

# SHEFFORD LOWER SCHOOL

## English Policy



Written by	Adopted by staff	Ratified by governors	Review date
Pamela Finch (Head) and S Sharma (English Lead)	October 2021	November 2021	November 2022

### 1. Rationale

- a. Reading, writing and communication are intrinsically linked and developed together across the curriculum. We believe it is essential for children to speak, read and write fluently in order to make progress in all areas of the curriculum, developing the skills for further education and to prepare them for life in society. English provides the narrative skills for problem solving, critical thinking, analysis and self-awareness, crucial for all aspects of personal growth and development. Reading enables children both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know and is an essential tool when communicating with others. Literature has a high profile in school as we believe it holds an important role in developing children culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.
- b. We believe it is important to enable children to become effective writers so they can develop ideas and communicate meaning to others. Writing should be taught as a purposeful and enjoyable activity in itself. Communication and Language is one of the prime areas of learning within our school. Prime areas of learning lay down the foundation for all children's learning, ensuring that children are able to relate to others, communicate effectively and engage with their environment.

### 2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- a. Handwriting Policy;
- b. Learning and Teaching Policy;
- c. Assessment and Reporting Policy;
- d. Feedback Policy;
- e. Early Years Policy;
- f. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report.

### 3. Aims

- a. At Shefford Lower School, we aim for children of all abilities to:
  - i. Be supported and encouraged to make rapid, sustained progress in reading and writing from their starting points;
  - ii. Read widely and often, both for pleasure and information;
  - iii. Read a range of texts and genres confidently and accurately with fluency and understanding;
  - iv. Employ a full range of reading cues, including phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual. However, in the early teaching of reading, phonics and blending are taught as the primary means of decoding words;
  - v. Foster an interest in words and their meanings including etymology;
  - vi. Have access to a wide range of literature from diverse cultures;
  - vii. Become familiar with significant authors and illustrators, and form opinions about their work;
  - viii. Develop their reading skills in tandem with writing so that their written work is enriched;
  - ix. Communicate their ideas and emotions to others through writing;
  - x. Organise and structure their writing to record their learning clearly;
  - xi. Write with confidence and independence;
  - xii. Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes and audiences;
  - xiii. Plan, revise, edit and evaluate their writing;
  - xiv. Accurately spell words using their knowledge of phonics (sounds and letters), morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure);

- xv. Explore a range of rich and high quality literature based on their learning within all subject areas;
- xvi. Write grammatically correct sentences using a range of punctuation correctly;
- xvii. Be supported and encouraged to make rapid, sustained progress in writing, whatever their starting point;
- xviii. Write neatly in a fluent and legible joined-up style.

#### **4. Our Vision**

- a. Children will be able to read fluently and with confidence, in any subject in their lifelong learning. Children will develop a love of reading and enjoy a range of literature. In writing, children will be able to write clearly and coherently for a range of purposes. Children are given opportunities to progress their speaking and listening skills through drama lessons in every stage of their schooling at Shefford Lower School. They are taught to respond effectively to targets in English and be in pursuit of excellence to achieve their potential. Opportunities for children to be ready for Upper Key Stage 2 are planned for and independence in their learning, encouraged.

#### **5. Learning and Teaching**

- a. Children are taught to read and write following the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and National Curriculum. The learning and teaching of reading and writing takes place both discretely and throughout all areas of the National Curriculum. It takes place with children working individually, in groups with an adult and as a whole class. Opportunities for teaching vocabulary, grammar and punctuation are planned for and arise naturally within whole class shared stories and texts. Class teachers regularly read aloud a range of stories and texts to the class, allowing children to comment on and make sense of the events and experiences within the text.

#### **6. Leadership**

- a. Regular opportunities for moderation of judgements will be supported in school and across schools for all age groups to ensure consistency of age related judgements. There will be opportunities for staff to participate in cross-school moderation activities. Each year group will collaboratively assess and moderate work to ensure consistency and gather evidence on an ongoing basis. Staff will be supported to assess progress and attainment in writing, reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling on an ongoing basis and staff will be supported to use a tracking system to inform their planning. Middle leaders will work with year teams and staff to ensure progress is monitored regularly and interventions are planned for as required for individuals and groups of vulnerable learners. Leaders will plan a robust cycle of monitoring and evaluation for this subject area to ensure consistently high standards in provision and learning.

