

Literacy Policy at Ashbourne Hilltop Primary



September 2020

INTRODUCTION

Intent

Literacy unites the important skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The study of Literacy develops children's ability to read, write, speak and listen for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories and poetry, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. They gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking, reading and writing across the curriculum through a range of different situations and in their everyday life.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study - Key Stages 1 and 2 (2014) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012).

In the Foundation Stage (Reception) children are given opportunities to:

- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- become immersed in an environment rich in print and opportunities to communicate.

At Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

- Children learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say.
- They learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm.
- They learn to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6)

- children learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences.
- They read a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetic texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them.
- They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works (using grammatical terminology).

Implementation

Foundation Stage

In Reception children have daily discrete phonics lessons using the Letters and Sounds approach. Children have opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis in both adult led and child initiated activities.

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1 daily discrete phonics lessons continue and are taught in ability groups, while children have daily mixed ability Literacy lessons with an emphasis on real texts. Children take part in both guided and individual reading sessions and have regular story times to develop a love of reading. Literacy skills are developed across the curriculum. Provision is made for children who require extra support through intervention programmes, differentiated class teaching and targeted teaching groups in Literacy and reading comprehension sessions.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 children have daily Literacy lessons. Spelling and grammar skills are initially taught discretely before being embedded within literacy lessons. Additional Literacy sessions include guided reading, spelling, grammar, handwriting (cursive style) and daily reading aloud of a class novel. Literacy skills are developed across the curriculum. Provision is made for children who require extra support through targeted teaching; intervention programmes and differentiated class teaching.

APPROACHES TO SPEAKING AND LISTENING

We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum - spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. Opportunities to develop these skills include: debating, Gold Book and class assemblies, talk partners, drama and a yearly school production. As the National Curriculum says:

'All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.' (pages 3, 4 and 7, 2014)

All of these speaking and listening skills are taught in Literacy, across the curriculum and during extra-curricular activities too.

Children who require extra support in speaking and listening benefit from small group sessions lead by

Teaching Assistants and draw on the expertise of a Speech and Language Therapist (where necessary). We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect, or other language is of prime importance.

APPROACHES TO READING

We use the Letters and Sounds programme to deliver daily discrete phonics lessons in FS and KS1, enabling children to decode efficiently. This is continued into KS2 where necessary, with children joining the relevant phase phonics lessons.

Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opportunity to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during guided reading sessions. In KS1 children also have the opportunity to read 1-1 with an adult at least once a week. As the children move through the school, opportunities to read independently for a sustained period of time are afforded to them.

A range of reading schemes are used to support early readers as well as book banded 'real books' used for guided reading. Teaching assistants support reading activities to ensure that children have more frequent opportunities to read with adults. Towards the end of KS1 and during KS2 we use Accelerated Reader. AR is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice.

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, i.e. 'Book Week'. Book Weeks include visits by published authors, skilled story tellers from many cultures, performances by professional theatre groups, making books, using drama, dance and music to illustrate texts.

APPROACHES TO GRAMMAR AND SPELLING

The teaching of Grammar and Spelling is in line with the requirements of The National Curriculum (2014). Grammar is timetabled to be taught discreetly. In KS1 specific sessions each week are dedicated to the teaching of grammar. Grammar skills are embedded within Literacy lessons on a daily basis.

To be able to spell correctly is an essential life skill. When spelling becomes automatic pupils are able to concentrate on the content of their writing and the making of meaning. Whilst we note that spelling is not the most important aspect of writing, confidence in spelling can have a profound effect on the writer's self-image. We aim to use explicit, interactive teaching which draws children's attention to the origins, structure and meaning of words and their parts, the shape and sound of words, the letter patterns within them and the various ways they can learn these patterns.

In Reception and KS1, daily phonics is the key to the children's learning of spelling. This is taught using the Letters and Sounds programme. Children are taught to blend sounds to read and segment to spell. At the same time they learn words which are not phonically regular (common exception words).

