



# Woodrow First School

## English Policy

<b>Signed by:</b>	
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## **Woodrow First School and Nursery English Policy**

### **Introduction**

At Woodrow First School we recognise the central importance of English, as a subject in its own right, and as the most cohesive area of learning. Gaining and using skills in language not only affects the child's progress in school, but also has a profound influence upon the course of his or her whole life. We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading & Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English within a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught skills.

At Woodrow First School we believe the children in our school deserve to have a curriculum that extends beyond the confines of the classroom and the pages of the National Curriculum. We use drama to bring stories into our classrooms; both our teachers and children invest themselves into the fiction and become responsible members of our team. We have an imaginary client, who provides tasks that we, the team have to complete. Along the way, we will encounter problems that need to be solved.

From Nursery to Year 4, we use drama to tell our stories; we work together and learn how to listen to one another. Ofsted say that our children "listen to each other's ideas attentively and courteously" and "appreciate the way they are encouraged to ask questions and suggest their own ideas".

### **English Aims**

- To enable children to be competent, confident, independent readers and writers.
- To promote a positive attitude to reading, writing, speaking and listening
- To develop children's ability to become confident users of language, both oral and written
- To ensure that skills underpin all learning and teaching in school.
- To develop the key skills in order to be confident, independent readers and writers.
- To ensure children have access to a broad, balanced and creative curriculum.
- To provide clear and consistent teaching throughout the school.
- To communicate the school policy on English to all staff, Governors, parents and other interested parties.

### **Inclusion Statement**

Every child is given the opportunity to be included in all aspects of school life and in all areas of the curriculum. Teaching and learning in the school ensures that all children are set suitable learning challenges. A broad range of teaching styles are adopted in response to diverse learning needs. We make every effort to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and for groups of children. We aim for Woodrow First School to be an ideal learning environment for nurturing and developing the whole child.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We have high expectations for all children. Our aim as a school is to ensure that all children have equal access to a rich and rewarding curriculum for English, and that they experience this curriculum in ways that are appropriate for their needs, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or any other determining factors. This school is actively promoting equal opportunities by tracking groups causing concern and regularly discussing them at pupil progress meetings with the Head Teacher. Consequently, we make use of a suitable range of learning activities, teaching strategies, educational materials and ICT aids to meet the needs of every individual learner. Children for whom English is an additional language are supported in their use of English and will be given opportunities to make use of their home language to assist their learning and to add to the resources of the classroom.

## **Special Educational Needs**

Situations may arise in which individuals need to work at a level above or below that of the rest of their peer group, or may need special assistance to accomplish particular tasks. This will become apparent through teachers' use of an on-going observation and assessment or assessment prior to a child coming to our school. Where children are thought to need additional help, teachers go through a referral procedure consistent with the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Parents are informed of any decisions made. Children with EHCPs and/or AIPMs for learning are supported as detailed in their provision maps. It is for class teachers to decide how to best target their support in liaison with the SENCO. Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study – Key Stages 1 and 2 (2013) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017).

In the Foundation Stage (Reception) children are given opportunities to:

- Speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- Use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum;
- Become immersed in a language rich environment.

At Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) children are given opportunities to:

- Learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say.
- Learn to read and write independently and with enthusiasm.
- Learn to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

At Key Stage 2 (Years 3-4) children are given opportunities to:

- Learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences.
- Read a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetic texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them.
- Explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works (using grammatical terminology).

## **Reading and Phonics**

At Woodrow, we love reading. We promote a love of reading throughout the school by modelling reading, sharing stories and encouraging children to explore a range of books as part of their daily routine. All children have access to the library and in KS2 they take books home to share with their parents, carers and family members. Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opportunity to develop their own reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during guided reading time. From Foundation Stage to Year 2, children have three reading sessions per week. For those in Year 3 and 4, children read in whole class reading sessions and focus more on comprehension.

At Woodrow, early reading from Nursery to Year 2 is taught using systematic synthetic phonics. The school follows the Little Wandle because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme. For more details, refer to our Phonics and Early Reading Policy.

