

FRONT STREET COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



ENGLISH POLICY September 2018



This policy links to articles: 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 28, 30

Introduction

This policy is written for teachers, parents, governors and all persons with an interest in the delivery of the English curriculum at Front Street Community Primary School. The purpose of this policy is to describe the philosophy that underpins the teaching of English in this school and to describe how that is planned, delivered and assessed.

At Front Street Community Primary School, it is our aim to maintain an ambitious vision, with high expectations and a culture of improvement developed through a Growth Mindset. Wherever possible we make explicit the links between what is being learnt and Unicef's Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Rationale

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 Front Street Primary 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 through-out 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 plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with disabilities outlined in the SEN code of practice.

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

1.1 Our Aims and Provision

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

response to audience and purpose. Listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

Ways in which we support this include:

- Activities which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate
- Performance Poetry
- School Plays
- Class debates
- Weekly assembly
- Events within the community
- School Council
- Talk partners
- Book talk sessions
- 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 of 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 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 Provision

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics (RWInc) in the Early Years and throughout Key Stage One, regular reading to adults in school, reading partners and at home.
- 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 and listening to adults read.
- Pupils also need to read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way every term.
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts from their literacy heritage during their school career.
- Pupils look at books in guided reading sessions on a weekly basis.

2. 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.

3.1 Our Aims and Provision

- We teach grammar as a separate lesson where necessary
- We correct grammatical error orally/ 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
- We encourage and promote 'talk for writing'
- We provide writing frames 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 the pupil
- We use 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

4.1 Our Aims and Provision:

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

- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learn

- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- In-depth word based lessons looking at patterns
- Using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar programmes
- Using the Power of Reading and other texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have
- Carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils
- Targeted small group support, where appropriate

5. Handwriting

The presentation of written work can not only reflect on an individual's fine motor skills but also the nature of the writer through his/her awareness of, and attention to, an audience's needs. We aim ultimately for our children to develop a fast flowing, attractive, legible, personal hand. To achieve this is a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the whole curriculum and key stages.

We therefore aim to provide a structured teaching approach which ensures:

- correct orientation and formation of letters.
- consistency and appropriateness in size and spacing.
- a pride in presentation.
- a smooth transition from printing to a joined up style.

6. Classroom Organisation

The teachers will ensure that:

- the classroom layout is organised.
- displays reflect the needs of individual classes but maximise potential for language development.
- the tables in the classroom are usually arranged to facilitate; individual quiet study, group work, whole class work.

In the Early Years the learning zones are organised into different areas which help support the language curriculum. For example, listening stations, a variety of print and texts and opportunities to explore writing and role-play both indoors and outdoors. In Nursery and Reception also have a reading area with a variety of texts available, for example fiction and non-fiction, poetry, magazines, newspapers, as well as examples of their own writing. Resources in all learning zones are organised for pupils' easy access.

7. The Delivery of the Curriculum:

The Early Years (EY) Framework and the English Curriculum provides a cohesive structure to guide teachers in planning for progression from 3-11 years of age.

Speaking and listening is developed through the use of the role play area in both Nursery and Reception. Communication and language is a prime area in the EY framework. Listening and Attention, Speaking and Listening and Understanding are key skills which are taught through all activities but also through focused adult initiated activities. New vocabulary and key questions to enhance children's language development are introduced and planned for weekly.

EY is organised into different areas, throughout all areas children can access a variety of writing materials, resources and activities e.g. in the construction area a child may draw and label a plan of what they are going to build. There is also a specific writing area available for children to access independently as well as completing adult focused activities.

Currently in Nursery the children are introduced to 'dough-disco' to enhance their physical developmental skills which is also a prime area, before leading into 'Squiggle while you wiggle'. This is a writing based programme which aims to encourage children to move and mark make on a large scale which is done alongside music. This prepares children for mark making opportunities and RWI activities. It is used as an intervention programme in Reception in the Autumn term. The Reception classes are organised into four ability groups for Read Write Inc. Children are taught the grapheme-phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence, to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur and to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes in order to spell. In our school this is taught in a systematic approach, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress. Activities for RWI group times are planned on a weekly basis to meet the children's needs and interests. The teaching of phonics is taught daily. The children in Nursery and Reception are also provided with opportunities for them to see adults modeling writing and to experiment with writing for themselves through making marks, personal writing symbols and conventional script.

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teachers follow a Synthetic phonics programme, Read Write Inc (RWI).It provides a systematic approach to teaching reading, writing and comprehension. RWI reinforces the teaching of phonics skills so that children can decode words quickly and easily, it also ensures that children develop strong comprehension skills. Once children become confident, skilled decoders they continue to reinforce these skills through the sharing of class texts and guided reading.

Listening to Readers in Early Years

The children are exposed to a variety of reading scheme books. The children will start with wordless picture books (prompt cards are given to parents) to encourage skills of book handling, directionality, understanding how stories are structured, discussing characters, events and setting and predicting what might happen. Children take home a sound book which they practise the RWInc sounds they have been taught. As the children begin to recognise sounds they will receive a reading book with simple CVC words and short sentences. Reading books match a child's needs and level. All children will be listened to once a week by a variety of people, teacher, teaching assistant, teaching assistant students and Year 6 Book Buddies. The class teacher keeps a record of who has heard each child, to ensure that he/she hears all children read regularly. Children are also given a 'tricky' words booklet to practise at home, these are sight words that cannot be blended or segmented. Once a week children will practise their tricky words with a member of the Reception team.

