

Redhill Primary School English Policy.

Children at Redhill Primary School follow an English curriculum which gives children extended practice to embed new skills. Learning is consolidated to such a degree that it is known, understood and embedded, leading to fluency. When children have recalled the skills taught and are able to apply them accurately in their own writing, the learning is secured. After reaching the expected standard to achieve age appropriate expectations, children will demonstrate their fluency in Literacy to develop deeper learning. They can then master a range of writing confidently, effectively and accurately. Those children who are not on track to achieve the expected standard have precise and targeted intervention to accelerate and embed the learning.

AIMS

Our aims are that all children should:

- be able to articulate their ideas clearly, expressing opinions and debating their views
- see reading as enjoyable, rewarding and worthwhile; read with fluency and confidence across the curriculum; share in discussion about social and moral issues raised from books read; develop an appreciation of our literary heritage
- acquire a wide vocabulary and an understanding of grammar
- be able to embed writing skills, applying their knowledge and skills of composition, spelling, grammar and handwriting in extended pieces of writing, while writing for a purpose and audience across all curriculum subjects.

Speaking and listening

Children are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions within all aspects of literacy and the wider curriculum. We follow the aims of the 2014 National Curriculum. 'All children should use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas; and should be competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.'

Phonics

At Redhill we teach phonics in a systematic way, following the highly structured Letters and Sounds programme. Throughout the Early Years and KS1 we teach phonics daily, with groups and activities pitched tightly to match the children's needs. The teaching of phonics is multi-sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to develop core learning. Parents are also invited into school to take part in phonics workshops and to observe phonics teaching in school.

- Phonics is taught daily at a brisk pace
- It is also developed across the curriculum
- Progress is assessed and monitored through the use of AFL strategies and through individual assessments
- The phonics screening test is taken by all Year 1 children in June each year, with those children in Year 2 who did not achieve the threshold assessed again.

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- A whole school planning format is used to promote consistency and continuity. Each session includes the essential - revisit and review, teach, practice, apply and assess.

Reading

Our reading programme is tightly matched to our phonics teaching. Children read daily in guided groups. In the Early Years and in KS1, when children are at the decoding stage of reading, the books used in guided sessions are fully phonically decodable books. This enables the children to use their knowledge of phonemes to decode words. The teaching of high frequency words or tricky words at each stage of the letters and sounds programme also supports the reading development. The books are mostly from the Oxford Reading Tree scheme, but there are additional books from Rigby Star and Ruth Miskin to support the reading programme. As the children develop their ability to decode phonetically, the comprehension of text increases in importance with guided sessions focused on inference and deduction, developing a wider vocabulary and broadening the knowledge of authors, genres and themes.

In KS2, we have introduced whole class reading, as evidence has shown that this approach to the teaching of reading supports the development of children's comprehension skills, fluency and stamina. Teachers ensure that the text chosen is appropriate to the ability of the class and provide children with a range of questions to develop all areas of their comprehension skills. Higher order questions extend the more able, with additional support or differentiated texts and questions provided for children who are not yet ready to access the whole class text.

All children should read widely for pleasure and for information across all areas of the curriculum. The library is used to develop independent research and to provide all children with a quiet and well-resourced area to read for enjoyment.

Writing

We believe that children should be given the opportunity to embed their writing skills and deepen their learning. Because of this, particularly in the early years and KS1, the children work on a smaller range of genres but have the opportunity to apply their learning across other curriculum areas. There is an emphasis on precision in all areas of writing: planning, composition, grammar, spelling, handwriting and re-drafting. Through modelled writing and guided writing sessions focusing on children's precise next steps, children secure their knowledge of age appropriate skills as outlined in the programmes of study for the national curriculum. We expect children to be able to master a range of writing styles confidently, effectively and accurately. Those children who are not on track to achieve the expected standard have precise and targeted intervention to accelerate and embed their learning. We believe that every lesson is an English lesson and an opportunity to deepen learning. All classrooms are learning resources with quality texts, engaging book corners, table top resources and working walls to support the learning process.

The teaching sequence:

The core of the writing curriculum is focusing on learning key skills and the text provides the vehicle for learning.

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Key elements that need to be completed in order for the children to understand text and become good writers are:

- Reading, comparing and evaluating a range of texts
- Identifying and commenting on the structural and language features of the genre
- Text annotation/analysis
- Practising of key skills related to the text type
- Planning an extended write
- Extended writing
- Peer/self-assessment along the journey
- Redrafting and improving

Teachers will plan to use different approaches, strategies, level of support or activities for different abilities each lesson. This secures learning for all children daily.

