Iver Heath Infant School and Nursery
English Policy
December 2022

Introduction

We believe that literacy is at the very centre of all children's learning. It has an essential role across the curriculum and helps learning to be coherent and progressive. Speaking, listening, reading and writing are crucial life skills and are integral to the enjoyment and understanding of all that we do at school.

We endeavour to give the children a sound basis in English so that they can become confident and literate members of society.

Intent

To enable children:

- to fulfil and extend their potential through a challenging and inspirational curriculum;
- to speak clearly and confidently and listen carefully to what others have to say;
- to express themselves articulately, creatively and imaginatively;
- to read a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction texts fluently, independently and critically;
- to develop a love of reading and to discover different authors, cultures and genres;
- to write with interest and enjoyment;
- to write fluently and independently for a range of purposes and audiences;
- to spell and punctuate correctly according to age related expectations;
- to develop neat, joined up handwriting;
- to use language skills across the curriculum.

Implementation

The school has adopted a creative curriculum approach to teaching, which has led to English being taught through both dedicated English lessons and through lessons in other subjects. We structure lessons so that they are suitably flexible so as to meet the learning needs of all children in the context of the subject being taught. The English Curriculum team work together to oversee the subject.

- Having good English skills plays an important part in being able to access the rest of the curriculum and so key literacy skills are reinforced in lessons, interventions, specific direct teaching and marking across the subjects.
- Teachers plan half termly, with more detailed planning from the National Curriculum 2014, Primary National Strategy and the Early Years Foundation Stage included in weekly plans.
- There is a daily English lesson in Key Stage 1 based on the National Curriculum, which is developed around the current topic in each year group.
- The English Curriculum team is responsible for monitoring, assisting and advising in the implementation of English work throughout the school.
- There is a governor with a responsibility for English.
- The subject is taught mainly within the classroom and outdoor area by the class teacher with support from LSAs.
- Support staff work with individuals or groups of children as appropriate.
- Teacher resources are kept in resource areas. Most pupil resources are kept in classrooms, accessible to pupils.

Storytelling School

In September 2015 we became a Storytelling School. Initial Storytelling School training was given to all teachers and some LSAs and since then Storytelling INSET has been attended.

We follow the English National Curriculum introduced in September 2014 and stories and storytelling drive the way that we teach this.
The Storytelling School initiative has story and storytelling at its heart. In brief, children are introduced to stories and explore them in depth by hearing, story mapping, acting them out and speaking them. They then deepen these stories through imitation, innovation and invention in shared and independent writing.
We have selected the stories in each year group carefully to ensure a range of genres, an appeal to audience and cross-curricular links with topic work.
The benefits of the Storytelling School approach are many:

- sustained active listening skills;
- confidence in speaking;
- an increase in self-worth as storytellers know their tales are enjoyed and respected thus building feelings of safety and support;
- learning how to appreciate others;
- ability to draw upon an ever-growing repertoire of language patterns both orally and in writing;
- opportunities to 'magpie' and experiment with rich and adventurous vocabulary in the spoken and written form;
- choice of quality, exciting stories and kinaesthetic ways of retelling draws in more reluctant learners;
- development of empathy and an understanding of how others think;
- a positive impact on reading habits as children are motivated by story;
- creative questioning and growth of inquisitiveness and enquiry;
- cross-curricular learning;
- development of memory and sequencing skills;
- autonomy and ownership;
- rehearsals for life as stories allow an imaginative experience of events similar to those that will be encountered in life itself;
- wonder and magic and fun!

Reading

All children follow a colour coded scheme called We Love Books. The books are housed in the Reading Zone (pink onwards) and in the Reception resource area (red, white and yellow) and include a variety of genres. Books that are fully and partially decodable are highlighted on individual's reading record sheets. Children from Reception onwards have lists of books at their individual level and staff mark titles off as they read them, either at school or at home. Reading books are sent home daily. Class teachers decide when it is appropriate for a child to move on a level. The books become more challenging as the children progress through the levels. All classes have small book areas/corners where individuals can go to enjoy a read.

ERIC (Everybody Reading In Class)
Children in Year 2 have timetabled ERIC sessions as a whole class. Children read from individual copies of the same text at the same time and class teachers use VIPERS questioning techniques (Vocabulary Inference Prediction Explain Retrieve Sequence).