In Key Stage 2, Little Wandle phonics continues for those who require additional support. If appropriate, the Little Wandle Rapid Catch Up programme will be followed. We also have the option to follow the Little Wandle SEND programme. Reading is taught mainly via whole class reading in Year 3 and Year 4 where fluency and comprehension are the focus. The document "5 Minutes on Reading [Fluency Focus]" from Shotton Hall Research School informs our teaching of reading in KS2. Fluency is explicitly taught and deliberately practised. This is done using the following strategies:

- Teacher led, modelled fluent reading
- Choral reading
- Repeated choral reading
- Echo reading
- Deep reading

Comprehension is developed through the reading of extracts and discussion around the class text which is read in full. The sessions are structured to include:

- Succeed with Six – a focus on vocabulary so that meaning can be gained from the text
- Rapid retrieval – a set of questions to answer either through discussion or in a written form
- Time to talk – discussion around a question based on inference which challenges children to justify their answers
- Think for yourself – discussion around children's opinions and views in relation to the theme of the text
- Flying solo – opportunity for the children to show what they have learned in a written form

### **Reading for pleasure and purpose**

Across school, teachers read a variety of written material regularly with the children: fiction and non-fiction, stories, reports, diaries, poems etc. Reading is an integral part of our

Mantle of the Expert sessions. Children also have daily “story” time sessions and access to a well-stocked reading area.

### **Speaking and Listening**

We recognise the importance of spoken language in pupils’ development across the whole curriculum; spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. Our frequent use of drama enables us to talk one another, explore storytelling, engage in role-play and contribute to debates within lessons across the curriculum. The National Curriculum states:

‘All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.’ (pages 3, 4 and 7, 2013) All of these speaking and listening skills are taught in, across the curriculum through our use of Mantle of the Expert and during extra-curricular activities too. Children who require extra support in speaking and listening are referred to a Speech and Language therapist to further assess their needs. We recognise the need for all pupils to speak, read and write standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil’s own dialect or other language is of prime importance. All staff members are role models who promote Standard English and take care to sensitively correct children’s misconceptions with language.

### **Writing**

Writing is both essential to thinking and learning and enjoyable in its own right. As children begin to learn the main rules and conventions of written English they learn how it can be used to communicate meaning in different ways.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

It is important that children learn to write independently from an early age. At Woodrow First School and Nursery all children are treated as writers and from the moment they make marks and attach meaning to them they are encouraged to regard themselves as writers. Children’s writing is valued whilst at the same time used as a basis for future teaching and learning.

At Woodrow we strive to enthuse, inspire and equip our children to become skilled, fluent writers. We want them to communicate knowledge, ideas and emotions confidently through writing. As outlined in the aims of the National Curriculum 2014, we want our learners to, “write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in a range of contexts, purpose and audiences.”

To do this, effective composition is dependent on the ability to articulate and communicate well. We aim for children to hear and use high quality talk and discussion so that they acquire a knowledge of varied vocabulary for writing and use grammar effectively.

Also important is the development of transcription. We expect children to place importance on spelling; effectively applying patterns and rules they learn in each year group. They are

encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their writing by developing a neat and clear handwriting style - moving to joined writing as appropriate as they move through Key Stage 2.

### **Organisation of teaching**

Writing is an integral part of most curricular areas and it is a key feature of our Mantle of the Expert learning.

However, the process of writing is taught during dedicated sessions where "The Write Stuff" program is used to structure content and progression.

We teach writing as whole class lessons where teachers and teaching assistants target support wherever it is needed. This may involve a greater level of scaffolding, extra modelling or access to additional support materials such as word banks. To extend thinking we set precise challenges for children that are not simply based on writing 'more'.

From Year 1, teachers follow a 'Yearly Overview' of writing genres and choose an appropriate unit to match the needs and interests of their class. They complete at least one unit and its complementary independent task each half term.

"The Write Stuff"- is an approach to the teaching of writing developed by Jane Considine which brings clarity to the mechanics of writing. It utilises a method called "Sentence Stacking" whereby children are taught to effectively write sentences that are stacked together chronologically and organised to engage children with short, intensive moments of learning that they can then immediately apply to their own writing.

An individual lesson is based on a sentence model, broken in to three chunks:

1. Initiate section – a stimulus to capture the children's imagination and set up a sentence.
2. Model section – the teacher close models a sentence that outlines clear writing features and techniques.
3. Enable section – the children write their sentence, following the model.

A sequence of lessons incorporating high quality demonstration writing is the basis of this model whereby children are explicitly taught and shown how to craft the ideas, grammar and techniques of writing - following plot points in a story, or the shape of a poem or non-fiction text.

At the end of the teaching sequence children will plan, write and edit their own work by creating their own plot point or shape structure based around the specific genre of writing under study.

Fantastic Foundations – The Write Stuff in the Early Years – puts key aspects of communication at the heart of teaching and learning. Children's language will be nurtured through developing ideas, strengthening talk and widening writing opportunities.

Fantastic Foundations is based on three guiding principles:

1. Understanding the uniqueness of each child
2. Nurturing deep talk and developing listening
3. Providing a rich repertoire of real and imagined experiences to ignite writing

In EYFS, children begin to learn the visuals on the Write Stuff writing rainbow. Then they work as a group or class to begin mark marking for meaning, which develops into writing words independently. Children are also supported using stem sentences and using a range of opportunities in the EYFS environment to develop spoken sentences. Children become 'word collectors' and begin to organise these words within written sentences.

