



Sunnybrow Primary School



English Policy

February 2026

Introduction

The National Curriculum for English comprises of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. In order to **empower** our children to **exceed** in the world beyond Sunnybrow, we believe that the three components of English are vital. Research shows that every important social issue is impacted by low Literacy. We strive to ensure that our children leave in Year 6 with a secure basis in literacy skills, so that they have the tools they need to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Intent:

Speaking and Listening

This starts with talk. For a small school, we have a high number of pupils on the Special Educational Needs register, and many of those pupils present with speaking, listening and communication difficulties. We intend to champion the spoken word. It is our mission to ensure that our pupils leave Sunnybrow Primary school as clear and confident communicators, who can speak clearly, fluently and coherently in a range of situations, understanding when it is appropriate to be formal and informal. We believe that the promotion of a language rich curriculum is essential to the successful acquisition and application of knowledge and skills across the curriculum. We intend to broaden our pupils' exposure to high level vocabulary to allow pupils to apply their understanding of vocabulary and grammatical features within and across the English curriculum.

Reading

We firmly believe that reading is a gateway into the wider world: it not only enables children to learn new facts and to increase their knowledge, but it also opens them up to a world of new stories, cultures, experiences and opportunities. We want our children to develop their fluency in reading and provide opportunities for them to develop their vocabularies so that they are more-able to access a wider range of texts and expand their horizons to a world outside of Sunnybrow. As a result of this, we make reading a priority in school and immerse our children in a reading rich environment and expose them to a wide and varied reading experience.

Writing

At Sunnybrow Primary, we want our children to see that their writing has a purpose that extends beyond school life and to understand how being able to write well will empower them to exceed by benefitting them in their future education and through in to their adult life. We want our children to have every opportunity to achieve highly and to overcome any social disadvantage they may experience and believe that quality writing is a gateway to this.

It is our intention that pupils develop a clear understanding of the writing process in order to establish themselves as an author in their own right. Through our book-led curriculum, we foster pupils' interest in writing and offer a reason and context for writing which enables the children to write for purpose and audience.

We intend that writing will be an integral part of our curriculum, with children being offered many opportunities to develop and apply writing skills in literacy lessons and across the curriculum. We expect the highest standards of writing every time a child writes in any subject.

In Spelling, our teachers will show pupils how to understand the relationships between words. They will also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning, and we intend for our pupils to apply spelling patterns correctly to pieces of writing.

Implementation

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening is a golden thread that runs throughout our whole-school offer. It is not taught as a discreet subject, but specific speaking and listening skills are taught and modelled in real-life contexts and across the curriculum.

Phonics

To be able to read, children need to be taught an efficient strategy to decode words. That strategy is phonics. Phonic decoding skills must be practised until children become automatic and fluent reading is established.

Our children begin engaging in phonics activities as soon as they start Nursery. There are at least 2 planned phonics sessions per week (more depending on the amount of hours pupils access). By working with children at an earlier age we are able to address gaps in skills and knowledge and ensure that Foundations in Phonics (Little Wandle programme) is thoroughly embedded so that the children are prepared for the Reception class curriculum expectations.

Phonic teaching and assessment is rigorous. We use Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised which is a Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme. There is a consistent structure to phonics teaching in EYFS and Key Stage 1.

We prioritise the teaching of phonics; we teach phonics daily in Year R and Year 1. Reception children start the programme from week 3 of Autumn term. It is vitally important that children review and revisit Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) and words, daily, weekly and across terms and years, in order to move this knowledge into the children's long term memory. Our consistent approach to phonics ensures that children are given the best possible foundation for reading, writing and language skills.

Children need to learn to read as quickly and reasonably as possible, so that they can move from learning to read, to reading to learn, giving them access to the treasure house of reading. Our expectations of progression are aspirational yet achievable; children who are not keeping up with their peers are given additional practice immediately through keep-up sessions.

On-going assessment of children's progress takes place and the books children read in school and take home to read are fully decodable and matched to children's secure phonics knowledge. As well as fully decodable books, children take home a non-decodable book for sharing that can be either read to or with them. These books play an essential role in developing a love of reading; an important distinction is that these books are being shared with the children, but they are using fully phonically decodable books to practise their independent reading.

Regular assessments also allow staff to ensure that children 'keep up'. Children requiring extra support are identified and appropriate daily 'keep up' intervention is delivered by a trained member of staff. Phonics intervention (Rapid Catch-up) continues beyond the Year 1 Phonics screening check for the children who need it.