Individual 1:1 Reading
When children read to teachers on a 1:1 basis comments are made in individual diaries that celebrate what a child does well and inform parents of areas requiring practice in order for children to progress further.
When reading children will be expected to:

- explain and justify their ideas;
- make predictions;
- offer critical comments;
- use their knowledge of phonics to read new words.

Nursery

- In Nursery, if children are ready, they will begin to take a reading book to read with someone at home.
- Some Nursery children who are ready take home Phase 2 phonics word cards to learn with someone at home.
- Children have access to a high quality range of books.
- Parents are encouraged to support their children's reading via the borrow bag scheme.

Reception

- In Reception all children take a reading book home daily. Some of them do not include words; these are intended to be shared with someone at home in order to enhance storytelling and inference skills. Teachers will read with each child at least once every two weeks and will make a comment in their reading record book to inform parents of what the child did well and what the parents can do to help their child make further progress.
- All children in Reception take home CVC and high frequency key word cards to learn with someone at home.
- Once children know their first 10 sounds they will take home phonic based reading books containing these sounds.

Key Stage 1

Year 1

- Teachers aim to read with each child as a part of a guided reading session once every week.
- Throughout the Spring and Summer terms children work on comprehension activities, which may be in a written form or orally through guided reading sessions.
- Targeted children are heard to read on a daily basis.

Year 2

- Teachers aim to read with each child once a week.
- Children are given opportunities to use their reading skills across the curriculum.
- During ERIC and independent reading children are supported and assessed on their comprehension skills.
- Throughout the Spring term the children are given practice questions and past papers to prepare them for the KS1 SATS.

Phonics

In all year groups Phonics is taught through Lesley Clarke's validated Letters and Sounds programme.

In all classes phonics is taught for 20 minutes each day.

Our curriculum focuses on the 16 essential core criteria outlined by the DfE and:

- is designed for the teaching of discrete, daily sessions progressing from simple to more complex phonic knowledge and skills and covering the major grapheme/phoneme correspondences;
- enables children's progress to be assessed;
- uses a multisensory approach so children learn variously from simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities designed to secure phonic knowledge and skills;
- demonstrates that phonemes should be blended, in order, from left to right, "all through the word" for reading;
- demonstrates how words can be segmented into their constituent phonemes for spelling;
- demonstrates that segmentation for spelling is the reverse of blending phonemes to read words;
- ensures children apply phonic knowledge and skills as their first approach to reading and spelling (even if a word is not phonetically regular);
- ensures children are taught high-frequency words that do not conform completely to grapheme/phoneme correspondence rules;
- provides fidelity to the teaching framework for the duration of the programme, to ensure irregular words are learnt fully;
- ensures that, in the early stages of acquiring phonics, children have opportunities to practise by reading texts that are entirely decodable.

The teaching of phonics is taught as a four part lesson (Revisit and Review, Teach, Practise and Apply) and is consolidated through the use of banded reading books matched to the phonic phases. In the Early Years sounds are explored through play, repetition and word building. As children develop competency with phonically decodable texts they are introduced to a wider range of reading material to support the development of comprehension at each stage.

We ensure all sounds (phonemes) are clearly modelled for the children using standard pronunciation and articulated to the children without unnecessary *schwars* at the end of the sound (eg 'w' not '*w-uh')*

Children are taught phonics as a whole class up to Phase 5, with opportunities to consolidate and pre-learn as required. Those who are identified as needing additional support receive either 1:1 or small group intervention to ensure they make accelerated progress towards age related expectations in phonics.
In Year 2 children may be grouped according to phonic phase to extend and embed key skills within each phase.

Nursery

- In Nursery, children are introduced to Phase 1 phonics using the Letters and Sounds programme and the Twinkl Phonics 2021 scheme. As the year progresses Phase 2 is taught as a class and reinforced in smaller groups to support and extend children's learning as appropriate. Nursery children start by exploring sounds in the environment and discriminating between different types of sounds and rhyming at Phase 1. Blending and segmenting is taught orally and modelled in written forms as appropriate.

