

"Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow"



Bishops Down Primary School

www.bishopsdownprimary.org

English Policy

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Reviewed and updated by:	English Team (D Wilson)

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Introduction

This policy outlines what we are aiming to achieve in respect of pupils’ literacy education. It also describes our agreed approach to the planning, delivery and assessment of the English curriculum. The English taught and the methods used reflect the recommendations outlined in the DfES guidance contained in the documents:

- (A) Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage
- (B) New English Curriculum

It provides information and guidance for teachers, governors and other interested persons.

Aims for Speaking and Listening

The staff acknowledges speaking and listening to be the first language modes in order of acquisition and therefore provide the foundation for all further language development. We believe that a pupil’s spoken language reflects the local culture and heritage of the individual and is crucial to his/her identity. This therefore should be valued and built upon. Pupils also have an entitlement to gain knowledge, competence, confidence and pleasure in the use of the more universal dialect of Standard English and to use whichever of these is appropriate to audience, purpose and situation.

We therefore aim to provide pupils with opportunities to:

- speak competently and creatively for different purposes and audiences, reflecting on impact and response;
- explore, develop and sustain ideas through talk;
- understand, recall and respond to speakers’ implicit and explicit meanings;
- explain and comment on speakers’ use of language, including vocabulary, grammar and non-verbal features;
- take different roles in a group to develop thinking and complete tasks;
- participate in conversations, making appropriate contributions building on others’ suggestions and responses;
- use dramatic techniques including work in role to explore ideas and texts;
- create, share and evaluate ideas and understanding through drama.

Aims for Reading

We use the principles from the Power of Reading to help children immerse themselves with the text. The staff believes that reading is the most powerful tool of learning both in and out of school. It facilitates

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independence in the quest for knowledge. It allows the reader to share experiences, which would otherwise not be encountered and encourages development of empathy. It engages readers with language models from which they can gain pleasure and an understanding of how their language works.

Therefore we aim to help pupils to:

- read fluently and automatically by using phonic knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences and the skills of blending as their **prime approach** for decoding unfamiliar words (Rose **Report** 2005);
- build up a store of words that are instantly recognised and understood on sight;
- understand and interpret tasks using inference and deduction;
- identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts;
- explain and comment on writers’ use of language, vocabulary, grammatical and literary features;
- engage with and respond to texts by reading independently for purpose, pleasure and learning (develop a love of reading);
- respond imaginatively, using different strategies to engage with texts;
- evaluate writers’ purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text;
- discuss texts in their social, cultural and historical context.

In Key Stage 1 reading skills are developed through guided, shared, modelled and independent reading.

In Key Stage 2 reading skills are explicitly taught as a separate session for 30 minutes. The focus skills are: inference, prediction, retrieval, summary, comparison, sequencing of events and synonyms/vocab.

Aims for Writing

We believe that confidence and competence in use and control of the written word is essential to the creation, exploration and clear communication of meaning: an individual’s ability to use this form effectively affects performance in all areas of living and learning. Teachers understand that writing is a developmental process and endeavour to promote it as an enjoyable experience. In the early stages the focus of teaching will be on developing knowledge and confidence in the young writer and, as this becomes established, the focus will sharpen to the development of competence, ensuring growth of knowledge about all aspects of writing and its application to written work in a planned, organised, stylistic and accurate manner.

We therefore aim to provide opportunities for pupils to:

- create and shape texts for purpose, pleasure and learning;
- use and adapt a range of forms, suited to different purposes and readers;
- make stylistic choices, including vocabulary, literary features and viewpoints or voice;
- use structural and presentational features for meaning and impact;
- organise ideas into a coherent structure including layout, sections and paragraphs;
- write cohesive paragraphs linking sentences within and between;
- vary and adapt sentence structure for meaning and effect;
- use a range of punctuation correctly to support meaning and emphasis;
- convey meaning through grammatically accurate and correctly punctuated sentences.

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- ICT should enhance good literacy teaching. It should be used in lessons only if it supports good practice in teaching literacy. ICT should be used if the teacher and/or the children can achieve something more effectively with it than without.

Aims for Spelling

At Bishops Down, staff refer to Target Tracker spelling statements, as well as the National Curriculum Spelling Appendix, to prepare their weekly list of spellings. These spellings are sent home at the beginning of a term and are broken up into the number of weeks in that term (10 spellings per week in KS2 and 5 spellings per week in KS1). These spellings are taught daily for 20 minutes through fun and engaging spelling carousel activities, with a dictation assessment every Monday. Parents are asked to practise these spellings with their children at home. If the child achieves 8 or more correct spellings in KS2 or 4 or more in KS1 we are confident that the child has grasped these spellings. We then expect to see these spellings applied in their writing across the year.

