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English Policy

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Downview School: English Policy

Introduction

At Downview Primary School, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills. Through our English curriculum, the children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively through spoken language and creatively through written language. We aim to inspire children to enjoy and appreciate literature. Literacy is at the heart of all children's learning enabling them to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas.

Aims

To encourage children:

- to be effective, good listeners and competent communicators;
- to express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts both fiction and non-fiction using appropriate technical vocabulary;
- to foster an interest in words and their meanings, and to develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written form;
- to enjoy and engage with and understand a range of text types and genres;
- to be able to write in a variety of styles and forms showing awareness of audience and purpose;
- to develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy;
- to use grammar and punctuation accurately
- to understand spelling patterns and rules
- to use phonic strategies to read and spell
- to produce effective, well-presented written work in fluent and legible handwriting.

Organisation of English within the Curriculum

Explicit Literacy objectives are taught and supported by the use of quality texts, within meaningful and creative contexts.

Teaching and Learning - Strategies for the teaching of Reading

Teachers promote and value reading as an enjoyable activity and a life skill. Teachers plan for a **range** of comprehension strategies that allow pupils to engage with text in a variety of ways to suit different learning styles. Children are encouraged to read a **range** of books, genres and texts.

Phonics

From the EYFS onwards children are taught phonics through the "Song of Sounds" synthetic phonics programme. They are taught letter sounds and digraphs and are then taught to blend these to read real and "alien" words in stages appropriate to their development.

In **Shared/Guided Reading** the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader providing a high level of support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and collaboration.

Quality texts support the theme or topic and allow the teacher to expose the children to rich language, grammar and to genres to support their writing. Children are encouraged to “**maggie**” phrases and language. **Longer, quality texts** are read to the class, which may be above their own reading ability to immerse the children in a rich and varied reading experience. In KS2, children have half-termly reading comprehension tests to assess individual progress.

Home Reading

Parents receive guidance and support with hearing their child read at home through **The Downview Home Reading Booklet** and support from class teachers and **EYFS Parent Workshops**. In **KS1**, the core reading scheme is **Big Cat Phonics and Oxford Reading Tree**, which are supplemented with other “real” books. These books are organised according to a **Book Banding** system.

Book Boxes

From Year 1, each class has a set of **Book Boxes** containing quality texts, levelled according to group ability. Teachers will select books to ensure the children are having access to appropriate authors and a variety of genres including: picture books, fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The children are expected to read the books in each box over the period of a half term. All books will be sent home to share as well as reading them daily at school. The importance of re-reading familiar texts is encouraged and children may return to favourite texts.

School Library

In addition to reading the books selected by their teacher the children can attend a weekly lunchtime Library Club, when it is supervised by a teacher. The fiction books are organised in the School Library according to our own grading system. All of the books are catalogued according to the content and level of challenge. Non-fiction books are organised using the Dewey System in line with County Libraries.

Home Reading

Age appropriate Reading Record Books are used throughout the school. Individual Reading Records, for children needing extra support, are maintained in school to monitor individual 1:1 reading with an adult during the school day. This may be with the Teacher, a Teaching Assistant or Adult Helpers.

Reading in the School Environment

Each class also has a set of age appropriate dictionaries, thesaurus and word banks and a rich collection of texts and books in class book corners. There are signs, labels, captions, displays and writing on notice boards around the classrooms, corridors and hall.

Teaching & Learning - Strategies for the teaching of Writing

At Downview, we believe that cross-curricular and first-hand experiences enhance the teaching and learning of English. Visitors are regularly welcomed into the school such as authors, storytellers, librarians, Steyning Book Shop and drama groups such as the Rainbow Theatre

Company. Visits to places that are linked to topics encourage empathy and inspire creative writing ideas. Topic days and drama activities also motivate children as speakers and writers.

Planning

The National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning. At Downview, teachers assess and plan against progressive KPIs, based on the National Curriculum objectives. Year group objectives are delivered through and supported by the use of quality texts.

The whole school follows the Literacy Tree Writing Scheme. Teachers work towards independent learning and differentiate, when required, for optimum learning. Teachers employ a range of multi-sensory teaching strategies to support and make learning memorable.

Speaking and Listening

At Downview we believe that children need to have the opportunity to 'talk it' before they 'write it'. The 'Talk for writing' approach supports this. Teachers and all adults in school model speaking clearly, using Standard English and all children are encouraged to participate in pairs, small groups and class discussions. Listening is also modelled, as is the appropriate use of non-verbal communication, respecting the views of others.

Learning takes place in a variety of situations and group settings. For example, these could include reading aloud as an individual, working collaboratively on an investigation, reporting findings as a newscaster, interviewing people as part of a research project, acting as a guide for a visitor to school or responding to a text in shared or guided reading.

Our children will build language experiences from: recounting events, participating in discussion and debate, talk for writing- retelling stories and poems, expressing opinions and justifying ideas, listening to stories read aloud, presenting ideas to different audiences, taking part in school performances, responding to different kinds of texts, listening to ideas and opinions of adults and peers, role-play and other drama activities across the curriculum.

The Writing Process

To ensure high standards of teaching and learning in Writing, we implement a curriculum that is progressive throughout the whole school. Throughout Downview, children learn a range of genres in response to immersion in quality texts and/or practical experience. Prior to starting any unit of writing, year groups agree with the children the purpose of their writing (inform, entertain, discuss, persuade) and the intended audience. Children sometimes write through our cyclic 'Composition Process': Plan, draft, revise/proofread, edit and publish. Lessons always include elements of grammar teaching and spelling. Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 have daily phonics lessons. These are taught through the Song of Sounds scheme.

