

FERNDALE PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL



English Policy

Ratified by Governing Body:

Reviewed Date: September 2023

Next Review Date: September 2024

English Policy

Vision

Our intent through the English curriculum is that we will ensure children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners. We aim to deliver a high-quality English curriculum that gives children the best possible opportunities to become confident, literate, successful members of society with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature. We will help children to enjoy and appreciate literature and to develop a passion for reading. This will be implemented through teaching a broad English curriculum that is rich in first hand experiences and opportunities for language enrichment. The impact will be evident in the children's development of a good range of reading and writing skills.

Spoken Language

The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. It is our intent that the children at Ferndale develop a rich and diverse knowledge of language. This is implemented across the curriculum; we provide our children with a wide range of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills such as discussion, debate, presentation, drama and movie-making. During speaking activities, we assist children in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing and their knowledge across the curriculum, the impact of which can be seen in all subjects.

Reading

Intent

At Ferndale, we are passionate about helping our pupils to learn to read with confidence, fluency, understanding and enjoyment. Reading enables pupils to acquire knowledge, develop a wide vocabulary and it stimulates the imagination. It helps pupils to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. We want all of our pupils to become confident readers so that they have the skills to access life-long learning, develop their understanding of the world and read for pleasure.

Implementation

Learning to read comprises of two core elements: decoding (word reading) and language comprehension. We implement the teaching of these skills in a range of ways.

Phonics

We deliver high quality phonics teaching, using a multi-sensory approach, following the 'Bug Club' programme.

Phonics teaching begins in nursery where pupils are introduced to discriminating sounds through fun games and activities. In foundation stage 2 (Reception), pupils are taught phase 2 phonics and in year 1, pupils begin phase 5 phonics.

At each stage, pupils are taught new letter sounds, letter formation, blending and segmenting and to read tricky words (words with irregular spellings). Bug club provides phonic level books for individual and guided reading, handwriting and teaching presentations. Lessons incorporate

relevant practical and interactive activities to engage pupils. Through our phonics teaching, we ensure that pupils develop their skills in aural discrimination, phonemic and rhyme awareness, blending and segmenting as well as grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

Pupils are given books to read at home (from our book band scheme) that match their phonic and word knowledge; this boosts the child's confidence in reading.

Pupils are continually assessed on their phonics knowledge and appropriately supported to develop this further.

Any pupils who have not secured their phonics knowledge by the end of year 2, continue to receive phonics instruction through targeted interventions. They practise their reading on a daily basis with an age-appropriate decodable book.

Developing Fluency

Fluent decoding allows pupils to understand what they have read. When a pupil gains accuracy and automaticity in word reading, the brain's resources are available to focus on lifting the meaning from the page. As they gain more fluency, their motivation increases: they start to enjoy reading more. It is therefore vital that pupils practise reading every day and at Ferndale we do this through both small group and whole class guided reading sessions as well as targeted individual reading with an adult.

The pupils are also encouraged to read at home on a daily basis through our '300 Reads' rewards scheme where children receive reading-related rewards.

Our book band scheme, which pupils start in the foundation stage, ensures our pupils have access to high quality books at an appropriate level for independent reading as they progress on their reading journey. These bands contain books across a wide range of genres and the stock is continuously added to/renewed to ensure an exciting and diverse choice for the pupils.

Developing Comprehension

From the earliest stage, we aim to improve our pupils' language comprehension. We aim to create a language-rich environment where the adults engage the pupils in high quality dialogue throughout the day and help them to articulate what they know and understand as well as helping them to develop their understanding of new vocabulary to support learning across all areas. We believe that the more our pupils take part in conversations, the more they will understand once they can read. Teachers plan lessons, experiences and trips with careful emphasis on helping pupils to develop and extend their language.

Our guided reading sessions (both small group and whole class) help to build comprehension through rich discussion of the text. Guided reading texts are carefully selected by teachers to be at the appropriate level and discussion around the text is designed to encourage good comprehension. Teachers are guided by the reading VIPERS to ensure they ask and the pupils are familiar with a range of question types to deepen their understanding. Teachers understand the key expectations for reading which are set out in our guided reading assessment sheets for each year group. (See appendix)

Our daily story times are a further way in which we help pupils to develop their comprehension skills; listening to and talking about books that include words that they cannot yet read themselves, will mean that when they can read at that level, they are more likely to have sufficient vocabulary and other knowledge to understand the books for themselves.

Reading at Home

We see parents and carers as crucial partners in the process of developing children's reading and encourage our children to read at home with an adult on a daily basis. All children have a reading record book in which to record this reading. Outlined below are our key expectations:

Reading Expectations at Home

Year group	Expectation – at least...	Focus
Nursery	Share stories and rhymes together to develop language and a love of reading.	
Reception/Year 1	10-15 minutes, 5 x week with an adult	Read text and discuss it. Apply phonics skills.
Year 2/Year 3/Year 4	15-20 minutes, 5 x week with an adult	Discussion: to develop fluency, comprehension and inference skills. (See questions)
Year 5/Year 6	20 minutes, 5 x week with an adult	Discussion: to develop fluency, comprehension and inference skills.

Our children also have access to Bug Club at home which is an online reading platform offering a library of interactive books pitched at the correct level for independent reading. Where pupils are still learning phonics, the books offered will be at the correct phonics stage.

