

# English

At Shefford Lower School, we ensure that literacy skills are taught with the understanding that children are unique and that they learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

English is the foundation of 'Shefford's Connected Curriculum' and we use the most state-of-the-art thinking from cognitive science to underpin highly effective teaching across a broad range of learning opportunities. Our expert staff are highly trained and continue exploring their areas of study as researching teachers. This ensures we deploy quality resources, and lesson stimuli to ensure learning is maximised and children are challenged to fulfil their potential.

We recognise that parents are their child's first educator, and are proud of the strong partnerships we build with families and the community. This ensures that best outcomes in English are achieved in our wide ranging and exciting curriculum experiences.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are two areas of learning that link to our teaching of English.

## **Communication and Language**

Communication and Language is one of the prime areas of learning within the Early Years Framework. 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.

Within Communication and Language, there are three aspects:

- Listening and attention
- Understanding
- Speaking

## **Literacy**

Literacy is a specific area of learning within the Early Years Framework and consists of two aspects:

- Reading
- Writing

Children develop their knowledge, skills and understanding within these areas through an engaging environment which offers quality provision and opportunities for purposeful play. Children also develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through quality adult interactions, small group and class activities as well as robust daily Phonics sessions.

Songs, poems, rhymes, stories and non-fiction are a part of our everyday practice. Children are encouraged to share their ideas and thinking through talk and role play, to be storytellers and mark makers. We also use Sign4feeling, Sign4phonics, Sign4story and Sign4maths to support children's ability to communicate, develop their language comprehension and extend their vocabulary.

In Phonics, we follow the 'Letters and Sounds' programme. 'Letters and Sounds' is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education. Within this programme, children learn to develop their speaking and listening skills, they learn letters and the sounds they make and how to blend and segment these sounds for reading and writing. Children also learn common exception

words (tricky words) and high frequency words to support them with their fluency in reading and writing. (Please see our 'Phonics- A Guide for Parents' for further information).

### **Early Learning Goals linked to English:**

By the end of Reception, children are expected to meet the following Early Learning Goals related to English:

#### **Communication and Language:**

##### **Listening:**

Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

##### **Understanding:**

Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

##### **Speaking:**

Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

##### **Literacy:**

##### **Reading:**

Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

##### **Writing:**

Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

## **English in Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and 2)**

We use phonics as an important tool to develop children's reading and spelling skills, with the knowledge that the understanding of what they read and write is of equal importance to their development in English. **We follow the Letters and Sounds programme.** We ensure that children at Shefford Lower School have many and varied opportunities to listen to and read a wide range of stories, poems and non-fiction, in order to give them models for their own writing.

Children are taught:

### **Reading**

- Using a range of reading material and a variety of reading schemes (Oxford University Press, Rising Stars and Big Cats) children learn to enjoy reading and understand what they can read independently. They read and listen to a wide range of poems, stories and non-fiction. They retell and discuss stories they have heard and read in small groups. They begin to make inferences, read expressively and recite some poems by heart.
- To use phonics as their main approach to word reading. They learn the 40 + phonemes, including alternative sounds for graphemes, and blend sounds in unfamiliar words.

- As they progress in reading, children learn to read words quickly and accurately, including common exception words, words containing contractions and words which contain common suffixes.
- From Year 2 we begin to develop reading comprehension skills by delivering weekly comprehension-based lessons. Skills are developed around: event prediction, sequencing events in a text, word and phrase retrieval, vocabulary meaning and inference by hunting for clues in a text.
- Children in Years 2 to 4 are taking part in a reading fluency project in our school. The main focus of this reading project is linked to fluency. This means improving the automaticity and accuracy of word recognition, as well as improving the rate at which they read and their overall comprehension of what is read. This is in addition to the normal reading sessions and interventions that are already in place and are running. The reading fluency project improves expression and intonation: appropriate expression will be used with improved intonation and pitch demonstrating understanding. Phrasing: consistently meaningful phrase reading – phrase, clause and sentence elements reflected in reading. Fluidity: mostly smooth reading – where points of difficulty are attended to rapidly and smooth reading resumed. Punctuation: consistent and appropriate response to punctuation generally.

## Writing

- To use their phonic knowledge when segmenting and blending sounds in words, spelling many phonically regular words correctly and learning to spell common exception words.
- To apply year group taught spelling patterns to independent writing to embed learning.
- To form regular sized handwriting and start using some of the joining strokes needed for neat cursive handwriting. They learn to leave spaces between words and form capital letters correctly.
- To write in a variety of genres including narrative, poetry and non-fiction forms. They learn to plan what they are going to write sentence by sentence, but also to begin to proof-read to check that their writing makes sense, correcting errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Children are taught to use full stops, capital letters, exclamation marks, question marks, commas in lists and apostrophes correctly.
- They begin to use adjectives and conjunctions for subordination and co-ordination in order to enrich their writing.
- We use rich texts in English and across the curriculum to ensure children are accessing high quality literature and expanding their understanding of vocabulary and language.
- We encourage children to self-assess their work and make edits to improve the content and build on their existing knowledge in English.
- We use planning strategies and writing scaffolds to support children to think logically in order to develop their ideas in the writing process.

## English in Key Stage 2 (Year 3 and 4)

Children are taught:

### Reading

- To develop a positive attitude to reading by having access to a wide range of reading materials, including versions of classic stories, fairy tales, myths and legends, poems and

genres of non-fiction, newspapers, advertisements and play scripts. They have opportunities to read, memorise and perform to others with expression, intonation and action, in order to develop their understanding.

- Through guided and independent reading, children are taught to predict, draw inferences, explain, conclude and summarise ideas from texts, and they begin to use written comprehension to develop these skills.
- Year 3 and 4 children are assessed in their reading ability on their entry to the year group, then take part in an exciting and challenging reading fluency project which enables them to make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Year 3 and 4 are assessed using YARC assessments which take into account children's fluency and comprehension. After this initial assessment they are grouped and have reading fluency sessions with the class teacher. This scheme has shown rapid growth in children's ability to read fluently and use expression. This in turn improves their comprehension.

## Writing

- Children learn to use dictionaries to check spellings, and further develop their ability to spell unfamiliar words, including words that are often misspelt, homophones and words which use the possessive pronoun.
- They learn to consistently produce neat, evenly sized cursive handwriting.
- Children in Key Stage 2 are taught to discuss and plan writing that shows the features of specific genres that they have read. They are given opportunities to enrich their vocabulary and sentence structures by learning from good quality models by significant authors. They evaluate their own writing and that of others and suggest improvements, respond positively to constructive marking and are able to talk about what makes a piece of writing effective.
- They are taught to organise paragraphs around a theme, and to create settings, characters and plot in narrative writing. In non-narrative writing, children learn to use organisational devices such as headings, sub-headings.
- Children learn to choose appropriate language for clarity and cohesion, begin to use a variety of tenses to enrich their written work and extend sentences by the use of subordinate clauses and fronted adverbials. They learn to express time and cause by using a rich variety of adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions. They learn to confidently understand and use the vocabulary of grammar when discussing their own writing and that of others.
- Children work collaboratively and are trained to peer-assess writing, giving feedback on areas which can be developed as well as positively praising the elements that stand out.
- High quality texts are linked across the curriculum, so that children build a bank of vocabulary to use in their Humanities lessons as well as gaining a deeper understanding of the topics they learn about.