

English Policy



Introduction

The teaching of English has recently been adapted, in line with the 2014 National Curriculum. Literacy in all its forms (reading, writing and speaking and listening) is a vital life skill which pupils will be required to use on a daily basis. As a school we are looking ***“to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment,”*** as stated in the 2014 National Curriculum. Through our work in school, children will become confident, articulate communicators who are able to interact and engage fully with the world around them.

Aims

At Hollymount School, we aim to develop in our pupils:

- A positive and enthusiastic approach towards acquiring literacy skills.
- Reading and writing with confidence, fluency and understanding.
- The habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- The ability to plan, draft, review and edit their own work and that of their peers.
- A wide vocabulary and an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- An understanding of a range of text types and genres – the ability to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation.
- The ability to use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- Competence in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Teaching and Learning in English

National Curriculum objectives and HertsforLearning assessment objectives provide guidance for planning teaching and learning of Literacy from Year 1 to 6. Teaching in the Foundation Stage makes use of the EYFS (Early Years Foundations Stage Framework) through communication, language and literacy. The Power of Reading and Literacy Tree teaching sequences provide planning, guidance and resources for literacy lessons based around quality texts, incorporated into each Year groups yearly planning cycles and help to ensure progression and coverage of the National Curriculum objectives.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening is fundamental to the development of pupils' language and communication skills. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding of reading and writing. They are skills used in all areas of the curriculum and are vital in daily life. At Hollymount we plan for a range of contexts and purposes for our pupils to talk and communicate effectively.

Speaking and Listening at Hollymount

- Through the use of quality literature and texts, pupils are encouraged to explain their understanding of books and other reading matter, preparing their ideas before they write.
- Across all subjects, pupils are taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.
- Drama is regularly used in literacy lessons allowing pupils to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles and respond appropriately to others in role.
- Pupils have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and for a range of audiences as part of our planned literacy curriculum.
- AfL strategies are used in school, including the use of talk partners, encouraging children to become attentive listeners, developing their analytical skills.
- Pupils take part in group discussions, making contributions, listening to others and working collaboratively.
- A wide range of opportunities are provided for children to express ideas, take on roles and perform to others in cross-curricular ways: assemblies, School Council etc.

Reading Policy

Pupils need to be able to read in order to access the print-rich world in which we live. Hollymount is a print-rich environment, where pupils have access to a range of texts, including both fiction and non-fiction and other forms of media. At Hollymount we look to establish an appreciation and love of reading. The school environment and teaching and learning all reflect a strong emphasis on reading for pleasure. Teachers plan for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences so pupils are reading for meaning. We aim for them to leave school as confident and reflective readers.

Reading at Hollymount School

Teaching Reading

- Phonics is taught systematically from the Nursery following the Jolly Phonics and Letters and Sounds 'phased' programme. Children have regular short whole class sessions until the end of Year 2, learning sounds, actions and letters, games and activities to support sounding out, segmenting and blending for reading and writing. Regular phonics support, through interventions, continues post year 2 for those children who are still not secure.
- A wide selection of early reading books are banded into 'colour steps' and children progress through these before moving on to free reading. Pupils will be listened to in a variety of contexts at school, but the level of their reading, and the banding of book that they read, will be decided by the teacher and changed at their discretion.
- Children are taught reading during shared and guided group sessions using guided reading texts in ability groups.. In these sessions, children develop strategies to decode words and texts, scanning, skimming, predicting, visualising, inferring, deducing and empathising. This is supplemented in FSU and Year 1 by individual reading sessions with the teacher or teaching assistant.

Reading for Pleasure

- The school environment including the displays, the library bus and class book corners look to promote and encourage reading across the school.
- The school implements plans to ensure there is a wide range of texts within each classroom including age-related fiction and non-fiction, magazines and newspapers (the school subscribes to First News), internet based texts accessed via tablets and laptops and children's own work (within books and displays).

- Teachers at Hollymount read regularly to pupils and dedicated time slots are allocated as part of the weekly timetable for pupils and staff to have the opportunity to read independently (SQUIRT sessions – Super-Quiet-Uninterrupted- Independent- Reading-Time)
- The Star Readers reward scheme is run from Years 1 – 6 encouraging children to read at home regularly. Sustained reading at home is rewarded with an invitation to the Star Readers Tea Party at the end of the year.
- Reading events including ‘World Book Day’ and ‘Poetry Day’ make up part of the yearly school calendar and look to promote and foster a love of reading at Hollymount School.

Writing Policy

Writing for a range of purposes makes writing meaningful to pupils. Through our teaching, expectations are made clear to enable pupils to assess their own writing. Transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing) are the two important dimensions which are focused on when teaching writing at Hollymount School.

Aims for children

- To write independently and for pleasure.
- To support the acquisition of fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.
- Write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own, and their peers’ work.
- Develop children’s awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and increasingly widen knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.
- Use writing as a method of communication to convey information or to express ideas and feelings.
- Use ICT to support their writing.

What does this look like at Hollymount?

- Children have access to a wide range of writing opportunities that include:
 - Shared and guided writing.
 - Big Writing and opportunities for extended independent writing sessions in order to build stamina for writing.
 - Writing different texts and narrative styles.
 - Writing in different curriculum areas.
 - Writing from a variety of stimuli including first hand experiences like trips and school visits.
 - Writing is, in the main, linked to class topics to promote engagement.
- Writing is displayed all over the school. Each week, class teachers choose a Star Writer who receives a certificate and whose written work is displayed on the ‘Star Writers’ Wall in the school foyer.
- Writing is taught as a sequenced and scaffolded activity beginning with immersion in a text, then gathering of ideas, which all support a final written outcome.
- Teachers provide regular helpful feedback through marking – *see marking and feedback policy*.
- Time is planned into lessons for children to respond to literacy marking and feedback.
- We ensure progression in complexity of tasks and reading material year on year.
- Peer and self-marking are encouraged as an additional way for children to respond to writing.

