

## A policy for English at Stockton Heath Community Primary School

### Aims and objectives

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, so using language to learn and communicate ideas, views and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as nonfiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

The aims of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- to enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama activities;
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus of word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts;
- to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and nonfiction with a consideration of purpose and audience;
- to help children understand the language associated with grammar and be able to write in a grammatically correct way;
- to enable children to understand the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological) and be able to apply spelling strategies learnt;
- to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.
- to encourage in children a sense of pride in both the content and appearance of their work.
- to encourage children to use and apply their learning in English to other areas of the curriculum.

### English curriculum planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Literacy Strategy as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English. We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium term and short-term).

The National Literacy Strategy Framework for teaching details what we teach in the long-term. Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year.

Our medium-term plans, which we also base on the Framework, give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The English subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing these plans.

Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives for each lesson and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them as part of the school's monitoring and evaluation program.

### **Teaching and learning: English lessons.**

At Stockton Heath Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons, with flexibility being important. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English. We do this through a daily lesson that can have a combination of whole-class, guided group and individual teaching; group, paired and independent work. During these lessons children experience a focused word or sentence activity; a shared reading or writing activity (including modelled writing); a guided group or independent activity and a whole-class session to review progress and learning. The structure of the lesson will depend on the age and ability of the children taught; the phase of the unit of work being taught and whether drama or role-play are included.

The children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries, thesauri and individual whiteboards to support their work. Children use ICT in English lessons where it enhances their learning, e.g. drafting their work, accessing on-line visual texts or using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning.

There are children of differing ability in all classes at Stockton Heath Primary School. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child.

### **Teaching and learning: Reading.**

Guided Reading workshop is experienced every day by every key stage 1 and 2 child. It is a structured process ensuring that each week the children have the opportunity to be involved in pre- and post-read activities, a carefully focussed session with the teacher that meets their reading needs, and other differentiated independent reading or word activities.

At Stockton Heath Primary School, we believe that children should be reading at home, and discussing their independent reading books with an adult, from EYFS through to Year 6. We have a range of independent reading books, including 'Bug Club' books with their on-line counterparts and activities. Every child has a reading record that teachers, children and parents are expected to sign as a record of the child's reading behaviours and experiences.

### **Teaching and Learning: Spelling and Handwriting.**

At EYFS and Key Stage 1, spelling is taught through daily sessions of 'Letters and Sounds' to enable children to understand the principles underpinning word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological) and be able to apply spelling strategies learnt. From Year 2, when 'Support for Spelling' is utilized, children have a weekly spelling session where a spelling rule is taught and practised, and a short list of words is given (based on the spelling rule) to be learnt. These words, *plus other unseen words that fit the same spelling rule*, are then tested later in the week.

***See attached appendix for school scheme of work for spelling.***

Handwriting, based upon the 'Nelson Handwriting Scheme', is taught and practised daily as a short, discrete session. Children who are able to write fluently in a controlled, regular, cursive style are given a 'pen licence', allowing them to write in pen.

### **Teaching and Learning: Grammar.**

Language is systematically organised by its grammar which is inextricably linked to meaning and communication - we cannot make sense without shaping grammatical and linguistic structures. All pupils have extensive grammatical knowledge. Much of this is implicit, but they are able to generalise and improvise from this knowledge. Teaching which focuses on grammar helps to make this knowledge explicit, extend children's range and develop more confident and versatile language use. Therefore, at Stockton Heath Primary, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary use are taught both as discrete sessions and within the context of reading and writing. These skills are assessed in a summative fashion, and formally at the end of key stage 2 within the national tests.

***See attached appendix for school scheme of work for grammar.***

### **Inclusion**

At Stockton Heath Primary School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability or background. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties, and to children who are more able or gifted. Work in English takes into account the targets set for individual children. Teachers provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts that children can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative communication such as signs and symbols;
- using translators and amanuenses.
- ensuring work is of an appropriate level to either support or challenge a child, depending on their needs.

### **Assessment and recording**

Teachers assess children's work in English using both formative and summative methods. Assessment for learning is used as part of every lesson to help teachers adjust their daily plans and to ensure teaching is relevant and appropriate to that group of children.

Teachers make formative assessments termly in reading and writing, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets.

Children undertake the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, plus the optional national tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 to assess the progress of children in reading and writing. Teachers are then able to set targets for the next school year and summarize the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents.

The subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. Teachers meet regularly to review individual examples of work against the national exemplification material produced by the QCA and the DCSF.

### **Resources**

There are a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have reference books and a range of age-appropriate small apparatus. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts, including those related to the current class topic from the Cheshire educational library service. Children have access to the Internet through the Smart board or use of net books. The school library contains a range of books to support children's individual research.

### **Monitoring and review**

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader and the Senior Management Team. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader creates an annual action plan for English in which the strengths and weaknesses in the subject are evaluated, and areas for further improvement are indicated. The leader has specially-allocated regular management time in order to enable her to review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school. The named governor responsible for literacy meets regularly with the subject leader in order to review progress.

Vicky Robinson  
English subject leader  
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