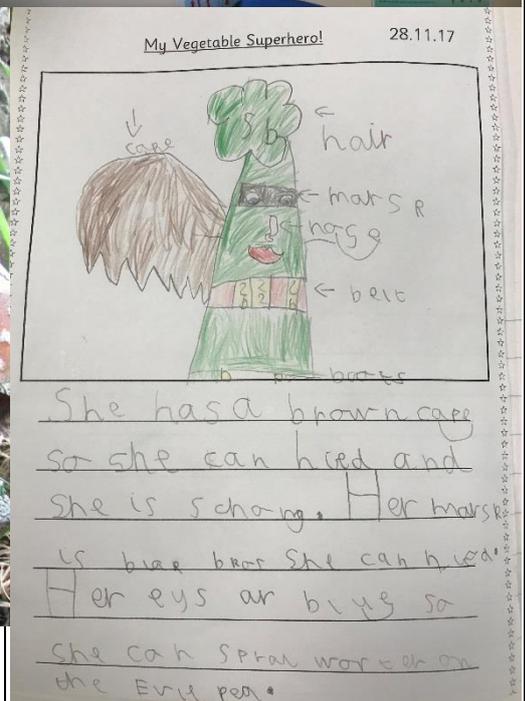
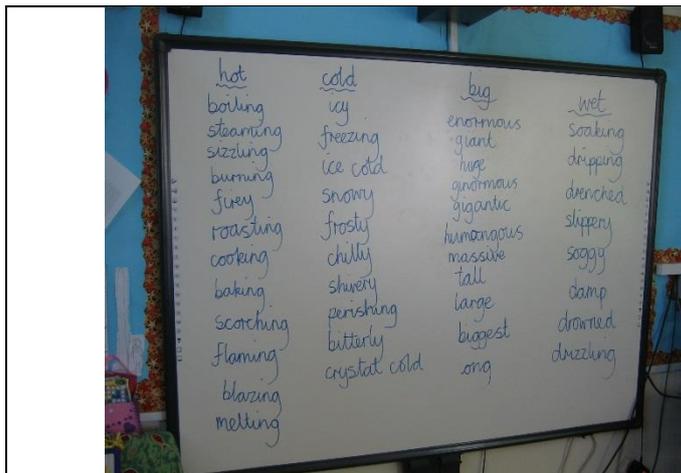


West Rise Community Infant School

English Policy



Policy updated: November 2020

Review date: November 2021

Updated by A Hurst in consultation with the staff of West Rise Community Infant School

This policy document sets out the schools aims, principles and strategies for the teaching of English. It includes an overview of the particular aspects of speaking & listening, reading, writing, phonics, spelling and handwriting. In order to take account of new initiatives and learning and teaching strategies, the policy will be updated on a regular basis.

Aims and principles

English lies at the heart of the curriculum. The skills of speaking & listening, reading and writing are necessary in all that children learn. Emphasis is therefore placed on the teaching of these basic communication skills, as well as in their use in every area of the curriculum. Oral communication is fostered and encouraged, as it helps the growth of appropriate language in formal and informal discussions, structured presentations and dramatic interpretation.

‘English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them.’

- *National Curriculum 2014*

At West Rise Community Infant School we believe that ‘if a child can’t say it, they can’t write it’. We therefore give priority to developing every child’s ability in speaking & listening as a vital stage in the developing attainment of all English skills.

‘Children use talk to identify what they need to understand, the personal knowledge and experience to which they can relate it, and the kinds of reinforcement they need for understanding to take place.’ *Learning together through talk, The National Oracy project*

The aims of learning and teaching in English at West Rise are:

- To foster a love and enjoyment of language and literature.

- To equip children with the skills to be able to communicate effectively in speech and writing.
- To enable the children to speak clearly and audibly with confidence to a variety of audiences.
- To develop listening, concentration and thinking skills.
- To develop confident independent readers through an appropriate focus on decoding skills, understanding and interpretation.
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through immersion in a wide variety of high quality texts.
- To develop an enjoyment of writing and a recognition of its value as a necessary skill for life.
- To provide a relevant print rich environment for children.