Reading beyond phonics

At Sunnybrow Primary School, every book our children read has a purpose. We use a two-pronged approach to developing reading fluency and comprehension: Independent/Group Reading and Shared reading. The primary purpose of the independent book is to develop reading fluency and prosody. We have developed a reading spine for independent reading books, made up primarily of Collins 'Big Cat' reading scheme texts. For children from Year 2 onwards, who are reading at a greater depth, we have developed a list of 'must reads' for each year group that children can self-select from to supplement their reading spine text.

We use Shared Reading as our primary approach for teaching reading comprehension skills. It is also used to teach reading with fluency and prosody. Children are taught the skills of reading (outlined in the National Curriculum and the KS1 and KS2 content domains) through the use of VIPERS which were created by Rob Smith (The Literacy Shed).

VIPERS is an anagram to aid the recall of the 6 reading domains as part of the UK's reading curriculum. They are the key areas which we feel children need to know and understand in order to improve their comprehension of texts and stand for:

Vocabulary

Inference

Predict

Explain

Retrieve

Sequence or Summarise

The 6 domains focus on the comprehension aspect of reading and not the mechanics: decoding, fluency, prosody etc. As such, VIPERS is not a reading scheme but rather a method of ensuring that teachers ask, and students are familiar with, a range of questions. They allow the teacher to track the type of questions asked and the children's responses to these which allows for targeted questioning afterwards.

Reading for pleasure

We want our children to be life-long readers. Our English curriculum is based around high quality texts and poems. As well as 'Shared texts', we have also carefully developed a Class reading spine, which includes a core range of books and poems that we share and re-share purely for pleasure.

We have a well-stocked library, which is regularly monitored and updated to ensure there is a range of diverse, lively, engaging texts for pupils to take home and share with their families. Each class also has a mini-library in their reading corner. Any spare time in class is spent reading and getting lost in a good book!

We also have a group of avid readers called the Reading Ambassadors, who work hard to promote a love of reading across school.

Writing

Pre-writing skills

Our children start Nursery often working below their developmental milestones with their gross and fine motor development. For this reason, we don't rush children into formal writing. Instead, we spend quality time developing spoken language and pre-writing skills so that the children are ready for writing. Lots of opportunities are provided within provision to develop gross and fine motor control and co-ordination.

English Lessons

In EYFS, and Year 1 children take part in daily phonics lessons following the Little Wandle synthetic phonics scheme. Within each lesson, there is a dedicated writing section. This starts with shared writing, where the writing process is modelled by the teacher. Then, children work in small groups to practise spelling up to 5 words using their phonic knowledge and a tricky word spelling, followed by writing a dictated sentence. Children are encouraged to work as independently as possible. Misconceptions with phonics and spelling patterns are corrected and incorrect letter formation is challenged.

English lessons are based around a class novel or book. We strive to provide breadth of genres in our English curriculum, so you will see the seven story types covered in classes with an increasing degree of complexity as the children progress through the school. Texts are carefully chosen to ensure we are providing children with the best examples possible for children to learn from. We also choose our texts to include books and authors that the children may not be familiar with, thereby broadening their horizons and providing an opportunity to build some cultural capital.

For each core text, there are clear fiction and non-fiction planned writing outcomes. We cover a range of genres in each class, enabling our pupils to develop a wide variety of knowledge and skills that they can apply to their own writing. Writing is usually planned over a 2-week cycle (sometimes shorter in EYFS). Children will analyse the features of the different genres of writing and how they are suited to purpose and audience and then use this to develop success criteria for their independent writing. Teachers use worked examples, scaffolding and success criteria to enable every child to become authors of their own texts.

Spelling

Across school, we follow the Twinkl spelling scheme. In KS1 children begin to move away from spelling words in a phonetically plausible way and move towards looking more at spelling patterns and rules. Children will begin to use prefixes and suffixes, they will learn to spell common exception words and begin to use contracted forms accurately. Alongside this, they will continue to apply their knowledge in relation to phonemes and graphemes and use this to help them spell. Children will be given a list of spellings to learn each week which will be linked to the rule or pattern that has been learned in class that week. In weekly spelling tests, children will be tested on 5 of these words and then 3 random words from previous weeks and 2 words from the National curriculum spelling lists. Direct teaching of spelling takes place for 10 minutes every day and this is often accompanied by games and online activities.

The majority of children in KS2 learn spellings by focusing on a particular spelling pattern each week (e.g. words ending in -tion or words containing 'ough'). This will be taught to children in class and the children will be given a list of words including this pattern to learn. Children will practise these spellings in school. Spelling tests are conducted in the same way as KS1.

