Wootton Bassett Infants' School

English & Literacy Policy

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Vision

Our school values and mission statement – Where Learning is Fun – is at the heart of this policy.

"Writing is the Painting of the Voice" – Voltaire

"A little magic can take you a long way." "If you are going to get anywhere in life you have to read a lot of books." Roald Dahl

At Wootton Bassett Infants' we believe that through the teaching of language and communication, listening, handwriting, writing, phonics and reading we are equipping our children with skills for life. The teaching of English is embedded in our creative and practical curriculum where children learn through a creative topic-based approach.

Aims

At Wootton Bassett Infants School we aim for the children to be able to

- speak clearly using a range of suitable vocabulary and to sustain attentive listening to others in a variety of situations
- read with confidence, have an interest in books and read for enjoyment
- move from early reading and a systematic phonetic approach to reading fluently with comprehension.
- write with confidence using initially a phonetic approach leading into writing with correct spellings, punctuation, grammar and a varied vocabulary
- write with a clear joined handwriting style
- read and discuss a range of text types and to be able to write in a variety of styles and forms
- have an interest in words and develop a rich and growing vocabulary to use in both spoken and written forms

Statutory Requirements

The National Curriculum aims for English state that we should:

1. Promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language.
2. Develop children's love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- encourage competence in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

EYFS

We teach English in the foundation stage as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the English aspects of the children's work to 'Communication and Language', 'Literacy', 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development', 'Understanding the world', 'Expressive arts and design' and 'Physical Development' detailed in the document 'Development Matters', which underpins the curriculum planning for children. English makes a significant contribution to the ELGs of developing a child's language and literacy skills. English learning experiences are provided for through continuous provision both indoors and outdoors. Children will be exposed to stories, rhymes and poems within their day. The basic skills of oracy and handwriting are taught and developed to give the children a solid foundation and readiness for Year 1.

Subject Organisation

The teaching of English is incorporated into our curriculum through a topic based and creative approach to learning. This cross-curricular approach allows the children to make links between literacy and other areas of learning and to understand the uses and importance of literacy skills.

Teachers plan using the National Curriculum for KS1 and the Development Matters and Early Learning Goals in the EYFS. Unlocking Letters and Sounds is used to plan for the teaching of phonics and early reading. Literacy Shed and Vipers is also used as a key program for reading in Year 2. We use a comprehensive spelling overview using our SSP focusing on the spelling of CEW's, and in Year 2 this is also taken from Support for Spelling. We use NC requirements for discrete spelling activities. Parents are encouraged to use Doodle Spell at home in order to support the teaching of phonics and spelling. Handwriting is taught from EYFS to Year 2 using LetterJoin. Teachers plan in year groups to ensure provision is consistent across parallel classes and split year groups. English is planned for on a termly, weekly and daily basis. Children are given 2 decodable books and a 'reading for pleasure' book to take home each week. We encourage children to read decodable books more than once to enable fluency skills. Guided reading is also planned for and taught using decodable books which are closely linked to the children's phonics knowledge. Guided reading takes place four times a week in KS1. It is introduced in EYFS from Term 3 onwards.

Spoken language

At Wootton Bassett Infants' our children learn in a very language rich environment. Children are encouraged to speak clearly and in an audible voice and they are exposed to and encouraged to use a wide and varied vocabulary. Books are often chosen as the centre of our topics so that the children are exposed to a creative and often challenging use of words for their age. Children in EYFS use Talk through Stories to develop spoken language and vocabulary. Adults provide good role models of spoken language and listening skills. Children are taught how to listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers. They learn how to maintain attention and participate in conversations. They also learn how to ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge. Children have structured opportunities to build their vocabulary and learn to speak audibly and fluently. They are also encouraged to answer and speak in complete sentences justifying their answer, e.g., "I think ….. because …..". They learn how to articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions.

We agree with the following statement taken from The Reading Framework July 23.

"A language rich environment is one in which adults talk with children throughout the day. The more children take part in conversations and discussion, the more they will understand once they can read and the more vocabulary and ideas they will have to draw on when they can write".

We believe that oracy underpins the whole of the curriculum and is an essential foundation to all

children's learning.

Reading

We aim to create a reading rich environment and children are encouraged to read for meaning and pleasure and to develop a love of books.