Developing a Love of Reading

We want all our pupils to develop a life-long love of reading. We aim to achieve this in a variety of ways:

- Daily Story Times – all classes have a daily story time where the class teacher shares with the pupils a high quality, engaging book. Much thought has been given by teachers as to which books to share with their classes and this is mapped out in our English overviews for each year group. Story Time sessions are fun, engaging and full of language-rich discussions.
- English topics with a book as the central focus. Each year group has carefully planned, exciting writing topics linked to quality books. These books have been chosen to inspire a love of reading and to expose the pupils to books they may not otherwise have encountered. This is mapped out in our English overviews for each year group.
- Access to quality books. We believe in the importance of our children having access to a diverse selection of high-quality books. Each class has a reading corner with a carefully chosen selection of books, including a 'Book Swap Box', where children can have completely free choice of book (both fiction and non-fiction) to supplement their decodable or banded book. Children are also encouraged to browse and choose books from our library.

- Special Activities Throughout the Year. In addition to our daily emphasis on reading, the English leads plan special activities with the support of teachers to further encourage a love of reading. For example, during World Book Day week the pupils have taken part in activities such as The Masked Reader, book door competitions and the school book fayre.

Impact

Assessment of Reading

We assess every pupil on a regular basis so that we can match teaching to their capacity to learn and to swiftly identify difficulties. We assess reading in a number of (outlined below). The results to these assessments, along with other informal observations gathered during lessons, feed back into our teaching so that each child can be supported to achieve their full potential.

- Reading ages - 3 times a year (September, March and June)
- Phonics screening check
- Bug Club assessments (FS to year 5)/Past SAT paper (year 6 only) These are completed each term to add to the teacher's overall picture of each pupil's reading comprehension.
- Phonics Assessments – These are used in KS2 to swiftly identify any child who has continuing difficulty with phonics. (See appendix)
- Benchmarking – This is used to support teachers to identify the appropriate colour band for children's independent reading books (for Gold books and above.)
- Guided Reading – informal assessments of pupils' fluency and comprehension are noted on guided reading assessment sheets during sessions. (See appendix)
- Bug Club - Teachers also use the online reading platform to gather further information about the comprehension skills of their pupils.

Writing

Intent

At Ferndale, our intent is for our pupils to become fluent, articulate and enthusiastic writers. We teach the writing objectives of the National Curriculum using an exciting cross-curricular approach, and feel it is important to give pupils quality texts and rich experiences to inspire writing and to provide a strong purpose where possible. We look for ways to motivate and inspire pupils so they see themselves as 'writers'.

How is it implemented?

At Ferndale, we have created an overview document for each year group. These overviews map out a clear progression of skills through the school. Each overview sets out the following areas:

- Texts to stimulate writing
- Writing opportunities
- Sentence and grammar objectives
- Key vocabulary

- Speaking and listening opportunities

From these overviews, we carefully structure and plan our writing units. This can start by analysing a text then moving on to a focus on vocabulary. We then look at sentence level and grammar elements appropriate for their end piece of writing before moving onto the writing itself. We use carefully chosen or created model texts as well as live modelling and shared writing so that pupils can see the process involved in creating a piece of writing. Re-reading and editing are an important part of the writing process and this is modelled to the pupils during shared writing sessions. The pupils are given time to edit and improve their writing and they are encouraged to evaluate both with the teacher and with peers. We ensure the pupils have the opportunity to write for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.

We recognise the vital importance of exposing our pupils to a rich and varied vocabulary and understand that their acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. We use model texts and class novels to teach vocabulary in context and encourage discussion around word choices when both reading and writing. When teaching vocabulary, we help pupils to make links between known and new vocabulary and discuss shades of meaning. We encourage and support pupils to be ambitious and precise in their vocabulary choices when writing their own pieces.

Where possible, our teaching of the grammar requirements of the National Curriculum are embedded into our writing lessons because we believe that grammar makes most sense if it is taught as an active process, related to the teaching of writing and reading. We encourage pupils to see the joys of language and to enjoy finding just the right words or phrases to express what they want to say.

Spelling

The ability to write ideas down fluently requires a good understanding of spelling. In KS1, we use 'Bug club', a DfE validated online phonics resource, to teach pupils how to write phonemes as graphemes. Pupils are taught to segment and apply their phonics knowledge when spelling words.

In KS2, we use 'Spelling Shed', where spelling patterns develop and build through the year groups. Each child has a login so they can access these spellings at home and practise them using the interactive games and activities. The children will then have a weekly test.

We use a range of strategies to support pupils with their spelling:

- Phonetic spelling strategies. Segmenting, to see how a word is composed of individual sounds, is crucial for spelling.
- Visual spelling strategy. Learning how a word looks and visualising the word can be an effective strategy.
- Rule-based strategies. Pupils are taught through investigations to understand rules behind spelling patterns.
- Word-meaning strategies. Helping pupils understand what words mean can support their spelling of those words. Explaining how words are derived, how prefixes and suffixes are

added on to root words and how to form compound words, can all support confidence and accurate spelling.

We also encourage the pupils to develop their use of dictionaries and other tools to check their spelling.

Spelling bees are held in year groups on a termly basis. These fun events aim to raise the profile of spelling across the school and to encourage pupils to learn the statutory words for their year.

Handwriting

In the early years and year 1, pupils complete fine motor activities to develop finger strength and are taught how to hold a pencil correctly. Pupils are taught to print correct letter shapes and formations.

From year 2 onwards, through weekly handwriting lessons, we begin to explicitly teach correct joins, consistent letter size and clear ascenders and descenders. Additional support is given through handwriting interventions where needed.

In Key Stage 2, pupils who demonstrate good handwriting are awarded a handwriting licence. This enables them to use handwriting pens and to further develop their fluency.

We use Letterjoin, an interactive computer-based resource to develop letter formation and joining.

Impact

Assessment

Assessment and monitoring enable us to evaluate the impact of our teaching and ensure the children are making good progress. After each unit of work, we are able to highlight all the areas that have been achieved on our year group 'unaided writing sheets' (see appendix). This gives us a clear picture of each child's progress and enables us to give targeted next steps and to set up relevant interventions where required.

POLICY REVIEW DATE:

September 2024