#### **7. Assessment and Recording**

- a. From the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) parents are informed of individual progress during twice yearly consultation meetings.
- b. Early Excellence Assessment Tracker is used within the Early Years to keep parents up-to-date with their child's experiences in class.
- c. The teacher keeps individual reading records.
- d. Staff, children and parents maintain reading record books.
- e. Before moving on to the next colour band, teachers assess children for accuracy and understanding.
- f. Ongoing, focused reading assessment takes place during individual/guided reading sessions led by staff in school.
- g. Children's writing is teacher assessed against the National Curriculum.
- h. Regular reviews of learning, written by children with adults' input are issued to parents every half term through 'writing progress' and 'Mind the gap' assessments which enable children to receive instant feedback and move their learning forward.
- i. Writing Progress books are completed termly and sent home to inform parents about their child's progress (as above).
- j. Children have regular opportunities to plan, edit and review their work as a result of live feedback within lessons.
- k. Children's reading and writing is tracked every half term against the National Curriculum.
- l. Children are given individual reading and writing targets. Records of these are kept by the teacher and are written into the shared reading record book.
- m. In years 1 and 2 children's development in phonics is assessed termly.

## **8. Individual Needs**

- a. Children's individual needs in English may be for support, challenge or learning at greater depth. Children within a class will be at differing levels and the banded book reading scheme/Spelling Handbooks allow for progression.
- b. Some children may need structure and adult intervention, beyond the usual provision, to help them learn to read and write. These children will read/work with a member of staff or parent helper on a more frequent basis in school. Children with an identified reading or writing need (e.g SEND primary need) will read/work with an adult on a daily basis in school. School support staff who have received training may work with children individually or in small groups using specific English programmes e.g Tracks. Parents will always be informed if their child is involved in one of these supportive programmes.
- c. Children who progress rapidly through the reading scheme may choose their own material. Teachers carefully monitor this and the children are encouraged to choose challenging and demanding texts, of all genres. Non-fiction reading material is also available. Staff designate time to support children reading at a higher level through high-quality dialogue, ensuring questions and tasks are challenging. Able writers are challenged at greater depth within their year group curriculum, expanding their writing vocabulary with spelling challenges linked to word play and word meanings. More able writers are challenged to demonstrate understanding of their reading by using characteristics of it in their own written work.
- d. 1:1/Group Tuition is made available for some children, including those who are eligible for Pupil Premium. These groups run outside of the school day and are planned for/led by school teaching staff.

## **9. Partnership with Parents**

- a. When a child reads to a member of staff or parent helper it will be recorded in the child's reading record. This book is used as a liaison between parent and teacher. The school has an expectation that parents will read with their child and share books/other texts at home daily. Teachers will gladly meet with parents to discuss how best they can support their child when reading at home and information/key questions are also available within the Reading Record to support parents as well as in the form of a bookmark. Children may receive letter sound/tricky word cards or probe sheets to support work at home.
- b. Spelling Handbooks structure and support parents when working with their children at home. These include weekly word lists, tricky words and a range of word/sentence-based activities to support children in their understanding and application of the spelling rule/pattern. These are to be completed each week at home prior to the weekly dictation assessment.
- c. Children's writing is teacher assessed against the National Curriculum each term and children's work is shared with parents in the form of the Writing Progress books every term. These are sent home to inform parents about their child's progress. Next steps/targets are recorded in this book to support parents when they are working with their children at home. Parents are encouraged to write comments in this book to support the school in celebrating their child's effort. In addition, a half termly 'Mind the gap' lesson is carried out in KS1/KS2 where an independent piece of writing is assessed according to the objectives being worked on in class that half term. Children are given feedback to enable them to move their learning forward and this is shared with parents to support children at home.
- d. Parents are signposted to the school website where support is available e.g homework help, useful websites.
- e. Regular workshops are held each year to support parents, e.g Phonics Workshops. Parents who help in the classroom are given guidance about how best to support children when reading in school through volunteer induction meetings.

## **10. Equality Statement**

- a. The governors and staff are committed to ensuring that everyone is treated fairly in accordance with the school's values. We are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background, and to overcoming any barriers to that access. We believe all individuals have the right to an environment, which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping, in which to learn and develop.

## **11. Evaluation**

- a. The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the English Leader who will evaluate developments in this area and identify any action points on the school improvement plan. The policy will be reviewed once every three years by staff and governors.

