



English Policy

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The Acorn Federation English Policy

In the Acorn Federation we believe that English, our spoken and written language, is an essential skill that allows individuals to participate fully in education and as a member of society. By providing a well-balanced, enriching and engaging English curriculum, we will ensure our children become confident speakers, listeners, readers and writers, therefore preparing them for Key Stage 3 and beyond.

Aims

In the Acorn Federation, we strive for excellence in English achievement throughout the school. We hope to develop children's abilities within a cross curricular approach to English teaching. Across the classes, pupils are given opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and use of spoken and written English, within a balanced and exciting curriculum. In addition, there are lots of opportunities for children to consolidate and reinforce taught English skills and to apply them in a range of contexts.

Children in the Acorn Federation will:

- Learn to read and write with ease, fluency, good understanding and confidence, developing a range strategies to enable them to work both collaboratively and independently, taking responsibility for their own learning
- Develop a love of reading by reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Develop their ever-growing vocabulary through an interest in words and their meanings
- Experience a range of text/media types and genres, across a range of contexts, to develop their understanding
- Learn to write in a variety of styles and be able to apply characteristic features of texts to their own writing
- Develop a technical vocabulary with understanding of grammatical terminology
- Learn how to apply grammatical terminology in their own writing
- Participate in group discussions in order to learn and share their own ideas and understanding
- Have the opportunity to write for pleasure; to explore and develop their own ideas
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, presenting and demonstrating to others

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are set out in the National Curriculum in England (KS1 and KS2) and in Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by allowing children to develop a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. From EYFS to Year 6, the National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all children:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, 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 arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Subject Organisation

EYFS

In EYFS, children have daily phonics sessions in order to develop essential skills such as blending, segmenting and grapheme-phoneme correspondence which prepare our learners for early reading and writing. Within the classroom, EY learners are provided with opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills on a daily basis, with a focus on child initiated activities. The children have continuous access to a range of materials to experiment and practise mark making/letter formation (and eventually to practise and apply taught skills) and other learning areas, such as the role play area, are enhanced to provide children with the opportunity to read and write in a range of contexts and for enjoyment. The children have access to a range of texts, including fiction and non-fiction, and enjoy daily 'story time' in which they become familiar with stories and authors and begin to develop a love of reading. Adult led activities in the EYFS are often linked to cross curricular topics, stories, poems or nursery rhymes.

Key Stage 1 (Y1 and Y2)

In Key Stage 1, daily phonics sessions are continued and are taught in groups according to ability. As children progress through the Letters and Sounds phases, there becomes an increased focus on spelling and spelling rules. In English lessons, teaching and learning activities are often linked to cross curricular topics. Children study fiction, non-fiction and poetry and begin to compare characteristic features of writing. They learn how to apply these features in their own writing and begin to write at length. In Key Stage 1, children will write for a range of purposes, including (but not limited to):

- Stories
- Diaries
- Newspaper reports
- Instructions
- Explanation texts
- Poems
- Letters
- Labels, lists and captions
- Recounts
- Non-chronological reports

In Key Stage 1, spelling, punctuation and grammar objectives from the National Curriculum are threaded through English lessons over the duration of the academic year. The children learn the key grammatical features and how to apply these into their own writing.

Writing skills are developed across the curriculum and children are provided with opportunities for cross curricular writing. This may be linked to Topic (for example, Castles, Dinosaurs or Around the World) or other curriculum areas such as Religious Education or Science.

For reading, the children work through banded reading scheme books which are appropriate for their reading ability. Each child has 1:1 reading sessions with an adult, at least three or four times a week at Marston Montgomery and at least one or two times at Long Lane, in order to develop their word reading and comprehension of texts. Children are encouraged to develop a love for reading through daily story time and access to a comfortable and relaxing reading area.

Key Stage 2 (Y3-Y6)

In Key Stage 2, learners have English lessons in which they focus on a range of text types throughout the year. These are usually linked to topic themes or to a book or poem. During Key Stage 2, children can expect to learn about and tackle a range of genres for writing activities, including (but not limited to):

- Stories (including a variety of genres such as myths and legends, adventure, mystery and suspense)
- Letters
- Play scripts
- Biographies
- Recounts
- Instructions
- Explanation texts
- Debates
- Poems

Children will also learn to write in a range of styles, including:

- Writing persuasively
- Writing in a journalistic style
- Writing formally/informally
- Writing arguments

In Key Stage 2, children learn key grammatical features and spelling rules from the National Curriculum in daily twenty minute focussed sessions. These skills are then reinforced in English lessons whereby children are expected to apply their acquired knowledge to independent and guided writing activities. Additional English sessions include guided and individual reading, Spelling Bee and handwriting.

