



Staplehurst School

Literacy Policy

Date

Policy reviewed and ratified by the Headteacher
Policy to be next reviewed

20 September 2018
September 2021

Literacy Policy

(Policy to be read in conjunction with policies on other subjects, Early Years Foundation Stage and Spelling. This policy also contains, specifically, our policy statement about the teaching of reading – see Section 5.)

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1. The English curriculum develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, opinions and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.
- 1.2. Teachers and pupils in our school usually use the term 'literacy' to describe the English curriculum. Literacy skills will be taught and practised in many areas across the curriculum, and not just in 'English' lessons.
- 1.3. Our objectives in the teaching of literacy skills are:
 - to enable children to speak clearly and audibly, to communicate effectively through speech and to take account of the perspective of those to whom they are speaking;
 - to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points, and sometimes the detail, of what they have heard;
 - to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
 - to enable children to become effective communicators, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities;
 - to help children become confident, independent readers, developing their understanding of meaning conveyed at word, sentence and whole text level;
 - to enable children to develop as enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with a wide range of different types of material, including challenging and substantial texts;
 - to foster the enjoyment of writing for a wide range of purposes, and a recognition of its value;
 - to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
 - to develop skills in planning, drafting, evaluating and editing their writing;
 - to engender in children a love of literature and an appreciation of our literary heritage;
 - to enable and encourage pupils to apply their literacy skills across the whole curriculum.

2 Teaching and learning

- 2.1 We use a variety of teaching and learning approaches in our literacy lessons to enable children to achieve the requirements of Curriculum 2014. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in relation to literacy. Our timetable ensures that pupils have a substantial daily lesson which focuses specifically on the development of literacy skills, for example, engaging in a whole-class reading or writing activity, a whole-class focused word or sentence analysis activity, a guided group or independent reading or writing activity, or a whole-class session to review progress and learning. Whilst there is a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching, the independent activity gives an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance pupils' learning. They have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as word banks, phonic resources, dictionaries and thesauruses. Children use ICT in literacy lessons where it enhances their learning, such as in drafting their work and in using multimedia resources to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible, we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum, and will often use incidental opportunities to teach and reinforce literacy skills in other subject areas.
- 2.2 In all classes, children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We

achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons, we do it through differentiated group work, while in others, we ask children to work from the same starting point before moving on to develop their own ideas. We use classroom assistants to support some children, and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

3 English curriculum planning

- 3.1 English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. Teachers plan and deliver lessons in a variety of ways to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014.
- 3.2 We carry out curriculum planning in English, or literacy, in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). Our yearly teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach to each year. Curriculum maps are available on our website.
- 3.3 Our medium-term plans give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The subject leader is responsible for overseeing and reviewing these plans.
- 3.4 Class teachers complete a weekly (short-term) plan for the teaching of literacy. This lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning and doing. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis.
- 3.5 We plan the activities in literacy so that they build on the children's prior learning. While we give children of all abilities the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, we also ensure progression in the schemes of work, so that there is an increasing challenge for the children as they move up through the school.

4 The Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.1 We teach literacy skills in reception year as an integral part of the EYFS curriculum. Progressive skill development is outlined in Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL), one of the six Areas of Learning in the EYFS curriculum. In particular, in the EYFS, the CLL curriculum cannot be covered in isolation from the other five areas of learning. Opportunities to practise literacy skills, for example, reading labels, responding to written instructions, mark-making and early writing as part of play-based learning will be provided throughout the learning environment in the Reception classroom and outdoor area. Children have a daily phonics lesson as a crucial element in developing their early reading and writing skills.
- 4.2 We plan the teaching and development of literacy skills to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. We give all children the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore words and texts, to enjoy them, to learn about them, and to use them in various situations.