Targets:

- Every child will have a target displayed in their books using the agreed whole school format. These are taken from the 'cold write' at the start of the block where gaps have been identified.
- These targets will be reviewed regularly by teachers. When a target has been achieved, it should be dated and highlighted. Teachers will regularly assess the gaps using pupils' assessment sheets and targets will reflect this. This system will also make it clear if a child is not meeting their target so that swift interventions can be put in place.
- Children will take ownership of their targets – particularly the older children, who could be encouraged to consider whether they feel they have met their target in a particular piece of work.

Presentation

The 'long' date and title for each piece will be recorded. Every piece of work will have Success Criteria in place – this will be highlighted in yellow if the child was able to meet the criteria within the learning session. If the child needed support, then this will be recorded. Evidence from the child's work will also be highlighted against the SC. Each piece of work will be annotated to indicate the level of support given to complete the task e.g. Tch, TA, Ind. A green highlighted area will indicate to children that an error has been made, for example with spelling or punctuation, or that further work is needed to improve the writing against the success criteria.

Children who join their handwriting and present their work neatly in Y5/6 may be awarded a pen as a reward for effort and achievement with regard to presentation; this high standard should be maintained in order to remain working with a pen. Teachers will monitor that high standards of presentation are maintained. Mistakes will be crossed through with a ruler line.

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Coverage

Children will be exposed to a balance of text types each term – narrative, non-fiction and poetry. Coverage in each unit needs to be thorough so a number of weeks may be spent on one genre.

There should be evidence of work towards the writing journey most days of the week. If there have been speaking and listening sessions or maybe cross curricular writing occurring on a particular day, then teachers should document this.

Marking

Comments in books will be diagnostic NOT descriptive – we believe that comments should praise the children's achievements but should be specific and move the learning on.

- Marking will respond to gaps in learning/ assessment/success criteria
- Children should be involved and respond.
- Children will respond with a purple pen –so it is evident.
- See responding to pupils' work for further details.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

We follow the programmes of study for each year group as outlined in the National Curriculum 2014, supported by the Letters and Sounds programme. In the Early Years and Key Stage One, spelling is closely matched to phonics teaching with daily sessions providing the children with the opportunity to practise and apply phonemes taught. Additional discrete spelling sessions are taught at Key Stage One to provide opportunity to teach the programmes of study around word families, prefixes and suffixes as outlined in the programmes of study. From Year 1, children are given weekly spelling tests based on words taken from phonics and discrete spelling lessons.

In Key Stage 2, there are weekly discrete spelling lessons which are investigative in their approach, so that children can find rules and exceptions. These rules are applied through sentence level work. In addition to this, spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught daily through short starter activities and then developed and applied through the writing process. Discrete grammar sessions are taught when appropriate.

Handwriting

We follow the programmes of study for each year group as outlined in the National Curriculum 2014, supported by the Nelson handwriting scheme. There are discrete handwriting sessions throughout the primary phase, with teachers demonstrating the formation of the letters and correct joins.

In addition, in all writing activities handwriting is reinforced for children to ensure that they apply the skills taught in discrete lessons. (See additional appendix for teaching principles.)

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Assessment

Independent writing books/assessing writing

We have developed our own assessment materials to assess children's writing, based on the age related expectations for each year group. Children will complete 2-3 pieces of Independent Writing per half term which should secure an assessment judgement. These assessed pieces of writing will be recorded in the children's 'Chance to Shine' books. A judgement will be made for each piece of work, with teachers ticking and dating the assessment grids.

Assessments are moderated by teams, across year groups and in cluster meetings between schools.

In Year 2 and Year 6, teachers are using the interim assessment information to assess the children's writing and as the basis for teacher assessment judgements.

Involving Parents

Parents are invited into school to observe Literacy sessions and to work alongside their children. We also hold parent meetings at the start of the foundation stage and for transition from Y1 to Y2. Parent workshops for the teaching of phonics are held in the early years, with an additional meeting for parents of Y1 children to support the phonics screening check. There are also meetings to support national tests at Key Stage 1 and 2. Finally, there is a literacy meeting open to all parents at the start of the academic year to outline our approach to teaching literacy and to explain any changes with the reasoning behind these.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all.