They are taught to read through a variety of teaching methods

- Individual reading
- Guided reading (including whole class guided reading)
- Shared reading
- Independent reading

The early reading skills are taught through phonics using Unlocking Letters and Sounds (see phonics section of policy). The progression starts from Reception to Year 2. Common exception words are learnt within the phonic approach. Children's reading comprehension is also developed through the different teaching methods listed above and also specific comprehension skills are taught within guided reading sessions.

Individual reading

We promote a 'phonics first' approach and in both our guided reading sessions at school and in the books children take home, texts are very closely matched to a child's current phonics knowledge so that every child can experience real success in their reading. In these crucial early stages of reading we use books from Ransom Rising Stars and Big Cat Collins Decodable books. At the higher levels, children are encouraged to select, collect and replace their own reading material from the appropriate level. Parents are encouraged to read the books three times with their child - once for word recognition, once to develop fluency and reader's voice (prosody) and once for comprehension. Bookmarks are sent home with guidance for the parents when hearing their child read. There are guidelines in the front of the books as well as key words that extend the children's vocabulary. These books are also used as group reading texts and one book is explored over two weeks- fluency and word recognition in week 1 and comprehension and prosody in week 2. It is the schools aim to hear a child read from their school reading book as often as possible. In the children's reading folder, they have a reading record book where positive comments regarding achievement are written, as well as stating progress through the book and areas to work on next. We have introduced the 150 club which aims to encourage a minimum of five reads a week at home. Our reading charter sets out school, parent and child expectations for reading.

Guided reading

Guided reading is introduced in the Reception class in Term 3. In Years 1 and 2 the children have four guided reading sessions per week with planning for 4 groups. When possible 2 groups are supported by adults in the classroom, two groups work independently on reading based activities and using ICT resources to develop specific comprehension skills. In addition, Year 2 children use a whole class guided reading approach which allows all children to have access to age related texts. Peer support and pre reading are used to help those children who find the text difficult, and all children are encouraged to respond to the texts both orally and in written form. Children's oral responses are recorded and used to annotate records which are then used for ongoing assessment purposes. Questioning relates to the following reading strands as defined in the National Curriculum and in the program Vipers.

A Vocabulary	E Predict it
B Find it	F Explain/ F Enjoy (reception)
C Sequence it	D Think about it

Records are kept of the children's progress and the focus of each reading session. Packs of books for guided reading are kept in group rooms. Most texts are linked to our phonic scheme. Texts for whole class guided reading have been purchased for Year 2 and eBooks are also used for whole class shared reading from our phonics scheme Unlocking Letters and Sounds.

Shared reading

Shared reading sessions are mostly whole class using eBooks from Unlocking Letters and Sounds. However, books relating to topics are also used especially as part of our English lessons. Shared reading allows teachers to model reading and to teach specific skills which then inform the children's writing.

Independent reading

Each classroom has a book area where children have easy access to a range of literature including comics, stories, non-fiction and poetry books. These are displayed attractively and changed regularly. Children are taught to value and care for books. We value the importance of providing a positive classroom environment to promote reading.

The use of our tree house library has further enhanced the reading environment of the school with the purchase of high quality and stimulating books. It has provided new opportunities for shared reading and book related/library activities as each class has a specific library time in order to browse and select from a large variety of books or have a specific story time with an adult. Book choosing and sharing is given high priority across the curriculum.

Children have regular access to school library books and they take these home to share with their families. We have made our school library a very bright and attractive space in order to encourage the children to use it. The school has introduced a reading incentive called The 100 books to read before you leave WBIS. These books are highly regarded as significant texts. The front covers of the books are represented by butterflies that decorate the walls of the library. The children receive a stamp on a bookmark for every text they read and when the bookmark is complete they receive a prize from Mrs Pass.

We also promote reading throughout the year through various events such as visits to our library, World Book Day activities such as books swaps, visits from authors and also a yearly book fair.

Phonics

We follow Unlocking Letters and Sounds (ULS) – a systematic synthetic phonics program which follows the progression of the 2007 Letters and Sounds framework, with the addition of some KS1 National Curriculum objectives. Through ULS children will learn the 150+ graphemes that are represented by the 44 phonemes of the English language along with common exception words (CEWs) in a planned, progressive way. This is achieved through daily phonics lessons, reading practice using fully decodable books matched to the child's phonic knowledge and daily handwriting practice.

