

# Sherburn Primary School



## English Policy

### Introduction

At Sherburn Primary School we aim to develop confident, articulate children who are able to communicate effectively through the written and spoken word, and to foster a life-long love of reading and writing.

### Aims

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of communication, reading and writing;
- To develop in pupils a love of books that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also will enrich their lives;
- To value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play;
- To teach children the craft of writing, including handwriting, in order to develop in them the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences;
- To systematically teach spelling, handwriting, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary – to ensure accuracy within creativity;
- To foster in pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing;
- To raise the standards of reading, writing and communication so that every child makes good progress;
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

### Teaching and Learning

At Sherburn Primary we use the National Curriculum as a basis for developing children's reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. We follow a Creative Curriculum and, wherever possible, English activities are related to a class novel linked to curriculum themes. As well as undertaking a daily dedicated English lesson, the children develop their literacy skills across all lessons and

activities throughout the day – from speaking clearly and eloquently to staff members to writing at length in topic lessons.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching and learning of English takes place within a whole class setting. Good practice in reading and writing is shared and modelled by the class teacher. A variety of interactive teaching methods is used to deliver the curriculum and achieve set learning objectives. Children's learning is in ability groups within their class. Independent tasks are differentiated to match ability and to provide challenge. Adult support is given as and when required.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, emphasis is on teaching English through stories and non-fiction texts with strong topic links, child initiated learning through play (with some adult intervention), demonstration and use of language.

## **Speaking and Listening**

It is our aim to develop children's ability to speak with confidence, clarity and fluency in a variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and for a range of purposes, and to develop their capacities to listen with attention and understanding. All staff model correct use of Standard English and accurate speech to improve grammar in children's speaking and writing.

## **Vocabulary**

At Sherburn Primary we want our children to be able to talk like experts. Therefore, we promote instructional contexts for learning – whereby we intentionally introduce children to vocabulary. This systematic teaching of vocabulary begins in EYFS and continues through to Y6. We put a great emphasis on giving children the technical and academic vocabulary through which they can communicate effectively.

## **Reading**

We aim to create proficient and passionate readers. We believe that reading is gateway to all other areas of the curriculum and can enhance pupils' experiences, improve language and vocabulary skills - whilst also stimulating their imaginations. In order to achieve this, every child is taught a range of

strategies to support them in becoming confident, independent readers. Teachers nurture a love of books by introducing texts with enthusiasm and enjoyment, promoting a sense of wonder and expectation as the book is explored. Texts are carefully chosen which provide opportunities to extend and enrich the children's learning. Many opportunities are provided for children to practise and extend their reading in other curriculum subjects.

Additional reading practice is also provided by staff and volunteers to boost basic reading skills for children who are working below age related expectations and for other targeted pupils.

### **Children will experience a range of reading lessons in school:**

#### **Shared/Whole Class Reading**

Shared reading takes place within the English lesson: the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral responses from children and high levels of collaboration. The children join in, where appropriate, with the reading of the text. The texts selected are quality texts that reflect the learning objectives. Each class has a class book, where possible, linked to their curriculum areas, which the teacher reads to children over the course of a term/half term.

#### **Other Opportunities for Reading**

Children in our school read every day. All classes, from Reception onwards, enjoy a dedicated reading session, during which time children are either taught the skills of reading or have the opportunity to read for pleasure. Each child participates in a teacher/TA led quality reading session at least once a week. During these sessions, where children are grouped by ability, pupils read and respond to a text at their level. Each session has an assessment focus against which children's knowledge and understanding are assessed. The daily reading session also includes other reading opportunities for children not in the teacher focus group, which include Lexia and Accelerated Reader activities as well as silent, independent reading with sustained concentration.

Reading for pleasure is given a high priority in our school and sufficient time is allocated for children to enjoy books. We firmly believe that reading at home with family members enhances a child's love and understanding of books. Therefore, we encourage our children to regularly take books home from our library as well as from the graded reading scheme that supports the development of individual reading skills.

Children start the reading scheme in Foundation Stage and continue until they become competent, independent readers. They can then choose from a wide variety of books from our library. A home/school reading diary is used to record books read. Children are encouraged to read daily at home to an adult who then signs the reading diary and adds a comment. From Year 2 (or after Phase 6 phonics), pupils take a short Accelerated Reader quiz on completion of a book which tests their understanding.

