

MEREWORTH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



English Policy

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English Policy

This policy describes our practice in the teaching of English: reading, writing, phonics, spelling, grammar and speaking and listening. It is defined by current national guidance on best practice, CPD, staff discussion and professional judgement. The teaching of English is evaluated through the Subject Leader Action Plan and the School Development Plan.

Our approach to teaching of English is multi-faceted, incorporating speaking & listening, drama, real contexts and good quality literature. Most importantly, we want to create fluent readers and writers with all the skills and knowledge they need to be confidently literate in life. We want all children to leave Mereworth Community Primary School with a lifelong reading habit and a love of books because we believe this has a significant impact on the quality of their writing. We teach the editorial skills needed for this (spelling, grammar and handwriting) within real contexts wherever possible so children see their relevance. Teachers plan creative and relevant links to their class topics as a vehicle for writing.

Aims:

- To build on our children's experiences of language learning, recognising their individuality, taking into account their personal experience and acknowledging differences in their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- 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.
- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- To develop a love of books and high-quality literature that will not only support learning across the curriculum, but also extend beyond the classroom environment and enrich our children's lives.
- To teach children the craft of writing, in order to develop the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Make appropriate assessments and keep meaningful records to ensure progression and continuity.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are set out in the National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Communication, Language and Literacy section of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014).

Learning and Teaching Strategies

Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within the English lesson. Lesson planning is guided by the 2014 National Curriculum, leading Kent literacy consultants and organisations such as the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE).

Using strategies from '**The Power of Reading**' teachers plan units of work towards writing outcomes across a range of genre linked to reading, drama and Speech and Language. Teachers select quality texts which support the termly class topic and, therefore, the wider curriculum. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction and poetry and an emphasis on whole texts rather than extracts.

Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to deliver the curriculum and achieve set learning objectives. They are provided with clear expectations for teaching English. Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting and, in the main, differentiation is by outcome and through setting different expectations. The teacher may lead smaller ability led guided reading and writing groups during a lesson. Within guided groups, teachers move children forward by focusing specifically on reading and writing issues which are particular to that group of children. Teachers are expected to plan time within extended writing lessons for children to reflect on their marked work, and independently respond to teacher prompts to improve their writing.

Reading

Our priority is both the teaching of reading skills and the enjoyment of literature, enabling children to become lifelong, confident readers. As children begin to read, we focus on decoding, primarily through phonics in addition to other strategies, e.g. whole word recognition, rhyme and context.

As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning looks at skills such as retelling, inference and prediction. We believe that high-quality literature is key to motivating children to read and instilling in children a love of literature. Children throughout the school are encouraged to read widely.

What this looks like at Mereworth Community Primary School:

We have a structured early learning programme. The teaching of early reading skills begins in our Reception class, through daily story time and individual reading of books children have chosen to take home from our reading scheme (Oxford Reading Tree supplemented with a variety of other schemes).

Children are taught during shared, guided group and whole class sessions using structured, guided texts and short stories, often in ability groups. There is a daily guided reading session of 30 minutes (each group reading with the teacher once a week).

Teachers and Teaching Assistants also read on an individual basis with children, assessing children's progression in reading and their understanding of the text.

Children who are not making adequate progress are identified and given one to one support.

We are flexible with our use of scheme books. If a child is 'stuck' at a level and losing motivation, we will always look for alternatives to re-ignite enthusiasm.

Phonics

Children in EYFS and KS1 have short, focused phonics sessions daily which build slowly from learning single letter sounds to digraphs and split digraphs. This knowledge is applied in children's reading and writing. Children learn sounds, actions and letters through games and activities from '**Letters and Sounds**' which support sounding out, segmenting and blending.

What this looks like at Mereworth Community Primary School:

Phonics is taught on a daily basis in EYFS and KS1 and interventions are available for individual children who need to catch up with phonics in KS2.

Children apply phonic knowledge to read real and 'alien' words (KS1)

Children 'have a go' at writing by sounding out words and recording the sounds they hear.

Children in Year 1, who are required to take the phonics screening test in June are given a 'mock' screening in January. Gap analysis aids planning and intervention groups.

Children in Year 2 who passed the Year 1 screening, move on to discreet spelling sessions. They will revisit GPC (Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence) as part of the 'No Nonsense Spelling' programme.

Developing a love of reading

We provide each year group with a 'Book Bingo' rewarding children who read widely

We have a dedicated library area and each class in the school has a collection of books within their reading corner.

We set up visits from authors.

There is lots of talk and discussion about reading in a variety of contexts, both formal and informal.

We have school Book Fairs and always celebrate World Book Day.

Children are expected to read every night at home, with reading diaries to keep a record of what they are reading. This is monitored very systematically by staff who liaise directly with parents if it is not happening. In younger classes, adults communicate in the diaries so that parents are aware of what books children are reading and how they are responding to texts at school.

Speaking and Listening

We believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning in English. In formal and informal situations, we create and facilitate opportunities for conversation, discussion and talk around learning. Questioning forms the basis of our teaching and we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment.

