

Zetland Primary School



1859

Curriculum Policy English



IRONSTONE ACADEMY TRUST

Purpose of Study

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have 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 build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.
(Primary National Curriculum September 2014)

Vision for the Subject

Achieving competence in English language is a vital part of the education of our pupils. All teachers play an important role in facilitating this.

The English curriculum aims to develop language skills in three different areas:

reading, writing and spoken language. The school's aim is that each child should achieve the highest level of performance of which he or she is capable in every aspect of English. We also aim to provide our pupils with a wide experience of literature throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

Aims

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of communication, reading and writing.
- To develop in pupils a love of books that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also will enrich their lives.
- To value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play.
- To teach children the craft of writing, including handwriting, in order to develop in them the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences.
- To systematically teach spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation –to ensure accuracy within creativity.
- To foster in pupils, the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing.
- To raise the standards of communication, reading and writing so that every child makes good progress.
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Curriculum Design and Organisation

Within Zetland Primary School we use the English Programme of Study as basis for our planning within the subject and expect all teachers to follow this framework. English is taught on a daily basis from reception to Y6 and this is supported and enhanced through other curriculum areas. We follow a Creative Curriculum and wherever possible English activities are linked to current topic and Science work.

Teaching and learning usually takes place within a whole class setting: children's learning is in ability groups within their class, with differentiated tasks and support as appropriate, but will also include independent and partner work. Good examples of reading and writing are shared and modelled in whole class teaching.

Teachers use a variety of interactive teaching methods to deliver the curriculum and achieve set learning objectives.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Foundation Stage, English forms the basis of one of the three prime areas of learning: Communication and Language. This area involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations. Literacy is taught as a specific area, which allows children to strengthen and apply the prime area skills. Literacy in EYFS involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest. Emphasis is on teaching English through stories and non-fiction texts with strong topic links, alongside child initiated learning through play (with some adult intervention), demonstration and use of language.

Key Stage One and Two

Spoken Language

It is our intention to develop children's ability to speak with confidence, clarity and fluency in a variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and for a range of purposes and to develop their capacities to listen with attention and understanding.

Teachers model the correct use of Standard English and accurate speech to improve grammar in children's writing.

Reading

Shared Reading

Shared reading takes place within the English lesson; the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response from children and high levels of collaboration. The children join in, where appropriate with the reading of the text. The texts selected are quality texts that reflect the learning objectives. Each class has a class story book(s), which the teacher reads to children over the course of a term/half term and often links into their specific class topic.

Guided & Reciprocal Reading

Each child participates in regular teacher/adult led guided reading sessions once their reading ability is secure enough not to need one to one support or intervention. Children are grouped by ability based on reading assessments. During a guided reading session, the children read and respond to a challenging text, with the teacher supporting.

Each session has an assessment focus against which children's knowledge and understanding are assessed. Guided reading provides an opportunity for children to demonstrate what they have learned about reading and to develop further and extend their reading fluency as well as their use of expression and comprehension skills.

The guided reading session also includes other reading opportunities and activities for children not in the teacher focus group. These activities are aimed at developing comprehension skills and giving opportunities to reflect on the texts that they have read during Guided Reading sessions. For children in KS2 these activities compliment the specific timetabled comprehension sessions, which focus on developing their oral and written comprehension skills. Within Guided Reading, children also have one session where they are able to choose a suitable book of their own choice to read silently with sustained concentration.

Individual Reading

Children have access to graded reading scheme books to support the development of their individual reading skills. Children start the reading scheme in Foundation Stage and continue until they become competent, independent readers. They can then choose from a wide variety of books from the library.

In FS and KS1 children take home reading scheme books. A home/school reading diary is used to record books read. Children are encouraged to read daily at home to an adult. The adult then signs the reading diary and adds a comment.

In KS2 children are expected to continue home reading. Records of books read are kept by the class teacher. Home reading is encouraged through meetings with parents and through rewarding active home reading. Reading is not restricted to the English lesson. Many opportunities are provided for children to practise and extend their reading in other subjects. Reading for pleasure and enjoyment is given a high priority and sufficient time is set aside for this. Whenever possible, 1-1 extra reading is provided, especially to boost basic reading skills for children who are working below age related expectations. The school has a number of adult helpers, who are DBS checked, who come into school on a regular basis to hear children read and to talk about what they have read.

Writing

Our creative two -year rolling program curriculum provides opportunities for children to complete a range of writing activities focussing on a range of writing genres as specified for each year group in the Primary National Curriculum. We use our topics as a theme for the writing activities as well as giving children plenty of opportunities to experience cross-curricular writing tasks in order to ensure that they apply the writing skills that they have been taught in a variety of different contexts.

Our school has adopted Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing as a model to improve achievement in writing. Talk for Writing advocates that children imitate the key language needed for a particular genre orally, before reading and analysing it. Through fun activities, they rehearse retelling the text, then through shared writing, they are shown how to craft their writing in the same style. The approach includes imitation, innovation and independent application (invention) – a two to three-week process depending on the genre being taught.

The Imitation Stage

The teacher establishes a creative context for each 'Talk for Writing' unit with a 'hook' to draw the children in. Teachers then introduce children to an exemplar text, supported visually by a text map. Actions are created to help the children recall the story or non-fiction piece and reinforce the specific language patterns. In this way, children hear the text, say it for themselves and enjoy it before actually seeing it written down. Children interact with the text through drama activities and internalise the language patterns through sentence and word games based on the text. Once they have internalised the language of the text, they are introduced to the written text and encouraged to identify the key writing ingredients and 'magpie' key words and phrases. Children will develop their understanding of the structure of the text with the use of the boxing-up technique and by analysing the key features.

