



## Thornhill Primary School

### English Policy

Date Issued	Spring 2019
Governor Approval Date	Spring 2019
Date of Next Review	Spring 2021

This policy needs to be read alongside other school policies including:

- Homework policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage policy
- More- Able policy
- SEND policy
- Marking and Feedback policy

This policy also should be read alongside the 'National Curriculum in England Key Stages 1 & 2 and other documents from the Standards and testing Agency.

Our Curriculum overview, medium and short term planning can also help support this policy, as will the Marking Guidance document.

#### **Rationale:**

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

At Thornhill Primary School, we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this is necessarily cross-curricular and a constant throughout school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's reading skills, spoken language, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (p10 National Curriculum)

We are an inclusive school, we set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every stage, throughout their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We use one to one support, small groups and booster classes to help with this. We plan and provide support for those children for whom English is an additional language, for children who have speech difficulties and for those with disabilities as outlined in the SEND code of practice. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that 'pupils...who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised' (p13)

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## **Aims**

The aims of this English policy are clearly outlined below and relate to the different areas of the English language that are taught in school on a daily basis.

### **Through the teaching of English, we aim to develop in our pupils the ability to:**

- communicate effectively in speech and writing,
- listen with understanding,
- become fluent and responsive readers,
- develop a lifelong love of reading and writing.

### **To develop our pupils as Speakers and Listeners we:**

- give them opportunities to express their ideas to a range of audiences,
- give them opportunities to take part in group discussion and drama activities,
- encourage them to listen and respond appropriately to others,
- help them to understand the need to adapt their speech to different situations,
- give them opportunities to evaluate and reflect on their own speech,
- encourage them to use the vocabulary and grammar of standard English whenever appropriate.

### **To develop our pupils as Writers we:**

- teach them to write effectively for a range of purposes and a range of reasons, adapting their vocabulary and style as appropriate,
- encourage them to write with interest, commitment and enjoyment,
- show them how to write in a variety of forms such as stories, poems, reports and letters,
- show them how to evaluate and edit in order to improve their own writing,
- provide individual 'next steps' for all children to help improve the quality of writing,
- show them how to use punctuation to make meaning clear to their reader,
- give them knowledge and the strategies, appropriate to their age, to become confident and accurate spellers,
- teach them a fluent and legible style of handwriting, promoting an understanding of how to present work appropriately.

### **To develop our pupils as Readers we:**

- teach them to read accurately and fluently using a range of strategies that are age appropriate,
- provide children with individual guidance to help children improve their reading skills,
- help them to understand and respond to what they read using semantic, syntactic, graphophonic and pragmatic cues within the texts that they read,
- encourage them to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books,
- encourage them to read independently and with enjoyment,
- teach them how to use the six key reading skills (understanding vocabulary in context, inferring meaning, prediction, explanation, retrieval and summary) to thoroughly understand texts.

### **Curriculum Organisation**

In the Foundation Stage the skills of listening, attention, understanding and speaking are encompassed in the prime area of Communication and Language and are fundamental to allow children to be successful in all learning.

In Key Stage 1 Reading and Writing skills are delivered through the specific area of English and enhanced in cross - curricular activities. Teachers provide activities which are interesting and motivating and provide the best context for increasing children's knowledge about the English language. It is also necessary to focus separately on aspects of knowledge about the language such as phonics and grammar so that children learn what they need to know in a systematic way.

Across the school, our teaching is planned using the National Curriculum programmes of study as a guide. We plan literacy sessions flexibly and ensure that the appropriate balance of whole class, group and individual teaching is retained. Extra time for specific intervention in the week is set aside for independent reading and writing when this is appropriate.

Expectations are made clear to children across the school through the use of learning questions and success criteria. Following on from many pieces of work are 'even better if' statements and/or 'next steps' which provide children with areas for development in future sessions.

Each child is given a reading diary/learning planner for staff and parents to record the book title etc., to make comments in and to give pointers to help the child make progress with their reading. Each class has easy access to a wide range of non-fiction and fiction books from a range of publishers for children to read for pleasure, as well as access to our specific reading schemes which also offer a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts to ensure children are engaged throughout their own reading journey. We encourage children to read as regularly as possible with an adult at home and provide support sessions for parents to help upskill our whole school community.