We begin teaching phonics in the first few weeks of term 1 in Reception. They begin to learn the main sounds heard in the English Language and how they can be represented, as well as learning 'Common Exception' words for Phases 2, 3 and 4.

In Year 1, children will revise phase 4 along with requirements from the national curriculum. They will then go through Phase 5a, b and c, in which they learn any alternative spellings and pronunciations for the graphemes and additional Common Exception Words.

In Year 2, phonics continues to be revisited to ensure mastery of the phonetic code and any child who does not meet age related expectations will continue to receive support to close identified gaps. To ensure no child is left behind at any point in the progression, children are regularly assessed and supported to keep up

through bespoke 1-1 interventions. These include GPC recognition and blending and segmenting interventions. The lowest attaining 20% of pupils are closely monitored to ensure these interventions have an impact.

Writing

Through our topic-based and creative approach to learning children are motivated to write and have opportunities to write for different purposes. Although closely linked, handwriting, spelling and phonics are mostly taught as discrete subjects. Our aim is to give children confidence when writing for any given purpose. A lot of effort is put into planning the stimulus for writing so that children are motivated. Writing is often topic based and the result of stories, drama or art sessions.

Writing is taught using both a **shared writing** and **guided writing** approach. During shared writing sessions specific learning intentions are modelled and taught by the teacher. This enables the teacher to model, explore and discuss the choices writers need to make and during guided writing sessions the children work in small groups with adult support and a clear focus for their work. Children also have many opportunities for **independent writing** – this may be a writing task set by the teacher in KS1 or a self-chosen task such as using the writing table in the EYFS.

Talk for writing. Children should have rehearsed what they want to write before they start. This may be as simple as asking the child what they want to write before they begin or may be role-play or drama activities where vocabulary is developed or the sequence of a story or event is made clear.

Writing is initially taught in the Foundation Stage through developmental writing which starts with children making marks on paper and moves on to using letter shapes, then letter sounds which can be heard in words. The most important thing about this initial approach to writing is that children are free to "write" without worrying about getting things wrong. Time is organised to allow for listening to the child read their writing back and for an adult to transcribe it. Response from the adult should encourage development of the child's writing process and extend their creativity. In later stages this process may be the "original drafting" level - prior to spelling/accuracy/presentation revising.

It is not necessary for every piece of writing to reach the "published" stage but children should be made aware of the process, so that by the end of Key Stage 1 children are given the opportunity at times to edit and produce a final presentation of a piece of work.

Correcting children's written work

Children's work should be received in a positive way by the teacher and work should be corrected with sensitivity according to the child's ability to retain the teaching point.

Ideally, corrections of children's work should take place on a one to one basis with the child verbally at the time of writing. However, there are times when this is not possible and it is therefore reasonable to correct work away from the child as long as there is some positive feedback and response for the child at a later date. Children are given time to correct their work – either at the time, or at a later date. (see our Marking Policy).

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

We teach spelling following the approaches and strategies used in our SSP Unlocking letters and sounds. Our spellings teach our common exception words and reinforce sounds taught in our phonics lessons. In the EYFS the children are taught the sounds that letters make in words and spelling is taught as the segmenting of these letter sounds. Phonics is taught through daily whole class sessions and these sessions are carefully planned and follow a highly structured approach following our phonics scheme Unlocking Letters and Sounds.

However, spelling is also a visual skill and time is spent in teaching children to spell common exception words

which can't be segmented and spelt using letter sounds alone. We teach these as part of our phonics scheme. In addition to this we send weekly common exception words home in the children's spelling books and the children practise these three mornings a week as an early morning task. In the EYFS this begins in Term 3. Words are differentiated according to ability.
Time is also allowed for topic words and words of interest to be taught and investigated. These include words of the week and words given to the children on topic word mats or word mats which include vocabulary from the book focus for the week or topic.
In Year 1 and 2 we also teach the common exception words. Words are differentiated according to ability. Parents are encouraged to support their children with learning these and spellings are sent home weekly in the children's spelling books. We also encourage the investigation of spellings and teach spelling patterns and rules which the children are encouraged to apply in their own writing. The word lists used are taken our SSP and from the National Curriculum. Word banks in the classroom are also useful as reference points for children to refer to, and how to use dictionaries is also taught. Also in Year 2 the children practise their spellings daily and are tested on them weekly with a termly focus on the Common Exception words. However, the main emphasis for assessment is looking for the use of spellings and spelling patterns in the children's own writing. This applies to all year groups. (see WBI spelling progression).
Parents are encouraged to use Doodle Spell with their children at home as extra support for phonics and spelling. Teachers are able to set assignments to target gaps in learning if necessary.
Grammar and punctuation in Year 1 and Year 2 is taught through the children's writing and good practice is highlighted through all of the children's reading and writing experiences. Grammar and punctuation lessons are taught as part of a weekly sequence of lessons or a discrete lesson if necessary. Lessons are planned so new learning taught in a SPAG lesson can be used and embedded in the children's own work.