The Innovation Stage

Once the children have internalised the text, they are then ready to start innovating on the pattern of the text. Using an adaptation of the text, children orally rehearse what they want to say then create their own version. During innovation, spelling, sentence games and drama activities continue to be incorporated so that children have a wealth of oral and written practice in the language features required to write.

The key activity in this stage is shared writing – which helps the children to create their own version by 'doing one together' first. This begins with the children boxing-up their innovated version of the exemplar text. Each stage of the writing process is modelled by the teacher. Throughout this process key words and phrases and shared writing are displayed so when children begin to write they have models and examples to support them.

Children are encouraged to swap their work with a response partner to discuss their successes.

The Invention Stage

In this stage, children move towards becoming independent writers. They write the same text type but choose the content. This stage still requires a 'hook', games to help children to internalise the language patterns and understand the text, boxing up and shared writing (driven by teacher assessment). Teachers guide children through the whole process, which ends with rereading and polishing.

Adults give feedback to pupils throughout the writing process, which children respond to in order to improve their work. Children are also given opportunities to experience peer assessment and marking on a regular basis. This promotes a collaborative approach to improving writing and increases pupils' awareness of how to improve their writing.

Phonics and SPAG

Throughout school, pupils participate in discrete Phonics and/or SPAG sessions at the appropriate level for their ability. Within EYFS and KS1 we follow the 'Letters and Sounds' guidance document to structure our teaching into Phonic Phases. Once Phase 6 is completed, children focus on specific SPAG on objectives linked to the Matters, Skills and Processes in the Primary National Curriculum.

Children in Year 1 are required to undertake a national phonics assessment in the Summer Term. Children who do not meet the required standard for the test are re-tested in Y2.

Handwriting

Foundation Stage work on basic letter formation using 'flicks' initially, which leads children onto practising basic joins.

Y1 recap basic letter formation and learn new graphemes as joined letters.

R to Y6 at Zetland Primary follow the Penpals Handwriting Scheme which promotes clearly joined handwriting. Teachers expect high quality presentation in written work. We are currently reviewing the use of the handwriting scheme and looking for alternatives to introduce a pre-cursive and then cursive script at an earlier age.

Assessment and Moderation

Throughout the process, teachers use formative assessment to plan the next step in their teaching (based on what the children need to know in order to improve). 'Assessment for learning' clearly involves the child in thinking about what has worked well and points them towards what needs to be done to move forward in their learning.

Once a term teachers use written evidence and/or formative assessments to update their reading and writing trackers for each child, which are based on the Matters, Skills and Processes from the Primary National Curriculum. These trackers are traffic light colour coded to show their level of security in each specific skill.

Teachers ensure the children's next steps for learning, identified from the trackers, form the next steps in the children's learning. The long term English plan outlines the fiction and non-fiction genres to be taught across the school. This will ensure progression and the opportunity for children to experience a breadth of genres.

At the end of each Key Stage, pupils complete summative English assessments and their achievements are reported to the Local Authority.

Supporting Specific Learning Needs

English lessons, tasks and materials are differentiated by the class teacher to meet the needs of individual children. A number of intervention strategies are used to develop children's specific learning needs in English. These include many programmes designed to support classroom learning, as well as specific programmes designed to meet children's specific difficulties. Intensive Reading support, Better Reading Partnership (BRP) and Wave 3 materials are delivered by trained staff members to help identified pupils make accelerated progress and narrow the gap in their learning. These are done on a 1:1 basis.

Gifted and Talented

All children are provided with challenge to enable them to make their own personal progress. The class teacher will also aim to identify those children who may be gifted in English and provide them with appropriate learning opportunities.

Wider Opportunities for Learning

We choose school visits and trips to coincide with our topics and curriculum planning in order to enrich and stimulate learning. As part of these visits and trips, and often as a follow-up to these events, children complete a range of English tasks which link into the matters, skills and processes for their specific year group. Within KS2, children are also encouraged to choose from a selection of home learning tasks, linked into their topic, which involve creative and stimulating tasks to motivate and extend their learning. These tasks also provide opportunities for children to consolidate and extend their English skills.

Resources

Classes have access to a bank of resources to support learning in their specific topic areas. Individual reading books and Guided Reading books are stored in the school library area and within individual classrooms.

Leadership and Management

Role of the Subject Leader

The English subject leader is responsible for monitoring the provision of the English Curriculum across school. As part of the Ironstone Academy Trust, we have also developed an English Subject Leader network where we monitor and discuss the English provision across the MAT.

Role of the Teacher

Each teacher is responsible for ensuring the coverage of the English curriculum for their class. They also have to ensure that pupils' progress is assessed and monitored closely to ensure progress. Differentiation is organised and managed by class teachers. Children who require extra support and/ or interventions are selected by class teachers but support and advice is always available from the SENDCo and SLT members when required.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school follows the legally required statutory Primary National Curriculum and that the children make progress in every subject area. The Headteacher completes Performance Management for the English subject leader in order to monitor and evaluate their role.

Parental Engagement

Parents are invited to attend three Parents' Evenings throughout the year where they have the opportunities to discuss their child's progress in English as well as the other curriculum subjects. Parents also receive a yearly report, which outlines the progress that their child has made as well as informing parents which level that their child is working at: working towards age expected levels, at age expected levels or greater depth.

We encourage parents to come into school and visit lessons so that they are aware of what their children are learning in school. Alongside our termly parent curriculum letters we hope that this experience will give parents ideas for how to support their child's learning at home. We also use our school website to upload parent information and videos to help support home learning. Parent workshops and meetings within specific year groups offer opportunities for parents to receive advice for how to help their child on their learning journey. For example, EYFS have offered individual reading sessions to help parents to learn how to effectively teach their child to read. Our regular parent surveys give us the opportunity to receive feedback on how our parental engagement works.

Policy amended:

March 2018 – J Clarkson