



ENGLISH POLICY
HOLTSMERE END JUNIOR SCHOOL
To be reviewed Summer 2023

Intent

For children to develop their English reading and writing skills across a range of different genres and the curriculum as a whole. In addition, children are challenged to achieve their full potential, in a safe, secure and caring environment.

The English curriculum has been planned to be mastery of a body of subject-specific knowledge designed specifically to meet the needs of our children.

At Holtsmere End Junior School we believe that the skills are the by-product of the knowledge, not its purpose.

Learning is defined as an alteration of the long-term memory. If nothing has altered in long term memory, nothing has been learned. Therefore the English curriculum has been planned accordingly to 'make knowledge stick'.

At Holtsmere End Junior School we know that vocabulary size is related to academic success, and schooling is crucial for increasing the breadth of vocabulary. Skills and knowledge for the subject have been identified and are lesson specific. Skills start with an imperative verb eg. Explore, consider, investigate... Knowledge is 'to learn' and will be key facts. Hooks to engage children will be planned for and should be varied with a focus on real artefacts where possible. Challenge and Choice should be included in most lessons or some form of differentiation clearly identified. Differentiation will always focus on how children can demonstrate their subject specific ability and not have a barrier to this, for example their ability to write. Planned opportunities for cross curricular writing will be included, where appropriate.

Introduction

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of the writing and reading skills taught and learnt at Holtsmere End Junior School.

The school's policy for English is based on the document 'Programme of Study 2014'. This policy has been drawn up as a result of staff discussion and has the full agreement of the Governing Body. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff. The school follows an adapted version of the Herts for Learning suggested long term genre coverage overview for writing with Reading sessions created around each genre studied. Age-related vocabulary, grammar and spelling skills are taught within appropriately chosen genres. Each child is also taught spellings appropriate to their knowledge through Essential Spelling lessons twice a week.

Implementation

Teaching time

To provide adequate time for developing writing and reading skills, each class teacher will provide daily separate writing and reading lessons. These may vary in length, but will generally last for an hour for writing (or extended to seventy-five minutes for lessons incorporating self and peer-assessment opportunities) and twenty-five minutes for reading lessons. Writing lessons will often directly follow reading lessons, so that learning explored in reading can be applied in writing lessons. Links will also be closely made between writing and reading within other curriculum subjects so pupils can develop and apply their English skills across the curriculum. Writing opportunities are specifically mapped out in each age-phase long term plan. Teachers are also expected to consolidate writing and reading skills taught during early morning work activities. Individual targets for specific children are set in children's writing books in order for them to make accelerated progress. These change half termly or termly and may be continued if necessary. Each class also has a weekly twenty-five minute handwriting lesson following the Letter Joins scheme of work which is also used as an opportunity to consolidate age-related class spelling learning. Children are also provided with two twenty-five minute spelling sessions differentiated appropriately to their spelling's learning journey that also includes phonics teaching where necessary.

Teaching of reading

To support children on their reading skills learning journeys, children are grouped into ability so that adults can specifically support them with their learning.

Reading lessons focus on four key comprehension skills: fluency; retrieval of information; vocabulary decoding and comprehension; and the development of inference skills. Each text read as a class is linked closely to the writing genre studied so children have the opportunity to view good examples of texts they will be writing themselves in class.

Teaching of writing

All pupils will have a dedicated daily writing lesson. Within these lessons, there will be a good balance between whole-class teaching, focused-group learning and, where necessary, scaffolded independent teaching. Children are taught in mixed ability classes where Challenge and Choice is implemented. Children choose from differentiated challenges with the highest challenge often an opportunity for children to evidence their 'greater depth' knowledge. Challenges should all work towards supporting children achieving the same learning outcome but will have to be changed to cater for varying degrees of ability. It is important that teachers try to have a next step for each challenge. Each year group benefits from Teaching Assistant support during lessons for targeted children. This support should be planned for in advance and targeted questions should be created to challenge the children to reflect on how best to accelerate their learning.

An effective writing lesson

An effective writing lesson should include:

- ◆ discussion and whiteboard work recapping assessing the introduction of new learning and consolidating previous learning (approximately five minutes);
- ◆ main teaching input including modelling of the learning and challenges (approximately fifteen - to twenty minutes);
- ◆ independent or group activities where children have to evidence their learning (approximately thirty - to twenty five minutes). This will include: adult led learning where pupils are 'cast off' to complete work independently (where appropriate), collaborative peer tasks and independent work;
- ◆ plenary (five to ten minutes) where whole class: identify their progress against skills taught, clarify misunderstandings and discuss next steps;

- ♦ opportunities provided to allow children to self and peer-assess their work. Good practice will include mini plenaries during lessons to remind children to reflect on and assess their learning.

