



# Thistly Meadow Primary School

## ENGLISH POLICY

Approved by Governors (date) .....

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body .....

Chair of Governors



# ENGLISH POLICY

## Rationale

At Thistly Meadow Primary School we aim to: *'Inspire with the joy of lifelong learning'*. In order to fulfil our mission statement, we strive to build foundations to enable every child to become literate; preparing them with the skills for adult life. The English teaching we provide allows all children to achieve their full potential while giving them the skills to understand and use language in all its aspects. We aim to engage all children in high quality learning experiences in order to foster passions for lifelong reading; while providing the confidence to communicate effectively in both speech and writing. Believing literacy has the power to enrich lives, we strive to ensure every child develops the confidence and competence to embrace literature in its many forms. This ethos applies to all groups of children in the school, including LAC, D/SEN, Disadvantaged / Pupil Premium, G&T, EAL and other vulnerable groups including 'hard to reach' families.

## Purpose

We aim to provide children with access to an integral programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing in order to foster a love of language, a curiosity about how language works and to strive for excellence in all areas.

Through English at Thistly Meadow, we aim to ensure that all children:

- ✓ Read both fiction and non-fiction texts easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- ✓ Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- ✓ Acquire a wide vocabulary and an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- ✓ Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- ✓ Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- ✓ Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- ✓ Are competent in the art of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.
- ✓ Meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the EYFS Development Matters document.

## Guidelines

At Thistly Meadow we create an atmosphere of enjoyment and pleasure in which all children feel confident to express themselves in both spoken and written language. A full range of teaching styles are used to cater for all learners and the LMT, alongside the English leader, regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Through the use of a creative and exciting curriculum map, we embrace a cross-curricular approach to the teaching and learning of English by providing high quality English experiences in subjects across the curriculum. This enables children to develop their reading, writing and speaking and listening skills in a range of situations and contexts. Computing is integrated appropriately within the English curriculum in order to enhance teaching and learning. Within our school we build a positive, challenging environment where ideas are shared and all contributions are valued and used as learning opportunities. We recognise the social and educational importance of standard English but also respect the linguistic background of every child. All teachers are expected to regularly

assess progress towards learning objectives in order to facilitate target setting and enhance levels of achievement.

## **Spoken Language**

Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using standard English. They should learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others and select the appropriate register for effective communication. They should be taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. This will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing.

We recognise that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing; therefore, the quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak is vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should consequently ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. This can be done in a number of ways for example: re-telling stories, participating in class/group discussions, drama/role play activities and oral presentations.

Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

## **Reading**

Teachers should develop pupils' reading and writing in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge. Pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose (both fiction and non-fiction) and be encouraged to read for pleasure; at Thistly Meadow we work hard to promote wider reading. Literature is at the heart of our curriculum and it is expected that the class teacher reads at least two books per year to their class (as well as poetry, short stories etc).

In order to instil a joy of reading at Thistly Meadow, all children have access to our school library as well as individual, personalised libraries for each year group in KS2. Our libraries host an array of texts, ranging from current, newly published books to well-known classic fictions. We devote a significant proportion of our school budget to replenishing our bookshelves so that reading material is new and exciting, and geared towards the interests of our children. Before purchasing new books, children are consulted and able to request titles or themes that pique their interest. We strive to create a text-rich environment for all of our children which appeals to their interests; however, we also set ambitious expectations for reading at home. Our pupils are encouraged to read books from home as well as different text types; fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics and magazines.

Children are taught to read using the Oxford Reading Tree scheme and books are colour banded according to difficulty throughout school so that children are familiar with the level at which they are working. When they become fluent readers, they choose books themselves by browsing independently. All of the libraries have books banded at 'age-related expectations' and 'challenge' books are available for our more able readers.

At Thistly Meadow the teaching of reading focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions: word reading and comprehension; different kinds of teaching are needed for each. Skilled

word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is vital which is why phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school. The Ruth Miskin Phonics Programme is introduced in FS and continued until the programme is completed and the child has a solid understanding of all letters and sounds.

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. Shared reading is carried out in English lessons. Guided and independent reading also takes place within the school day and may be cross curricular. Guided reading takes place daily and may be carried out by the class teacher or TA and can be based on the reading targets for that group of children. Over the course of the year, guided reading covers all the reading assessment foci, in line with the symphony assessment criteria, so that children are prepared to answer a variety of question types - such as inference and deduction, and information retrieval- based upon their reading.

Children are encouraged to share books as well as to read quietly by themselves. All children have reading journals which parents are encouraged to use at home. It is our policy at Thistly Meadow that children read aloud to a teacher at least once a week in KS1 and at least once fortnightly in KS2 in order to improve their reading skills and understanding. This is as well as class reading, shared reading and guided reading which takes place daily. Parents are encouraged to support the development of reading comprehension by asking questions of the children when reading at home to see whether they've understood what they have read.

Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds. It is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in preparation for their secondary education.

