

LOUDWATER COMBINED SCHOOL

English Policy

“Literacy is ... the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realise his or her full potential.” Kofi Annan

Intent (Rationale and Aims)

At Loudwater Combined School, English is at the very heart of our curriculum. We believe that everyone has the right to high quality English teaching and learning opportunities. It is our aim to nurture and grow our pupils’ literacy skills enabling them to become effective communicators and critical thinkers who achieve their potential at every phase in life.

It is our aim that pupils at Loudwater become confident, articulate speakers and effective listeners. They respond appropriately to what they hear and express personal opinions.

We are passionate about developing reading for pleasure in all our pupils. We aim to inspire pupils to read widely and often. As a result, pupils become fluent readers who can comprehend a wide range of texts to acquire knowledge for personal interest and pleasure, as well as to support learning in other curriculum areas.

Pupils learn to write for a range of purposes, including for pleasure. They understand that writing is a form of communication and consider their audiences. Pupils learn how to build writer’s toolkits to enable them to write well-structured, detailed and purposeful texts in a range of genres.

At every opportunity English is linked to other subjects. Medium and Long Term Planning highlights where these opportunities exist. These links are constantly reviewed and extended where appropriate.

As pupils come to the end of their time at Loudwater Combined School, they have the skills and knowledge needed to continue their English journey and realise their potential in life. We ensure these end points are met through use of QFT, progression maps, assessment and intervention where appropriate.

Implementation (Teaching and Learning)

Spoken Language

Children’s ability to use spoken language and listening skills is fundamental to their development as learners and citizens.

As well as talk that happens as part of everyday school life, opportunities for talk are planned and considered across all age phases. Classrooms are organised to encourage purposeful talk for learning between whole class, groups and pairs of pupils.

High quality models are provided through adult-led talk and speaking frames. Active listening, appropriate responses and critical thinking is taught and modelled. Examples of planned activities include debating, drama, sharing and responding to learning and performing for different audiences.

Spoken language plays an important role in all curriculum subjects e.g. discussing the odd one out in Maths or Science, role play in History and debating in Geography. In addition, pupils are taught to plan their writing by saying their sentence aloud before putting pen to paper.

Pupils have opportunities to engage in other roles where spoken language is a key skill e.g. school council representative, reader in church services and school tour guides.

Reading (also see separate Reading Policy)

Being a fluent, independent reader is essential to successful learning and progress within all curriculum subjects. Therefore, reading has many timetabled sessions dedicated to its teaching and learning.

In Foundation Stage and KS1, we use Rocket Phonics as our Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme. Daily lessons, focus on 2 sounds per week in Foundation Stage and Year 1. Two days per sound – 1 focused on blending, the other on segmenting. Day 5 is used for consolidation and Common Exception Word reading and spelling. In Year 2, a group of sounds e.g. all the different graphemes for 'e', are the focus for 4 days of learning. Day 5 is focused on handwriting. Pupils read texts at the level appropriate to each phonics stage in school. To take home, they have independent readers that are chosen to meet the child's independent reading ability. These books are the Rising Stars levelled readers, but might be supplemented by other reading scheme books as appropriate.

All classes have a dedicated Guided Reading lesson every day. This is a whole class reading session led by the teacher. We have developed explicit approaches to teaching reading comprehension. We consistently focus on developing these skills as the children move through the school:

- Using background knowledge
- Predicting and wondering
- Visualising
- Making inferences
- Break-down and Repair
- Identifying challenging vocabulary and inferring the meaning from the text.
- Making links and comparisons within texts and across different texts.
- Retrieval
- Summarising
- Identifying and explaining author choices

The use of these skills to develop comprehension is expertly modelled by the teacher. Reading skills are developed through the use of high-quality texts that provide a challenge to pupils because they contain rich and unfamiliar vocabulary, have non-linear plot lines and require inferences to be made to fully develop understanding and enjoyment of the text. During each session pupils practise and apply the skills modelled by the teacher through discussion, sorting tasks, pictorial responses and written responses. In Years 1-6 these responses will often be recorded in a dedicated Guided Reading book.

Once each week we have a Paired Reading session. Classes pair up on a rotational basis each week, and pupils read together. Younger pupils are supported by older readers who can model fluency and provide discussion about the book shared. Older pupils develop a better understanding of the reading process and use this when reading at their own level. The Year 6 pupils are Reading Ambassadors. They are paired with the same pupil each week from a younger class. Their role is to

listen to the child read, offering support and quality discussion of the book. The children they read with may be vulnerable pupils, lower attainers or pupils whose opportunities to read at home are limited.

Once a week, one class visits our local Library in Flackwell Heath. Over the course of a half term, each class visits once. Pupils learn how to use a library, enjoy a wider selection of books than they have access to in school and support a key service in their community. The children bring 30 new books into the classroom to be enjoyed for 3 weeks. In addition, pupils visit the school library once per week to select a book which they want to read for their own pleasure and enjoyment.

We also make use of the School's Library Service which provides us with a box of books each term to supplement our learning in other curriculum areas. This ensures opportunities to read across the curriculum are maximised.

English lessons are based on carefully selected texts which offer high quality models of writing. Within the English lesson reading opportunities include modelled reading, shared reading and independent reading.

As part of our drive to promote reading for pleasure, we celebrate key events including Roald Dahl Day, World Book Day, Children's Book Week, Poetry Day etc. During Friday's Achievement assemblies, each teacher takes a turn to promote a children's book they have enjoyed reading. This book is placed in the school library for borrowing and the review is shared in the weekly newsletter.

