



Stebbing Primary School English Policy

Updated February 2020
Ratified February 2020
Due for review February 2022

Introductory statement

At Stebbing Primary School we believe that a secure knowledge of the English language is fundamental to everyday life. Our English work unites and develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. It is the purpose of the teaching and learning of English at Stebbing to prepare children for their future. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts.

Aims of the National Curriculum

The overarching aim of the English national curriculum is 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.

The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding,
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information,
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language ,
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage,
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences,
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas,
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

At Stebbing Primary School we encourage children to:

- express themselves confidently in both verbal and written forms, understanding the nuances of different text-types and genres,
- read with expression and comprehension,
- have fluent and legible handwriting,
- have a curiosity about words, their meanings and develop a growing vocabulary,
- have a secure knowledge of the basics of the English language, spelling patterns and grammar conventions,
- be interested in books, read with enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences,
- develop a love of language.

Approaches to Speaking and Listening

The teaching of speaking and listening within English provides children with a tool for accessing other areas of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

The Four Strands of Speaking and Listening: Speaking; Listening; Group Discussion and Interaction, and Drama permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. We believe children must have access to Standard English in both oral and written forms, but not at the expense of the pupils' culture, home language and dialects.

Examples of drama based speaking and listening activities -

- Role play
- Performing and/or reading plays in a group
- Freeze framing
- Hot seating

Examples of non-drama speaking and listening activities -

- Learning partners
- Class assemblies
- Presentations of work
- Peer feedback
- Collective Worship
- Classroom based games
- Circle time
- Debates
- Expressing opinions
- Family consultation presentations and learning review meetings.

Approaches to Reading

Our aim is for children to become confident and independent readers who gain both pleasure and insight from the reading activities and the texts they engage with. Reading is an essential skill for participation in all areas of life. Competence enables enjoyment and appreciation of literature and access to information from a variety of sources.

At Stebbing Primary School we utilise a set of core reading skills which children will be taught. These are known as the reading VIPERS:

- Vocabulary
- Infer
- Predict
- Explain
- Retrieve
- Summarise (KS2) / Sequence (KS1)

These skills will be taught through following strategies:-

- **Whole class teaching of reading** – this is a whole class reading activity. Comprehension skills and knowledge about the structure and composition of texts are explicitly taught during this time using a range of interactive teaching methods including retelling to a partner, reading the text in character, hot seating and role play, open and closed questions. The level of the text should be chosen to challenge the most able readers in the class, but by using additional adults and reading it through, teachers should make it accessible to all. Shared reading provides a context for teaching and applying word level skills and cueing strategies at all levels.
- **Guided Reading**- this is the systematic teaching of reading skills and strategies to a group of similar ability children. Each group has a weekly guided session lasting 20-30 minutes. Each group will be working on targets relevant to their year group.
- **Individual reading**- one to one reading with an adult to support their use of different strategies and to respond to comprehension questions.
- **Independent reading** – this gives children an opportunity to read a book that reflects their interests.
- **Story reading**- this gives the children the opportunity to listen to an adult reading a text that would otherwise be unavailable to them. The adult models intonation, fluency and enjoyment, and this fosters enthusiasm and motivation in the children.
- **PAT reading sessions** - this gives children the opportunity to develop their confidence with reading by reading to one of our PAT reading dogs.

Approaches to Writing

Our aim is for children to communicate meaningfully when writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. Writing requires the orchestration of a number of complex skills including the ability to construct and organise a text in an appropriate style and to use punctuation, grammar, spelling and

handwriting. Confident, independent writers will be able to express themselves creatively and also communicate information clearly and concisely. Children will participate in both shared and guided writing sessions led by the class teacher or LSA as well as being given ample opportunities for extended independent writing activities. All Reception children are provided with opportunities that encourage and celebrate emergent writing.

Teaching should be:

- interactive - pupils' contributions are encouraged, expected, and extended;
- well-paced - there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed;
- confident - teachers have a clear understanding of the objectives;
- ambitious - there is optimism about and high expectations of success.

Literacy teaching should have a clear focus and direction and should aim for high levels of motivation and active engagement for pupils. To achieve this, teachers will need to use a wide range of teaching strategies including:

- direction
- demonstration
- modelling
- scaffolding
- explanation to clarify and discuss
- questioning: to probe pupils' understanding, to cause them to reflect on and refine their work, and to extend their ideas
- initiated and guided exploration
- investigating ideas
- discussing and arguing
- setting success criteria e.g. using features of the genre, punctuation and adjectives
- listening to and responding, often using response partners.