Children are encouraged to be taught to scaffold their writing. Think-pair-share opportunities are encouraged so that the children talk through their ideas as part of the writing process. Writing is celebrated in assemblies, displayed around the school and shared with parents.

Teachers promote writing and look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as 'writers'. ICT is used where it enhances, extends and complements literacy teaching and learning.

Handwriting

Our aim is to encourage children to form letters correctly and write legibly, neatly, fluently and with increasing speed. At Downview, we follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. This is displayed for staff and children in every classroom. Teachers and Teaching Assistants use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme to model good handwriting at all times, e.g. when writing on the whiteboard and labels for displays and when marking books.

Handwriting is taught explicitly, in short frequent sessions and wherever possible, alongside phonics and spellings. It is modelled by the teacher and children practise by carefully copying and repeating. In Year 2 children are taught how to begin to join. Interventions are put in place for those children who are not yet ready for this and need further support. By the end of Year 6 children are expected to maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.

We follow the guidelines and expectations of the National Curriculum for Handwriting 2014: Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are provided with a wide range of activities and opportunities to develop fine motor control and hand-eye coordination.

Spelling:

In Reception, Years 1 and 2 children have daily phonics lessons following the Song of Sounds scheme. Children use a multi sensory approach to recognise the phonemes and digraphs and read and sort words containing different phonemes.

Children are taught a range of approaches to learn to spell common exception words (CEW) and patterns in words. A multi-sensory approach to spelling is used to cater for a range of learning styles: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Games and investigations are also used to reinforce, explore and practise spellings. Children's spelling attainment is assessed and recorded regularly in individual spelling records. Dictation and handwriting sessions are sometimes used to embed spelling and phonics. Weekly spellings and words that children have learnt are displayed and referred to in classrooms. Teachers rigorously encourage children to proof read their writing for taught spelling patterns and CEW, referring to workingwalls and word banks in class. Weekly spellings are set throughout KS1 and KS2 to support home –school learning.

KS1 - Five spellings per week. Lower KS2 – Five to 10 spellings per week and Upper KS2 –10 spellings per week

Grammar and Punctuation:

Through reading quality texts the teaching of grammar (including grammatical terminology) and punctuation is embedded within Writing lessons using the Literacy Tree planning to ensure rigour. Through proof-reading the children are encouraged with their teachers, peers and when working independently to gain an increased knowledge of the English language and to check their writing in line with this. CGP books are used to reinforce the teaching of Spelling and Grammar from Year 2 through to Year 6.

The role of the English co-ordinators-(Reading and Writing Co-ordinators) is to:

- Support colleagues in teaching the subject content and developing their skills in planning, teaching, moderating and assessing writing and reading across the school.
- Renew, update and oversee the audit of resources needed to deliver the curriculum
- Monitor and evaluate the learning and teaching of writing and reading.
- Develop assessment and record keeping ensuring progression and continuity
- Keep abreast of developments in the teaching and learning of writing and reading

Assessment:

National Testing

Children in The Foundation Stage are continuously assessed on the objectives in the Early Learning Goals. This includes Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening.

Currently in Year 1 children are required to take part in a phonics test in the summer term. This is repeated in Year 2 if the children do not reach the expected standard.

In Year 6, the children take part in SAT Reading, and GPS, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling tests and are assessed against the Year 6 expectations. Reading and GPS tests are externally marked.

Assessment of reading:

Teachers keep individual records of children's achievements and progress. Progress is measured against KPIs each term.

Assessment of writing:

Marking and feedback is pertinent to individual needs and made in relation to the year group KPI's, in accordance with our marking policy. Marking is progressive and encourages the children to edit the content and quality of their writing and proof-read their writing for spelling and punctuation. Learning Journals are used through-out the school. The majority of feedback takes place verbally within lessons directly with pupils both individually and within groups.

Writing is moderated by all members of the teaching staff in year group meetings and at termly agreement trialling/moderation. Reading and Writing is also moderated across other schools in our FAB locality meetings. Writing is moderated once each year using the national No More Marking platform. Progress is tracked and recorded on Insight Data Tracker.

SEN

All children receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated. In addition, where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support, to enable them to work towards age appropriate objectives, focused interventions are put in place in order for all children to achieve. Teachers plan programmes, including Precision Teaching, and monitor progress of pupils on ILP's with the teaching assistants and SENCO.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils at Downview have equal access to the facilities available, regardless of gender or nationality. When working in groups the teacher ensures that children take turns and share the equipment fairly. Teachers also give pupils opportunities to work individually to complete tasks by themselves.

Professional Development

Training needs are identified as a result of whole school monitoring and evaluation, analysis of data and identified priorities. This forms the basis for any monitoring activities and will clearly identify when, who and what is to be monitored and how this will take place e.g. classroom observation, planning scrutiny, work sampling, model lessons, coaching etc. These will be reflected in the School Development Plan, which includes the Writing and Reading Action Plans.

The Reading and Writing Co-ordinators and Senior Leaders will arrange for relevant advice and information, such as feedback from courses and newsletters, to be disseminated and Reading or Writing Co-ordinators and UPS groups organise and lead school based training.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this English policy is monitored throughout the year by:

- Monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning by Senior Leaders and Reading and Writing Co-ordinators
- Book scrutiny: Sampling of children's work
- Pupil interviews/ pupil voice
- Visits from the inspectorate or Local Authority advisory team, consultation with staff.

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