From year two and into KS2 the children move towards using their phonic knowledge to help them to understand spelling rules and patterns. Helping the children to understand how to use and apply known spelling patterns (and to develop strategies to tackle tricky words) is the key to helping them to become successful spellers. Spelling skills are taught each week during two twenty minute sessions and are also embedded in Literacy lessons so as strategies and rules can be taught in the context of writing.

When actually writing children should be concentrating on higher order thinking skills and should simply 'have a go' at spelling and underline words that they are unsure of with a dotted line. When marking children's work, we do not correct all spelling errors, instead we focus on high frequency words, topic words and those studied in spelling sessions. Parents may like to refer to our website for further information on key words, patterns and rules that are taught in each year group.

APPROACHES TO WRITING

We use the Talk for Writing approach for writing. Talk for Writing was originally created by Pie Corbett and supported by Julia Strong and is powerful because it is based on the principles of how children learn. Talk for Writing enables children to imitate the key language they need for a particular topic orally before they try reading it and analysing it through fun activities to help them rehearse the tune of the language they need, followed by shared writing to show them how to craft their genre, children are helped to write in the same style. It works well right through from the Early Years up to year 6 and beyond.

The Method

Talk for Writing is powerful because it enables children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally before they begin reading and analysing it and then writing their own version. It builds on three key stages:

- Stage 1 - Imitation
- Stage 2 - Innovation
- Stage 3 - Independent Application

We recognise the important role that computing has to play in our school in the development of Literacy skills. There are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by drama techniques and film clips. We use cursive joined handwriting in school to help children develop fluent, clear and legible joined up writing (see Handwriting Policy for further details).

CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum. One piece of extended writing is expected to be produced for each Humanities and Science unit.

Impact

Writing is assessed via Cold Writes and Hot Writes - these are marked in line with an assessment grid linked to the National Curriculum outcomes for writing. Phonics groups are monitored half-termly and meetings take place to decide on whether to move children - these groups are fluid and enable children to move dependent on individual progress and need. Reading is monitored carefully on a regular basis through a variety of methods - through reading 1:1 with a child and assessing them via an assessment grid linked to the National Curriculum outcomes for reading; during Guided Reading Sessions and through Star Reading tests (on a four yearly basis). This computerised based reading assessment program uses adaptive technology. Questions continually adjust to a child's response. If the child's response is correct, the difficulty level is increased. If the child cannot answer a question or answers incorrectly, the difficulty is reduced. A report is provided outlining progress and levels the child's ability. All reading and writing data is input regularly onto a computerised assessment system. Progress is monitored half-termly at pupil progress meetings. This then assists with planning for future lessons, Individual Educational Plans and future intervention requirements.

INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment in liaison with the SENCO. Gifted children will be identified in consultation with the G&T leader and suitable learning challenges will be provided.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Ashbourne Hilltop Primary School has universal ambitions for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged.

In order to engage all children, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children.

We believe in 'disciplined and caring environment' and recognise the importance of supporting a child's first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English.

ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- monitoring and evaluating Literacy:-
 - pupil progress
 - marking and planning
 - curriculum coverage
 - provision of Literacy
 - the quality of the Learning Environment,
- taking the lead in policy development,
- auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD,
- purchasing and organising resources,
- keeping up to date with recent Literacy developments.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We aim to involve parents directly in the life of the school, and thus in the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding in English. Parents are involved in hearing children read, and are encouraged to discuss books with them.

There are opportunities during the autumn and spring terms when parents can discuss their children's progress with their teacher. However, Ashbourne Hilltop Primary support an 'Open Door' policy so any concerns may be discussed as and when required. Strategies for supporting children are shared at phase meetings and reading workshops as well as at parent helper training sessions.

SATs results are published in accordance with Government legislation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Marking Policy
- Handwriting Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- More Able, Gifted and Talented Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Continuing Professional Development Policy

Literacy policy at Ashbourne Hilltop Primary Susan Sadula 2020

This policy will be reviewed every three years or if changes are required.

Subject Leader – Susan Sadula