

Highwoods Community Primary School



Understanding English, Communication &
Languages

Reviewed September 2022
To be reviewed September 2024

Highwoods Community Primary School

English Policy

Policy Statement

We aim to develop a love for the English language in its written and spoken forms. We encourage children to develop the skills to communicate effectively in speech and writing and to listen with understanding, to be responsive, enthusiastic and knowledgeable readers.

We recognise English as a core subject in the National Curriculum and as a pre-requisite for educational and social progress, empowering children to communicate creatively and imaginatively. We aim to provide an environment for language development which is stimulating and is characterised by high expectations of success, so that the fullest potential of each individual may be realised.

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at Highwoods Community Primary School.

Aims

We aim to provide all children with equal access to a programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing and to strive for excellence in all these areas. At Highwoods, we work towards every child becoming literate. By the age of 11 we aim for every child to:

- Develop the necessary skills to use the English language confidently, appropriately and accurately, to the best of their ability in learning and everyday life.
- Read with confidence, fluency and enjoyment and understanding by providing a wealth of reading material with access to a range of texts covering a balance of fiction and non-fiction in a variety of genres.
- Use a range of independent strategies, to self-monitor and correctly retrieve information and comprehend and evaluate what has been read.
- Apply the higher order reading skills including deduction and inference through the use of text referral, assessment of author's intentions, justification of their opinions and judgements in the pursuit of critical awareness.
- Write with confidence, imagination and enthusiasm, with an awareness of purpose and audience, in a range of genres.
- Use grammar and punctuation correctly to attain the higher levels of writing.
- Recognise and use technical vocabulary when discussing their reading and writing.
- Recognise the use of phonics and spelling rules, and to use these skills to read and spell accurately.
- Communicate effectively, speak with confidence and structure their talk in ways which are coherent and understandable in discussion and debate.
- Listen carefully, with good concentration so they are able to respond thoughtfully and appropriately.
- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate and clarify their understanding.
- Write with fluent, legible joined handwriting and take pride in the presentation of all their work.

These are Key Skills which we at Highwoods have identified as necessary for our pupils to be successful in their lives:

Speaking and Listening

Talking is the primary means of communication. For young children, talk is one of the main vehicles for learning. Speaking and listening encourages children to analyse and clarify their thoughts and experiences thus stimulating intellectual developments.

Speaking and listening skills are developed through:

- Encouraging pupils to speak in clear sentences and be aware of this;;
- Providing a range of opportunities for children to talk and listen in formal and informal situations;;
- Pairing and grouping children to maximise the effectiveness of speaking and listening activities through collaborative group activities, school productions, circle time and role play;;
- Listening to and valuing all children's expressed views;;
- Planned opportunities to listen to adults reading and telling stories;;

Reading

Children need to have both good word recognition and good oral language comprehension in order to read. Reading is a life skill. It is an effective means of communication enabling us to live enriched and independent lives.

Reading is developed through:

- Teaching English and Read Write Inc (RWI)
- Modelled, shared, guided and individual sessions
- Use of a range of quality texts including media
- Regular opportunities for independent reading, which children are expected to record in their reading diaries when possible;;
- Use of reading diaries to encourage parental involvement
- Keeping informative records which record progress and inform new targets
- A variety of groupings
- Provide a stimulating interactive learning environment
- Use of class and library books

Read Write Inc

Read Write Inc. Phonics is an inclusive, structured programme for teaching synthetic phonics and writing. It is taught to all pupils in Foundation Stage, Year 1 and for part of Year 2. Children will be confident with sets 1, 2 and 3 sounds by the end of the programme. Children are grouped according to their level of phonic acquisition and are taught by trained RWI tutors in small groups. Their progress is assessed and tracked by the Reading Manager.

Elements of RWI Phonics are also incorporated into Y2-Y6 Spelling Lessons and, in these year groups, any children with learning difficulties or specific literacy problems will receive more targeted teaching of phonics skills.

Writing

Writing is an important form of communication. It is more permanent than other language modes.

