



# **Thistly Meadow Primary School**

## **ENGLISH POLICY**

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## English policy

### 1. Writing

#### Intent

At Thistly Meadow Primary we aim for our children to become independent and creative writers. We encourage them to write clearly and with confidence across a range of genres, for specific audiences and purposes. Throughout their writing, we place great value on the importance of accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as the development of correct letter formation and neatly presented handwriting. Through our English curriculum, we aim to develop a love of literature and language for all children, as well as the confidence to continue to write throughout their lives.

Within the EYFS and KS1, we place a strong emphasis on ensuring our children secure the foundational knowledge and skills that every child needs by the end of key stage 1 to give them the best chance of educational success. Language is the bedrock of thinking and learning and a priority in our curriculum. We aim to identify children's needs as early as possible, taking into consideration their starting points, with opportunities to practise to make sure that our teaching methods help all children to build and remember crucial knowledge and skills.

#### Implementation

Writing is taught daily in English lessons, as well as being taught within other subject disciplines (such as history, geography, and science). Our writing curriculum is organised into three key areas: transcription, composition and grammar and punctuation. End of year Teacher Assessment Frameworks are used to inform planning and teaching; ensuring children learn, develop, revisit, and consolidate these skills throughout the year. The statements outlined in the National Curriculum are used alongside our assessments to ensure children receive a broad, balanced and challenging writing curriculum.

#### Transcription

This area of learning covers both spelling and handwriting. A structured programme of spelling extends across the whole school, beginning with Read, Write, Inc phonics in EYFS and Key Stage 1. There is then a natural transition to the Rising Stars Spelling Programme in KS1 which continues to be used throughout Key Stage 2. At Thistly Meadow, we aim to support our children to become confident spellers so that they have the freedom to express themselves through a wide range of vocabulary. We teach a different spelling pattern

discretely through daily spelling sessions and application. The spelling rule is taught, practiced and applied each a week – through use of engaging lessons and dictation.

As a school, we follow the Letter Join handwriting scheme, which is first introduced in EYFS alongside the RWI letter formation rhymes. Children are taught to use the correct letter formation, sizing and joins and apply this within their written work.

### Composition

Throughout each term, children are exposed to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts and learn to create writing in both styles. Each year group has an English overview which ensures children have many opportunities to write for a variety of purposes (to entertain, to inform, to persuade and to discuss). Our school reading and writing spines ensure our children experience a wide range of quality key texts as a stimulus for reading and writing. Initially, our children are immersed in the text, they are then given opportunities to analyse the features present within it, considering why they make that text successful to the purpose and audience it serves. This supports our children in *reading as writers* and *writing as readers*. Children are then explicitly taught to practice certain grammar or punctuation skills before independently applying this learning to sentences or short paragraphs. At the end of the teaching sequence, children will independently apply their taught skills, within an extended piece of writing, and have the opportunity to self-assess, edit and revise. Our children are provided with various opportunities to publish their final outcome.

### Grammar and Punctuation

Correct grammar and punctuation are crucial building blocks for children learning to speak, write, and listen. Having a good knowledge of grammar allows our children to communicate their ideas and feelings and helps them choose the right language when writing. Within English lessons, children are taught the appropriate grammar and punctuation which they then practice and apply to their written work. As part of our approach to adaptive teaching, stand-alone grammar lessons may also be taught to consolidate and secure previous learning or where gaps may have been identified.

### Oracy

Oracy is a combination of *learning to talk* and *learning through talk* – it underpins the development of reading and writing, and is key to progress in all subjects. We believe that developing oracy throughout primary education provides our children with vital life skills. We aim to encourage fluent speakers, who are confident to communicate, debate and present in a wide range of situations. The ability to listen actively, speak clearly and communicate articulately are fundamental skills developed within our oracy skills progression map. We strive to develop oracy skills through the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and the whole ethos of the school.

### Marking and feedback

As part of our formative assessment, we use verbal feedback and live marking daily as a powerful and continual form of assessment for learning, as misconceptions can then be immediately addressed. Teachers ensure that the success criteria and toolkits are revisited regularly throughout the lesson- understanding is checked in a variety of ways and feedback informs the child about their current level of performance ('How am I doing?'). Within lessons, there are regular reviews of learning and children respond to whole class and individual, in the moment, feedback by editing and revising their work using red pencils (KS1) and purple pens (KS2).

### Impact

- Children will enjoy writing across a range of text types and for a range of purposes
- Children of all abilities will be able to succeed in all English lessons because work will have been modelled, pupils will have appropriate scaffolding and opportunities to practice, edit and revise their work
- Children will have a wide vocabulary that they will use within their writing
- Children will have a good knowledge of how to adapt their writing based on the context and audience
- Children will leave primary school being able to effectively apply spelling rules and patterns, as well as produce neat, legible handwriting
- Parents and carers will have a good understanding of how they can support spelling, grammar and composition at home, and contribute regularly to homework
- The percentage of children working at the expected standard by the end of KS2 will be at least in line with national averages
- The percentage of children working at Greater Depth by the end of KS2 will be at least in line with national averages
- There will be no significant gaps in the progress of different groups of pupils (e.g. PPG vs Non PPG)
- Writing will be monitored across all subject disciplines through learning walks, observations, moderation, discussions with pupils and against our Teacher Assessment Frameworks.

