



# English Policy

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## Introduction

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of English teaching and learning at Holly Primary School. That includes all aspects of reading, writing and spelling. We believe that English is fundamental to learning across every area of the curriculum, and that the ability to speak, listen, read and write is the greatest gift that we can give to the children at our school. We are providing them with the means to become lifelong learners.

## Our Aims

We aim to develop pupils' abilities through an integrated programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing in accordance with the English National Curriculum 2014. Pupils are given opportunities, within a broad and balanced curriculum, to consolidate and reinforce literacy skills that they have been taught.

## Our aims in English are:

- To continue to develop a consistent whole school approach to the teaching of reading, phonics and spelling.
- To improve standards in spelling.
- To improve reading progress.
- To continue to emphasise the importance of handwriting and presentation.
- To use respond to marking in all lessons, including reading.
- To nurture a love of English and enjoyment in all areas.
- For our children to read and write with confidence and enthusiasm, demonstrating fluency, understanding and an ability to use a range of independent strategies to self-correct, edit and improve.
- For our children to enjoy reading and develop a love of books.
- For children to have an interest in the morphology of words, allowing them to develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written forms.
- For children to understand that there are different text types and genres and that they can apply this knowledge to their written work.
- For the children to be able to understand the technical elements of writing, alongside an ability to use flare and imagination.
- To improve standards for all groups in school so that each child can reach their full potential.
- To enrich and support other areas of the curriculum.

## Subject Organisation

The English curriculum is delivered using the National Curriculum 2014, following the statutory requirements for teaching and learning.

Our planning system includes a long term plan, as set out in the English curriculum, to be achieved by each year group. Our medium term plan includes half termly units of work which include the main teaching objectives and when they will be taught. These have been developed by staff to deliver the curriculum in a fun and exciting way, and include texts to be used and key outcomes. Short term plans are generally made

by staff in specific year groups, to cover the objectives but to be adapted to specific class groups as appropriate. They include the support of SEND children and the role of teaching assistants.

### **We will achieve these aims by:**

#### **Spelling**

This is closely linked to our phonics programme (see separate phonics policy). From the earliest stage, children are taught to apply the phonic skills that they learn using Little Wandle to help them read and spell unknown words until that knowledge becomes embedded. Errors are corrected consistently and promptly, thereby allowing children to spell independently and confidently. We follow the Little Wandle revised Letters and Sounds programme which introduces the GPCs that the children need to support their spelling. The children in Foundation and Key Stage 1 are taught phonics for 20 minutes each day. Each child takes homework on a weekly basis that summarises the phonemes learnt during the week, including the spelling of tricky words and the words they can spell using the phonemes learnt that week. Their progress and retention is constantly assessed by the class teacher, as well as assessed half-termly using the appropriate Little Wandle assessment. This sits alongside consistent correction of errors in their work.

At Key Stage 2, those children who are working below age related expectations are provided with Little Wandle keeping up sessions. This focuses on gaps in their retention by using an initial assessment system, allowing a bespoke method of teaching and monitoring. Those children working at the expected standard are assessed and tracked within the writing assessment framework, and follow the Twinkl spelling programme.

Throughout school, children are set some form of spelling homework. In class, spelling errors are identified and corrected in all books to encourage an understanding of the importance of correct spelling across the board and to raise the profile of spelling throughout school. The teacher's strong knowledge of the phonemes and tricky words taught means that they are able to hone in on the GPCs that they are expected to know and apply. Similarly, spelling rules and patterns are on display in each class to remind the children how and when to apply various spelling strategies.

#### **Writing**

Throughout school, a cross curricular approach to writing is used. We aim to inspire children to write by providing a strong stimulus, often linked to a high quality text. Writing is taught through a wide variety of means, to inspire every type of learner. These include shared, guided, modelled and independent writing across both key stages. Grammar is embedded within writing sessions as well as being taught discretely. Our constant aim is to improve standards in writing alongside an understanding of the purpose of writing. Success criteria are used to facilitate differentiation and to give the children a clear focus. They allow opportunities for progression and ensure all children are challenged accordingly. A strong emphasis is placed on the importance of planning and how to edit successfully in order to improve the quality of writing. Response marking is successfully used to allow individuals to closely focus on areas for improvement. School has a clear and consistent marking policy which makes transition from one class to another seamless. Similarly, we have a thorough writing assessment in place, which passes from one class teacher to the next.

Handwriting follows a clear policy and is taught both overtly and discretely from Foundation and upwards, in accordance with the Little Wandle grapheme and mnemonic guidance. We use these to ensure correct early formation, which then prepares the children for joining their handwriting. Teachers model handwriting in their marking.

## Speaking and listening

At F1 speaking and listening is at the heart of early years learning. Language is modelled and early speech problems identified. Those children with specific needs are given an individual programme and supported by a highly trained TA alongside SEND support. All F1 children follow the Letters and Sounds phase 1 programme.

Throughout school, speaking, listening, group discussion and interaction, paired talk, puppet work and drama are used to permeate the whole curriculum, encouraging a safe environment in which all opinions and ideas are valued. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise standards in reading and writing. Pupils are encouraged to speak confidently with intonation, clear diction, accurate grammar and with a regard for their audience.

## Reading

At Holly Primary we are determined that every child will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. To this end we put reading at the heart of our curriculum. In F2 and Key Stage 1 reading is taught through smaller guided reading groups, following the clear Little Wandle programme and using the matching Big Cat Phonics books. As a school we have invested heavily in the high quality texts that support the children and staff in this. Pupils are taught to read by decoding, developing prosody and thereby strengthening their comprehension skills. They access a broad range of texts and become children who choose to read for pleasure and develop a wider cultural capital, through questioning and discussion.