Reception

- The Reception classes are taught phonic sounds and are supported in using them in their writing and reading.
- All children in Reception are given a sound box to take home. The boxes contain sound cards and tricky words to reinforce phonic learning introduced that week. In addition children take home a word wall booklet containing decodable CVC words and Phase 2 and 3 tricky words. Children are expected to practise these regularly at home and are teacher assessed before moving on.
- Children start Phonics at Phase 2 in the Autumn term and aim to get to Phase 4 by the end of the Summer term.
- Phonic progress and attainment are assessed at the end of each phase and learning needs are identified.
- Children are taught altogether as a whole class. Children are given additional support as required in order to make expected progress within Phases 2, 3 and 4.

Year 1

- We aim to teach all children Phase 5 by the end of Year 1.
- After initial formative assessment in September, intervention groups run alongside the expected phase teaching to consolidate Phases 2, 3 and 4 as required.
- Phonic progress and attainment are assessed at the end of each phase and learning needs are identified.
- All children are expected to undertake the Phonics Screening Check in June and are introduced to the format and concept of 'real' and 'alien' words as part of the preparation for this process.
- There are intervention groups for children who find phonics a real challenge.
- Phonics homework is sent home weekly as spellings to consolidate the children's phonic learning.

Year 2

- We aim to teach all children Phase 6 during Year 2 as this phase supports the grammar curriculum and helps children to improve spelling skills.
- Phase 6 phonics will also be taught as part of the SPaG component of literacy lessons to ensure that the Year 2 spelling curriculum is accessed by all.
- After initial formative assessment in September, intervention groups run alongside the expected phase teaching to consolidate Phases 2,3, 4 and 5 as required.
- Phonic progress and attainment are assessed at the end of phase 5.

- Children who did not achieve the required standard in the Year 1 Phonics Check are given targeted intervention in Year 2 in order to allow them to catch up. This intervention may be needed all year and is assessed on a half termly basis.
- Children who did not reach the level in the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1 will be retested in June.
- There are intervention groups for children who find phonics a real challenge.
- Phonics homework is sent home weekly as spellings to consolidate the children's phonic learning.

Writing

Children begin writing with mark making in Nursery and progress to a more structured writing style in Reception and Key Stage 1.
In all year groups pupils are taught in both ability groups and mixed ability groups within their class.
We aim for all children to be writing cursively by the time they leave Key Stage 1. Children in Reception and Year 1 form their letters in the style of the Sassoon Primary font with lead outs on most letters to prepare for joining. Children develop a fully cursive style in Year 2.
Children's writing is celebrated in all classes across the school and is displayed where children can see it and discuss it.

Nursery

- In Nursery opportunities for mark making and writing are available throughout each session. Children are free to select these activities and produce work of their own choice, but adult led writing activities regularly take place to encourage early development of emergent writing.
- Each child has a Fun Write book to encourage free mark making and to develop fine motor skills.
- Children are provided with an area where they can display their own writing.
- In the Foundation Stage a lot of work is done to develop pupils' fine motor skills in readiness for writing. Regular opportunities are provided to encourage recognition, copying and tracing of the children's first names.
- During the summer term more structured support is given to enhance early sentence construction, both as a group and individually when appropriate.
- Parents are encouraged to support their children's writing development via fine motor borrow bags.

Reception

- In Reception, guided writing is used to support children in their development of writing. It is undertaken in small groups, led by an adult, and with a targeted outcome in mind.
- Shared writing is used to model what writing should look like and to show the children the process of writing. Teachers will use this time to elicit children's ideas and form them into the target form of writing for a particular lesson.
- Handwriting is practised daily. In Reception the children learn to form letters in the style of the Sassoon Primary font.
- When children are ready they take home Tricky Words to learn how to spell.

Key Stage 1

- In writing sessions children are given opportunities to write in a variety of genres and forms eg. stories, poems, riddles, letters, journals, lists, labels, invitations, posters, menus, news, non-fiction reports, instructions and playscripts.
- Iver Heath Infant School and Nursery is a Storytelling School. This initiative means that children will not necessarily write every day in English as they will be taking part in drama and talking activities in order to firmly embed the stories they are learning in preparation for writing tasks. On days where they do not write in English lessons, writing will be done in other subjects.
- Handwriting is taught in discrete sessions alongside practice across all subjects. It is also sent home as a weekly homework in Year 2.
- Learning intentions are made clear to the children and processes are demonstrated.

