



Policy Approved:
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Slimbridge Primary School English Policy

At Slimbridge Primary School we believe that language and English is fundamental to the overall development of the child and their access to all aspects of the curriculum. We recognise that both spoken and written English will empower our pupils and provide the foundation for all future learning. Our primary aim is to engender enthusiasm and a love of literature in all our pupils; our broad and balanced curriculum gives our pupils varied opportunities to develop and practice Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening skills to allow them to become effective communicators.

Our aim, is to help children leave primary school:

- reading and writing with confidence, fluency and understanding
- with a love of reading and a desire to read for enjoyment
- with an interest in words and their meanings; and a growing vocabulary
- understanding a range of text types, media types and genres
- able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation
- using their imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness
- having a suitable range of technical vocabulary to articulate their responses

English throughout the school day

At both KS1 and KS2, children have a daily English lesson lasting an hour. Throughout the school we use a strategy called 'Talk for Writing' to immerse the children in good quality model texts. Children are introduced to each text type and explore the key features, structures and the related vocabulary. Text types are learnt through recital (using visual and action prompts) and then with support they create their own innovations of the text. In addition to this, the following is also incorporated into our school day:

- discrete phonics/spelling sessions

- opportunities for reading – either individually or to an adult, listening to stories or whole class guided reading sessions
- the teaching of grammar and punctuation
- handwriting (dependent on children’s needs).

In the Foundation Stage, English is taught throughout the day through a range of play based activities. Children also experience a discrete phonics session (4x per week) and daily story times. We promote a learning environment that is rich in communication; speaking, listening and representing ideas in children’s activities is paramount to early learning.

At Key Stage One, children learn to:

- develop confidence when speaking and listening.
- read and write with increased independence and enthusiasm.
- use language to explore experiences and imagination.

At Key Stage Two, children learn to:

- change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences.
- read a wider range of texts and respond to the different layers of meaning within them.
- explore the structure and key features of different text types
- explore rich language and extend their vocabulary

Speaking and Listening and Performance

Speaking and listening provide the foundation for further language development. A pupil’s spoken language often reflects their local culture and heritage and is therefore crucial to his or her identity. We value this and help them build upon it. However, pupils are also entitled to gain knowledge, competence and confidence in the use of Standard English, thus empowering them to use whichever is most appropriate to purpose, audience and situation. To reflect this, we aim to provide pupils with opportunities to:

- speak in a variety of forms for different audiences, purposes and situations (both formally and informally).
- reflect upon their speech and make appropriate choices.
- talk in group situations, valuing the contributions of others and responding appropriately.

Our pupils are encouraged to embrace drama and performance from the start of their school life. In EYFS, we promote confidence to speak in a group and talk about their interests through the forum of ‘show & tell’ sessions as well as using ‘helicopter stories’ and the ‘Talk for Writing’ approach to perform known stories as well as using their own narratives to the class. Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2, this is developed and encouraged further, for example, through expression, gestures, intonation and more within lessons. We further promote learning during extra-curricular activities such as drama productions and class assemblies. The

use of drama and performance across our curriculum is highly valued and is used to showcase children's learning and talents.

Reading

Our school is passionate about promoting a culture of reading for pleasure; we want our pupils to develop a genuine love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also enrich their lives. Studies have shown that reading for pleasure is the biggest single indicator of a child's future success, therefore we place huge importance on the provision of good quality fiction and non-fiction that we hope will help them develop enjoyment, understanding and knowledge that will last a lifetime.

As reading is one of the most powerful tools of learning, we aim to help pupils to:

- master the basic mechanical skills of reading
- read with accuracy, fluency and expression
- develop and use higher order reading skills which will contribute to their overall comprehension of texts
- understand the value of information texts as an aid to learning
- develop a love of literature and an understanding of the pleasure reading can bring
- develop an enjoyment of a wide variety of reading opportunities, such as online reading and audio books.

Children begin their independent reading journey in EYFS with a book that matches their phonic knowledge. All our EYFS and Key Stage One reading books are fully decodable. The books are taken home daily to read with parents. The books are not changed daily as we promote repeated reading to support decoding and encourage fluency. This is the same throughout Year 1 and 2 until the children are able to move onto the 'free reader' choices presented in our School Fiction Library.

Children in all classes participate in regular whole class reading sessions where a wide variety of genres are explored. Good questioning, quality texts and rich discussion and enquiry, all help children develop essential comprehension and inference skills. Individual reading development is encouraged through regular 1:1 reading sessions between a child and adult. Our school is fortunate to be part of the 'Reading Pets as Therapy (PAT) scheme', which encourages vulnerable, disadvantaged and SEND children to read.

Vocabulary

We promote a learning environment that is rich in vocabulary. Our 'Talk for Writing' approach is highly invested in providing children with high quality texts that encourages children to extend their knowledge and understanding of words. From Year 2 to 6, children use 'magpie' books to 'steal' and generate word banks and phrases from texts which we then encourage them to use in their own writing. Within EYFS and Year 1 children use displays, vocabulary boxes or word mats to write new words they have learned which they independently retrieve to use in their own writing. Children's vocabulary and language is enhanced through:

- communication, role play and text recital
- using quality texts in all our English units of work, as well as independent reading
- teaching direct meaning of vocabulary across the whole curriculum, including the key words as set out by the Primary Curriculum
- classroom displays linked to current learning

Writing

A pupil's ability to write effectively determines their performance in all areas of learning. The 'Talk for Writing' method immerses children in 'model texts' and enables them to develop from emergent writers into independent authors. Throughout these stages, we aim to provide opportunities for pupils to:

- explore and develop knowledge of the variety of functions and formats of writing.
- communicate meaning effectively through appropriate language choices according to intended purpose and audience.
- improve the content and presentation of their writing through planning, drafting and editing.
- write individually and collaboratively, experiencing praise and receiving constructive criticism and support.
- experience the pleasure of publishing their writing and sharing it with a wider audience.
- experiment with different types of language.
- develop their grammatical knowledge in order to improve their writing.