## 2. Reading

### Intent

At Thistly Meadow, we believe that reading is at the heart of everything we do- it is an essential skill that provides access to wealth of opportunities and opens the door to a rich and broad curriculum. It is our intent to ensure that all children are fluent and effective readers who have a rich vocabulary and enjoy reading for pleasure. It is vital that children acquire good reading skills so they can access the information that will support their learning in all areas. We achieve this through high quality teaching of reading to secure fluency and a good level of comprehension. This, underpinned by a culture that promotes a love of reading, ensures that our children become articulate and literate individuals who have a positive attitude towards reading.

### **We aim to:**

- To instil a love of reading in children that lasts a lifetime to develop 'lifelong readers'.
- To develop children's confidence, fluency and independence to read for different purposes.
- To develop a range of reading strategies that allow children to tackle reading challenges and the wider curriculum with confidence.

We use high quality key texts as a stimulus for our reading and writing lessons. We have developed our reading spine to ensure our children experience a wide range of:

- Contemporary novels
- Heritage literature
- World literature
- Texts that build cultural capital
- Diversity of representation – characters and authors
- Strong female voice
- Non-narrative/information
- Social, moral, ethical and cultural issues
- Curriculum centered
- Rich poetry – heritage and modern

Within our sequences of work, we ensure that content covered will widen children's general knowledge and increase their awareness of current affairs- developing cultural capital. Our curriculum is ripe with spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning which aids our children in reaching their full potential and equips them to be successful citizens, who can contribute positively to society and life in modern Britain. There are many opportunities for children to read and write around different cultural themes using texts which have social, cultural and moral themes within them. This develops an appreciation for democracy, English law, accountability, individual liberty, equality and tolerance- promoting British values.

## **Implementation**

Children must *learn to read* before they can *read to learn*. The teaching of early reading and phonics focuses on developing children's phonetic skills in order to segment and blend to develop fluent readers through following the principles and practices of letters and sounds. From the EYFS, we follow the Read, Write, Inc phonics programme. This systematic approach to the teaching of phonics enables children to develop secure reading and spelling skills and can substantially reduce the number of children at risk of falling below age-related expectations for reading. Read, Write, Inc lesson plans, resources and the book scheme are used to support the teaching and learning of phonics and ensures fidelity to the scheme.

Phonics is taught daily to all children in Reception and KS1. We organise children into ability groups for phonics lessons according to the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they know. Children are regularly assessed to ensure they are in the group where they will make the most progress and we provide additional practice, in addition to the lessons, for children who need it. All children are provided with fully decodable books to ensure reading books are closely matched to current phonic knowledge. Teachers are skilled in quickly identifying gaps and where targeted/additional teaching is required.

Children are encouraged to use their knowledge of synthetic phonics as much as possible to work out how to read unknown words aloud. With the teaching and learning of common exception words, the bits of a word that are 'tricky', and do not directly correspond to known grapheme-phoneme correspondence, are identified and discussed as a teaching point. We call these 'red' words. Within the phonics sequence, we identify where we expect 'red' words and decodable common exception words to be taught and ensure these are also being practiced and applied in English lessons.

Once children have gained a secure phonetical knowledge, they need to become fluent readers. This means that they must be able to recognise words automatically to use appropriate expression and intonation and read at a natural pace. A range of fluency strategies (e.g. echo reading, emphasis sentences and speed reading) allows children's fluency to be developed, based on the EEF's Reader's Theatre guidance.

Comprehension is an important part of our curriculum taught from EYFS through to Year 6 and is a vital component to becoming a fluent and effective reader. Children work on a range of high-quality texts within whole-class reading lessons to develop their reading skills, following the objectives highlighted on our skills progression map. Our whole class reading lessons focus on teaching and developing key skills in reading from the National Curriculum. We use high quality texts including poems, film clips and lyrics, as well as extracts so children have the opportunity to unpick the text and can practice using and applying their reading skills independently.

We quickly identify children who are at risk of falling behind and we intervene early through additional teaching and reading opportunities- we intend that our children 'keep up, not catch up'. Reading progress is monitored regularly to ensure all children are making

progress. For some children carefully thought-out individual/group teaching plans are written to ensure gaps are closing and progress is age and stage appropriate.

### **Impact**

- Children will experience and enjoy reading across a range of genres. They will have a good knowledge of authors and be able to discuss their reading preferences
- Children of all abilities will be able to succeed in all reading lessons- their reading skills will improve year on year in line with the skills outlined on our skills progression map
- Children will use a range of strategies for decoding words
- Children will be ready to read in any subject discipline and realise the importance of reading in each subject discipline which will help prepare them for the in their forthcoming secondary education
- Parents and carers will have a good understanding of how they can support reading at home and contribute
- The number of children working at the nationally expected standard will at least be in line with national averages and gaps will be closing
- The percentage of children working at Greater Depth in reading will be at least in line with national averages and any gaps will be closing
- There will be no significant gaps in the progress of different groups of pupils (e.g. PPG vs Non PPG, and where gaps are evident, these will be closing
- Reading will be monitored in a variety of ways including learning walks, observations, books looks, reading with pupils, discussions with pupils

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