Each Genre studied should include the following teacher foci:

- age related grammar and spelling learning;
- reading comprehensions skills based on age and genre related text;
- talk for writing opportunities;
- planning opportunities both collaboratively and independently with writing frames and key age-related vocabulary appropriate for the genres;
- extended writing sessions allowing pupils the opportunity to apply the grammar and spelling skills taught within the genre;
- carousel innovation stations used to allow children to independently edit and improve their writing;
- range of resources to support children with their learning including: writing frames; key word lists and success criteria to assess against;
- formal assessment opportunities at the end of genres where pupils evidence their writing skills independently;

Other writing opportunities and homework

Children complete handwriting sessions once a week. Teacher models handwriting following letter joins scheme introduced in the Easter term of 2019. Age-related spelling words taught during the genre covered are used to model handwriting. Children have the opportunity to practice their handwriting and age related spellings, learnt in writing and handwriting lessons, on their tablets or computers at home by logging onto Letterjoins website. Termly handwriting targets are set and assessed against by the class teacher.

Children attend class spelling sessions twice a week. They learn six spellings from a spelling pattern studied in the session and evidence their learning by writing sentences including the correctly spelt words in their spelling homework books.

Differentiated reading homework is set weekly focusing on comprehension and vocabulary skills. Children will also be rewarded for completing their weekly

home/school reading record/ passport. It is expected that all children read at least four times for twenty minutes at home during the week. Parental support and Links with home are encouraged through: reading comprehension homework; home-school liaison / communication books; reading records and a whole school reading evening to support parents with approaches to questioning and accessing texts.

Interventions

Writing Challenge is completed weekly by focus children (agreed at pupil progress meetings) who are working below age-related expectations. This is a small-group intervention focusing on punctuation, grammar and basic sentence structures.

Teaching assistants assess children's learning and feedback progress regularly to class teachers. It is expected focus children make accelerated progress and groups can be changed quickly.

In addition, children with personalised learning targets have the opportunity to work with teaching assistants. 1:1 or in small groups, practising and securing their targets either in class or during intervention time.

Phonics is teaching assistant led, where they work 1:1 assessing each child to find out their phonetic gaps. These gaps are then filled in a variety of different mini-tasks such as: word play, games and specialised reading books. Evidenced work is recorded in folders kept in the child's classroom.

Where appropriate, children will participate in reading interventions that supports them to develop decoding skills- this is usually within the reading session with a small-group focus. Children may also participate in reading fluency interventions to improve their confidence and fluency when reading.

Links between English and other subjects

English contributes to many subjects within the primary curriculum and opportunities will be sought to consolidate and extend children's writing and reading skills within all of the curriculum. Subject leaders will ensure that specific writing and reading skills are being modelled and evidenced in children's afternoon lessons so that children have the opportunity to apply their learning skills in a variety of contexts. Cross-curricular links will be identified within

writing plans and other-subject long-term plans. Every year group will complete one piece of cross-curricular writing, per term, in English lesson time.

School and Class Organisation

How we cater for pupils who are more able

Where possible, more able pupils will be taught within their own class and stretched through differentiated group work and extra challenges. When working with the whole class, teachers will direct some questions towards the more able to maintain their involvement and give these pupils the opportunity to peer teach and explain concepts to the class. Challenge and Choice offers children the opportunity to choose the level of their challenge and a 'more-able' challenge will be set in writing lessons where appropriate.

Pupils with special educational needs and individual education plans

Teachers will aim to include all pupils fully in their daily writing lessons. All children benefit from an emphasis on oral and mental work (particularly at the beginning of a genre). They will also participate in class by watching and listening to other children demonstrating and explaining their methods. On some occasions, these children have a 'split-start' to help them access learning at their need and to give them the opportunity to become more independent learners. Some pupils may need to be supported with an individualised programme during all writing lessons to help them accelerate their learning and narrow the gap in learning in relation to their peers.

Resources

Each class will use a variety of resources that will be used regularly to support their learning e.g: word banks, writing frames, spelling rulers and success criteria.