We aim to ‘promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment’ *National Curriculum for English 2014*

Teaching and learning style

At West Rise School, we acknowledge and celebrate that children have preferred learning styles and we plan and use a multi-sensory approach. Our principal aim is to develop children’s knowledge, skills and understanding in English and to discover the pleasure of communicating their thoughts and ideas in many forms. In both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One the children are exposed to language and literacy skills all day long, with a variety of skills being taught both explicitly and incidentally. We teach daily English lessons to give children regular learning and practise opportunities.

We also pride ourselves on being reflective practitioners and are willing to alter our practice to meet the needs of the children. Therefore, children are grouped according to their needs. This may include small differentiated groups or differentiated whole class learning.

We are committed to providing a creative curriculum so there are always a variety of starting points (a stunning start) for the literacy lessons. This may include a book, poem, picture, photograph, film clip, a letter, a trip, a visitor or an incident for the children to explore, from which all other literacy and wider learning may follow.

Phonic skills for both reading and writing are taught using the systematic synthetic phonics programme *Letters & Sounds*. These sessions may be taught in discreet differentiated ability groups or whole class sessions, along with handwriting and grammar. Phonics is also referred to at every point during the wider curriculum.

Speaking & Listening

The teaching of communication skills has a high priority in our school and opportunities are planned daily, whereby the children can practise and develop these skills in a fun and purposeful way. Children are taught about the 'four voices' they need when they are formulating and communicating their ideas. They are also encouraged to actively debate and discuss ideas through the use of 'talking partners'. All subject areas provide opportunities for pupils to share experiences and benefit from what others think, say and do. Circle-time is an example of an opportunity to develop the ability to contribute to small group and whole class discussion and to work with others to meet a challenge. This is always evident in PSHE lessons and also when having a lesson based on the wellbeing curriculum. Drama, role play and the use of ICT are all ways the children can use these skills in a fun and practical way. At West Rise, we also believe in a strong emphasis on storytelling and talking in preparation for writing.

Writing

Children write every day in a range of contexts and for a variety of reasons. When planning, the teachers refer to a range of materials and curriculum guidance but most importantly the needs of the child. Activities are usually given context within the topic for that term and are often linked to a 'family challenge'. Wherever possible, writing should be prepared for

by talking. This could be through talking partners, whole class discussion or group discussion. Writing should nearly always be the result of talk. Opportunities to practise talking for writing should be planned for throughout the day.

Children are encouraged to mark make right from the beginning in order to see themselves as writers and letter formation is taught and encouraged alongside this, according to the readiness of the child. Through consistent and quality phonic teaching, shared and guided writing, teachers help the children to move on towards independent writing skills. Children's next steps are identified through both formative and summative assessment and in Key Stage One, children are taught to know their targets, both through communication from the teacher and classroom displays, as well as in their 'I'm a Writer' books. Children are given clear success criteria to work towards. Every piece of writing, although not always in designated writing books, is a chance for a child to practise their skills and the high expectations are still there. This is also the case when children are writing in 'Wellbeing books' which are not necessarily 'marked' by the teacher as they are a tool for the children to navigate the wellbeing curriculum.

Each classroom either provides the children with an inviting well equipped writing corner or an area where children can take a range of writing equipment and resources to use independently. Children are encouraged to independently practise taught skills and apply them in a variety of situations. Displays should be a balance of children's work, where possible labelled by a child, and a 'working wall' where children can find words and information to help them with their writing. The use of individual targets gives a clear self-assessment checklist for the children to use.

Quality phonic teaching gives children the knowledge and confidence to be able to attempt spelling the words they want to write. 'Common exception words' are also taught in phonics. When children are ready, they will be given spellings to learn for homework, which are tested weekly.

Grammar teaching is incorporated into phonics sessions, English lessons and reading. This is taught both discreetly and within other lessons. Children are also given opportunities to practise their skills in morning activity time. Teachers follow the Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation appendix 2 document.

We use the *Nelson* handwriting style at school (please see separate handwriting policy). All writing modelled by adults should adhere to this style. A variety of pencils and pens should be available for the children to write with, allowing them to find the utensil that suits their writing the best. At school we encourage the tripod grip when holding a pencil and we place enormous value on correct posture for writing.