Children with additional needs

Provision is tailored so that all pupils, including those with SEN, can access their learning e.g. adaptations will be made where necessary to the curriculum, equipment and resources so all activities will be made available. The SEND Co-ordinator will liaise with the Literacy Co-ordinator and class teachers to ensure that the individual needs of pupils are met and that appropriate intervention through provision mapping from assessment is set and regularly reviewed. Teachers will be mindful of the literacy needs of the children and differentiate provision, questions and activities to allow all children access. (For further information see the SEND policy).

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Appendix 1 The teaching of handwriting.

The first stages.

Young children need to be provided with many pre-writing experiences such as finger painting, painting with brushes, bead and lace threading, tracing pictures and patterns, writing in sand. As many multi-media experiences as possible should be provided, to include pencils of different thickness', chalk, pens etc. When children are ready to begin to learn to write, it is essential to have an adult directing the early stages of letter formation so that the correct formation can be supervised.

Principles

Posture

Posture is important for good handwriting. Children should be encouraged to sit upright with their body slightly inclined towards the table with feet firmly on the floor.

Position of pen

The pencil should be held (NOT GRIPPED) and children should always be encouraged not to put undue pressure on the paper. Children should be encouraged from the earliest stages to have a correct pencil grip.

Scheme of work

We follow the Nelson scheme for handwriting.

General rules

All letters start at the top (except e which is a rule breaker).

You should never take your pencil off until you have finished the letter (or when joining the word). Go back at the end to 'cross the f, t. and dot i and j.

Be conscious when introducing new or unfamiliar vocabulary such as ascender, descender, base, waist etc that children will often not know what they mean and that it is a teaching point in itself.

Multi-sensory and 'muscle memory'

Remember your 'muscle memory' - where ever possible multi-sensory, air writing (but reverse so children see correct orientation), children writing on each others' back, sensory feedback, gloop, sand paper, sand, shaving foam etc. Make it big out on the playground with a paintbrush and bucket of water. (chant the script). Hit as many senses as possible and this stands a better chance of locking into long term memory. Feel it, see it, hear it—make it fun!

First set - The 'Down and Bounce' family

l,i,t,u

'l' is when you can introduce ascender line, and base line. Start at the very beginning with this so children are always aware and don't have to correct in the future. The will find this clarity very reassuring. All our tallest letters start on the ascender line and go down - stopping on the base line which they 'stand' on, again remember how I modelled standing up with my body and stamping my feet.

i and u start at the 'waist line to base line' letters (waist line is invisible but halfway

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up and all waist line letters should be the same height. 'i' has a floating dot that floats and is not stuck to the top of i and it is a dot not a 'football'. 'down bounce and a floating dot'

t is another ruler breaker as it starts just under the ascender line so it is slightly shorter than all the other tall letters. 'down bounce and cross', note cross just touches and does not cross through 't' or school form.

u 'down bounce - up and across, down bounce'

'Push set' (or pull if left handed)

c,o,a,d,e

Make explicit how c turns into o then a, and that they are waist line to base line letters. Then the round part of d touches the waist line but the tall ascender goes all the way up to touch the ascender line.

c 'push down and round'

o 'push down and round , all the way up, join and a flick'

a 'push down and round, all the way up, down and bounce'.

d 'push down and round, all the way up—right up to the ascender line and down, bounce'.

Focus e is a rule breaker as it starts in the middle

'Down up and across'

r,n,m,p,h,b,k

Again make explicit how r turns into n then m,

R 'down up and across

n 'down up and across down bounce'

m 'down up and across, down up and across, down bounce.'

p 'all the way down up and across to the waist line, round and tuck it in.'

b 'all the way down up and across to the waist line, round and tuck it in.'

K all the way down up and across to the waist line, round and tuck it in, kick out and a bounce'.

'Down and across'

v,w

Introduce term diagonal

Helping to lock in new letters with quirky observations such as....why is it's name 'w' and not 'double v'?

'Under the line'

j,gqyfp

F same height as t just under ascender line

Others start at waist line

All descenders going down through and under/beneath line all stopping at same

point invisible descender line—like waist line half way. Remember descender

like a cats tail dangling down or like when child at swimming pool chin on water body underneath.

Also make connection between g,q and push set e.g. start like a c,o,a then become

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either g or q

make connection between y and down up and across—like u but carries on to become y.

make connection between p and down up and across e.g like r, but goes further down and back up and across before you 'tuck it in'.

'last ones'

s,x,z,

Left-Handed Children

All teachers should be aware of the children who are left-handed in their class and need to position their seating appropriately so that they have free arm movement.

They should also help them with positioning their paper and wipe board appropriately