## **Grammar and Spelling**

The teaching of Grammar and Spelling is in line with the requirements of The National Curriculum (2014). All staff members are role models who promote Standard English and take care to sensitively correct children's misconceptions with language. Initially, through the teaching of phonics, the skills of segmenting and blending are used by younger children to sound out a word and spell it accordingly. Overtime, when children become familiar with a number of different phonemes, spellings become more accurate.

From Year 2 onwards, teachers use the "No Nonsense Spelling" scheme to support their teaching in discrete sessions and use the resources included. We teach the children spelling techniques including spelling rules, pyramid spelling and 'what looks right'. There are high expectations for spelling, and for those words we expect to be spelt correctly, the children must correct. We model how to spell something we do not know, for example, using a word bank, the internet, a dictionary, phoneme mats, asking a friend.

Grammar and punctuation knowledge and skills are taught in context during writing lessons, at the point of writing, as much as possible. Occasionally, teachers will deliver a stand alone lesson if they feel that the class need to consolidate their skills further.

In 2022-2023 we adopted the "Little Wandle" phonics program so children in Reception are learning the letter formation associated with the scheme and we aim to continue with this as the children move through school. Other year groups currently use the appropriate "Penpals" letter formation and joining strokes.

## **Planning**

We use the National Curriculum (2014) to inform all of our planning and as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English. In accordance with the planning procedures, English is planned both discretely using and adapting The Write Stuff unit plans and as a vehicle for learning in other areas e.g. the teaching of non-chronological reports for use Mantle and reporting back to our client. The National Curriculum objectives encompass the breadth of what is taught.

## **Assessment, Target Setting and Record Keeping**

Formative assessments are a part of every lesson; they help teachers to adjust their daily plans based on what has happened on the day. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Teachers use formative and summative assessments to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next steps in learning. Each half term, children complete an assessed independent sequence of writing. The Write Stuff 'Performance of Writing' documents are a useful assessment tool that teachers use to help them when assessing children's writing. These assessments are also used to evaluate progress against school and national targets. They are reported back to and discussed with parents.

Teachers have regular pupil progress meeting/moderation meetings/key stage meetings, whereby they discuss the evidence collected against the National Curriculum objectives and collate the evidence on the whole school tracker.

### **Marking**

Marking in English is in accordance with the school's Marking Policy.

### **Cross- Curricular Opportunities for English**

Mantle of the Expert enables us to make meaningful links between subjects and develop purposeful reasons for writing. We plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

### **Mathematics**

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children in Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children. Children in KS1 are immersed in stories and rhymes that rely on counting and sequencing. Children in KS2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language. Mastery skills can be acquired by a child's ability to reason and justify their understanding of mathematical concepts. Every class teacher strives to achieve this by supporting children's developing explanations.

### **Computing**

The use of ICT enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use ICT as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the internet when searching for information about a different part of the world or Mantle related information. We encourage all children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever it is appropriate.

### **Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning**

Opportunities for the children to engage with feelings and situations arise naturally within the drama. We encourage children to be open about their and others feelings and voice their worries; to solve their conflicts within the fiction and outside the fiction.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Our inquiry based approach to learning through Mantle of the Expert enables the teaching of English skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. Mantle of the Expert allows children to work together and empowers them to talk confidently about what they believe.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in English is the responsibility of all teaching staff. We have high expectations. Regular meetings are

held with Subject Leaders, teaching staff and leadership to share good practice and moderate work. The Subject Leader meets regularly with the Leadership Team and updates Governors through Curriculum subcommittee meetings. The Subject Leader has allocated time, in order to enable them to review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school.

### **Staff Development**

At Woodrow First School, staff development is undertaken in the following ways:

- By identifying areas for development during Performance Management reviews (personal development).
- In the School Improvement plan (whole school development).
- By discussion with the Head Teacher.
- By making staff aware of relevant courses.
- By observation and feedback.
- By whole school INSET.
- By visits to leading teachers when appropriate.

### **Excellence in English**

For work that is above and beyond we give praise and share the work with the Head Teacher.

### **Homework and the Role of Parents**

We see parents as important partners in the process of developing children's skills.

- They have an important influence on children's language before they come to school.
- They provide valuable support at home in helping children to become readers and writers.
- They offer a useful audience for children in their development as speakers and listeners, readers and writers as the children move through the school

We therefore encourage parents to play their full part in their children's education by holding regular parental empowerment opportunities, including phonics workshops, reading workshops and Foundation Stage workshops.