Key Stage 1

Children in Year 1 and 2 experience a daily phonics or spelling session. There are currently two Teaching Assistants who can provide additional support for those children who are still working on their Read Write Inc sounds.

Organisation

Across Key Stage 1 and 2 the English lesson is delivered by the class teacher and the children are taught in mixed ability classes supported by a shared Teaching Assistant where appropriate. Planning for this is carried out collaboratively by the members of staff involved.

Handwriting, spelling and drama are incorporated within the English lesson, with extra time also being allocated for guided reading throughout Key Stage 1 and 2.

Cross Curricular Learning

The staff recognise that English holds a unique position as a medium for learning in all areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for children to explore and develop language across the wide variety of spoken and written genres presented by other subjects, and any resourcing implications, will be identified by teachers at the planning stage. In science for example children may be involved in structuring a chronological or non-chronological written report. In history they may be developing their understanding of a subject through the study of a text, for example when learning about the Romans

Assessment

At Front Street Primary School, assessment of children's work is used to inform planning for the future and thus ensure pupils' progress. Staff keep a record of half termly writing progress based on pieces of written work from English lessons and cross curricular subjects. A Local Authority produced writing grid (GAP) is used to assist Staff, in recording progress based on the different elements of writing. In addition, planned opportunities for moderation occur throughout the year both within school and with cluster schools to ensure standards and expectations are in line with each other.

Furthermore a Reading Assessment File is also kept with records of children's phonic ability, lists of high frequency words achieved and current miscue analysis that may be completed in order to gain a greater understanding of strategies children use when approaching unfamiliar words. Staff also complete a Reading (GAP) on a termly basis which records children's progress in relation to different Assessment Foci (Af's).

Assessment is in line with the whole school policy (see assessment policy for processes and proformas) and will include:

Continuity and Progression

The school is aware of the need to ensure continuity and progression in the development of knowledge and skills for individual pupils. However, it is also essential that basic skills are revisited and practised in order to ensure a deep understanding, which will provide an excellent grounding for the more complex skills and knowledge. Continuity and progression will be achieved through careful planning, differentiation and assessment and structured liaison between and across key stages.

Equal Opportunities

This school believes that every pupil is of equal value and has the right to equal education opportunities, irrespective of age, ability, race, creed and gender; therefore we help all our children to (Articles 2, 3, 30)

- access the whole curriculum with respect to Literacy/Language skills in reading, writing, speaking/listening through the provision of appropriate texts and additional outside support being requested as necessary.

- extend the Literacy curriculum appropriately through more demanding tasks, texts and extra support if necessary.

Cultural Recognition

At Front Street Primary School we recognise that the diversity of cultural contributions influences current planning and practise. We embrace this through the inclusion of multicultural texts and story based film clips therefore ensuring that all children are respected, whatever their gender, nationality, ethnicity or religion. (Article 2)

Special Educational Needs

There is a procedure outlined to identify children with special educational needs (see the Special Educational Needs Policy). Parents and pupils are involved at all levels, with outside agencies being involved if and when appropriate. Planning for children with SEN is supported in our termly/weekly planning. Class teachers specify main activities, which may incorporate support work for less able pupils, and extension activities for children that are Gifted and Talented therefore ensuring that the best interests of every child are met (Article 3).

Parental Involvement and Community Relations

The staff believe that it is reciprocally beneficial to promote links between the school and the wider community. We therefore encourage:

- parents to take an active partnership role in education through e.g. the development of home school reading programmes.
- appropriate parental assistance and sharing of expertise in classroom/on visits and in promoting extra curricular activities.
- business partnerships with local industry and commercial enterprises.
- good relationships between the young and old people of the community through joint activities; school fairs, invitations to concerts etc.
- visits from authors, poets and drama companies to perform for/work with pupils.

The school aims to present itself positively at all times to the community through the considerate attitudes of staff and pupils, the production of a newsletter and supporting local charities and causes raising the pupils' interest or concern.

Use of Local/Global Environment

The staff take every opportunity to develop children's knowledge and concern regarding current issues through the whole school curriculum. This ensures that we are supporting the development of children's views by providing such rich experiences (Articles: 12, 13, 14, 17). This is achieved through:

- Visits
- Participation in local projects E.g. The Hermitage Garden, The Rotary Club
- Recycling
- Accessing the Internet and Gateshead's intranet.
- Outright
- Unicef

Such experiences are used to stimulate children to write, speak and read. New experiences, which visits may offer, can generate a sense of awe and wonder.

Spiritual Development

At Front Street Primary School, we aim to deliver the whole curriculum in a way which provides our children with opportunities for exploration, questioning and reflection. In particular, Literacy provides many opportunities to develop open ended and thought provoking situations to enable children to develop the skills of thinking beyond the literal, nurturing sound relations and principles.

Professional development:

- The English Co-ordinator attends termly training within the Local Authority and reports back to all staff
- Staff are expected to attend relevant courses during the school year
- Moderation takes place in school, within the cluster and with support from the LA.
- A writing moderation file is held within each year group.

Monitoring and Review

This policy was reviewed in September 2018 and will be reviewed annually.