5 Reading Policy

- 5.1 The teaching of reading and children's acquisition of reading skills is the bedrock of our English curriculum. Becoming an effective and proficient reader is the gateway to learning for our children, and success in most other subjects of the curriculum is dependent upon learning to read well.
- 5.2 Children begin to develop pre-reading skills involving, for example, the ability to visually focus, to concentrate for increasingly sustained periods, to distinguish between visual shapes and to notice similarities, and to begin to understand that pictures, symbols and print can convey meaning, from the very youngest age.
- 5.3 In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we aim to give children continuous experience of the medium of print and text through all their learning experiences and in all the Areas of Learning in the EYFS curriculum. The environment is rich with appropriate text: labels, captions, simple instructions, names, alphabet prompts and children's own mark-making. Adults continuously model reading in the learning environment, embedding in children's understanding the idea that print conveys meaning and is invaluable to us in our lives. Children are taught from the

youngest age to value and care for books, to understand their structure, to handle them appropriately and to enjoy sharing them with each other. We develop comprehension skills through discussion/questioning. This takes place when looking at shared texts or during individual reading.

- 5.4 We believe that an understanding and knowledge of phonics, the relationship between graphemes (letters or groups of letters) and phonemes (the 44 constituent sounds of spoken English) is essential as children learn to read. Children's ability to phonetically 'decode' letters and words into oral sounds is continuously assessed throughout the EYFS and Key Stage 1, in order that the next steps in children's knowledge of phonics can be effectively planned and taught. All children in these key stages have a daily phonic session to support their development of both reading and writing skills. Phonics is initially taught as a class, then in ability groups to enable reinforcement for the less able and to stretch the more able. At Staplehurst, we follow the Read, Write Inc programme for phonics teaching.
- 5.5 However, children cannot learn to be skilled readers through phonics alone. We teach children to use a wide range of clues in tackling unfamiliar words and phrases in their reading: whole word recognition, picture clues, contextual clues based on the meaning of the text and grammatical correctness.
- 5.6 We do not use one single structured 'reading scheme' in our school, but believe in guiding and supporting children to read 'real books' with text of an appropriate level of difficulty. For this reason, many of our books, fiction and non-fiction are colour-coded to indicate their level of difficulty, in the EYFS, Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. Alongside ensuring that children read books of progressive difficulty, we do not deny children access to books which interest them but which may be too difficult for them to read independently. We seek to support children in accessing such books and encourage the use of 'paired reading' with an adult or a more able reader.
- 5.7 Children become avid readers through developing a love of books and through reading being made fun by teachers and other adults, providing excitement and inspiring the imagination. Parents and carers have a key role to play in helping to promote a love of books and reading at home, and we regard sharing books and support for reading to be one of the most important aspects of 'help with homework' which parents can provide.
- 5.8 All our classrooms have dedicated reading areas, which we aim to make comfortable and inviting, and in which teachers ensure there is a range of stimulating and attractive books and other reading material. We display and promote books throughout our school, and learning support areas to which all children have frequent and regular access, both for free choice of reading material and to do book-based research in order to support their learning across the curriculum. We also value and promote computer-based reading resources and the internet to support children's reading.
- 5.9 Reading pervades the curriculum and children have continuous opportunities to develop their reading skills, whatever the area of learning. However, throughout the school, classes have daily sessions of group and guided reading, during which they engage collaboratively in purposeful reading activities or exercises, or are taught directly by the teacher or a teaching assistant. During reading sessions, the teacher can read text at an appropriate level with a group of children, or sometimes with the whole class, teaching next step reading skills, including higher level skills such as using inference and deduction to understand meaning. Reading sessions are teachers' key opportunity to assess children's reading and to plan which skills they need to develop next. In this planning, the school uses the reading objectives in the National Framework for literacy and numeracy. We believe that well-planned group and guided reading activities are more effective in developing children's reading skills than simply ensuring that every child reads aloud from a 'reading book' every day. We do, however, give all children the opportunity to read aloud regularly, to an adult, and encourage parents and carers to support this activity at home.
- 5.10 We use resources from the Better Reading Partnership Programme and from the Every Child a Reader materials to support children who need additional support with their reading. When children need such extra support, we liaise closely with parents and carers and seek to work in partnership with them to ensure that all children make the expected progress in reading.

