to the pupils and encourage them to 'hug the text' in order to become successful in writing for particular purposes. Within each literacy session the teacher (and teaching assistant if available) works with a guided group to target specific needs and teaching points with groups and with individuals. Teachers use the washing line approach to display information generated during the sessions in order to support the pupils' own writing.

The children are given frequent opportunities to write in different contexts and through different areas of the curriculum using quality texts as a model for a variety of purposes and audiences. There are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by drama techniques and film clips. They may be asked to produce their writing on their own or as part of group. Children are also given the opportunity to use ICT for their writing where appropriate. We have our own developed Handwriting Scheme in school to help children develop fluent, clear and legible joined up writing. Children will learn in Reception to form letters with a lead-in stroke ready for joining in Year 1.

Children work hard towards being allowed to write in pen in Year 2 and 3 which encourages them to take care in their presentation and pride in their work. Pupils record their work in their 'Writing Journal'. This exercise book contains writing from across the curriculum and has the child's literacy targets, glued inside the covers for reference

during lessons. Teachers provide feedback tasks to be completed prior to the next session (Read and Respond takes place before assembly daily in KS2) at least once a week. Peer marking and feedback is also encouraged in KS2.

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum; there is particular focus on writing across all subject areas where the same standard of writing is expected as that seen in literacy lessons.

## **7. SPELLING**

Spelling skills are introduced through direct teaching, investigations and studies of spelling patterns and conventions.

EYFS and KS1 pupils are introduced to phonics through the Letters and Sounds programme and work through a progressive set of phases to learn key words. KS1 also use the spelling appendix in the National Curriculum 2013 to ensure coverage of the statutory requirements for spelling.

In KS2, teachers use the spelling appendix in the National Curriculum 2013 for progressive spelling lists. Older pupils learn about spelling patterns and are expected to collect and learn lists of words appropriate to their topic/theme.

All pupils are encouraged to:

- Develop dictionary skills to support their spelling
- Attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies
- Write an increasingly wide range of words from memory based on the spelling lists in the appendix
- Use a variety of resources to help with spelling e.g. Computer-based activities, dictionaries, word banks, classroom environment, computer spell-check

The spelling of necessary technical vocabulary is introduced throughout the curriculum and displayed in classrooms where appropriate.

Marking supports self-correction and learning of correct spelling.

## **8. PLANNING**

The school uses the National Curriculum in England Key Stages 1 and 2 Framework Document (2013) and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014) as the basis of its curriculum. Teachers adapt and develop them into teaching sequences suitable for classes or groups, enabling children to study a text type and then use this as a model for their own writing.

We carry out our curriculum planning in English in two phases (long-term and short term). The long term planning tries to make links between areas of the curriculum so that the children experience a connected curriculum that gives literacy a purposeful setting.

The class teachers are responsible for writing the weekly/daily plans for these lessons (short-term plans). These plans list the specific learning objective of each lesson, the activities, guided group foci, differentiation and the success criteria/learning outcomes. The class teachers are supported by members of the SLT in the production of these plans and members of the SLT often discuss them on an informal basis and as part of the monitoring process.

## **9. ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING**

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment systems which are based on the Herts for Learning (HfL) assessment documents. Ongoing formative assessment takes place during planning, teaching and marking and a formal summative assessment of each child's progress and learning is made once a term using the HfL criteria. These

summative assessments are recorded on SIMS as 'steps' and show whether a child is 'working towards', 'working within' or 'working beyond' age related expectations. The use of 'cold tasks' at the start of each unit of learning allows teachers to assess where there are individual gaps in learning and also to set short term targets with the pupil. Each unit ends with a 'hot task' where children are assessed against their targets and progress within the unit. The Writing Journals are therefore an indication of progress and learning for each child. Cross curricular writing is also assessed through the Learning Journal where children may record learning in Science and the foundation subjects.

Children are assessed at the beginning of reception through a Baseline assessment, during the year through Early Years Outcomes and at the end of their reception year using the Foundation Stage Profile.

Children are also formally assessed using the statutory Phonics Screening test at the end of Year One and at the end of each Key Stage (in Y2 and Y6) through the Statutory Assessment Tests (SATS). Formal external tests take place to assess reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills (in addition to teacher assessment in Y2). Writing is based solely on teacher assessment in Y2 and Y6. The results of all of these assessments (including teacher assessments) are submitted to the Local Authority and the DfE.

Teachers use assessment to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they are to do to achieve the next step.

Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress twice a year and are sent an annual end of year report, detailing the child's literacy development and targets for next steps. 'Book Looks' are held after school on the first Monday of each month where parents are invited to come into the classroom to view their child's learning journals.

## **10. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

It is the responsibility of the class teachers, Phase Leaders, the Core Skills Team, SLT and Governors to monitor the standards of children's work. The Core Skills Team monitors the quality of teaching in English and is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. This will form the basis for monitoring in accordance with the school's monitoring policy.

## **11. INCLUSION**

At Highwood we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against age related expectations. Opportunities are found for more able children to extend their understanding. Intervention programmes are used with children who are finding it more difficult to access the English curriculum where appropriate.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors or barriers to learning: classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation and the child – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning English. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a trip to a museum, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to

ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils. All children receive quality literacy teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. Where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support, to enable them to work to age appropriate objectives, a variety of interventions are available. These include the use of Personal Plans, TA support, and intervention programmes. More able pupils are planned for in line with our Inclusion Policy. This is supported by our Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

It will be ensured that equal opportunities in English are addressed as follows: Pupils with special needs have equal access to the English curriculum through the use of differentiated learning strategies and tasks. These are based on individual needs. Specific teaching strategies are used to maximize access to the curriculum for pupils learning EAL. Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is promoted through the use of resources on multi-cultural themes. An awareness of other dialects and Standard English encouraged through a range of texts. Gender equality is promoted by ensuring that both boys and girls have access to all aspects of the English curriculum. Opportunities to address issues of gender, race etc. are provided through discussion, texts and resources.

## **13. PARENTAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

We value parent involvement in children's development of literacy and promote a home school partnership in the following ways:

- Sharing information – newsletters, parent consultation evenings, Parentview meetings, parents' leaflets, email, reading diaries, home learning grids and books
- Celebrations – assemblies, school performances, displays, Open Evening, Monthly Book Looks
- Home Learning- in line with our Home Learning Policy
- Parent helpers – listening to readers

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