



## **ELMTREE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

### **POLICY FOR ENGLISH**

This Policy is intrinsically linked with and is informed by other school documents including:

- Teaching and Learning policy
- Marking and Feedback
- Equalities and Cohesion policy
- Foundation Stage policy
- Special Educational Needs policy

This policy outlines the guiding principles by which this school will implement the teaching and learning of English in the context of the school's curriculum policy statement and its staffing, health & safety and equal-opportunities policies.

### **INTENT**

At Elmtree School, we believe that the English curriculum should support children to develop the key skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language, throughout their lives. In order to facilitate this we provide a language-rich environment, with varied Speaking and Listening opportunities. We also intend to promote a culture of reading, not simply as a vital skill, but to also inspire in pupils a love and appreciation of literature that will not only support them in their learning across the curriculum, but also enrich their lives.

At Elmtree we:

- Provide a rich and stimulating environment, where speaking and listening, and reading and writing, are at the core of each child's learning.
- Provide an environment where all pupils are encouraged to construct and convey meaning (both in speech and writing) of factual, imaginary and personal experiences.
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- Provide opportunities for pupils to become confident, competent and expressive users of the language with a developing knowledge of how it works.
- Provide children with the ability to form their letters, spell words and demarcate sentences, all with precision and accuracy, as stated in the National Curriculum.
- Enable children to develop an understanding and appreciation of a variety of text-types, media-types and genres.

- Encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, using their developing creativity, imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Instil a life-long love of reading and writing.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Planning:

We use the National Curriculum & Foundation Stage Framework to plan our teaching. This sets out the aims & objectives, and details what is to be taught to each year group.

- Teachers produce Medium Term Plans as a year-group which ensures the whole curriculum is covered during the academic year.
- Weekly plans are then formulated from the Medium Term Plan with more detail about how the lesson will be taught and what the differentiated activities will be.
- Clear objectives (LOs) along with Success Criteria are set for the lesson and shared with the pupils.
- Teachers scaffold according to the needs of the children in the class and Assessment for Learning (AFL) will be used to evaluate the learning and inform the learning sequence.
- Computing is used to enhance, extend and complement English teaching and learning.
- Additional adults are planned for and always used to support children with their learning in English.
- Additional adults work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of children or individuals.
- Specific Implementation for Early Years & Key Stage 1
- The Early Years Foundation Stage
- Communication, Language and Literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage builds on the language skills that children bring from home, with the aim of supporting children to reach their Early Learning Goals.
- All opportunities for the development of communication and literacy skills in the Early Years will be guided by Development Matters.
- The Prime Area of Communication and Language consists of three aspects:
- Listening and attention- Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
- Understanding- Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.
- Speaking- Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

The Specific Area of Literacy consists of two aspects:

- Reading- Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.
- Writing- Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.
- Pupils are introduced to phonics to support their reading and writing skills through the 'Bug Club Active Learn' Programme, supported by cued-articulation.

The Prime Area of Physical Development and its related aspect:

- Moving and Handling- Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.
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### Key Stage One

Skills are taught daily either through links with specific texts or as part of another curriculum topic. The lists below are just some examples of the multitude of ways in which we help children to make progress in the key areas of English.

#### Spoken Language:

- Pupils are given opportunities to speak in learning partners and small groups, as well as to speak in front of their whole peer-group. Children also have opportunities to speak in front of larger audiences during special assemblies and school plays.
- Within each week, children will: feedback information to their peers, discuss texts within Guided Reading sessions and give opinions in circle time and across the wider curriculum.
- Children are encouraged to listen to others, respect turn taking within conversations and ask appropriate questions.
- Role play, drama and performance activities are used across the curriculum to encourage imagination and story language and children are encouraged to take on the role of 'participant', as well as 'observer'.
- Pupils will be involved in larger presentations and performances at Christmas as well as half termly class assemblies throughout the year.
- Children are regularly given opportunities to engage in high-quality discussions as part of lessons.
- Speaking and Listening opportunities are also used to assist children with the organisation of their ideas for writing.
- An environment is created in which children feel safe when speaking about their thoughts and feelings.