6 Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

- 6.1 The literacy skills that children develop are linked to, and applied in, every area of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school.
- 6.2 Mathematics, science and design technology. The teaching of literacy skills contributes significantly to children's mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in the EYFS develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these matters with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that involve counting and sequencing. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems, in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions, and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language. Pupils will be expected to engage in research as part of their learning in science and design technology, to write a range of types of report on their work and to explain and communicate verbally about their learning, to the teacher and each other.
- 6.3 History, geography and religious education (RE). While these humanities subjects involve significant subject specific knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding, the medium for researching, learning about and communicating is, of course, the English language. Pupils will constantly call upon and develop their literacy skills in finding information, ordering and making sense of what they have learned and communicating it in writing and orally.
- 6.4 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. The teaching of literacy skills contributes to the teaching of PSHE and citizenship by encouraging children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Older children also research, debate and write about topical social problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices, and meet and talk with visitors who work within the school community.
- 6.5 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teaching of literacy skills enables our children to offer critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their life, both within and outside school. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts bring them into contact with their own literary heritage and with texts from a diverse range of cultures. The organisation of our lessons and break times allows children to work and play together, giving them the chance to use their speaking and listening skills in developing social collaboration and understanding.

7 English and ICT

- 7.1 The selective use of computer software, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text levels. It also offers ways of developing learning which are not always possible with conventional methods, for example, through individualised interactive learning. Software is used to support independent reading (text to speech) and writing (predictive word processors, word banks and spell checkers). A range of software is used to develop specific grammatical and spelling skills.
- 7.2 Pupils frequently use word processing facilities to record and edit their writing, and have access to laptops and computers in the classroom, as well as regular access to the ICT suite.
- 7.3 ICT is used at whole-class, group and independent levels. Screen projection of text, and the use of visualisers enables published texts and pupils' own writing to be read, shared and discussed. Through these means, classes engage in writing and reading, guided or modelled effectively by the teacher. A wide variety of text types and resources are available through the internet or CD-ROMs to support specific learning, focused on particular textual analysis.

8 English and inclusion

- 8.1 All children, whatever their ability and individual needs, have a basic entitlement to be taught essential literacy skills, and to have the opportunity to develop those skills to the best of their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our teaching of literacy skills, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of

those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policy on Special Educational Needs & Disability.

8.2 When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the pupil may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

8.3 Teaching staff provide support for literacy by using:

- individualised guided writing and reading;
- differentiated texts that children can more easily read and understand;
- visual and written materials in different formats;
- ICT and other technological aids;
- alternative communication such as signs and symbols;
- translation and amanuensis.

9 Assessment

9.1 Teachers assess children's work in English in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the learning objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide children's progress. Older children are encouraged to review their work and make self-assessments about how they can improve their own work.

9.2 Teachers use medium-term assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work.

9.3 Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, they are able to set targets for the next school year, and to summarise the progress of each child before discussing it with the child's parents or carers. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year.

9.4 These long-term assessments are based on teacher assessments, supported by national assessment guidelines, and may be informed by the use of standardised, optional tests. Pupils participate in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers also make termly assessments of children's progress based on expectations from the national curriculum.

9.5 Teachers meet regularly to moderate assessments across a range of writing and other activities to ensure that our teacher assessments are accurate and in line with national standards.

9.6 Staff are continuously developing their English subject knowledge and the subject leader takes an active role in disseminating best practice and making recommendations for staff training.

10 Resources

10.1 We have a very wide range of resources to support the teaching of literacy across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a variety of age-appropriate learning materials. Each classroom has reading and speaking and listening areas, with access to audio texts. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the internet in the classroom, the library and in the ICT room.

11 Monitoring and review

11.1 The co-ordination and planning of the English curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping abreast of current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the Headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and areas for development in literacy in the school, and indicates areas for further improvement;

- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's learning, and to observe and review literacy lessons across the school.

11.2 As part of the Governing body, the Learning & Development Committee meets regularly with the subject leader to review progress.

11.3 This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.