Assessment

Assessment of pupil progress is on-going and forms part of the class teacher's formative assessment. Instead of marking work, teachers fill in weekly feedback grids and identify misconceptions, strengths and next steps. We hold 'assessment' weeks every half-term, where teachers check pupil understanding and skills. Reading fluency is assessed using the Collins fluency assessment scheme and Phonics termly assessments are completed using the Little Wandle assessments.

Year 1 children complete the Year 1 Phonics Screening check and Year 6 complete SATs test for Reading and GPS.

Moderation

Children's work is moderated both internally and externally in order to ensure assessments are rigorous and consistent. In-house moderation of writing takes place regularly, with staff working as part of cross phase teams to ensure accurate judgements.

Teaching English to children with additional needs

English is planned to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of all children.

Teachers provide help with communication and literacy by:

- Ensuring texts are matched to the needs and ability of the children. Frequent reading practice.
- Daily support from Teaching Assistants and Teachers who will deliver sessions to support pupil targets. Regular opportunities for children to over-learn and revisit concepts.
- Reviews of progress, made by school SENDCo, class teacher and teaching assistant, to make sure that targets are being met.
- Adaptive teaching strategies

Children who have English as an additional language will be supported in a variety of ways to ensure that they can access the English curriculum and develop a full range of language skills. This support will include:

- Assessment and monitoring of pupil progress by the class teacher and the SENDCO
- Develop opportunities for the children to hear stories in their own language.
- Additional support sought from the Local Authority Advisory Teachers

Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the coordinators to ensure policies are up dated with the latest initiatives. Evaluation will include: effectiveness, ease of implementation, identifying any amendments needed and additions required to the policy as a result of legislation changes. Teachers should ensure that they are confident with the subject matter and inform the English Coordinator of their training and support needs. The English Coordinator should ensure that they are well-informed of current ideas and developments in Literacy by attending appropriate courses and keeping up to date with new initiatives. They should disseminate gathered information to colleagues.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All teaching and non-teaching staff at Sunnybrow Primary School are responsible for ensuring that every pupil, regardless of gender, race, culture, background and ability have the opportunity to experience education at an appropriate and challenging level. To ensure that pupils experience high standards of success, English needs to be taught with regards to pupil's abilities to ensure progress. We aim to identify and minimise barriers to learning and take account of gender, ability, disability, social, cultural, and linguistic background when planning lessons. Provision is made to enable all pupils to participate effectively in curriculum and assessment activities. A wide range of gender specific and cultural images that challenge stereotypes will be used. Individual teachers consider carefully the groupings they have. These might depend on the experiences the children have had in their home environments.

Intended Impact

We measure the impact of our curriculum in a variety of ways. A triangulation of monitoring and evaluation evidence provides us with a clear picture of the quality of literacy teaching, the effectiveness and suitability of the curriculum and the attainment and progress of our pupils.

In Reading, as children move through the school you will see that they increase in confidence and fluency. They are more-able to use expression when reading aloud. Children show increasing skill in analysing, discussing and explaining different aspects of texts. Impact is measured through assessment for learning opportunities and through summative assessments. For more information, see our page Reading & Phonics.

For spoken language, our main source of impact will always be the quality of interactions you see in and around our school. In lessons, you will see children who are actively engaged in their discussions with their partner or group. As you move around school, you will see polite, confident children, who can converse with ease with a range of different people.

In Writing, by looking at children's books, observing lessons and conducting pupil voice activities you will see that children demonstrate increasing familiarity with different genres meaning that children can also focus on creativity, writer's craft, sustained writing and manipulation of grammar and punctuation skills. You will also see that children are making at least good progress throughout the academic year and that there is sustained progression across the school.

Children will be able to produce written work in all areas of the curriculum of a similar standard. The skills taught in English lessons will be effectively transferred in to other subjects; this shows a consolidation of skills and that children know more, remember more and can do more.

Writing assessment is thorough and consistently applied throughout the school. Senior leaders in school discuss attainment and progress of individual pupils with staff and staff regularly moderate examples of writing. Pupil attainment and progress is tracked from starting points and timely intervention takes place to ensure children do not fall behind. Pupils of all abilities will be able to succeed in all English lessons because work will be appropriately modelled, scaffolded and differentiated. There will be no significant gaps in the progress of different groups of pupils (e.g. disadvantaged vs non-disadvantaged).

Our writing results at the end of KS2 will be consistently high year on year. A high proportion of pupils reach the Early Learning Goal in writing. KS1 writing teacher assessment results are rising. In lessons, you will see that children take pride in all that they do, are motivated to do their best and have confidence in their own abilities. Knowledge, understanding and skills will be secured and embedded so that children attain highly and are fully prepared for the next phase of their educational journey.

Written by: Claire Sim 30.09.24

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