#### Reading:

- Equal emphasis is given to the development of children's competency in their 'word reading' and 'comprehension' of a text.
- Pupils are taught to decode words during daily Phonics sessions, using the 'Bug Club' programme, supported by cued articulation.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for meaning and through context during 1:1 reading with an adult, shared reading as a class and small-group Guided Reading sessions.
- Pupils are exposed to a wide-range of fiction and non-fiction, including: poetry, play-scripts, stories, information texts and encyclopaedias.
- Pupils follow the 'Big Cat' reading scheme and their progress is closely monitored by adults in class using running records to ensure there is the correct level of challenge.
- Pupils are encouraged to make free-choices of books from the School Library based on their own interests.
- In group reading, pupils of a similar ability are encouraged to interpret and discuss texts in more depth, asking and answering a wide-range of questions.
- Reading skills are also developed through other curriculum subjects.
- Pupils are expected to do regular home-reading and this is monitored by school staff.
- Volunteers are encouraged to listen to children read in school on a regular basis.
- Everyone works together to create a reading culture that celebrates a love and enjoyment of books. We have regular story reading sessions in every class.

#### Writing:

- An equal emphasis is placed on the development of both of the key aspects of writing: ‘transcription’ (handwriting and spelling- see sections below) and ‘composition’ (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).
- Teachers model writing of all genres through the process of shared-writing, across the curriculum.
- Once a new skill has been taught, children have lots of opportunities to put these into ‘practice’.
- Pupils have opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities through independent writing tasks.
- Pupils are given opportunities to plan, draft, edit and evaluate their own work.
- Pupils use their writing skills to communicate effectively across the wider curriculum, as well as in English lessons.
- Children are encouraged to evaluate and reflect upon their success at a task through self-assessment, as well as that of their friends, through peer-assessment opportunities.
- Working Walls and other displays are used in class to support children with the writing process.
- Learning Objectives and Success Criteria are used to support children in their understanding of what they are trying to achieve in a particular lesson and how they can be successful.
- Children have a writing target in KS1 and next steps in EYFS.
- Where possible, children are given a purpose and an audience for their writing.
- Spelling:
  - Pupils are taught to encode words during daily phonics sessions, following guidance from the ‘Letters and Sounds’ programme of study.
  - Children are encouraged to recall the spellings of ‘tricky’ and ‘high-frequency’ words from memory, linked to the phase of Letters and Sounds they are working at, and given ample opportunities to practice these.
  - Children are encouraged to have the confidence to attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies.
  - Accurate spelling is also encouraged through the use of a variety of resources in class e.g. dictionaries, topic-related word mats, spelling-books, displays in the classroom environment, working walls, writing toolbox, etc.
  - Key words for a lesson are shared during the lesson introduction and the correct spelling is modelled for the children.
  - All teachers have high-expectations of children’s spelling and ‘Next Steps’ are used across the curriculum to encourage children to practice words they are spelling incorrectly.
  - Where work is displayed in class, some incorrect spellings will have the correct version written above it in pencil.

#### Grammar and Vocabulary:

The teaching of Grammar, and development of a wide-vocabulary, is woven throughout the wider-curriculum, particularly through the teaching of reading and writing, as well as through speaking and listening activities.

- All children are consistently encouraged to use Standard English correctly and the correct use is sensitively modelled back to them when they make an error.
- New vocabulary is explained carefully to children using language they are already familiar with.
- Children are encouraged to use new and ambitious vocabulary in their speech and writing through the use of: topic word-mats, displays in the classroom environment, thesauruses, word banks, etc.
- Some children with EAL are introduced to topic words prior to the lessons during pre-teaching sessions.
- Grammar may be taught more explicitly in Year One and Two through the use of SPaG sessions. SPaG session will be integrated into the weekly planning.

