

WEST PARK ACADEMY

English Policy



Reviewed: February 2024

***“So please, oh please, we beg, we pray,
Go throw your TV set away,
And in its place, you can install,
A lovely bookshelf on the wall.”
Roald Dahl - Charlie and the Chocolate Factory***

INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the learning and teaching, organisation and management of English at West Park Academy.

WHOLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The study of English develops children’s ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of different purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children become empowered to interpret the world around them and to make sense of their experiences; in this sense, English is a tool for both our thinking and learning.

Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama as well as of non-fiction and a range of multi media. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins; ensuring that they are at the heart of the learning experience.

The aims of teaching English are:

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- To enable children to speak with clarity, confidence and expression, and to take account of their audience, purpose and differing situations.
- To encourage children to listen, understand and respond thoughtfully to what they have heard.
- To use phonological awareness to decode and encode words.
- To value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play.
- To develop in pupils an interest in and a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum but also enrich their lives.
- To help the children to develop an understanding that writing is both essential to thinking and learning and enjoyable in its own right.
- 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 pupils the confidence, desire and ability to formulate and express their views and opinions about the world around them both orally and in writing;
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.
- To develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness through reading, writing, speaking and listening.

PLANNING AND ORGANISATION

English underpins all that is taught at West Park Academy. Skills are taught discretely on a daily basis from Reception – Year 6, rehearsed within a context and applied across all subjects.

At West Park Academy we follow the principles set out by the National Curriculum 2014, the Early Years Framework and the identified needs of the children at WPA. This provides the long-term plan and identifies the key objectives in English that are to be taught in each year group; these are then adapted to suit the needs of individuals.

Each year group engages in fiction, non-fiction and poetry learning. All units are based on a carefully chosen high quality text, form of visual literacy or non-fiction outcome. These stimuli are outlined in the document ‘The texts we study and why’ and can be found on the school website.

Bookshelf recommendations for year 1 – 6 include texts that expose children to the five plagues of reading, as set out by Doug Lemov. In key stage one and EYFS, bookshelf texts are familiar to the children to promote re-reading and fluency of familiar stories and poems.

Short term planning identifies the expected outcomes for units of learning and provides details of how lessons are to be taught.

TEACHING ENGLISH

To allow adequate time for English, it is expected that at least 5 hours teaching time will be allocated to English each week, however, if children are using their English skills in other contexts/subjects then this is included within those 5 hours. Spelling is taught for one hour per week and this is split into separate sessions. The discrete teaching of handwriting also sits outside of the 5 hours directed teaching time for English. In each year group, there is time set aside each day to read to children for pleasure and enjoyment.

Children are taught in their own class groups by their own class teacher unless there are exceptional circumstances where a child requires a personalised curriculum.

CROSS CURRICULAR APPLICATION

The skills that children develop in English are rigorously applied in every subject of our curriculum. Expertise in speaking, listening, reading and writing enable children to communicate, research and express themselves in all areas of their school work and for pleasure.

Disciplinary Literacy is taught across the curriculum, enabling children to read, write, speak about, listen to and think conceptually and critically as experts in a certain subject. In short, teaching disciplinary literacy is asking students to 'think, speak, read and write as a historian, scientist, or mathematician', as Alex Quigley describes in Closing the Vocabulary Gap. Disciplinary literacy is fundamental to developing the strong literacy skills that are vital to success at school and beyond.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education and Fundamental British Values

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a core component of the English curriculum at West Park Academy.

The **spiritual development** of children is shown by their use of imagination and creativity when sharing and writing stories. Children's freedom when writing and encouragement to make independent decisions and choices also demonstrates the British value of **individual liberty**. Children are always encouraged to reflect on their work and make changes based on feedback. There is a culture in which enjoyment and fascination to learn about the world around them is fostered in English lessons through the stimuli children are presented with.

Children's **moral development** in English lessons is developed through discussion writing and spoken word debate. There are opportunities set out in the English curriculum which encourage children to offer reasoned views about different subject matter, presenting this in both writing and spoken word form.

One-way in which children's **social development** is fostered is through their engagement in speaking and listening tasks. This involves presenting, debating and performing to an audience. Social development is also linked directly to children's acceptance and engagement with the fundamental **British Values** of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Children's **cultural development** is carefully considered in English through the selection of texts encountered read in each year group and progressively through school. Children meet texts from other cultures alongside those that sit within historical and classical literary contexts (see 'The Texts we Study and Why document). Children are provided with opportunities for democratic voting when selecting stories and poems for pleasure and when applying for positions such as 'Reader Leaders' in upper key stage 2.

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

At our school, we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. When progress falls outside of age-related expectations, children are targeted to catch up through systematic, planned for support using strategies such as: pre-teaching, additional reading and targeted teaching strategies. For any additional intervention in place, small step progress is tracked and the impact measured. Children who are already identified as SEN will have specific targets on their EHC plan or provision map related to English and these are addressed through planned intervention and targeted teaching.

Health and Safety

In their planning of activities, teachers will anticipate likely safety issues. They will also explain the reasons for safety measures and discuss any implications with the children. Children will always be encouraged to consider safety themselves, others and the environment and the resources they use. Where children are to participate in activities outside of the classroom (a theatre trip, for example) risk assessments are carried out prior to the activity, ensuring that the activity is safe and appropriate.