Writing skills are developed across the curriculum and children are provided with opportunities for cross curricular writing. This may be linked to Topic (for example, Stone Age through to Iron Age and Islamic Civilisation) or other curriculum areas such as Religious Education or Science.

For reading, the children group guided reading sessions are timetabled to support children's comprehension and understanding of texts. Learners also have the opportunity to read 1:1 with an adult at least one or two times a week and to engage in independent reading frequently.

Approaches to Reading

In EYFS and KS1, the Letters and Sounds document is used to deliver daily phonics lessons, enabling children to decode efficiently. Where necessary, phonics teaching and intervention is continued into KS2. Reading strategies are modelled by teachers and teaching assistants and children have the opportunity to develop these skills and discuss texts in detail in individual and guided reading sessions.

Children have the opportunity to read 1:1 with an adult at least two-four times a week in EYFS and KS1 and at least one or two times a week in KS2. This is more frequent for children who read less often at home, or who may need additional support to reach national expectations for their age. Children at Marston Montgomery who require additional support in reading also have access to Lexia, an online learning tool which helps them work through stages of reading development. As children move through the school (or become more able readers), opportunities for sustained independent reading are provided.

A range of reading schemes are used across the Key Stages and children work through colour banded books beginning with texts in which children rely on their phonic decoding skills in order to read words. Once children can read longer texts independently and fluently and demonstrate their understanding of the text, they become free readers. Free reading enables children to read for pleasure (by selecting their own books) whilst also further developing their fluency and comprehension skills.

Across the school, children are encouraged to and rewarded for reading and sharing books at home with parents and siblings. Each child keeps a reading record in which parents and teachers share information about a child's reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their children as often as possible, preferably daily, and information is provided by the class teachers to help parents understand how best to support their child(ren) in reading.

In KS2, children have more responsibility for selecting appropriate books to take home and read. At this age, although children are expected to be able to read independently, we still encourage all readers to share books at home with their family in order to build a lifelong love of reading.

As a school, we recognise the value of reading aloud to children to model appropriate use of story language and reading with expression. Teaching staff wish to enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers.

Approaches to Writing

In the Acorn Federation School our aim is to develop children's ability to produce well-structured writing with appropriate detail, in which the meaning is clear and the interest of the reader is engaged. Our approach to writing aims to instil the importance of transcription and composition, as highlighted in the National Curriculum.

Throughout the school, teachers are flexible in their selection of teaching models for English and children are given regular opportunities to write at length in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes. Long term English planning across both key stages covers the range of text types set out in the National Curriculum, ensuring a breadth of coverage.

As a school, we recognise and appreciate the importance of technology in developing English skills. Children are provided with regular opportunities to improve their writing through drama or short film clips. In addition, interactive technology is used daily in a range of ways to enhance the teaching of English; children may play games on the interactive whiteboard or iPads and may access the internet to conduct research to support their writing. Also, technology may be used to support the 'end product' of a writing task; for example, filming role play or typing up pieces of work/creating presentations.

Approaches to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

In Key Stage 1, phonics sessions are fundamental in developing children's spelling. Children are taught to segment to spell. From EYFS, children are encouraged to spell words phonetically (spelling words in the way which they sound) but they also learn some words, which are not phonetically regular, by sight. From Year 2 there is more focus on choosing the 'right' sound for spelling and children learn alternative graphemes for the same phoneme (for example, 'ai', 'ay' and 'a_e) and spelling rules are introduced.

Across the school children are provided with spellings to learn for weekly spelling quizzes. The expectation is that these spellings are then applied to their independent writing. Children are also encouraged to access dictionaries to support their spelling of unfamiliar words.

Approaches to Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening are fundamental to good communication for us all and are independent of ability in reading and writing. We recognise the importance of being aware of skills children have already acquired in order to build on this foundation and so, from entry in EYFS, children are given opportunities to develop and learn new skills in formal and informal settings, both in and outside of the classroom.

At Marston Montgomery, children in the Garden Classroom engage in daily show and tell sessions called 'Chatterbox'. Each day a different child takes home the Chatterbox to put something inside. They then return to school the following day ready to share this with their friends.