#### Punctuation:

During Key Stage One, children are taught to use a wide-range of punctuation and given frequent opportunities to put it into practice during independent and supported written tasks.

- The use of new punctuation is explained and modelled by the teacher during lesson introductions.
- Additional multisensory techniques e.g. physical punctuation, are used when teaching.
- Next steps are given to encourage children to use the punctuation correctly in their work.
- Children have opportunities to be 'punctuation detectives' during guided, shared and individual reading sessions to see the punctuation 'in action'.
- Handwriting and Presentation:
- The 'Handwriting Without Tears' handwriting programme is used until children are forming each of their basic letters correctly. These sessions teach children to form their lower and upper case letters using little lines, big lines, little curves and big curves. They are additionally taught the language of horizontal, vertical and diagonal to support them in their understanding of how each letter is 'built'.
- Each letter has a written instruction for the teacher to read to the children to help them form each letter correctly.
- The children will also practice the letters within words and sentences, and be encouraged to use the correct formation during all written tasks.
- Once the children are able to form their letters correctly, they are moved on to cursive script.
- High-expectations of written work are held by all teachers within all lessons.

## **IMPACT**

- Marking is in line with the school's Marking and Feedback Policy.
- Regular opportunities are planned for to assess the children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, and assessments are made in line with the school Assessment Policy.
- Children are assessed at the end of their year in Reception against the Early Learning Goals.
- Children are assessed on their ability to decode words using their sounds at the end of Year One using the Phonics Screening Check materials.
- At the end of Year Two, children are assessed for Reading and Writing using the SATs.
- Each child will be assessed on their Phonic development. Progress is tracked using our Assessment Analysis Grids half termly and discussed at Pupil Progress meetings.
- Running records are used in class to check the accuracy of children's reading on each book band, along with Benchmarking assessments.
- Teachers use formative assessment during lessons and when marking books, to evaluate the children's success and to ensure planning is based on prior attainment.
- Writing is moderated termly within school and with other schools.
- Baselines and termly data are submitted using Target Tracker.
- Analysis of assessment data is also used regularly to monitor the children's progress, inform planning and find ways of 'closing the gap' for our disadvantaged learners.

The school's Marking and Feedback policy allows children's levels of independence to be evident, as instances where pupils have the most secure knowledge and skills can most easily be recognised when they've applied learning independently and in a range of ways, including across different areas of the curriculum. On occasions when such extended depth has yet to be developed, an expected core impact of our curriculum is that pupils are at least ready to move on to the next key stage of learning.

## **Equal opportunities**

English is taught within the guidelines of the school's equal-opportunities policy.

- We ensure that all our children have the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding regardless of gender, race, class, physical or intellectual ability.

- Our expectations do not limit pupil achievement and assessment does not involve cultural, social, linguistic or gender bias. All children receive quality English teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. If pupils are considered to require targeted support, to enable them to meet age-related expectations, this is given using a variety of interventions and individual or group support activities matched carefully to their needs
- Specific teaching strategies are used to maximize access to the curriculum for pupils who have EAL.
- We aim to teach English in a broad global and historical context, using the widest possible perspective and including the contributions of people of many different backgrounds.
- Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is promoted through the use of topics on multi-cultural themes. An awareness of other dialects and Standard English is encouraged through a range of texts, including dual-language books.
- We use speaking, listening, reading and writing skills to communicate effectively across the wider curriculum, as well as in English lessons.
- We recognise the particular importance of first-hand experience for motivating children with learning difficulties.
- We exploit opportunities for special contribution to develop children's creativity; we develop this by asking and encouraging challenging questions and encouraging original thinking.

### **Resources**

- Each class is resourced with home reading books, a book corner offering a range of fiction and non-fiction books for different ability groups, as well as books to support the current topic. The school library contains a range of age-appropriate fiction and non-fiction books. Sets of guided reading books are stored centrally for use by all classes.