Spelling

We value and encourage children as they move through the developmental stages of learning to spell, but we also recognise the importance of mastering and using accurately conventional spelling in order to convey meaning clearly in writing. Children in the Foundation Stage and KS1 learn phonics through a Jolly Phonics program taught 4x per week. Children's learning is then carefully transitioned onto the daily learning of letters and sounds in Year 1 and Year 2, and then replaced with daily spelling sessions. During these sessions, we aim to develop pupils' knowledge of:

- sound-symbol relationships.
- regular patterns in words and non-standard forms.

- the structure of words; compound/complex words, prefixes, suffixes, roots and origins.
- high interest words associated with topics and specific curricular areas.
- a variety of strategies to enable independence in spelling, such as word banks, dictionaries, displays, mnemonics etc.
- spelling rules.

Punctuation and Grammar

Punctuation and grammar is taught throughout the school. In Reception and Y1 it is mainly taught as part of daily English lessons and through the Talk for Writing process. From Y2 onwards, discrete grammar lessons are introduced and new skills and knowledge are then practised and embedded during English lessons. Accurate grammar is also learnt through talking, modelling in speech and promoting the correct everyday use of use of grammar in the written form.

Handwriting

Presentation of written work reflects the awareness of the writer to his or her audience. Our ultimate goal is for pupils to achieve a fast, flowing, legible style of writing. In order to achieve this, we are aware of the need for a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across the key stages. We aim to deliver a structured teaching programme which:

- ensures correct formation and orientation of letters.
- develops consistency and appropriateness in size and spacing.
- encourages a pride in presentation.
- eases the transition from printing to joining.

Target Setting and Measuring Progress

Children are assessed and measured in accordance with the school assessment policy. We use Insight Tracker to assess all our children against the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum; this is updated termly.

Key elements of our English assessments are as follows:

- In the Early Years, children's progress is tracked termly against EYFS Profile.
- Children are aware of the next steps in their learning and are helped to meet these through reflective marking and regular verbal feedback.
- From Year 2 onwards, children learn the spellings for their year groups (as specified in the National Curriculum). These are tested weekly and repeated often.
- Spelling in EYFS and KS1 is less formal, often with assessments being carried out in groups.
- SWST (Single Word Spelling Tests) are carried out at the start of each year academic year for Y2 and above to determine a child's reading age. These tests are repeated at the end of the year to measure progress.
- Regular phonic assessments take place to measure children's reading age and ability.
- KS1 use Benchmarking to support reading assessments.

- Reading comprehension is tested using the 'Rising Stars' scheme, but additional comprehension assessments are undertaken in UKS2 to aid the preparation for the end of Key Stage assessments
- Children are assessed at the end of KS1 in Reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Children are prepared for statutory 'phonics screening' assessment in Year 1.
- In Year 6, children participate in SATs testing for Reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar – these are externally marked.
- Year 6 writing is teacher assessed through rigorous school, cluster and external moderation.

Formal written reports are provided at the end of each academic year and shared with parents. Parent consultation meetings are held twice yearly (in November and March) to discuss progress informally and to share targets for progress.

Meeting individual needs

We are committed to providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils. Suitable learning challenges (at an appropriate level for each individual) are set with the aim of maximising achievement for all pupils. Teachers will respond appropriately to pupils' diverse learning needs and be aware of the needs of differing genders, special educational needs, disability, as well as different cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds. We are committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and this will be reflected in the curriculum offered to pupils and in the conduct of staff and pupils.

We provide a range of interventions for pupils to maximise their learning. These include Dancing Bears, Bear Necessities, Apples and Pears, precision teaching and boosters. These are delivered by both teachers and TAs (usually in the afternoons so that children still have access to their class English lesson). Interventions are carefully monitored – children are assessed before and after interventions to evaluate their effectiveness.

Children who excel at English are identified by class teachers and provided with challenging, differentiated work. In certain circumstances they may work with older children (for example, during phonics/spellings sessions).

Homework

We value parents' co-operation and partnership in supporting their children's literacy skills. Children throughout the whole school are encouraged to read regularly at home and high importance is placed on this. Spelling homework is set weekly and words are often linked to topics and national curriculum word lists. There is plenty of opportunity for writing at home, through topic related homework and research tasks – especially as children move through the key stages. In Year 5 and 6, English homework is often more specific to cementing skills need for the transition to Secondary school.

Role of the Subject Leaders and Governors

The subject leaders are responsible for raising levels of achievement and our Governors monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning throughout the school.

Our subject leaders:

- Take the lead in policy development
- Develop an annual action plan for the teaching of English throughout the school
- Support colleagues in their CPD
- Purchase and organise resources
- Keep up to date with recent developments in the teaching of English
- Lead Parents information evenings, where needed
- Produce the EYFS termly report
- Work with the head teacher to provide governors with annual presentation of English within the school.

The Subject Governor supports the teaching of English in the school through regular visits to observe the teaching and learning environment. As well as meeting with the subject leaders, they monitor pupil attainment across the school and ensure that staff development and performance management promote good quality teaching.