

English Policy for
Hillside Community First School

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Signature of Headteacher:	Jeremy Harrison
Signature of Governing body:	Ben Mason
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Hillside Community First School

English Policy

There are Five Main Purposes to this Policy:

- To establish an entitlement for all pupils;
- To establish expectations for teachers of this subject;
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school;
- To state the school's approaches to this subject
- To promote public, and particularly parents' and carers', understanding of the curriculum.

RATIONALE

The teaching of English develops the ability of pupils to communicate effectively in speech and writing whilst they learn to read and listen with understanding. 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. At Hillside Community First School, we believe that children should have access to a full, stimulating, well-structured curriculum. The children's English skills are developed within an integrated programme of spoken language, reading and writing; and then extended throughout all other curriculum areas.

PURPOSE

At Hillside we believe that high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and, through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. At Hillside Community First School we know that the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society.

AIMS

The overarching aim of the Early Years and Foundation Stage and the English National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and English by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. Therefore at Hillside Community First School, we aim to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn. They should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas, be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, make formal presentations, demonstrate to others and participate in debate.

Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching is based on the objectives specified in the Early Years and Foundation stage curriculum and the National Curriculum. Specific skills are taught and practised, as appropriate, during regular designated English lessons. Children's learning follows a pattern of reading to identify a genre, then analysing texts to establish the features of that genre. This is then followed by modelled, leading to independent, writing of the genre. Teachers use a range of techniques such as talk for writing, drama and the use of ICT throughout the teaching sequence to engage and inspire as well as to ensure the children's development in English. Opportunities to practise English skills in context are given across the curriculum and are revisited as frequently as possible.

A variety of teaching strategies and styles are used to ensure an adequate balance, depth and delivery. These include:

- individual tasks;
- work in pairs, small groups and whole class;
- reviewing, reflecting and evaluating with the teacher;
- reviewing, reflecting and evaluating with their peers and independently;
- working with other adults, including parents and non-teaching staff.

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. At Hillside Community First School, we know that quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary, grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Spoken language and listening are not only communicative skills, but are also the bedrock of language development. Group interaction and drama provide a context for children to develop these skills as well as inspiring and engaging the learner. Pupils encounter an extensive range of opportunities to develop their capacity and confidence in this area in:

- English lessons – spoken language objectives are taught explicitly to allow children to develop in this area.
- Throughout the curriculum – various spoken language, listening, group interaction, role play and drama techniques are used in the wider curriculum where specific topics provide a context for children to develop their spoken language skills.
- More formal occasions such as assemblies, poetry recitals and other performances as well as those who wish to take a part in the school council.
- In response to home learning challenges involving performing, discussing and debating.

Reading

The programmes of study specified in the National Curriculum for reading at key stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading).

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each. Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. At Hillside we have a very strong emphasis on phonics, using the "Letters and Sounds" programme from Reception through Key Stage 1 and into Key Stage 2 where necessary.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. At Hillside Community First School all pupils are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often, increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and curiosity

At Hillside Community First School, the foundation for learning to read for pleasure and understanding comes from:

- The teaching of reading which takes place during shared and guided reading sessions which take place regularly throughout the week.
- Reading practice at the pupil's own level, which takes place during independent reading times and as a home learning activity;
- Reading with volunteer and parent helpers who share the reading experience for short periods of time during the school day;
- Continuous assessment and monitoring to ensure all children are reading at a level appropriate to their age;
- Specific catch up and booster sessions targeted to those children who are recognised as not meeting expected standards in reading for their age;
- Access to a wide range of genres in both fiction and non-fiction that pupils read or listen to.

Writing

Writing is closely linked to reading and speaking and listening. The National Curriculum sets the programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 which are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. At Hillside Community First School, children have experience of the full writing process, including evaluating and improving their work against a success criteria. The features and layouts of a full range of writing genres are taught in both fiction and non-fiction with planned opportunities to write in context in other curriculum areas. At Hillside we use drama, talk for writing including "Mighty Writer" and a range of other speaking and listening activities to engage pupils in discussion about their writing.

Handwriting and Presentation

Pupils need to understand that other people will see much of their work, and it therefore needs to be legible and well presented. To build up correct letter formation, accuracy and speed, the formal teaching of handwriting takes place regularly. Targeted adult led intervention groups, such as Finger Fun, work to develop the children's letter formation in order that children develop fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. At Hillside Community First School there is a strong focus on the teaching of specific skills in spelling and grammar, both discretely and in the context of studying different genres of writing. Grammar is taught following a progression of skills taken from the National Curriculum.

The teaching of spelling and vocabulary follows a planned progression through the use of the Letters and Sounds programme and then the No Nonsense spelling programme which builds on children's phonics knowledge and teaches them to investigate and recognise spelling patterns and conventions as well as allowing them to develop a range of spelling strategies.

The children have spelling journals which they use at least once a week either in discrete spelling lessons or as part of Guided Reading or Letters and Sounds. At the end of Year 1 all pupils take part in the National Phonics Screening. If they are unsuccessful they have additional support in Year 2 and then take the test again. Children who are identified as needing opportunities to further improve their phonological awareness are taught in small groups by trained teaching assistants. Spellings are returned to throughout the year in order to consolidate and apply spelling knowledge in their independent writing. There is also a weekly spelling focus set in home learning.