Handwriting

At Wootton Bassett Infants' School we use the Letter Join handwriting scheme. This is a cursive joined style and by the time the children leave Y2 we aim for them to be confident at writing in a cursive handwriting style.
Children in Reception will start by learning how to write their letter shapes. We initially use our SSP Unlocking Letters and Sounds to introduce the letter sounds and formation of letters. The children will continue to develop their gross and fine motor skills, learn a correct and comfortable pencil grip, and learn letter formation alongside phonics (letter sounds). The children use a range of writing materials such as chalks, paints, pens, crayons, big brushes and water, finger in the sand etc. This enables the children to learn using large movements first and also provides fun ways to teach the orientation of letters. The children all start by using a pencil grip on their pencils which teaches a correct and comfortable pencil grip. These are easily adapted for left handed children. In term 5 the children will be introduced to Letter join which forms the letters in the same way. However in addition to this the children will be introduced to the loops on the tails of letters, e.g. g and y. The parents will have access to the Letter-join materials at home. We believe that teaching and learning the basic skill of handwriting and letter formation in EYFS will form a firm foundation for the children's learning in KS1.
In Year 1 the children continue to learn the formation of pre-cursive letters and also capital letters and numbers. This then leads in to learning how to join the letters. These lessons are discrete lessons where the focus is handwriting. This continues into Year 2 where handwriting is also taught discretely and moves onto some dictation exercises.
Correct letter formation is encouraged right from the start of a child's writing career and parents are encouraged to help their child. An example of correct formation is included in the child's reading folder. Good examples of clear joined handwriting in our Letter-Join style are modelled by the teacher. This is

through shared writing sessions and also on signs and labels around the classroom or on the children's work. Children who are left handed often have difficulties with reversal of letters and how they hold their pencil. We have specific handwriting activities to use with any left handed children who may be experiencing difficulties. For example the classroom tables can be marked with a v to show left handed children how to slant their paper or books to aid their writing.

Computing

Opportunities to use computing to support teaching and learning in literacy will be planned for and used as appropriate. Our classroom computers, IPad and Chrome books are some of the resources that we use to support the teaching of literacy. Each classroom has an Interactive Whiteboard which is used as a whole class teaching tool for literacy and also as a tool for children to use to develop their literacy skills. Our handwriting lessons use the online Letter-join resources, and programmes such as Phonics Play are used to support our phonics teaching. Our handwriting resource, Letter-Join, has a website with a login for teachers, pupils and parents. Parents also have a log-in for Doodle Spell in order to support spelling learning at home.

Assessment

Work is assessed in line with our Assessment and Marking policy. Regular assessments are undertaken to ensure that each child is making appropriate progress. A baseline piece of work is at the front of the children's writing book at the start of the year. Children complete one piece of writing each term that is assessed and put in the child's sample of work book. This provides a record of each child's progress and attainment. Regular individual phonics assessments (linked to our phonics scheme) are also carried out to monitor progress and to identify and address gaps in learning. In Year 1 this also takes the form of previous Phonics Check assessment papers in order to assess the children's ability to blend words and non-words. Interventions are planned using our SSP Unlocking letters and sounds intervention resources. Reading is assessed through both guided reading and individual reading and children who need extra reading support are priority readers.

Learning environment

We aim to provide a classroom environment that is rich in print. This reflects the importance of language through signs, notices and books. Books we have enjoyed as a whole class are displayed in our reading corners. Provision is made for children to experiment with writing for themselves, for example writing tables and when appropriate books/magazines or writing materials in the role play area. The children's own writing is displayed and celebrated through displays and class books. The agreed handwriting style is also displayed and used in every room.

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in literacy according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. More able children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided. (see Inclusion policy)

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the literacy curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or home background.