All teachers have a planning, teaching and assessment folder which clearly outlines the expectations for each year group. This folder contains a yearly overview for the teaching of narrative, non-fiction and poetry texts. Also, teachers have access to agreed upon text structures and language continuum which need to be taught, this will ensure there is consistency from one year to the next. All staff are expected to draw upon their own exciting experiences to teach writing effectively. An approach in which using a variety of established literacy schemes ('Alan Peat', 'Pie Corbett', 'Jonathon Bond') in combination to suit the needs of the children in line with the objectives is also encouraged.

Classroom organisation is a key area to success in the teaching and learning of writing. Writing skills will be taught in both designated English sessions and through cross-curricular topics. Pupils will spend time daily, being taught as members of a whole-class or a smaller group. We ensure that the needs of the full range of pupils are met within this structure, including those with SEN and English as an additional language. Children will also be engaged in purposeful writing through real world experiences such as letter writing to pens pals at Kajonkiet International School, Thailand. Teachers are also encouraged to provide plentiful opportunities for the children to engage in writing across the curriculum.

Approaches to Spelling

Our aim is for children to spell easily and automatically in order that they can focus the greater part of their attention, when writing, on what they want to say; poor spelling can hamper speed and interfere with the thought processes involved in composition.

Spelling is a thinking process, not a rote-learning task. Phonics is taught daily using the 'Letters and Sounds.' Phonics programme in Reception, year 1 and where necessary year 2 and is assessed each half term. Spelling is taught using 'The Spelling Shed' spelling scheme of work and homework which is

in line with the outlined programme from the National Curriculum in years 2-6, where the focus shifts from using individual sounds, to using a variety of letter strings in practice. Children are encouraged to think about whether a word looks right and whether that spelling choice for a phoneme is used in that part of a word. i.e. ay not ai is more often used at the end of a word. Weekly spelling homework is in place to support the teaching of specific spelling rules being taught in class. Children are also encouraged to make use of applications and programmes such as 'The Spelling Shed' to further develop and enhance the children's spelling.

Approaches to Handwriting

See Handwriting policy for information

Assessment

The assessment and recording of English is part of the overall assessment of the whole child and should be seen alongside all the other areas of development. Teachers report reading, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling data to management half-termly.

English is assessed formatively and summatively using a variety of assessment tools including in-house developed assessment systems adapting the work published by Ros Wilson, Sheffield Stat, Twinkl, Jonathon Bond and Rising Stars. Termly summative assessments are also utilised to support the teachers overall assessments. We have used all these sources to create our own assessment system in order to confidently assess progress of all children in all classes whilst ensuring the children are accurately assessed against the national curriculum expectations.

Inclusion

The study of English will be planned to give pupils a suitable range of differentiated activities appropriate to their age and abilities. Tasks will be set which challenge all pupils, including the more able.

For pupils with SEN, the task will be adjusted or pupils may be given extra support. The grouping of pupils will take account of their strengths and weaknesses and ensure that all take an active part in the task and gain in confidence. Special provision will be made for children who need specific support e.g. triangular pencil grips, recording devices.

Equal Opportunities

At Stebbing Primary School we are committed to ensuring that there is equality of opportunity in all areas of the curriculum, including English, regardless of gender, race or ability. This will be achieved through careful monitoring and assessment.

Technology

At Stebbing Primary School we recognise the importance of technology as a tool for learning in all curriculum areas. We ensure that a good variety of resources are available within the school and that computing skills are utilised in English teaching and learning. These can include the use of: Chromebooks, iPads as well software such as Spellodrome and websites. Technology is also utilised to provide feedback following extended writing opportunities through applications such as SeeSaw.

Role of Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants/Learning Support Assistants support is a planned part of English sessions and time should be allowed for teachers and TAs to liaise in order to establish the exact nature of the support they are to provide. Training is available for all TAs to enable them to support literacy teaching effectively.

Other aspects of the LSA/TA role may include:

- supporting individual children either within a group or 1:1 situations,
- helping children learn spellings,

- assisting children to revise, edit and redraft their writing,
- feedback from group sessions,
- model all literacy skills to children,
- assistance in forming formative assessment analysis.

Links with parents

The school aims to work in partnership with parents to enable all children to achieve their potential. Parents are therefore encouraged to help their children at home as much as they are able to.

Parents can help children at the early stages of speaking and listening by encouraging them to talk about their experiences and retell events and stories. Through a wide range of reading and discussion of books, parents can also develop speaking and listening skills as they can through games and everyday situations.

Parents can help children at the early stages of writing by emphasising the purpose and value of written communication and encouraging children to write themselves.

The school will support parents by:

- Providing curriculum information via termly overviews of work and newsletters.
- Providing information evenings to update parents on changes in approaches.
- Ensuring parental volunteers are welcomed and valued in classes.
- Ensuring that parents have access to teachers, by appointment, to discuss their child's progress and attainment in Literacy.
- Informing parents of writing targets relevant to their children's development.