### **Phonics**

Throughout the Foundation Stage, early phonetic awareness is promoted and developed through every day activities and routines such as listening games, shared reading, singing and interactive planning sessions. Children are encouraged to identify familiar letters in their name and hear the sounds they are making, identify familiar words, to listen for sounds and to remember sounds.

In Reception and Key Stage 1 phonics is timetabled to be taught daily in planned sessions based on the 'Letters and Sounds' progression of phonemes and graphemes to be learned. Read, Write, Inc. is used to link the phonetic development to reading. Children are taught to segment and blend words and apply their learning for reading decodable and 'alien' words. A wide range of activities are used by practitioners to help children achieve the goal of fluent phonetic decoding and word recognition.

Children are supported in different ways according to their learning preferences and differences.

Towards the end of Year 1 all children will take part in the national phonics screening test. They will achieve either a pass or fail. If a child does not meet the expected standard at the end of Year 1, they will retake the phonics screening test in Year 2.

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

In Nursery and Reception, children are introduced to the basic principles of grammar and punctuation appropriate for their age range. They learn through a wide range of activities such as: singing rhymes, conversations with adults, stories, interactive educational programmes, phonics, reading and writing.

In Key Stage 1, a more formal approach is taken with weekly grammar and punctuation teaching taking place in English sessions. Children's learning is also supported through weekly spellings and in teacher led writing and reading activities.

In Key Stage 2, the teaching of punctuation and grammar is woven into many of our daily reading and writing lessons, with children understanding the importance of recognising the grammatical features of their own writing as well as how authors use techniques to enhance their own writing. The importance of spelling development is also embedded into our daily teaching; however, all children also receive weekly individualised spellings appropriate to their age and ability.

### **Assessment**

Children in the Foundation Stage have their attainment on entry assessed by observations and their progress is tracked and monitored through the use of Early Years Outcomes throughout Nursery and Reception. The Foundation Stage profile will indicate if children are reaching expected levels by the end of Reception and will be used in transition into Key Stage 1.

In Key Stage 1 children's attainment will be judged according to work produced, observations and discussions. All assessment data will be stored centrally using Target Tracker for half termly analysis as well as kept easily accessible in children's books.

In Key Stage 2 children are involved in a range of self and peer assessment activities where they evaluate their own work and the work of others according to a set of criteria. Specific learning questions, success criteria and 'next steps' are made available to children in their writing books to help each child understand what they need to do in order to make progress.

### **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

- All children are given access to a broad and balanced English curriculum regardless of gender, ability, race or religion.
- Provision will be made for individual needs in I.E.P's.
- Equal opportunities are provided for boys and girls, also for children with special needs, those who are identified as more- able and children from different cultural backgrounds.
- Children with English as an additional language (E.A.L.) will be given access to additional resources and teaching to support their learning and to ensure they make maximum progress from their individual starting points.

### **SEND**

- Children with special needs will be identified and work within their individual level. If needed, they will have an IEP and work with support under the direction of the class teacher. A range of literacy intervention programs run throughout the school for those who need extra help.

### **Continual Professional Development**

The professional development of teaching and support staff is key to ensuring that children in the school receive an up-to-date English curriculum delivered using engaging, modern, and tried and tested methods for maximum impact.

To ensure this:

- Staff attend relevant courses during the school year
- English lead attends local training and reports back to all staff

- Staff have access to a range of web based resources to assist with the development of key priorities for the school
- Moderation of writing is seen as a priority - staff attend termly external writing moderation with local schools and moderate internally. Those staff involved with end of key stage testing have access to wider moderation resources when necessary
- The English lead hold documentation relating to external moderation in leadership files.

#### **Homework**

We recognise the importance of homework and the significant difference parental support can have on a child's progress. Literacy homework is set once every two weeks in KS1 and every week in KS2.

The homework set should further challenge the children's knowledge of concepts they have learned in class that week.

#### **Health and Safety**

- All aspects of this policy and practice are carried out with regard to our health and safety procedures.
- All relevant risk assessments should be read in conjunction with this policy.