



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Growth Through Learning

English Policy

October 2018

Our vision

At Merrylands, our aim is to teach pupils to become confident, responsible and effective users of English. We strive to achieve this aim by:

Access and entitlement

- to encourage a positive attitude to learning English, by raising awareness of the creative aspects of the subject
- to create a classroom ethos so that there is a high expectation of quality, within which contributions from all children will be respected and valued

Curricular balance

- to ensure breadth and balance in the English curriculum by planning a range of appropriate learning experiences across all ages and abilities throughout all subjects
- to ensure our planning of the curriculum incorporates all of the aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and sufficient flexibility to offer experiences, which meet the needs, interests and cultural diversity of our pupils

Differentiation and potential

- to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their starting point, be provided with learning experiences, which will enable them to reach the highest possible standard of achievement in English
- to value their own and the work of their peers
- to set targets which are challenging but achievable
- to support appropriate children with intervention programmes
- to encourage the children to view mistakes positively and as vehicles for learning
- to personalise a child's learning to ensure that they achieve to the best of their ability

Preparation for the future

- to provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing
- to develop an interest in a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum but also enrich their lives
- value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play
- to teach children the craft of writing in order to develop in children the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audience
- teach the basics – spelling, handwriting and punctuation - to liberate creativity
- to foster in children the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing
- to value and celebrate diversity in culture and language

Teaching and Learning

Language and Literacy skills are taught on a daily basis from Reception to Year 6. The basic Core Skills that are related to the children's targets are taught both through English and topic lessons, as well as other areas of the curriculum, such as PSHE, ICT and PE.

Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting; lessons are a combination of:

- differentiated daily phonic sessions (Foundation, KS1 and Year 3 Autumn Term). See separate Phonics Policy
- spelling sessions (3 times a week for 20 minutes)
- shared reading (3 times a week for 30 minutes and 45 minutes in Year 5 and 6)
- weekly spelling homework (linked to letters and sounds and The National Curriculum)
- reading comprehension homework (set every other week and weekly in Year 6)

- VCOP sessions which are a focus on the skills of vocabulary, conjunctions, openers and punctuation prior to Big Write
- Big Write sessions to be used when pupils are ready to apply their skills independently
- sessions based on the term/half termly topics that are either directly English focused or cross curricular
- daily GPS starters prior to English lesson (should link where possible to the genre being taught)
- daily handwriting sessions
- children in KS1 listened to weekly by an adult
- readers in KS2 listened to every other week by an adult

Planning and Organisation

Lessons are structured following the National Curriculum and are a mix of whole class, small group, partner and independent. The learning sessions are differentiated to meet the needs of the children and are designed to ensure that all children are taught the age-related skills to be independent learners.

In each year group English is taught by the class teacher. All genres are to be covered each year to ensure that each year group (from Year 1 to Year 6) will cover a balance of narrative, non-fiction and poetry text (see appendix A). A clear set of end of year expectations are followed by each year group and incorporated into planning and assessment (see Appendix B).

Aspects of Talk for Writing, Screen to Page, Literacy shed resources and whole class texts feature in the planning for English and supports the deliverance of a topic based curriculum. These tools for learning are used to create stimulating lessons that provide opportunities for learning Core Skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling as well as speaking and listening.

The expectations for presentation and VCOP (Vocabulary, Conjunctions, Openers and Punctuation) are consistent as Core Skills are planned for and taught through all subjects. Where key words are written on the board, such as in science, the children are to be encouraged to copy them correctly.

Themed weeks and days are planned to support learning eg book week, performance poetry week etc.

Annual Trust competitions take place (Spelling Bee, Debating, Poetry etc) to make the children aware that we are more than just a school, our Trust is a community. The children enjoy watching other schools during the competitions as well as competing to win the trophy for their school.

Speaking and Listening

A range of opportunities are planned for the children to develop their speaking and listening skills. Role play is also incorporated in all year groups to further the children's understanding of how and why language is used and the importance in real life experiences. Examples of how speaking and listening is taught at Merrylands are:

- debating competition across the Trust
- evaluating their own and others work. Comments may be made as to how their work could be improved or what was successful such as a sequence of movements in PE
- role play is used to retell stories and develop the ability of speaking in full sentences
- appointed play leaders and Anti Bullying Ambassadors are trained to listen and solve minor disputes in the playground
- Anti Bullying week. Issues discussed in class that deal with bullying and disagreements within the school environment
- class ambassadors to greet visitors
- class councillors/eco warriors to attend meetings on alternate weeks to discuss issues and feedback to the class
- PSHE lessons provide opportunities to air concerns

- reciting poetry and extracts of books
- use of iPads to record and play back speech

Speaking and listening is reinforced through the Big Write in KS1 and KS2 and Talk It in Foundation Stage. Speaking in full sentences at an early age, rearranging sentences and widening the children's vocabulary are essential if a child cannot speak in sentences then they cannot write in sentences. Talk for Writing is also used to support the teaching of some or a series of lessons. The class teachers for each year group decide how Talk for Writing is used for their classes.