Each classroom has a working wall to promote independent learning. Working wall will be updated every week to suit the areas being covered. Each working wall will include key vocabulary for the genre, age-related spellings as well as examples of good models and hints to encourage deeper understanding. Each classroom also has a vocabulary wall to promote the learning of cross-curricular vocabulary.

Computing resources will be used in a variety of ways to effectively support teaching and motivate children's learning. Interactive white-boards, visualisers and iPads are used to support, celebrate and clarify any misunderstandings in children's learning.

SMSC and British Values

In line with the school's equal opportunities policy, all children will have an entitlement to all aspects of the curriculum, in accordance with British values e.g. mutual respect gained through collaborative work in mixed abilities.

Management of Writing and Reading

Role of the Subject Leader

The role of the subject leader is to:

- teach demonstration lessons, modelling to other teachers key skills where necessary;
- ensure teachers are familiar with the curriculum and help them to plan lessons;
- lead by example in the way they teach in their own classroom;
- monitor books and lesson plans, long-term overviews and provide feedback to staff on half-termly basis, making sure targets set are reached and hold staff to account for their pedagogy;
- prepare, organise and lead INSET, with the support of the Headteacher to raise standards in the subject;
- work co-operatively with the SENCO and TA's;
- observe colleagues with a view to identifying the support they may need to accelerate learning and to ensure the quality of teaching is at least good or outstanding;
- attend INSET and other training provided by HFL and other advisors;
- inform parents and carers of how to best support their children's learning at home;
- ensure that writing remains a high profile in the school by: organising Spelling B competitions and facilitating other English learning opportunities,
- ensure there is a good writing environment within each classroom and across the school by monitoring classrooms and school displays through learning walks.

Impact

Assessment

Formal and informal assessment will take place at three inter-connected levels: short-term, medium-term and long-term. These assessments will be used to inform teaching in a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and assessment.

Short-term assessment

Short-term assessments will be an informal part of every lesson to check children's understanding and inform day-to-day lesson plans and responsive interventions for that day. Many teachers will use pitch and expectation questions to assess understanding and use open ended questions to deepen thinking. This includes using named questions and a general 'no-hands-up' learning environment.

Whiteboard work will also be planned for in advance and used to assess children's understanding of concepts taught.

Children will have the opportunity to self and peer-assess their own progress and recognise their next steps. This will be evident within pupil's books in written self and peer-assessments across each genre studied. Self and peer-assessment will always be part of extended writing session's Success Criteria. This will enable children to rigorously assess their own or other's extended writing skills.

Medium-term assessment

Medium-term assessments consist of, on average, three pieces of unaided writing per term. Children independently write texts inspired from the different genres covered in that term and apply the skills taught in the genre topic.

This writing will be completed in Unaided Writing books and then used to support half-termly teacher assessment based on the end-of-year statements for each child.

For reading, children are continuously assessed within reading lessons through teachers annotating their weekly plan template. Teachers will also be reading with all children in their class to assess that they are on the correct reading book and passport. This will be completed half termly- termly.

Long-term assessment

Long-term Reading assessments consists of half-yearly formal tests which are used to support the termly teacher assessments to ensure accurate tracking for each child. End of year statements for each child are tracked and assessed against for each tracker child and results are collated for all children. Provision is then discussed in Pupil Progress meetings and resources are allocated to children who have not made expected progress. Accurate information will then be reported to parents and the child's next teacher.

Handwriting is formally assessed against age-related expectations each term by the class teacher. Spellings and Grammar learning is also formally assessed twice a year to inform planning.

Response to assessment

In response to children's needs, teachers, along with the Subject Leader, will organise English weeks to identify and 'fill' the gaps in children's learning and to deepen their understanding of English. Additionally, the 'end of year statements' are used extensively by each class teacher in order to make continuous assessments and judgements to inform the next steps in the children's learning. Summative assessment leads to conversations in Pupil Progress where provision is then made for pupils not making expected.

Feedback and Marking

Teachers are expected to mark in detail in at least three or four of the weekly writing lessons. Marking will include next steps, closing the gap comments, scaffolds and reminders to support children's learning. Planned for time will be set aside for children to respond to next step questions (either during early morning work or beginning of writing lessons) and teachers will respond to the children's answers.

For reading, teachers are expected to mark all the children's work in the three lessons evidenced in their Reading Comprehension book each week.