What this looks like at Mereworth Community Primary School:

- Questioning and taking risks with language.
- Presenting in front of an audience – class assemblies and special events or curriculum days
- Reciting and reading aloud.
- Re-telling, role-play and drama productions.
- Listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs.
- Drama activities to enliven and enrich children's understanding of character
- Talking the text – opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing.
- Debate.
- Collaborative work and reporting back following group work.
- Talk is valued highly in the classroom as a tool for learning.

- Intervention is used to support pupils with speaking and listening skills below age related expectations.

Writing

Teachers carefully plan writing linked to the termly topic, ensuring that there is a purposeful outcome to each piece of writing. In order to ensure that all pupils learn to be confident writers we encourage children to write creatively whilst teaching key writing skills explicitly and systematically. Writing takes place daily within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum.

What this looks like at Mereworth Community Primary School:

Extended writing is encouraged and developed at all times.

Writing is linked to class topics to promote engagement and opportunities for cross curriculum writing.

Writing is taught as a sequenced activity based on The Power of Reading (CLPE)

We have high expectations for quality and presentation.

We provide stimulating first hand experiences e.g. trips, visitors and special curriculum days.

Teachers provide regular helpful feedback through marking.

Time is planned into lessons for children to respond to literacy marking and feedback.

We ensure progression in complexity of tasks. Younger pupils, or those with a special educational need, are offered writing frames to enable them to write independently.

Some pieces will be 'published', i.e. re-drafted in neat and displayed on classroom walls.

Peer marking is encouraged as an additional way for children to respond to writing.

Spelling

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key words is empowering for children.

Spelling plays a significant part of standardised assessment and is taught throughout the school using 'Topical Resources' at KS1 (linked to Letters and Sounds) and the '**No Nonsense Spelling**' programme at KS2.

What this looks like at Mereworth Community Primary School:

We use the 2014 National Curriculum as a guide to which spellings should be taught in which year group. In addition to this, Key Stage 1 focus on high frequency and common exception words

Children practise spelling corrections in their literacy books - chosen by their teacher as part of their response to marked work.

Every child has a spelling journal where new words are recorded and are taken home to be learnt. Tests are recorded in the same book to show the impact of learning them.

We link handwriting to common spelling patterns.

Children learn to spell explicitly in daily spelling lessons. In Key Stage 2, spelling sessions incorporate Etymology, consolidation practise of High Frequency words, dictionary work, the study of spelling patterns and the statutory words set out for each year group in the national curriculum for English.

Children are actively encouraged and taught to proof read their writing for spelling errors.

Handwriting

We place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this. In the early years, there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills.

What this looks like at Mereworth Community Primary School:

We have a Handwriting Policy with a scheme to reward progression in handwriting skills

We use cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly.

Extra handwriting groups occur in classes throughout the school where the class team feel that additional handwriting support is needed.

Grammar

An understanding of how to use grammar correctly, use relevant meta-language and identifying word classes and sentence types is taught both in the context of a piece of writing and explicitly in whole class

work. Linked to the National Curriculum guidelines for year groups, grammar is taught and planned to fit in with relevant genres of writing.

What this looks like at Mereworth Community Primary School:

We start with the basics of sentence construction including full stops and capital letters.

Children begin to identify word classes early on (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb).

Spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught and practised on a daily basis.

Frequent opportunities to identify and comment upon punctuation marks and grammatical structures when scrutinising texts in all subjects

Assessment and Monitoring

In Reception, children are assessed in their early literacy development against the '**Development Matters**' goals.

Children are provided with Success criteria for every piece of written work; children are given differentiated 'Steps to Success'.

Each term an assessment week is identified. Every class from Year 1 to Year 6 carries out assessment for all aspects of English and tracks progress using our internal 21 Steps Assessment System. The writing task is recorded in a Writing Assessment book and the sample is marked using the National Curriculum writing statements for their year group. Class teachers indicate new learning and next steps. Targets are recorded on target sheets at the back of English books.

Staff moderate within school, with collaboration partners including other 21 Step schools and at county moderation (Years 2 and 6).

Teachers may use a range of testing materials as part of their on-going teacher assessment.

A Home/School Reading Diary is kept to monitor progress and ensure progression.

Year 1 take the end of year Phonics test in June. Children in Year 2 and Year 6 take end of Key Stage national tests

In association with the Senior Leadership Team the subject leader will analyse data and monitor teaching and learning. There are Learning Walks, book scrutiny and moderation opportunities planned throughout

the year and detailed in the Subject Leader Action Plan. Using this information the subject leader will identify priorities and set appropriate targets.

Equal Opportunities

We undertake to 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. We aim for all children to participate in mainstream lessons. Work is differentiated and extra support is in place for children with SEN. Where it is felt necessary, a pupil is withdrawn from class to receive specialist help from school devised intervention programmes, or support from the Language and Communication Service.