We believe that conventional spelling is necessary to accurately convey meaning to the reader. We therefore aim to help our children to develop a variety of strategies that will enable them to become independent, conventional spellers. Staff recognise that learning to spell is a developmental process.

We therefore aim to develop pupils’ knowledge of:

- segmenting words into their constituent phonemes for spelling is the reverse of blending phonemes into words for reading;
- spelling words accurately by combining the use of grapheme-phoneme correspondence knowledge as the prime approach, and also morphological knowledge and etymological information;
- a range of approaches to learn and spell irregular words;
- a range of VAK (visual , auditory, kinaesthetic) strategies.

Aims for Handwriting

The staff believe that the presentation of written work can not only reflect on an individual’s fine motor skills but also the nature of the writer through his/her awareness of, and attention to, an audiences’ needs. From Reception children learn to use a pre-cursive style of handwriting. The expectation by the end of KS1 is that the children are able to join all lower case letters using the appropriate joins. Staff teach children the Read, Write Inc. letter patters to help them remember the correct formation and begin each lower case letter on the line. Pen licenses will be awarded to children in KS2 who use an accurate, cursive style. We aim ultimately for our children to develop a fast flowing, attractive, legible, personal hand. To achieve this there will be a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the whole curriculum and key stages.

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We therefore aim to provide a structured teaching programme, which ensures:

- correct orientation and formation of letters;
- consistency and appropriateness in size and spacing;
- a pride in presentation;
- a smooth transition from printing to a joined up style- to begin in Reception and be achieved by the end of KS1;
- Intervention in KS2 with differentiated targets.

Literacy Curriculum Planning

Staff follow teaching sequences from the Power of Reading where the children explore a range of fiction texts through reading and writing using the Talk for Writing Approach. They become familiar with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts and learn to write in a variety of genres. English is a core subject in the National Curriculum, and we use the new English Curriculum as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for literacy.

Curriculum Overviews are set for staff to ensure coverage of text types in line with the new English Curriculum. Each year group studies a broad range of genres including Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry. Text types taught across the school have been set to progressively build on the skills taught the year before.

Our weekly flipchart plans list the specific learning objectives for each lesson and give details of how the lessons are to be taught including whole class teaching, paired learning, independent learning, the plenary and success criteria. As the understanding of reading and writing different genres throughout the year develop in each class, the children are encouraged to use previous learning to develop the success criteria with support from the teacher.

Phonics is taught through using the RWI Inc. Phonic Programme to YR-2 and through interventions for those children in need of developing their reading skills in KS2 (see Phonics Policy).

The Head teacher and English subject leaders are responsible for monitoring the English planning within our school

The Foundation Stage

Work undertaken within the Foundation Stage is guided by the requirements and recommendations set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage document.

We give all the children ample opportunity to develop their understanding of literacy. We aim to do this through varied activities that allow them to use, enjoy, explore, practise and talk confidently about literacy.

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Cross Curricular Links

The staff recognise that English holds a unique position as a medium for learning in all areas of the curriculum. Links across subjects are set out in the curriculum overviews, with set links made between Art, DT, Geography, History, Music, PE and PSHE with English units. This allows the children to make links across their learning and often write for a ‘real’ purpose. This is evident in the learning the children participate in through Independent Learning Activities.

Resources

There are a variety of resources to support the teaching of literacy across the school, for example a well-stocked library, a wide range of banded guided reading texts and teaching and learning guidance materials for teachers from The Power of Reading project. All classrooms have an interactive whiteboard with access to a range of software to support learning.

All planning, flipcharts and resources are saved in the Staff network area, for use and adaptation by current and future teachers.

Developing and Monitoring of the English Curriculum

To ensure the coherence and progress of the development of English at Bishops Down, the monitoring of the curriculum is recognised as an essential element.

Time is allocated to allow the English team to do this as well as assisting with planning, updating the school’s policy, schemes of work and the literacy action plan.

The English team also assists teachers by leading staff meetings, planning and leading INSET activities, providing consultancy and advice, also by supporting them in the classroom. This is all done in collaboration with the headteacher.

In addition, as a result of monitoring, the co-ordinator will make appropriate arrangements for staff development.

Assessment

The assessment procedures within our school encompass:

- Making on-going assessments and responding appropriately to pupils during ‘day-to-day’ teaching; These ‘immediate’ responses are mainly verbal and recorded in the children’s books;
- Adjusting planning and teaching within sequences in response to pupils’ performance;
- Statements from Target Tracker inform learning objectives. Objectives to be updated weekly on Target Tracker;
- Statements from Target Tracker mainly linked to SPAG and Handwriting are in the front of all children’s English exercise books. This is to help the children self-assess and the teacher track progress against the children’s individual targets;

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- Use of information gained from independent writing. A formal written assessment is completed once every half term from Years 1-6. This piece of writing is kept in the children’s Writing Portfolios which go up with the child through the school from class to class. Information gained is used to set focused curricular targets (what to teach) and also to determine which strategies or methods are particularly effective in respect of specific areas of English (the how and why).
- The English team monitor writing assessments and moderate with schools in the Kent area in addition to termly in-house moderation.
- Summative assessment data is analysed by the English team and used to inform intervention groups.

