



English Mission Statement

Intent

At Ashbourne Hilltop Primary and Nursery School we believe that a quality English curriculum should develop children's love of reading, writing and speech, language and communication skills. Our English curriculum is rigorous, innovative and well structured. It provides imaginative and engaging opportunities to develop reading, writing, and speech, language and communication skills. The aims of the 2014 National Curriculum for English are embedded across our English lessons and the wider curriculum.

Aims

- 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 literacy 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
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

There is a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. Continuous assessment and review will ensure that we are able to provide targeted support so that all children experience success in English. We firmly believe that a firm basis in English skills is crucial to an outstanding education and will give our children the necessary tools in order to participate fully in all lessons and as a member of society.

Implementation

Speaking and Listening Skills

“The ability to communicate - to say what you want; to say and to understand what other people are saying - is fundamental to life chances.” (Gross, 2013, p.1).

We value the importance of understanding that the most valuable aspect of a quality English education is having both interesting and enjoyable conversations with our children. In recognition of this, quality speech, language and communication opportunities underpin the development of reading and writing within our school. Opportunities to develop these skills include: debating, celebration and class assemblies, hot seating and role play throughout the school, talk partners, drama, pupil voice through both School Parliament

and Eco-Council, and a yearly school production and nativity play. 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).

Indeed, Ofsted’s thematic national reports also supported this view:

“In the most effective schools visited, inspectors saw teachers thread rich opportunities for speaking and listening into lessons. In turn this led to improved standards in writing.” (Ofsted, 2011, p.21).

Reading

Early reading is supported through the Letters and Sounds approach (this is currently being revised and will be replaced by Little Wandle). It is a systematic, fast paced approach to teaching phonics. The children read decodable books that match their phonics level. Regular training and development days ensure that staff are equipped to teach with the expertise and skills required to promote excellent progress - and more importantly - to develop children with a lifelong love of reading.

Teachers model how to teach reading skills through guided reading; shared reading and a class story. These are then practised and applied independently. Every child from year 2 to year 6 has an accelerated reading book which is at their reading level. Accelerated Reader is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children’s independent reading practice.

We encourage our children to visit the local library and share recommendations to others. We have library visits to support this. Parents are encouraged to read with their children regularly and we will be incorporating regular ‘parent training’ sessions once our new SSP and reading schemes have been put in place.

Writing (including approaches to Grammar and Spelling)

When planning English lessons, teachers make links to other areas of the curriculum to ensure that cross curricular links provide further context for learning. Fiction, non-fiction and poetry are all taught in line with the 2014 National Curriculum and comprehension, grammar and writing are embedded in lessons. Our writing is based on Pie Corbett’s ‘Talk for Writing’. We teach children to imitate and innovate writing before becoming independent writers with their own writing style. Handwriting is also taught within English lessons. Reading and writing is taught across the curriculum ensuring that skills taught in these lessons are applied in other subjects.

The teaching of Grammar and Spelling is in line with the requirements of The National Curriculum (2014). Grammar is timetabled. In addition, grammar skills are embedded within English lessons on a daily basis. 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 the and the various ways they can learn these patterns.

Impact

Reading

Reading is monitored carefully on a regular basis through a variety of methods - through reading 1:1 with a child and assessing them via Insight - an assessment system linked to the National Curriculum outcomes for reading; during Guided Reading Sessions and through Star Reading tests (on a four times a year 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.

Writing

Writing is assessed via Cold Writes (after pre-teaching) and Hot Writes (occurring two weeks after completion of a topic) - these are marked in line with Insight - a tracking system linked to the National Curriculum outcomes for both reading and writing. Phonics groups are monitored half-termly and Pupil Progress 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.

All reading and writing data is monitored half-termly at Pupil Progress meetings. This then assists with planning for future lessons, Individual Educational Learning Plans and future intervention requirements. At the end of each year we expect our children to have achieved at least Age Related Expectations for their year group.