

## Simmondley Primary School English Policy

Literacy skills are essential to attainment in school and to fulfilling opportunities throughout life. By the time children leave Simmondley Primary School, we expect them to be able to communicate confidently and fluently, through speaking and listening, reading and writing.

### Reading

*For the teaching of early reading to be successful, it needs a balanced and creative approach in a context of rich oral language development. This should include the systematic teaching of phonics, as well as focus on application, exploring comprehension and meaning and reading enjoyment.*

The skills of reading are taught through phonics, Guided reading, individual reading and through shared reading in English lessons.

Phonics is taught in ability groups throughout KS1, according to the Letters and Sounds phase children need to work on.

Guided Reading is taught in every class throughout school. Children are grouped by their ability and this is when reading strategies and comprehension skills are taught. Objectives for planning and formative assessment are taken from the reading skills ladder

Individual Reading – all children have a reading book and a reading record. Children follow the school reading scheme, which is made up of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, reading scheme and ‘real books’. These are banded in increasing difficulty of word reading and comprehension skills. Children in Key Stage one should be heard read individually at least once a week, in order to develop their decoding, fluency and expression. In Key Stage 2, where the focus should now be on comprehension, only children who are not at expected levels will be heard regularly

### Reading for Enjoyment

Reading for enjoyment is the fundamental key which underpins the teaching of reading. Encouraging pupils to enjoy reading does not just foster positive reading attitudes and behaviour, but will also have an impact on attainment.

As well as learning phonics and comprehension skills, children need to be immersed in a **rich reading environment, exploring a wide range of quality texts**. All infant classes have a designated story session at the end of the day and Key stage two classes should have an ongoing class novel. All children have access to the school library once a week. All classrooms should have a designated book/reading area (or display in UKS2 where space is tight) where the focus is on reading for enjoyment.

### Assessment of reading

Children's reading is assessed at the end of each term, through the use of PIRA tests, as well as teacher assessments, made in guided reading and individual reading, with reference to the reading skills ladder. This will inform teacher's use of book banding for individual reading books.

### **Writing**

*Writing is much more than just an educational issue – it is an essential skill that allows people to participate fully in today's society. Pupils need to see themselves as writers, understand the writing process and have opportunities to write for real purpose and audience.*

The skills of writing are taught through English lessons, using good quality texts as a basis. There is also an overview of units to be taught in each year group, with an accompanying list of grammar points. An adapted version of 'Pie Corbett's Teaching Guide for Progression in Writing' is used throughout school. This details the knowledge that children need of text structure, sentence construction, word/language use, punctuation and grammatical terminology for each year group.

All children have a writing target ladder in the front of their English book. Targets should be small steps, which will help children to achieve the next writing sublevel. Each time the target is met, it should be dated on the target ladder.

Writing is assessed using the Sheffield STAT system. Writing assessments should be ongoing throughout the year; however it is important that enough time is given after teaching takes place to assess a particular genre of writing.

Children should regularly complete pieces of writing in their topic books, in order to show that they are able to apply skills previously learnt in English lessons. This is a useful way of assessing pieces of writing, ensuring that there is distance between the teaching sequence and the assessed piece. For example, children in Year 3 may learn how to write instructions during the autumn term. They could then apply this to their topic work during the spring term with 'How to make a mummy'.

### **Vocabulary, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling**

*Basic skills are vitally important for the teaching of writing. They should be taught in a creative and engaging way and contextualised to illustrate their application, benefit and effect.*

There is a whole school teaching progression for writing, which outlines the grammar points and terminology that children should be taught in each year group. As far as possible, grammar should usually be taught through a contextualised approach, as part of English lessons, not as a discrete subject. However, this may be consolidated through grammar activities during independent sessions in guided reading time.

## Spelling

Appendix 1 of the English National Curriculum outlines what should be taught in each year group. In Key Stage one, much of the programme links to phonics teaching. However, it is still necessary to teach spelling rules in English lessons so that spelling work is taught in context, alongside the form of writing being developed.

In KS2, spelling is assessed using the 'Single Word Spelling Test'. This is a diagnostic test, which pinpoints exactly which sounds or rules children need to learn next. It also gives a 'spelling age' which may be useful for setting targets for IEPs etc. All children from Y3-Y6 have a weekly list of spellings to take home and practise. These are taken from the SWST level. Regardless of children's individual spelling levels, they should still take part in year group appropriate spelling lessons, when rules and patterns are taught.

## Handwriting

We have a whole school handwriting script which is a 'continuous cursive' style. Its most important feature is that each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper – and consequently, each word is formed in one, flowing movement. The whole school progression includes a 'patter' for teaching all letters, ensuring that there is consistency in teaching. A copy of this progression is given to all parents when children begin in reception, so that children may be encouraged to practise at home.

Children begin to learn how to write each cursive letter individually, as they are introduced to the phonemes and corresponding graphemes in reception. Handwriting is taught discretely throughout school. By the time children enter Year 3, they should be able to use cursive writing confidently. However, they should continue to be taught throughout the lower juniors, supporting the teaching of spelling, vocabulary and grammar. By the end of Year 4, all children should be using neat, fluent cursive writing. Children should continue to practise their handwriting in Years 5 and 6, in order to increase their speed.

## Spoken Language

The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum. In English, as well as across the curriculum, quality talk and questioning between adults and children should be embedded in all lessons. The use of Kagan co-operative structures is used across school, in order to support children to develop their skills in this area.

As specified in the national curriculum, all children learn a range of poems 'off by heart' and these are often showcased during class assemblies.

Rachael Adderley May 2015

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