- Children have opportunities to write collaboratively in different groupings eg. pairs, small groups etc.
- Well focused and open questioning involves and motivates children and promotes discussion.
- Children are encouraged to improve their own learning and performance by meeting individual targets or responding to marking in their books (see Marking Policy).
- Children are offered opportunities to use technology to aid writing.

Spelling

Spelling is an integral part of the English curriculum. It is a vital skill to acquire so that children are able to communicate effectively in writing with a range of audiences, and are able to complete a range of tasks to the highest standards.

Foundation Stage

Spelling is taught primarily through phonics, where the children are taught to spell simple CV and CVC words, building to CCVC, CVCC words by the end of Reception. Key words are sent home in Reception for the children to read and they are encouraged to learn to spell them as well.
Topic words and high frequency words are on display in all Reception classes.

Key Stage 1

- Spelling tests are conducted on a weekly basis in all KS1 classes. The amount of words a child receives is based on their phonic and writing ability. The words that children are given to learn follow on from the previous week's phonics lessons and also include words from the English appendix of the 2014 National Curriculum. Sometimes there are words linked to the class topic.
- All children in Year Two have a spelling bookmark that they have access to in writing lessons across the curriculum. This bookmark includes words that teachers have noticed the child struggles with. When marking writing, teachers add to the bookmark as they deem appropriate. Children use the bookmark as their first port of call when they are struggling to spell a word.
- Common Exception Words are on display in all KS1 classes. These are on the walls and on spelling mats on the tables. Children also have access to topic words on spelling mats and on topic displays.
- At the beginning of every academic year, parents are provided with the Common Exception Words for their year group and are reminded that the children must be able to read and spell these words by the end of the year. In Year 2 children are assessed termly and parents are informed of individuals' progress and encouraged to support their children to practise.
- In Year 2 there are intervention groups for children who find spelling a real challenge.
- Children in KS1 continue to learn to spell through their Phonics lessons, and once into Phase 6 this is reinforced through grammar lessons, which are based on the 2014 National Curriculum.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening opportunities are a priority as evidenced in post-pandemic research outlining the negative impact on children's development in this area.

Speaking and listening are taught throughout the school in a cross curricular manner. We believe it is essential that children have a firm foundation in speaking and listening in order to achieve their best in reading and writing. All children have the opportunity to participate in whole school productions or assemblies each year when they sing and speak to an audience.

Foundation Stage

- In Nursery children work on their listening skills in Phase 1 of the Phonics programme where they learn to identify and discriminate between different sounds in the environment and in Phase 2 where they begin to identify sounds in words. The children develop these skills during circle time activities and free choice.
- In Nursery, speaking skills are developed through storytelling, small group work and rhyme. All children take part in the Spirals programme.

- Children who are identified as needing extra support in speaking receive intervention in the form of shape coding, language and communication groups or individual interventions, as appropriate.
- In Reception children build on the work they did in Nursery/pre-schools and further develop their storytelling skills by imitating and innovating stories they already know. They continue with listening skills in Phonics in order to identify sounds in words to help them with their reading and writing.
- In Reception children develop their speaking skills by sharing their treasure boxes with each other in the Autumn term. In the Summer term a class teddy is taken home and the children take part in a question and answer session about the adventures the bear has had.
- In the Spring term children are given the opportunity to make story boxes and bring them into school where they will tell the story to the rest of the class using the props in the box.

Key Stage One

- In Key Stage 1 children work on their listening skills throughout the curriculum and through talk partner work.
- In Key Stage 1 speaking skills are developed through storytelling. It builds on the work done in the Early Years by developing vocabulary and including elements from grammar lessons.
- Throughout the year children in Year 2 have timetabled sessions where individuals make a presentation and recite a poem to the rest of the class. The audience has the opportunity to ask the speaker questions related to the presentations.
- We aim to extend and enrich individuals' vocabulary by immersing them in a rich language environment and exploring the meanings of words and their homophones.