## **Writing**

Pupils should develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. They should be taught the correct use of grammar. Their writing should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations: such writing supports them in rehearsing, understanding and consolidating what they have heard or read.

The programmes of study for writing at key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. The English Leader and SLT undertake regular work scrutinies throughout all subjects to ensure that the volume and quality of cross-curricular writing remains high and that standards are consistent throughout subjects and year groups.

### **Handwriting**

The school aims for a consistent whole school approach, which sets high expectations and maintains a constant awareness of the importance of presentation. We teach a fluid style which enables the pupils to write speedily and legibly. Short revision sessions are held each week. Grip and posture are reinforced and a pencil is used to write throughout all year groups. We follow the 'Read, Write, Inc' handwriting scheme; there are only two basic joins: the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal). Other than when printing is required (maps and labels) this style will be employed in all writing activities. Opportunities will be given to produce well set out and well-presented work of a highly finished standard. Teachers will employ this style on the board and in their marking.

Once children have mastered letter formation in Year 1, we expect our more able writers to begin joining in the second half of the year. Our expectation is that most children join their writing in Year 2 and the significant majority of all children join in a fluent, legible style in all writing activities in KS2.

### **Spelling / Phonics**

In order to help children to become more confident spellers, the teaching of spelling in FS and KS1 follows the Ruth Miskin 'Read, Write, Inc' phonics programme, which uses an interactive and kinaesthetic approach to learning. When necessary, this programme will continue for some into Year 3 to help them with the transition between KS1 and KS2. Throughout FS and KS1 the children receive twenty minute sessions of focused phonic work five times a week. The children are organised into groups based on their phonic ability relating to each phase of the phonics programme. In addition to this, any children in year groups further up the school who have been assessed as working below national expectations in phonics will receive further phonics intervention to support their development in reading and writing. Each teacher has a RWI handbook which consists of all lesson plans and the resources which are required to deliver the sessions. It is expected that the phonics phoneme freeze is displayed in every classroom and is referred to during phonics lessons and at other points during the day.

Children in Years 2-6 use the Ruth Miskin 'Read, Write, Inc' spelling programme to recognise new spelling patterns, learn common high frequency words for their year group and strategies for defining and spelling unknown words, as recommended by the National Curriculum 2014. Each teacher has a RWI spelling handbook and additional resources are kept centrally with the English leader. The spelling objectives and high frequency words, which need to be taught/covered in every year group, are outlined on pages 51-63 of the national curriculum.

It is a requirement of the new curriculum that children be exposed to new, exciting vocabulary regularly and add these new words to their own internal word banks for their fluent use. New vocabulary will be introduced throughout the curriculum subjects to provide children with new words and definitions to enrich their speaking and listening contributions and within their writing. Appropriate key spelling words and new vocabulary for each year group is displayed in classrooms for children to refer to and use, both within their verbal contributions during lessons, colloquially around school and within their writing. This is done to promote a language-rich environment at Thistly Meadow.

We use 'active spelling' as a whole-class approach to improving spelling. The aim of this is to improve the accuracy and maintenance of spelling skills through active learning. Active Spelling encourages children to independently amend incorrect spellings and find hooks to remember correct spellings.

### **Planning / Assessment / Monitor / Review**

Assessment of the standard of pupils' work and rate of progress is measured through careful observation and marking of pupils' output, with the school marking policy being integral to this process. The teaching staff will moderate the writing produced by children in planned meetings to assess the children's progress using the symphony assessment resources to support judgements.

Pupils are formally assessed in line with the symphony assessment resources and these are used to identify pupils working at, above and below age expectations. Assessment data is analysed in order to identify current strengths and weaknesses within the subject and to plan whole school improvements in English teaching. Pupils' work is assessed three times a year. The data is used to help teachers devise personal targets for the children in their class and to drive improvement. All pupils are assessed as either beginning, developing or secure. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to assess the children and input the data onto O Track.

The English Leader and members of the LMT also observe lessons, speak to children and examine a range of work to ensure effective delivery, differentiation and progression towards targets set. Children self assess their own work and that of their peers regularly during guided reading and writing sessions.

The assessment leader works alongside the English leader and class teachers to:

- Track the progress pupil through the school
- Monitor groups of pupils e.g. boys/SEN
- Monitor the progress of year group cohorts
- Compare class to class and year to year progress
- Set targets for improvement

Age related targets for reading and writing are set each term (this may vary depending on the length of each term) and progress towards these is assessed by teacher assessment of class work. All pupils are given feedback and precise targets based upon their extended independent writing and these are specific to each individual. When marking, teachers assess whether these targets have been met before setting new ones. In the Foundation Stage and Year 1, children are assessed in phonics acquisition on a half termly basis. Appropriate interventions are planned for those children who do not meet these expectations during termly pupil progress meetings with the assessment leader.

Parents are updated about progress and attainment in English at parent's evenings in the autumn and spring term and in the written report at the end of the year.

### **Links with other policies:**

- Assessment Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy

Version	Date	Comment
V1	Date created: 29.2.2016 Review date: Feb 2019	A Gordon