### **Our Reading Scheme**

In Reception, our children usually begin at Phase 2 of the Letters and Sounds Programme, although some children may need to start at Phase 1 - which focuses on attuning children to the sounds around them. Pupils continue on this journey into Phase 3 and possibly Phase 4 of Letters and Sounds, learning letters and their sounds one by one, alongside segmenting and blending sounds into words. 'Tricky words' are taught throughout using Action Words. Once children can build up words using phonics, they start to read books with words and develop their story building and comprehension skills. Children will continue to progress through the Letters and Sounds programme in Year 1 and Year 2 (there are 6 phases altogether), learning how to recognise more complex letter strings, prefixes and suffixes, as well as building up their memory of 'tricky words'.

Confident readers also have access to Accelerated Reader books that are ZPD banded. These books supplement our reading scheme and give children access to 'real' books at their level.

### **Writing**

Our school promotes the importance of 'real texts' to children. Each class uses a class book (where possible, linked to a class theme) to fully immerse the children into the teaching of English. Spelling, grammar, punctuation and writing opportunities are generated from the text. For example, children enjoying a curriculum theme linked to World War II may read 'Waiting for

Anya' by Michael Murpurgo where they would write their own war related diary entries; pen a speech to persuade the villagers to help Jo; and create a non-chronological report about Lescun. Such linked learning not only develops children's understanding of a curriculum theme, but makes writing purposeful, real and fun.

We also support the teaching of writing by using some aspects of Pie Corbett's *Talk for Writing*. Each unit begins with the teacher establishing a creative context - a 'hook' to draw in the children. Teachers then introduce pupils to a model text and encourage them to identify and analysing the key writing features and 'magpie' key words and phrases. Children develop their understanding of the structure of the text using a range of planning frames. Teachers then model the thought process of a writer in shared writing – which helps the children to create their own version. The process leads to children becoming independent writers and ends with editing and improving.

## **Assessment**

Throughout the assessment process, teachers use formative assessment to plan the next step in their teaching (based on what the children need to know in order to improve). 'Assessment for learning' clearly involves the child in thinking about what has worked well and points them towards what needs to be done to move forward in their learning.

Once teachers have evidence from a few pieces of written work, they highlight the writing criteria achieved by each child on the individual writing assessment grid.

Teachers ensure the children's next steps (identified from the writing assessment grids) form the basis of subsequent teaching and learning.

## **Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling**

As well as being taught in the context of a class book, grammar terminology and spelling rules are taught explicitly. We have a strong emphasis on the home-school link to support spelling development and encourage the use of a computer based spelling program at home to aid progress. From Y1 to Y6, teachers allocate weekly spellings which can be accessed at

<https://www.spellingshed.com>. These words are linked to the English Programme of Study and ensure full coverage of spelling patterns and tricky words.

## **Handwriting**

Although there are many opportunities to practise handwriting across the curriculum, we also teach formal handwriting skills regularly and systematically through the use of the PENPALS handwriting scheme. Opportunities for linking handwriting with early phonics and spelling are fully exploited through the PENPALS scheme. Offering clear progression through five developmental stages, it teaches children a fast and fluent handwriting style to help them achieve their potential.

## **Phonics**

Daily phonics teaching takes place across EYFS and Key Stage 1 (and for some children in KS2 if required). Children are taught in focussed groups to develop their reading and writing skills at the correct level. Foundation Stage to Y2 follow the Letters and Sounds programme for spelling which is directly linked to phonics. The teaching of phonics is key to children's developing reading. Children in Year 1 (and Year 2 resits) are required to undertake a National Phonics Assessment in the Summer Term.

## **SEN**

English lessons, tasks and resources are differentiated by the class teacher to meet the needs of individual children. A number of intervention strategies are used to develop children's specific learning needs in English. Computer programs such as Lexia and Nessy support children with specific difficulties in reading and spelling.

## **Gifted and Talented**

All children are provided with challenge to enable them to make their own personal progress. The class teacher will also aim to identify those children who may be gifted in English and provide them with appropriate learning opportunities.