Reading

Shared Reading

Shared reading takes place three times a week for 30 minutes from Year 1 to 4 and 45 minutes in Years 5 and 6. Shared reading provides children access to a text as a whole class. The aims of these sessions are to develop fluency, comprehension and have opportunities to discuss and make links in line with the curriculum.

Individual reading

A child has access to a range of picture books, transition chapter books and longer reads to support the development of their individual reading skills. Children start the ORT reading scheme in Reception and then move onto book bands that are linked directly to the National Curriculum expectations. Only when the classteacher has assessed the child's reading, which is every half term, can the child be moved onto the next colour band.

The colour bands continue until a child reaches the end of Band 4 upon which they become a 'Free Reader'. Children are also questioned regularly and there is an opportunity to request books that the children would like to see purchased through pupil voice surveys and teachers feedback.

Reading book bands

Book Colour	National Curriculum Band
Pink	<P7 (<40-60)
Red	P8 (40-60+)
Yellow	Band 1 Beginning
Blue	Band 1 Beginning +
Green	Band 1 Working within / Working within +
Orange	Band 1 Secure
Turquoise	Band 1 Secure + (Yr 1) Band 2 Beginning / Beginning + (Yr 2)
Purple	Band 2 working within / working within +
Gold	Band 2 Secure
Lime	Band 2 Secure + (Yr 2) Band 3 Beginning / Beginning + (Yr 3)
Brown	Band 3 working within / working within +
Grey	Band 3 Secure
Dark Blue	Band 3 Secure + (Yr 3) Band 4 Beginning / Beginning + (Yr 4)
Dark Red	Band 4 working within / working within +
Free Reader Level 1	Band 4 Secure / Secure +
Free Reader Level 2	Band 5
Free Reader Level 3	Band 5
Challenging Readers	Band 6

Book monitors are appointed each half term to update and tidy the reading books as well as class book monitors.

Reading in class

- teachers are responsible for ensuring that children are taking home books appropriate to their reading level regularly and to communicate effectively with parents the children's progress through the use of the Home School Books
- all children in KS2 are to keep their reading books on their tables to ensure that their book is easily accessible and can be read at every available opportunity. Children are also encouraged to record when they have read a book from Year 3
- teachers are to read a class book and for this to be displayed on their class door
- all classes have a prominent book area displaying topic books as well as a book case with dictionaries, thesauruses, atlases and novels

Shared Writing

Shared writing takes place within the English lesson; the teacher models the writing process to the whole class as an expert writer, articulating the process. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific writing strategies. The children join in individually or through partner work, with the writing, where appropriate.

Handwriting

Each child is to develop a handwriting style which is clear, fluent, joined, legible and individual. Formal handwriting is taught through the use of Penpals scheme (Cambridge University Press), which acknowledges that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of sequential growth. (see Handwriting Policy)

Spelling

The teaching of spelling is taught through Letters and Sounds throughout Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. (see Phonics Policy). No nonsense spelling is used for Key Stage 2 to **teach, revisit and apply skills**. Topic words and common exception words for that particular class are also taught and given as spellings to learn (see Appendix C).

Children who find spelling challenging attend Lexia sessions three times a week and receive spellings linked to the level that they are working on. There is also a pass code for children who have been identified for not spelling key words correctly in their writing yet are competent readers. The program can be accessed at home for extra support.

Nursery

In Nursery we do letters and sounds in every session starting with Phase 1. We send home a reading book and reading record with every child and change the book once a week for them, the idea being that it is encouraging parents/carers to read to their child at home. We encourage the children to choose a book out of the box themselves so they can judge by the pictures or title they think they will like or have enjoyed listening to before. The books range from simple word books to different stories as well as some non-fiction books.

For writing, we have introduced a mark making book which really focuses on pencil control. The children complete an activity in this book once a week with an adult on a one to one basis. The 2/3 year olds focus on line control, shapes and different patterns and the 3/4 years at preschool age develop into letter formation for their name when ready then on from there. The closest we get to spellings is with their name then in the summer some simple CVC words for preschool age.