Writing

As mentioned, we use a text-based approach to the teaching of writing. High quality texts are selected as good models of writing for each year group. A text can be used for a little as 2 weeks, up to 6 weeks. A main driver text provides rich vocabulary, structure and content which is supported by a range of other texts linked to the theme. The outcome for writing is decided and then a journey of learning is planned to support the pupils to create a high-quality finished text. Journeys will include reading, comprehension, vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and modelled writing. Over time, pupils will have learned how to write a range of genres that Entertain, Inform, Persuade or Discuss. Purpose and audience for writing lies at the centre of all planned writing outcomes. Where writing can support cross-curricular learning, teachers will ensure these links are made.

Key writing skills are taught, most effectively, within the English lesson or as a starter or stand-alone lesson where this is relevant. Pupils will learn the process of writing from planning, drafting, re-drafting, writing, proof reading and editing, and finally publishing or presenting. Spelling, vocabulary and grammar skills are embedded in each step of the learning journey where most relevant but will sometimes be taught more discreetly outside of the English lesson.

In KS2 daily spelling lessons are taught focusing on the Spelling content of the National Curriculum. This lesson is timetabled to take place at the beginning of the day running at the same time as Phonics in FS and KS1. Phonics teaching follows the Rocket Phonics scheme. Spelling Guides are provided on the VLE each half term for each year group. These provide parents with the spelling rules taught each half term and the examples of words which use the rule.

Often, handwriting is taught alongside spelling and phonics. There may be instances where discreet handwriting sessions are taught, or intervention is needed. At Loudwater we teach a cursive script from year 2 onwards. Handwriting pens are introduced from KS2 once pupils demonstrate a neat, consistent and fluent handwriting style.

Impact (Assessment)

The impact of teaching and learning is assessed by class teachers using assessment opportunities which are used to input attainment on Sonar Tracker. The National Curriculum objectives for Spoken Language, Reading and Writing are highlighted according to attainment so far. Then progress and attainment can be measured. Sonar Tracker is updated in the core subjects on a termly basis.

Assessment opportunities used include formal testing using past SATs papers and PIXL tests for Reading, Spelling and Grammar and independent writing tasks linked to text-based planning to assess writing. Formative assessment is essential when updating Sonar Tracker including Guided Reading notes, spoken language observations, Phonics assessment and Distance Marking Sheet notes from daily lessons. In addition, Accelerated Reader provides data on pupils' reading progress through half termly STAR tests and frequent Book Quizzes. Accelerated Reader is used from Y3-Y6.

Pupil progress meetings ensure the impact of teaching and learning is reviewed at least termly and pupil progress is discussed. Where progress is limited, reasons why are discussed, and actions are planned.

Book surveys, learning walks, weekly drop-ins by the SLT and planning audits are also carried out regularly to assess the impact of implementation.

In-school moderation of writing and reading takes place every term. Across-schools moderation takes place annually between liaison group schools.

Resources, particularly texts used for writing, are reviewed frequently and their impact on reading and writing progress is considered. Texts which do not have the required impact are replaced.

EYFS

In our Foundation Stage class, Communication, Language and Literacy is taught every day. Literacy is based on a driver text as it is across the school. The text is selected to fit with the wider topic being studied e.g. Funny Bones is used within the topic of Marvellous Me. The text is explored through whole class teaching and adult-led activities. The pupils record their writing in their English books during their adult-led activity once per week. In addition, other writing opportunities are provided in free-flow activities e.g. writing lists, recipes, letters, prescriptions, phone messages in Role Play areas or offering clipboards next to a science investigation etc. Pupils are taught to write their name early in the year during adult-led sessions. They are given plenty of opportunity to practise. A pre-cursive script is taught from entry to Foundation Stage.

Phonics is taught daily for 15-20mins using the Rocket Phonics programme.

On entry to Foundation Stage pupils are given Sound Books. The sounds are grouped to support the teaching of the Rocket Phonics programme. These books are used at home and in school. Pupils learn to read and write a group of sounds and use these sounds to segment and blend words. This ensures their sight vocabulary for reading and writing is building immediately, enabling pupils to read and write some words independently early in their school life. Guided Reading is taught as a whole class session. Pupils are provided with home readers and reading diaries. Fiction and non-fiction books are available at all times within the Foundation Stage environment (indoor and outdoor) e.g. books about trucks and diggers may be available next to the sand tray, books about musical instruments may be within the stage area with the instruments etc.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils will have equal opportunity to reach their full potential across the English curriculum regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. Equality of opportunity is essential in English as it provides pupils with access to other curriculum areas in the primary years and in the future.

Inclusion

Pupils access learning in different ways; some pupils will need support to make progress and others will need additional challenge. All pupils will be supported in ways that enable them to make further progress. Class teachers will identify these pupils and early interventions will be put in place with the support of the subject leader, SLT and the Special Educational Needs Leader.

In line with the school's policy on Special Educational Needs, the SENDCo, the English Leader and class teacher will be involved in ensuring that pupils identified as having special educational needs will have learning and activities planned accordingly. Pupils with significant literacy weaknesses will have specific literacy targets on their Provision Maps. In some cases, a specialist support teacher or educational psychologist may be involved.

Subject leadership

The English Subject Leader is responsible for the development and monitoring of the English Curriculum to ensure there is a well-designed journey of learning for all pupils. The leader's role is to:

- support teachers with their planning
- be responsible for updating the school's Policy and Scheme of Work and the school's English Action Plan
- assist teachers by leading staff meetings, planning and leading INSET activities, provide consultancy and advice and by supporting teachers in the classroom
- be responsible for implementing changes required by government guidelines and new initiatives and ideas which affect the teaching of English in Loudwater School
- attend training courses in line with changes and developments within the subject and impart that information to colleagues through regular staff meetings and on INSET days
- monitor approaches within this document. This will include lesson observations, work-sampling and plan sampling

April 2024

To be reviewed in line with the governor's policy review schedule.