All writing should be quality and should have the highest expectations attached to it. The same rules for writing apply both inside and out of the English session.

Reading

At West Rise School, we believe that all children should be given the opportunity to discover the love of books and the magic of reading as a way of escaping into an imaginary world or to find out more about their world. We aim for the children to be exposed to a wide range of exciting and beautiful quality texts daily.

“Reading is the one ability that, once set in motion, has the ability to feed itself, grow exponentially and provide a basis from which possibilities are limitless.”

(Michael Morpurgo)

Our core reading scheme is the Oxford Reading Tree, the characters and books are introduced, as appropriate from the Foundation Stage onwards. These books are sent home daily and are changed at least once a week. Typically, the class teacher or TA will read at least once a week, either as part of a guided reading group or on an individual basis to practise and teach reading skills. *During The 2020 pandemic this may reduce to once a fortnight, to allow for a reduction in reading opportunities brought about by altered routines and safety

procedures*. Each child's individual reading target is written in the reading file and is shared with the child each time they are read with. The evidence of individual reading happening is recorded in a reading file and in the child's individual reading record. Parents are encouraged to read with their child daily and each class has a 'book change basket' in place, which allows for books to be changed more frequently, as long as the parent has signed the reading record. All books have been sorted by reading stage rather than reading scheme, which has allowed children to take more ownership of choosing which book they would most like to read.

Quality phonic teaching through Letters & Sounds gives children the knowledge and confidence to be able to attempt the segmenting and blending of the words they want to read. Children are explicitly taught common exception words and high frequency words through high quality teaching. In Year One special pencil cases are given to each child with individually targeted sounds and words, so they can specifically increase their sight vocabulary and spelling through frequent practise at home. These words are updated once the child is able to read these words on sight and in random order.

Once the children have the necessary skills in place, guided reading will take place (this takes place outside of the main literacy lesson). Guided reading is used to practise and / or teach specific skills such as comprehension or reading a play. Focussed reading targets for the group are recorded in the guided reading file and are shared with the children prior to guided reading. ***Guided reading is postponed during the pandemic of 2020***

Children are also explicitly taught these skills in whole class reading sessions in English lessons, and also Learning journey lessons and class story times, exposing them to good quality, higher level texts.

Children should be encouraged to use and apply their reading skills in as many situations as possible, including reading

learning intentions, notices, own and others work and information around school.

Each classroom should have a stimulating, exciting and organised book corner, where the children can enjoy books in a comfortable environment. Classrooms should all have a range of appropriate texts including fiction, non-fiction, dictionaries and atlases. Children should also be given the opportunity to explore stories from around the world and author collections. Other adults are encouraged to come in and read with children as much as possible. Male role models for reading are extremely important and should also be encouraged as much as possible.

Assessment and recording

There are structured assessment and recording procedures in place. Please see separate learning and teaching policy for more information.

Inclusion

At West Rise School we aim to identify and support all children following the guidance laid out in the East Sussex Dyslexia Policy (See Principles, Section 2, Roles and Responsibilities Section 3). We have a specialist teacher and two specialist TA's.

Children identified as having a special need in literacy will have these needs met through differentiated work and extra support in daily group work with the INA / TA with work that addresses different learning styles.

Gifted and talented children are given extra challenge to stretch their abilities as appropriate.

There are only a small percentage of EAL children at West Rise Infants, but every effort is made to ensure they have the maximum opportunity to access English as their additional language. Our EAL provision from the LEA varies as to the needs of the school. The support staff liaises closely with staff and families to ensure the effectiveness of provision. According to the needs of the child, they will provide in class support, or withdrawal, for more intensive Speaking and Listening opportunities.

All staff at West Rise Infants aim to teach inclusively, so the use of props, Role Play, Visual Aids and the practice of pairing EAL children with very able English speakers is embedded in our whole-class teaching. We also value and encourage the use of additional languages in our school, both as a celebration of diversity but also recognising that children will access English more easily if they have opportunities to form concepts in their Mother Tongue.

By the time children leave our school the minimum we aim to ensure is that they have developed a positive self-image as a speaker, writer and reader.