Resources and Displays

English is identified in the whole school development plan, and funding is allocated in response to this. Resources are purchased to meet the requirements of the units of work and the needs of the children.

- The school is well-resourced for English to ensure high quality teaching. The main resources are kept in the large store cupboard in the year 5 and 6 corridor.
- Every class must have an English display which is used as a working wall. This must be updated as appropriate with the children and demonstrate current learning.
- In EYFS and KS1, the alphabet (upper and lower case) must be displayed both inside and outdoors.
- Grammar and spelling rules linked to year group expectations should be displayed and referred to as part of the English working wall.

ASSESSMENT

Formative: Assessment is primarily on-going and formative. Staff observe, question, listen and mark children's work regularly/daily, allowing them to build up a picture of each child's strengths and areas for development. At the end of a unit, the teacher will complete an informal assessment tracker which provides whole class or individual targets. This is used to inform future teaching.

Summative: In years 1, 3, 4 and 5 summative assessment are carried out termly to support teacher assessment. This will involve children completing the NFER or Testbase reading, spelling and grammar assessments. The results will validate the teacher's assessment and support teachers in making accurate judgements of a child's overall performance. Year 2 and 6 will complete separate assessments using practise SAT materials each half term. The English subject leader will work with staff in making final judgements at the end of each half term and to moderate writing. This will form a triangulated approach, looking at children's books, assessment scores and formative assessment notes from the assessment folder.

The summative assessment of writing will take place through writing moderation with colleagues from across the school (and on some occasions with teachers from other schools). These opportunities are planned into the staff meeting calendar and appear at least once every half term.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Marking and feedback (oral and written) will take place throughout and after the lesson. Teachers and support staff are to assess children's understanding of a concept throughout English lessons. Immediate feedback will be given to children during the lesson and if any children do not fully understand the subject matter, teachers should try and work where possible with these children in the lesson.

If children are not secure with a concept at the end of the lesson, it is up to the teacher to decide if whole class teaching is appropriate, or whether small group or 1:1 intervention is required. Where possible, this should take place on the same day as the lesson or first thing the next morning so children have a secure understanding in order to take part in the next lesson.

Marking

- Areas of success linked to the learning objective area are underlined in green and areas for development are underlined in orange.
- Pupils should respond to the areas that are underlined in orange. This should be addressed on the same day or morning after and should be completed before the next lesson. Children complete this work in a sharp pencil.
- Children's responses should be re-marked daily with a tick and 'c' to show it has been corrected and acknowledged by the teacher.
- The best marking and feedback is the dialogue that takes place between teacher and pupil while the task is being completed.
- There should be a balance between high and low level response marking. (See marking and feedback policy).
- Verbal feedback should be signposted with (v/f) and a short annotation or modelled example in the child's book to demonstrate the conversation.
- Any significant support provided to a child in a lesson is marked with an (s).

For further detail see Marking and Feedback Policy.

HOMEWORK

Homework is set by class teachers and is given out weekly focusing on developing key skills. The units of work for each half term will be outlined on enquiry grids to inform parents of the content being covered.

Daily reading at home is a key component of the whole-school homework policy and spelling activities (linked to the rule covered that week) will be sent home on a weekly basis.

Reporting to parents

Parents' Consultation evenings are held termly, in which parents/carers have the opportunity to see their child's books and discuss progress with the class teacher. Areas of achievement and concern are discussed and parents are made aware of how they can further support their child outside of school with their development. During the summer term, parents receive a formal, written report outlining their child's achievements against age related expectations. Class Dojo is also used to regularly provide informal feedback to parents.

MANAGEMENT OF ENGLISH

Monitoring and evaluating

English leader to carry out scrutiny of work and planning on a regular basis and report findings to the Senior Leadership Team. English Leader will carry out observations of lessons and provide feedback and next steps to members of staff where necessary.

Role of the English Lead

- To know the legal requirements of English
- To keep up to date with any changes to English, its teaching, learning, assessment, data analysis, recording and reporting through appropriate literature and professional development activities
- To identify resources needed and oversee their maintenance
- To identify training needs and deliver when and where appropriate
- To ensure continuity, progression and challenge in skills, concepts and knowledge
- To develop an action plan for the forthcoming year using quality evidence and data analysis working closely with the curriculum team
- To promote English through quality displays, visits, and information/workshops for parents
- Report on the progress of English to the Directors of WPA.
- To analyse data and create/adapt the English action plan in response.

Role of the Principal

- To monitor the quality of learning and teaching of English
- To collect data, analyse and use this for continuous improvement and set targets

Role of the class teacher:

- To plan and teach English effectively and enthusiastically, on a daily basis
- To assess, keeping up-to-date records, including marking in line with Marking and Feedback policy.
- To assess children's abilities against the National Curriculum and have a good understanding of progression, setting targets that move learning forward.
- To exploit opportunities for using and applying English skills, both within English lessons and across the curriculum
- To report to parents orally and in writing, regarding their child's ability, progress and next steps in English.

Role of the Trustees

- SATs results are shared, discussed and evaluated with the Trustees of WPA.
- Trustees are kept up to date at teaching and learning meetings on any developments in English.