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### Appendices



#### 1. Appendix 1: Reading - General Classroom Practice

- a. From the time Reception children start school they take home one library book per week.
- b. Letters & Sounds based sessions encourage oral work in the early Years
- c. In Reception classes, children begin to learn Tricky Words/High Frequency words and continue to work on initial sounds
- d. At the beginning of their Reception year children begin to choose books without words from the lower levels of the Book Band Scheme (Lilac), they then move on to read Dandelion Phonic Reading books or Rising Stars sets.
- e. Children progress through the coloured book bands and move up a level when they have read a breadth of their current band confidently, based on the teacher's assessment
- f. KS1 children are explicitly taught phonics on a daily basis through a structured phonics program until they have mastered the programme
- g. During Year 1, children are broadly grouped for focused phonics teaching for daily phonic sessions as well. These groups are organised and amended according to the half termly phonic assessments
- h. Children may receive letter sound/tricky word cards or probe sheets to support work at home
- i. In Key Stages one and two, children continue to progress through the coloured book band levels until they are deemed confident and able to choose their own reading material from a variety of sources (library, class shelves or home). Children will change these books as they finish.
- j. An adult will hear children read one to one or within a guided reading group weekly and assess their comprehension skills as well as fluency and phonetic knowledge.
- k. Opportunities to talk about books, discuss texts and answer questions are ongoing and children complete regular comprehension activities, whether orally within a group, on a one-to-one basis or as a written exercise
- l. Preparation and practice for written comprehension tests begins in Key Stage One and continues through to Year 4
- m. Children starting school, at any age, will be assessed for their reading and comprehension ability and reading books will be selected accordingly. This assessment will inform the teacher's provision for support or extension.
- n. We encourage children to read every night to an adult at home which results in them receiving a house point the following morning to celebrate their achievements.
- o. Children are expected to look after their reading records and treat them with respect, especially as they are transported between home and school.
- p. Years 2 to 4 take part in a reading fluency project designed to increase their ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression.

#### 2. Appendix 2: Writing - General Classroom Practice

- a. In the Early Years, children are taught mark making/letter formation
- b. Emergent writing is encouraged in the Early Years through the range of daily activities available to children
- c. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers plan a **weekly spelling lesson, weekly sustained writing sessions** and teach all aspects of writing around a text-based curriculum
- d. Children are taught to use the correct grammar, spelling and punctuation for their year group
- e. Children are encouraged to write in response to a range of stimuli and for a range of purposes e.g narrative, poetry, autobiographical
- f. Opportunities are provided for independent and collaborative work
- g. Handwriting is taught following the school policy. **There are opportunities for specific handwriting practice a minimum of 3 times each week**
- h. Handwriting focuses on letters being consistent in size and shape, as well as being neat and well presented. Joining up of handwriting is encouraged in Key Stage 1 and expected in Key Stage 2.
- i. When marking children's work, all staff will follow the school Handwriting Policy
- j. From Year 2, children are taught to plan, draft, edit and improve their work

- k. Within English and all other curriculum areas, children are expected to apply the skills they have learnt in spelling, punctuation or handwriting
- l. Preparation and practice for unaided writing assessments begins in Key Stage One and continues through to Year 4 in the form of Writing Progress which is assessed against the National Curriculum
- m. Displays make use of opportunities to develop writing for varied purposes, demonstrate print in varied contexts and reinforce/extend vocabulary.
- n. Staff model the correct use of spelling, punctuation and presentation.

### 3. **Appendix 3: Grammar – General Classroom Practice**

- a. Teachers will plan, teach and track progress in vocabulary, grammar and punctuation
- b. Key objectives for each year group will be assessed for grammar, vocabulary and punctuation
- c. Displays make use of opportunities to develop grammar and corresponding terminology
- d. Within English or other curriculum areas, children are expected to apply the skills they have learnt and staff will use age appropriate grammar terminology to support their writing across the curriculum
- e. Teachers will plan activities which provide pupils with opportunities to develop their knowledge of grammar and corresponding terminology
- f. Activities which are short and involve active learning will be planned to develop grammar skills regularly

### 4. **Appendix 4: Spelling – General Classroom Practice**

- a. Pupil progress in spelling will be tracked and monitored with interventions to support progression in place as required for target children
- b. Spellings lists and activities will be sent home weekly and practiced at home. Parents receive feedback on how children have performed in their test (dictation Y1-4)
- c. Pupils will be given the opportunity to practice spellings they have not got correct during the dictation to correct misconceptions
- d. Teachers will follow a structure whilst allowing room for creativity ensuring all National Curriculum fundamentals are covered.
- e. Children will be taught to read at an increasing speed.
- f. Children will have a spelling session that teaches them to develop confidence in spelling.
- g. The programme follows 2 halves.
- h. 1<sup>st</sup> half (week 1) focuses on the hypothesis and progress checks, 2<sup>nd</sup> week - 5 x 10 minute sessions that need to be carried out throughout the week.
- i. 30 minutes facilitating an investigation looking at true/ false. Introducing the spelling rule – red page investigation
- j. 20 minutes on day 2 on Go Grapheme Getters. The nature of this is a slow look at patterns and working to prove or disprove a hypothesis.
- k. Not to be used as a spelling test but a problem-solving process.
- l. KS1 in large square books- TBC KS2 in their note books.
- m. This can be done during- starters, morning work, next step challenges, spelling time / straight after lunch
- n. Each 10 minute session has a focus: QUICK, STICK, FLICK, TICK, CLICK.
- o. Find them in the book and use these to plan throughout the week. It should not be seen as a 'worksheet' based book but can be used to adapt and plan with.
- p. STICK- focuses on previous years investigations which would be ideal to use for week 2 homework.