Spelling

Spelling is taught as part of a Literacy lesson. Pupils receive weekly spelling tests taken from Spelling Appendix 1 of the 2014 National Curriculum which develops children’s understanding of spelling patterns and rules.

Grammar

At Hollymount, teachers and pupils understand that the explicit knowledge of grammar is very important as it gives us more conscious control and choice in our language. Building this knowledge is best achieved through a focus on grammar within the teaching of reading, writing and speaking. Grammar objectives from the Grammar Appendix 2 in the 2014 National curriculum are taught through Literacy lessons. The use of teaching resources including the Literacy Tree teaching sequences support teachers in embedding grammar objectives into their lessons and teaching.

Handwriting

There is a separate, brief policy which outlines the approach to the teaching of handwriting at Hollymount School.

Planning

Weekly plans are developed by the class teacher reflecting the requirements of the National Curriculum objectives for the year group, which may be adapted to reflect class, group and individual needs. Weekly plans also specify the deployment of support staff and the criteria on which successful learning will be assessed.

Provision

Each class teacher teaches a daily literacy lesson. This may be discreet or as part of our creative curriculum, where literacy skills may be linked to work in other subject areas. Cross-curricular links may be made in a number of different ways, developing reading, writing, and speaking and listening in order to provide real purposes and audiences for pupils' work. For example, different religious experiences, responding to historical artefacts and recording observations in science. Lessons will last for approximately 60 minutes. Small groups of pupils will be given additional provision such as guided reading, guided writing and booster sessions. Children in FSU have opportunities throughout the week to discuss their ideas, complete independent word activities and have daily phonics input and a wide variety of opportunities for writing (Also see EYFS Policy).

Inclusion

Literacy is taught in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Policy, SEN and Inclusion Policy, which ensures that all children, irrespective of ability/special educational need, gender, race, socio-economic background and religion, have access to the Literacy curriculum.

Able pupils

Able pupils are stretched through differentiated group work and extra challenges.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils with SEN will be included in the daily literacy lesson, through appropriate differentiation and support, informed by the targets in their SEN support plans.

EAL

Support for children with English as an additional language will be given in the daily literacy lessons in a variety of ways. For example, planning using objectives from previous year groups, simplified texts, peer support, key words, picture cues, vocabulary translations where available and appropriate.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Continuous formative assessment will be an informal part of every lesson to check understanding and give the teacher information about progress and achievement, sometimes requiring an adjustment to the next day's plan. At the end of each term, independent pieces of writing are assessed against the curriculum writing objectives using the HertsforLearning assessment grids specific to each year group.

Parents' evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms. Written reports are sent home at the end of the academic year. Informal discussions are held by appointment with individual sets of parents as and when required.

The new National Curriculum sets out what is to be taught within each year group or phase; the descriptors for reporting to parents about their children are now as follows:	
Below (B)	Is consolidating elements of the previous year's standard but may also be starting to achieve in areas of this year's standard
Working Towards (T)	Is emerging in their understanding of the requirements of the year and shows signs of working towards the expected standard for their year group.
Working At (At)	Is secure in most objectives for the end of the academic year and is achieving well within the expected standard.
Working at Greater depth (GD)	Is confidently achieving all objectives at the end of the academic year and has a deep and thorough understanding of the subject, able to apply his/her skills in a range of different contexts.

At the end of KS1

Teacher assessment (TA) is the main focus for end of key stage 1 assessment and reporting of writing and reading. It is carried out as part of teaching and learning. The statutory national curriculum reading and writing tasks and tests must be administered to all eligible pupils. These inform the final TA judgements reported for each pupil at the end of KS1.

Schools are not obliged to report task or test results separately. However, parents must be allowed access to their child's results on request.

At the end of KS2

From 2016, KS2 national curriculum test outcomes will no longer be reported using levels. Scaled scores will be used instead.

The KS2 tests consist of:

English reading: reading booklet and associated answer booklet

English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 1: short answer questions

English grammar, punctuation and spelling Paper 2: spelling

EYFS

Pupils in Nursery and Reception are assessed against the Early Learning Goals in the EYFS profile .

Role of the English Subject Leader

The English Subject leader is responsible for: ensuring staff are kept up to date with good practice in literacy teaching, subject knowledge, offering advice, organising INSET sessions and appropriate CPD to support teachers, analysing data and giving assistance with target-setting. The ESL will also be responsible for organizing special events e.g. World Book Day, Book Fairs etc.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is encouraged at Hollymount, beginning with reading support and work with the learning of phonics. Staff, pupils and parents working in partnership benefits the child and is seen as a vital way to encourage and support reading activities at home. Parents are encouraged to write in reading record books and homework diaries.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Policy and practice will be monitored and evaluated by the English Subject Leader (ESL) and the Headteacher. Teachers are observed as part of the SDP and Performance Management cycle with feedback given as per the school's Monitoring Policy. Other means of evaluating teaching and learning in English will include scrutiny of work, monitoring planning and analysis of progress and attainment data. The link Governor for English makes a termly visit and may be involved in any or all of these monitoring activities across the academic year.

Policy approved by Standards, Teaching & Learning Committee

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