Writing is developed through:

- English lessons and RWI
- Valuing emergent writing
- Modelled, shared, guided and individual writing sessions

- Use a range of stimuli including visual texts
- Planned opportunities exploiting cross curricular links
- Keeping of informative records which show if a child is working at or towards the expected level and sets new targets.
- Having a positive ethos where children's work is valued
- Progression, where one piece of writing is developed over a number of days and pupils come to understand the *process* of writing
- Provision of opportunities to practise handwriting, punctuation, grammar and spelling
- Discussion and review of children's group targets
- Clear objectives/Key Skills shared with children
- All AEN children having a 'target card' in their English book, indicating their individual and focused target
- Whole class, group and individual feedback (see Feedback policy)
- Pupils (particularly KS2) being encouraged to self-edit their writing through redrafting sections and independent use of dictionaries for misspellings

Spelling

Children in Years 1--6 follow the Highwoods Spelling Programme, which was created following the National Curriculum Programme of Study for spelling. Spelling rules are taught in class as an explicit lesson daily and are recorded in Spelling Books. In Years 1 and 2, spelling rules and common exception words are taught in class and set as weekly written homework. In Years 3--6, spelling rules are taught in class then words following these rules are set as weekly homework on the Spelling Frame website.

Spelling homework completion is checked by a member of staff on the Spelling Frame online account. Children who are working below year group expectations are set differentiated spellings if needed and their homework is differentiated accordingly, following the spelling programme from a lower year when necessary. In Years 3-6, children also learn the 3/4 and 5/6 word list words. These are shared with parents and are in reading diaries for children to practise at home. Misspellings are identified by the class teacher in written work and children are expected to write at least 3 correct versions of their spelling mistake. In order to encourage independence, some children, according to age and attainment, are expected to find the correct version of the spelling in the dictionary independently. At the beginning of the year, parents are given the spelling rules and homework words for the year ahead so they are able to support their children with spelling at home.

Twice each year, children are assessed for their spelling ages. If a child's age is significantly below their chronological age, the English Coordinator / a Deputy Headteacher will inform parents by means of a letter with a list of spellings to learn which will help the child catch up with their actual age. We will keep parents informed of progress if their child is working significantly below expectations.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught in every year. During Read Write Inc (RWI), children learn rhymes to help them remember the letter shapes and are taught to form letter shapes correctly in a clear script. Children are taught and encouraged to join their writing by the end of KS1. At the beginning of Year 1, children are assessed in their letter formation and interventions are planned accordingly to ensure all children have good writing habits (including pencil grip and sitting position). In Years 2--6, teachers follow the Highwoods Handwriting teaching sequence to ensure all joins are taught correctly, following the Highwoods Handwriting style poster, which shows our agreed way of joining letters. The English Coordinator and Deputy Headteacher monitors writing books for handwriting and advises teachers on which children need further support to enable them to reach the expected standard for writing at the end of Key Stage 2.

Curriculum Management and School Organisation

English lessons take the form of reading lessons, spelling lessons and writing lessons, which may focus on writing a particular text type or have a grammar focus according to year group expectations. In other areas of the curriculum when children are writing eg theme or science, children are expected to write at the same standards as they do in their English lessons, including grammar and handwriting expectations. Incorrect spelling, poor grammar and poor handwriting will be identified and worked on over time by teachers. In Foundation Stage, the elements of English are covered in the course of a school day as children work towards achieving their Early Learning Goals and through small group RWI sessions.

RWI is taught in small groups, organised around phonic development rather than age. Progress is assessed and tracked by the Reading Manager in co-operation with RWI group tutors. Once children have completed RWI they are taught English in mixed ability classes, where work is differentiated.

Independent tasks may take place at the same time, as adults work with guided reading and writing groups.

Planning

English planning takes place on a weekly basis and follows the 2014 National Curriculum Programme of Study. Teachers also refer to their “Highwoods Year Group Booklets” which is the year group “bible”, where handwriting, spelling, grammar, writing and reading expectations are all in one place, including end of Year/phase expectations. Planning reflects the needs of pupils in class and differentiates according to learning needs. Support for children who are significantly below the expected standard for reading, writing, spelling and handwriting will feature on the class intervention policy.

Assessment For further information please see the Assessment Policy

SEN Provision and Equality This recognises the SEN Policy

English as an Additional Language This recognises the Inclusion Policy

Revised by Sarah Halls (English Coordinator)

Next Review date: September 2024

