

## Appendix 4: Curriculum Statement for English

### Introduction

English is at the heart of education because it is not only a subject in its own right but the medium through which all teaching and learning takes place. It is vital that children develop a working command of language to enable them to speak, listen, read and write in the context of the curriculum areas they study. Moreover, competence and confidence in all forms of language are a crucial factor in the children's future happiness and success as adults.

### The English Curriculum: content and organisation.

From the Nursery onwards, language development and communication skills are a key priority. Children learn language skills by being motivated to use them in real situations. They become fluent speakers because they want to communicate; they learn to read by enjoying books; they learn to write by writing for a reason. During the Foundation Stage, the full range of language activities is introduced, in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. In Key Stages 1 and 2, all classes have a daily English lesson, in line with The National Curriculum 2014 for English. But, of course, in addition to this, children learn to use language in all the work they do at school, not only in specific 'English' lessons. Language activities of one form or another take place continuously during the school day, across all curriculum areas. Many aspects of English are taught through an integrated approach but can also be taught in isolation to provide emphasis on the development of particular skills. Depending on the aims, objectives and requirements for year groups the following strands are covered and often link to the agreed whole school topics or year group topics; speaking and listening, shared reading, guided reading, comprehension, grammar, punctuation, spelling, writing and handwriting.

### Long, medium and short term planning

In the Foundation Stage, medium term plans and weekly plans are drawn up using the appropriate guidelines as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. In KS1 and KS2, annual plans and curriculum overviews map out the reading and writing study genres to be delivered throughout the year. More detailed weekly or unit plans are produced across key stages 1 and 2 which outline learning objectives and opportunities in greater detail. The 2014 National Curriculum underpins all elements of planning. Weekly and unit lesson planning across the school incorporates opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing through various genre based study units. Emphasis is placed on these elements of English according to the age and stage of the class. Teachers use formative day-to-day assessments to adjust their plans to suit the needs of their class, specific groups and individual pupils.

### Teaching and learning

English lessons are taught daily across the school, usually for an hour although these might be delivered in smaller parts during the day depending on the age of pupils, the class timetable, resources and content that is being covered. The agreed approach to the organisation of lessons consists of: an introductory teacher-led session, main session for independent working, followed by a plenary to discuss misconceptions, reinforce and evaluate learning, although mini-plenaries are often used throughout lessons for various purposes. During the introductory session the teacher usually recaps on prior learning, introduces the learning objectives and shares new material in order to enthuse and develop discussion, alternatively a task for pupils to practise isolated skills may be provided. During the main session, children would be expected to work independently to develop their reading or writing skills, relating to the particular area of study or genre. In addition, pupils may be asked to participate in guided group work relating to a particular area of focus. During the plenary, pupils are encouraged to share identify their own progress, discuss misconceptions and to plan next steps for learning.

### Differentiation

Children enter school with a variety of language experiences and skills, and progress at different rates. Within any age group there is a wide range of ability, and it is the policy of the school, and a requirement of the National Curriculum, to tailor the curriculum to suit individual needs and to have high expectations of every pupil. Both tasks set, and response expected, should be appropriate to the stage of language development reached by the children. High attaining pupils are given varying experiences in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding and make links across their learning. Children experiencing learning difficulties are given extra help to overcome these using intervention strategies and programmes and in some cases one to one tuition. Teachers act on advice provided by outside agencies, using strategies and resources available to them, in order to provide the best support. English lessons also take into account personal targets, including support records and any advice from the SENCO. Children working on specific intervention programmes are able to practise these skills during English lessons and use the strategies to help them make better progress.

- See SEND Policy

### **Progression of skills and the range of experiences**

Teachers carefully select genres to study in order to help pupils to meet the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum for their year group. They plan and review the past learning of pupils and the areas of the curriculum they have covered alongside colleagues across the school, to ensure pupils are given opportunities to build on their existing knowledge and skills and broaden them. Where necessary, teachers access advice and support from a variety of providers and consider past and current documentation as recommended by Herts for Learning. When planning for pupils to have wide and varied experiences, teachers consider their past experiences, agreed whole school topics and consider topical issues that arise, taking full advantage of new opportunities.

- See curriculum maps.
- Herts for Learning – progression papers.

### **Resources**

The most important resource in promoting language development is the teacher, so reasonably sized classes are obviously a great advantage, allowing more time to be spent with each child. Teaching Assistants and voluntary helpers have a key role to play, providing support for a range of activities and opportunities for purposeful talk. Opportunities for class teachers to work alongside individuals and groups of children are also considered when organizing activities and deploying staff members in the classroom.

The central resource area provides a range of consumables and specialist resources which can be accessed as required. Other centralised resources include those for handwriting, phonics and spelling and reading and writing. The school has a good selection of books for individual reading, both in the library and each classroom, a large range of Guided Reading sets and Big Books, and a range of other resources for the teaching and learning of English, including laptops, netbooks and PCs. Classrooms are also well equipped, with resources including: writers' toolkits which offer children word banks and writing prompts, vocabulary displays and boards, working walls, pupils' writing and book displays. The Headteacher, subject leader and teaching staff regularly evaluate the range of resources and update them as required, bearing in mind the constant evolution of resources.

- See Guided Reading catalogue.
- See Subject Leader's order records.
- See Budget and Bids records.
- See Action Plan / School Development Plan.

### **Assessment and record keeping**

Formative day-to-day assessments across the different elements of English are essential in providing teachers with information about the learning that has taken place, in order to inform the future planning of lessons. Oral feedback and marking are used to monitor the progress of individual pupils, groups and of the whole class and are an important part of the assessment of learning and essential to the teaching and learning cycle. The National Curriculum 2014 underpins what is taught and learned and teachers monitor pupils' progress according to its aims.

- See 'Assessment and Record Keeping Policy'.
- See 'Assessment for Learning' document.
- See Marking Policy document.

### **Monitoring**

A range of monitoring activities relating to the teaching and learning of English at Ashwell School is regularly undertaken by the English subject leader. Children's work, displayed within classrooms as well as in communal areas, or pieces presented in assembly, provide an insight into the work produced by children across the school and informal, regular opportunities for monitoring. Formal monitoring activities are also undertaken which include: planning scrutiny, work sampling, the review of specific practices in isolation, lesson observations, learning walks, interviews and record files. Most often, formal monitoring activities are completed in response to the School Improvement Plan and subject leader's action plan and so form part of a cycle, although this may not always be the case. End of term and annual assessment results are evaluated carefully, in conjunction with the Headteacher, class teachers and Governors, and used to inform planning. Monitoring reports are presented to the Curriculum Committee of the Governors as required, and these include a summary of the current state of English teaching and learning, proposals for future developments, and their resource implications. This in turn, after consideration by the Governors, feeds into the School Improvement Plan. The English subject leader reports to the English Governor once a term.

- See Monitoring Policy for Governor visits.
- See Monitoring Policy.

**Conclusion**

The English Curriculum of the school is designed to give each child access to the full range of learning experiences set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the National Curriculum. We hope that by following this curriculum all our children are enabled to reach their full potential as confident and competent language users, and thereby gain success, fulfilment and satisfaction as learners.

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