Resources/Non-negotiable KS1/KS2

Working Walls/Displays

These are essential resources to support the teaching of English:

EYFS	KS1	KS2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letters and sounds display • alphabet frieze • writing area display • presentation display promoting high expectations of handwriting • examples of children's writing • English promoted through different curriculum areas / zones including outdoor area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working wall showing current teaching content / vocabulary • checklist for writing • letters and sounds display • presentation display including Merrylands Expectations for presentation pyramid • examples of banded writing to show expectation for end of the year with annotations to show how it reaches expectation • genre related vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working wall showing current teaching content / vocabulary • checklist for writing • letters and sounds display (Yr3 only) • presentation display including Merrylands Expectations for Presentation pyramid • examples of banded writing to show expectation for end of the year with annotations to show how it reaches expectation. • genre related vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selection of books linked to current topic (fiction/non-fiction/poetry) • book corner visible and clearly labelled • book area tidy • key questions • class reading book sign on the door eg ...class are reading ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selection of books linked to current topic (fiction/non-fiction/poetry) • engaging book area visible and clearly labelled • book area tidy • key questions • class reading book sign on the door eg ...class are reading ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selection of books linked to current topic (fiction/non-fiction/poetry) • engaging book corner visible and clearly labelled • book area tidy • key questions • class reading book sign on the door eg ...class are reading ... • Examples of children responding to books eg reading journals, reviews

Personalised Toolkit

Each child has a 'Personalised Toolkit'. This is an individual folder that contains support material that is personalised to the child. These include:

- VCOP (Vocabulary, Conjunctions, Openers and Punctuation) pyramids
- spelling lists (common exception words / year group lists)
- year group grammar expectations
- children's own resources eg list of synonyms

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

English lessons, tasks and materials are differentiated by the class teacher to meet the needs of individual children. Children identified as having SEND may need greater differentiation of materials and tasks consistent with the child's education health plan (EHCP). Intervention groups are provided to deliver more intensive support. More able children will be challenged and motivated by greater differentiation of materials and tasks. The classteacher will also aim to identify those children who may be gifted in English and provide them with appropriate learning opportunities. Intervention groups to extend those that are high achievers in reading, for example, receive extra booster sessions from the Headteacher and selected classteachers during lunchtime.

Assessment, Records and Reports

Progress in English is monitored through ongoing teacher assessments (see Assessment Policy).

At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, SATs tests are used as basis for assessing formally. Years 1- 6 use Rising Stars and Pira/Puma tests to aid half termly teacher assessments.

Half termly assessments are entered onto Target Tracker. Data can be analysed for various groups FSM (free school meals) children, gender, gifted and talented, special needs and ethnicity to ensure the progress is continually monitored and reported at Phase and Leadership meetings.

Parent meetings are held twice a year to inform parents of their child's progress. Regular review and discussions are held with children to discuss their targets to enable them to move to the next stage in their reading and writing. An annual report is sent home during the summer term with an open invitation to discuss it on display evening with the classteacher.

Targets are accessible as they are placed in the children's toolkits and can be applied across all subjects.

Parents

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in their child's education by reading with them regularly at home, supporting them with their homework and completing their Home School Book. At the beginning of each academic year parents are invited to attend a meeting to inform them of the curriculum for their child's year group. During this parents are given key questions to ask their children when listening to them read, advice how to help their children with their homework and other activities to promote learning at home. In Year 2 and 6 parents are given samples of SATs test to make them aware of what we expect of their children.

Parents have been invited as volunteers to take an active part in the school such as reading with individual children.

The website continues to be developed and aims to provide information such as reading strategies, the reading scheme, homework and supportive websites.

Phonics

At Merrylands Primary School phonics is taught using the letters and sounds programme. It starts in Reception and continues to be taught throughout KS1. Children continue following letters and sounds at the beginning of Year 3 before moving onto the school's KS2 spelling programme.

Planning

The school follows the systematic approach laid out in Letters and Sounds (DfE 2007) which we have adapted to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Staff complete weekly plans for phonics which ensure progression and effective, high quality teaching.

Lessons

Discrete phonics lessons take place daily across Reception and Key Stage 1. They follow the structure of 'Review, Teach, Practise, Apply' to ensure that children are consolidating phonic knowledge and skills over time and that they are able to apply them in context. Consequently, wherever possible, links between phonics knowledge and understanding are made to learning in both reading and writing. These lessons proceed at pace and incorporate a wide range of practical and interactive activities to engage the children. These activities are carefully chosen to ensure that children develop their skills in aural discrimination and phonemic and rhyme awareness, blending and segmenting as well as grapheme phoneme correspondence.

Classes

Children are taught in small groups of between 10-20 children. They are grouped according to their phonic knowledge which is assessed by the class teacher. As children progress at different rates, these groups are changed regularly.

Resources

All phonics teachers have a range of resources to use which are appropriate for the level at which the children are working. They include practical resources such as letter fans etc. which should be used in every lesson to create a point of resonance. These resources can be added to so that children are continually engaged with their learning. There should also be age and phase appropriate displays in both Reception and Key Stage 1 classrooms and intervention rooms to support the teaching and application of phonics in reading and writing.

Intervention

Children who still need extra support to develop their phonic knowledge across Key Stage 1 and 2 are identified and targeted for intervention. In Year 1, children have phonics twice a day and in Year 2 target children have phonics taught twice a day. There are a range of intervention strategies which the school uses and the most appropriate one is selected once a child's needs have been assessed.