ICT in English

We recognise the children's need to have opportunity to use and experience a range of ICT applications in their learning and teaching. At Hillside, ICT is used to enhance English learning and teaching in a variety of ways:

- The use of interactive whiteboards to display visual texts, interactive texts and multimodal texts.
- The use of software and internet based resources to teach specific language skills and engage children in a range of different text types.
- Children/teacher using multimedia devices to capture sound and/or images to be used to create a digital text, display or presentation.
- The use of a range of software which combines books with onscreen reading to motivate and engage children who are working behind their chronological reading age.
- Using word processing technology in the process of writing and presenting written work.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

All pupils, regardless of race, gender, ability, culture or disability are entitled to a broad and enriching English curriculum which caters for their individual needs. Activities are planned in such a way as to encourage full and active participation by all children irrespective of ability, ethnicity, gender, disability or background (for further information refer to relevant school policies). All children are encouraged to do their best and all efforts and achievements are praised. Work is differentiated, where appropriate, to enable pupils to progress at their own level. Children with learning and behavioural difficulties are supported either by the SENCO, outside agencies or by trained teaching assistants. In addition, other initiatives such as ELS, small group phonics sessions, grammar and writing intervention groups as well as reading comprehension groups are implemented where necessary. Children who are identified as having specialist learning needs are taught either individually, in pairs or small groups by the SENCO, inclusion leader or trained Teaching Assistants.

Resources

Levelled home reading books are housed in the corridors of the main building or in the Reception classroom. They are colour coded according to reading level, by the Book Bands system of levelling. All classrooms also have a class library consisting of a range of genres including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The school resource room is used to store a wide range of topic related texts which can be withdrawn by teaching staff as required to support topic work in the classroom situation.

A large selection of guided reading resources is organised by genre and level of challenge in the corridor between the hall and Reception class. A range of reading based materials are on the network for teachers to access. English software, such as interactive texts, is loaded on to classroom teacher's PCs or laptops for use in whole class sessions using an interactive whiteboard. The school has the use of iPads, cameras and digital microphones. There is a full range of multimedia software, as well as

word processing and presenting software, on all computers in the school. Children access the computer suite and laptops for whole class English work. "Mighty Writer" mats are used in reception and KS1 to promote talk for writing and enable pupils to become independent, confident and capable writers.

There is consistency across the school in terms of interactive English displays; teachers display the English terminology required for their year group including the areas of grammar, punctuation and spelling as a point of reference for the children. These build up over the year and may be changed to suit the genre being taught.

Planning

Each teacher plans English with their year group colleague(s) to ensure consistency across the year group. Planning is based around specified genres, and links closely with the topics taught across the curriculum to facilitate speaking, listening, reading and writing in context. Objectives specified in the EYFS and National Curriculum are integrated into the studies of different writing genres. A unit of work builds on previous learning, introducing a new genre and the features of the genre, reading examples, then planning and creating texts, ultimately writing in the style of the genre independently. This work is then assessed, evaluated and improved.

Parental and Governor Links

We value our strong links with parents and governors and encourage their active involvement in our children's learning. Reading journals and home learning logs provide advice to help parents to contribute to their child's learning and offer an opportunity for them to comment on areas of success or concern. We encourage parents to listen to their children read and help them with their spellings as often as possible. During the Autumn Term in Year R we offer parent workshops to support parents in helping their children with phonics and further develop their reading at home. The English Governor is invited to participate in learning walks and meetings with the English Subject Leader and is encouraged to challenge the school for further improvement in English learning and teaching throughout the school.

Recording and Assessment

A spelling test to gauge a spelling age is carried out in October and reading tests are administered twice yearly (in January and July) to track pupils' progress.

A record of the children's writing progress can be found in their red *Independent Writing Books*. A range of genres are included in this book, each being completed away from the direct teaching of that text type. Teachers aim to give children the opportunity to add about five pieces of independent writing to this portfolio each term. Each piece of writing is assessed (teacher/peer/self) against the chosen success criteria using orange and green highlighters (green for achieved and orange for improvement). Importantly, children are given opportunities to improve their work. This work is used as evidence for assessing pupil progress in writing.

A range of tracking and assessment procedures takes place regularly throughout the school. Through the use of School Pupil Tracker Online, teachers regularly update their records and track individual and groups of pupils to inform planning. They are then able to identify individual or group targets for pupils to focus on. These are shared with pupils and updated as and when the targets are achieved and new targets are set. Targets are regularly shared in parent consultations and in school reports. Online data and other forms of testing is subsequently used to track children's progress throughout the school and is regularly reviewed by the head teacher and school leadership team.

Year 2 pupils take part in the National Standard Assessment Tests in reading, spelling and grammar and punctuation in May. The results are collated and reported to the DfE, governors and parents.

In order to assess and monitor attainment and progress, monitoring is undertaken by the Head Teacher and English Subject Leader. This includes:

- Sharing and monitoring planning
- Observing teaching (where there is an agreed English focus)
- Work sample scrutiny
- Moderating work with all staff members, including staff from other schools, in order to reach shared agreement on teacher judgements
- Pupil interviews

Support is offered in the form of feedback, positive advice, coaching and modelling good practice.

Teachers use a range of systems to record and assess pupils' progress including School Pupil Tracker Online, these include Phonic assessment sheets linked to Letters and Sounds and Jolly Phonics, Spelling and Reading lists of key words from EYFS and the National Curriculum for each year group, Guided Reading Records, Book Mark targets for pupil's self-assessment and group tracking documents. (Please see Appendix)

K Pain 09/2017