By Key Stage 2 most children access a whole class approach, following one text but completing a variety of different activities to embed the reading skills needed, as appropriate to their year group according to the national curriculum. Those who require a more structured keeping up approach are assessed and, based on this, taught via the clearly structured Little Wandle small group method. The Little Wandle language has been married with a VIPERS approach, whereby an aspect of reading in focused sessions allows the children to understand the text and author intent more fully. Children complete written activities and speaking and listening tasks in order to internalise the text and how it is structured. This approach aims to improve the quality of written responses to comprehension questions, as well as deepening their understanding of how reading feeds into writing. By understanding an author's word choice, they also understand the power of language that they use in their writing.

## High quality texts

As a school we invest heavily in high quality texts that will be valued by children and parents alike and nurture a love of books and what lies within. These take the form of phonetically matched books, colour-banded books once children no longer rely on phonetically decodable books and a range of beautiful, high quality texts that parents can share with their children. We also have texts that are used within school as part of a guided reading programme.

## Reading stars

We want every child to have the opportunity to practice their reading skills at home as well as at school. They each have a reading diary and are encouraged to read daily, discuss what they have read and fill in the diary. Each class has a wall of reading stars and the children move along with every read in their diary. When a child reaches 100 reads at home they receive a gift and a certificate. At 200 reads they are able to choose their own, brand new book to keep and at 300 reads they are invited to a party to celebrate their commitment to daily reading. We are aware that not every child is able to read at home for a number

of reasons. The system allows us to see where this occurs and to intervene by creating opportunities for those children to read in school.

### Little free library

We understand that not every child has access to books beyond school. So we have set up our Little Free Library where parents and children can borrow books to read. This library has books for the parents as well as for the children and is providing another opportunity to explore and enjoy a range of texts, without the expense. It has proved extremely popular and the parents now run it for the school on a rota basis. The library plugs the gaps in accessibility to books for adults and children alike, following the reduction in local library opening hours.

We also encourage parents to share books by inviting them to come into foundation on a weekly basis to share books with the children.

### Education Library Service

As a school we made the decision to fund 220 texts from the education library service. These texts are pre-ordered to match the programmes of study in each year group. Each phase of school has 50 high quality texts delivered each half term, to be used alongside the theme of work being studied. They may be in the form of guided readers, non-fiction texts or fiction, to support both the children and members of staff. Alongside this they deliver 20 newly published texts which staff have the opportunity to read, in order to keep up to date with new publications. Over the school year we therefore have 1320 texts in school that we wouldn't otherwise have access to. On top of this we also pay for the Education Library service mobile library to come to school for three days in an academic year. This houses a vast array of books and, again, allows our children to visit a library at a time when cuts in the local library service makes access difficult.

### World Book Day

Although we celebrate books and reading throughout the year, we always take part in the nationwide World Book Day so that children can see that they are part of a bigger picture. We love pairing up with other classes and sharing books as a school. We vary our theme year on year and always encourage the children to redeem their free book token.

### Reading intervention

Every child in school has numerous opportunities to read as part of their school day. We encourage quiet reading times, paired reading and reading aloud to the rest of the class. But some children require a little more targeted time, either in a small group or on a one to one basis. To this end we have skilled teachers and teaching assistants who have all completed the Little Wandle training, allowing them to identify any children who are struggling to keep up and plugging the gaps by formally assessing them and individually tailoring programmes. We have one teaching assistant who is dedicated to keeping an overview of the children who are working below age related expectations. With the support, guidance and monitoring of the English lead they assess all children individually, using the Little Wandle placement assessments, and create a targeted individual precision reading programme. The children work on this each week. Older children may also work on a rapid reading programme, a systematic comprehension programme or as part of an after school reading club to boost confidence and nurture a love of reading. We also invest in Lightning Squad which targets our Pupil Premium children and those we feel need extra support, perhaps because they are unable to access support from home. They may also work with a literacy volunteer, funded by school, who provides additional opportunities for our vulnerable pupils to enjoy books. Our aim is to target the correct intervention for each child.

## **Cross curricular opportunities**

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross curricular links. They plan for pupils to practice and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Through themed work, children are given a purpose for writing. ICT plays an integral part in the learning of English. Lessons are often, though not solely, taught using an interactive whiteboard and children will also use laptops and ipads to research and present their work.

## **Inclusion, EAL and Equal Opportunities**

Our aim is that all children achieve in English according to their individual abilities. Pupils underachieving are identified and provided with support. Interventions are put in place according to need. Those with special needs in any area of English have Individual Education Plans and their class teacher will be engaged in an ongoing dialogue with their parents. All children receive input from the class teacher, differentiated work to ensure progress, support from teaching assistants where possible according to need and appropriate and achievable targets. Teachers use ongoing assessment to identify target groups or individual children who work with teaching assessments on targeted interventions. Our close adherence to the Little Wandle revised letters and sounds programme means that EAL children who start with us or join us can be given a very clear structure to support language acquirement. If they join school at any point they are individually assessed, using a Little Wandle placement assessment as part of this to provide the maximum support at ,what can be, a challenging time. All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum, regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

## **Role of English lead**

The subject leader is responsible for improving and monitoring the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating English
- Pupil progress
- Observations and feedback
- Auditing provision
- Purchasing and organising resources
- Keeping up to date with English developments
- Moderation of children's work

## **Parental Involvement**

Our parents are supportive and keen to work with their children at home. We ask them to read with their children each day and complete their reading diary. We encourage them to discuss the text with their child. Weekly spellings are also sent home, with the expectation that the parent supports them when learning these. Regular book fairs are held and the parents are encouraged to use the Little Holly Library. We celebrate reading with them through World Book Day activities.