Continuity and Progression

The school is aware of the need to ensure continuity and progression in the development of knowledge and skills for individual pupils. However, it is also essential that basic skills are revisited and practised in order to ensure a deep understanding, which will provide an excellent grounding for the more complex skills and knowledge. Continuity and progression are ensured through the literacy overviews, which determine the text types taught, as well as through careful planning, differentiation and assessment and structured liaison between and across key stages.

Response to Children’s Work

We recognise the importance of responding to children’s work, whether orally or in writing. We mark children’s work regularly (in accordance with the marking policy). Children are given the opportunity to respond to their feedback after every written piece of written work. In addition to this, children are given opportunities, and actively encouraged, to explain their work to others and to display their work when it seems appropriate. They are encouraged to value and respect the work of others.

Equal Opportunities

This school believes that every pupil is of equal value and has the right to equal education opportunities, irrespective of age, ability, race, creed and gender; therefore we help all our children to:

- access the whole curriculum with respect to English/Language skills in reading, writing, speaking/listening through the provision of appropriate texts and additional outside support being requested as necessary;
- extend the English curriculum appropriately through more demanding tasks, texts and extra support if necessary.

Special Educational Needs

We aim to provide a broad and balanced education to all pupils. Effective pupil tracking enables identification of pupils who may benefit from early ‘intervention’. Laptops are available to aid children’s writing through using tools such as “Clicker” and “Write On-Line”. We use braille as a form of communication for pupils with a visual impairment.

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Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the standards of children’s work and of quality of teaching in literacy is the responsibility of the headteacher, subject leaders and supported by the link governor. Phase meetings take place each term for teachers to share best practise and set targets within phases.

The work of the subject leaders 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.

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Appendix 1

Literacy Marking Policy

At Bishops Down, we mark pupils work daily, to ensure that pupils are aware of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. We ensure that adequate time is given to pupils to engage in this aspect of their learning, given the impact it has on their progress.

- Marking should be done in green and pink pen.
- Adult handwriting needs to model all expectations for pupils, joined, neat, legible to pupils, on the line, starting at the margin etc.
- Children should respond to marking / edit in purple pen.
- Children should mark their peers work in black pen.
- The **Success criteria** clearly states who the child has worked with and who has marked their work. The success criteria should be ticked by the teacher or the child when used in books to show that the criteria was achieved. Green comments should highlight the success of the child and be specific, whilst pink comments should move the child’s learning on.
- **Marking Key** KS1 and KS2 have a differentiated marking key which is stuck into the front of the children’s English books. These feature symbols for the children to respond to.
- **Children** should tick the success criteria if they have achieved them. Children should identify examples in their writing first before ticking.
- **Ticking** should relate directly to the success criteria
- **Marking** should be formatively marked after each extended piece (i.e. an extended sequence of sentences). There should be evidence of 2 pieces of extended writing each week e.g. letter/diary/descriptive paragraph with appropriate time allowed for feedback and improvement in the following session. One piece of work can be peer or self-marked, whilst the other can be a sticker mark (for a generic praise or next step). The remaining should be teacher marked.
- **Published writing** should feature on display each term. This writing should showcase an extended piece of writing that has been drafted and edited several times within class and is of the child’s best standard. This display should contain speech bubbles and arrows to show off the content used from that year group e.g. Year 6: colons, hyphens, relative clauses, informal/formal language etc.
- **Missing punctuation** is marked to the level of the child, e.g. commas for lists in Y2 but not commas for grammatical boundaries. When prompted, the child should then add in the missing piece of punctuation in purple pen. If the child does not know where to add in the missing punctuation, it should be written into the correct place in the writing by the teacher to model its use – this might also be done once for the first error as a model before the child corrects the rest of the errors themselves.

“Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow”

- **Next steps** will be given after every extended piece of writing. They will refer to something a child has to edit at word or sentence level. There could also be a next step to further the child’s understanding of the text type or a particular grammatical structure. Where necessary, these next steps will be scaffolded and the child’s response will be checked.
- **Book Corners** should be an engaging area in all classrooms, that the children have had an involvement in creating. This should be an inviting, tidy space that is accessible to all children in the class.
- **Working Walls** should feature the text that is being read, a WAGOLL (what a good one looks like) updated each week, photographs of the children engaged in learning. Examples of shared/modelled/writing or predictions or questions etc. and an ‘In English this week are mastering’ poster.
- **Library** All children should have access to the library for a minimum of 30 minutes a week, where they are encouraged to scan out a book, appropriate to their reading ability. Child librarians went through an application process and were selected based on this.