The children in the Garden Classroom at Long Lane have weekly show and tell sessions using Charlie the Monkey. Charlie spends each weekend with a different child and his adventures are recorded by the child and their family. The children then share this with their peers when they return to school after the weekend. These activities have proven to be extremely beneficial for children's speaking and listening skills as they build confidence in talking to their peers and answering questions.

In both Key Stage 1 and 2, children are encouraged to speak clearly and listen carefully and speaking and listening are both stimulated in a range of ways, including:

- Listening to and responding to stories, rhymes, poems, songs and games from various cultures
- Responding to visual and aural stimuli, such as pictures, paintings, audio or film clips
- Discussing and expressing opinions
- Giving and receiving information or instructions
- Using talk partners across the curriculum
- Engaging in paired reading
- Describing/recounting events
- Storytelling and reading aloud
- Reciting lines, songs or poems learned by heart in school plays or presentations
- Imaginative play, such as role play or drama
- Circle time
- Assemblies
- Debates

Any child thought to require the support of a Speech and Language therapist is referred in accordance with our SEND policy.

Marking and Feedback

Teaching staff provide children with regular feedback to move children on in their learning and advise them on their next steps. Regular feedback also helps children understand how they are doing in their learning. When marking spelling, teaching staff do not correct all spelling errors. Instead, corrections focus on high frequency words and those studied in phonics or spelling sessions. In extended writing activities, staff provide the children with two stars (things they have done well) and a wish (a next step) for the children to work towards next time.

Across the school, children are provided with time to respond to marking. In this time the children should act on any feedback left by the class teacher and correct any spellings identified to practise.

Assessment

Children are assessed termly by their class teacher in reading, writing and grammar. Formative and summative assessments are carried out regularly to identify the children's next steps and also to identify those who require additional support and intervention.

In Year 1, children complete a statutory phonics screening check to test their decoding and blending skills. Any children who do not pass the test in Year 1 will be required to re-take the test in June of Year 2. In Year 2, statutory assessment informs teacher assessment.

In Year 6, children will take statutory assessments in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar. The children are expected to reach the National Expectation (100). Writing is teacher assessed and moderated with other staff members within the local cluster.

Inclusion in English

When planning English, staff in the Acorn Federation carefully consider the needs of all children in order to support them in reaching their full potential. Children with Special Educational Needs are encouraged to take part when and where this is appropriate and may follow additional intervention programmes and have extra adult support to ensure progression.

Equal Opportunities

We have high expectations for **every child**, regardless of their background, ability or circumstances and value what each individual child brings to our school. We recognise that children learn best when they are happy, healthy, safe and engaged and so, in order to engage all children, diversity is celebrated. Our English curriculum includes a wide range of texts and resources which represent a variety of backgrounds.

Role of the Subject Leader (based at Marston Montgomery)

The subject leader for English is Miss Harris. The subject leader is responsible for maintaining/improving the standards of teaching and learning in English by:

- Monitoring and evaluating English; pupil progress, planning, marking and feedback, curriculum coverage, teaching, role of teaching assistants, English provision
- Taking the lead in policy development
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in CPD
- Purchasing/organising resources
- Keeping up to date with developments in English education

Homework

All children are expected to read with somebody at home each day. This is recorded in their reading records and children are rewarded for their efforts. For each time they read at home, children at Marston receive a dojo and children at Long Lane receive a house point.

The children are provided with spelling lists at the beginning of each term. This highlights the spellings to be learned for each weekly spelling quiz. Again, children are rewarded for their efforts at home, receiving two dojos/house points for all spellings correct and one dojo/house point for beating their previous score.

Parental Involvement

We aim to involve parents as much as possible in school life, and therefore in the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding in English. Parents are invited in to school for weekly Celebration Assemblies and regular opportunities to view their child(ren)'s work.

Each term theme leaflets are sent home which highlight the areas that will be covered in English lessons. Formal parent meetings take place on two occasions across the school year where parents are updated on their children's progress, attainment and effort in reading and writing and a full written report is provided at the end of the academic year, detailing their child's achievements in English alongside other curriculum areas. In addition to this, parents and/or teachers can organise additional formal meetings if they feel necessary and they have the opportunity to chat with staff in the playground each day, before and after the school day. The results of statutory assessments are reported to parents in accordance with government legislation.