Inclusion and Diversity

- In whole class teaching differentiation for all pupils occurs through:
  - discussion;
  - well-focused and challenging questioning;
  - praise of individual contributions;
  - high expectations encouraging pupils to elaborate, suggest, make observations, reflect and speculate;
  - thinking time.
- In individual, paired or group work differentiation will take place by resources, variety of tasks, response and support.
- More able children in English are identified by the class teacher and their learning is enhanced.
- Children with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) are supported using a variety of support materials suggested by class teachers, SENDCO, The Specialist Teaching Service and other outside agencies. For children with physical disabilities, we endeavour to secure appropriate apparatus in order for them to access the curriculum and we consult with relevant outside agencies.
- All Reception children are assessed on "Language Link" and interventions are put into place depending on outcome. In Key Stage 1 these individuals who have had interventions are re-assessed and interventions will continue if needed.
- We also use "Language Link" and "Speech Link" as a diagnostic tool.

- We ensure that all English work shows positive images of the gender groups in society. We celebrate the contribution that other ethnic groups and cultures have made to English. We use a variety of texts to support this.

Equal Opportunities

- We aim to provide equity of opportunity throughout our English curriculum to ensure that all pupils irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender, religion, belief / non-belief, socio-economic status or background are able to develop their English skills to their full potential. We incorporate English into a wide range of cross-curricular subjects and look to support any groups identified as needing additional support.

Homework

- It is our school policy to provide parents and carers with opportunities to work with their children at home.
- All children bring a reading book home daily.
- Sound Boxes and Word Walls that reinforce phonics are sent home weekly in Reception.
- Children in Year 1 and Year 2 bring home weekly spelling lists to learn.
- English activities and worksheets relevant to what is being taught in class are sent home weekly in Year 2.
- There are suggestions for useful and appropriate websites and apps on the computing page on our school website. All children have at home access to the literacy teaching and games on Purple Mash.
- In Nursery and Reception we use Seesaw to model strategies to support learning and to celebrate achievements and experiences.
- We use Seesaw as our platform for online learning when necessary.

Health and Safety

- All staff ensure that Health and Safety regulations are adhered to when using equipment such as interactive whiteboards and CD players etc.

Impact and Assessment

The impact of our English is evidenced through our assessment practices.

- Teachers assess pupils' progress both formally and informally.
- Each child is assessed in relation to criteria given by Development Matters statements from the Foundation Stage Curriculum, the Foundation Stage Profile and the Interim Assessment Criteria for Year 2.
- We use our English Progression Frameworks in each year group to assess what pupils have achieved and from this plan what they should do next.
- Every year group carries out a baseline assessment in September and then there are 3 further assessment points throughout the year - in December, March and June when children's progress is monitored. However, assessment is ongoing and conducted on a daily basis. If a teacher feels a child is not making sufficient progress, adaptations or additional support will be put in place regardless of whether it is at an assessment point or not.
- In KS1 each term we hold a formal review of the progress made by each pupil and we set individual and group targets.
- National assessments are carried out at the end of Reception and Year 2.
- We assess Year 2 children based on the Interim Framework for Assessment, which has been incorporated into the Year 2 English Progression Framework and use the exemplification materials to support our judgements.
- We prepare pupils for the KS1 SATs so that they can achieve as well as possible and try to make the process fun. KS1 SATs results support teachers' own assessments.
- Our Marking Policy reflects the importance we place on immediate assessment and feedback.
- In line with the school assessment policy we take part in moderation at local level with other schools in the area and at County level.
- Alongside teacher assessment, children in Year 1 are assessed using the Year One Phonics Check materials as set out by the Government. Children who do not meet the required level in Year 1 will be assessed again in Year 2.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Development

- Planning in all classes is available for scrutiny by the English Curriculum team when required.
- The English Curriculum team will be responsible for work sampling. Classroom observation will take place by the English Curriculum team and/or the Headteacher.
- SLT monitor standards in English through a combination of learning walks, observations, books scrutinies, formal and informal conversations with teachers, pupil review meetings, in-school moderation and data collection.

Reporting to Parents

- We hold two parents' consultation evenings during the year, one in the Autumn term and the other in the Spring term. Written reports are given to parents at the end of the Summer term and parents have the opportunity to discuss these with the class teacher if they choose.
- We have an open-door policy to discuss strengths and strategies to support learning in all areas of English.

The Governing Body

- Governors monitor the standards in English via governor visits, PP and C committee meetings and Full Governing Body meetings. One or more of these meetings happen each term.

Policy to be reviewed in three years or earlier if necessary.

December 2022