



WHITEHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

English Policy

English Policy

1. Aims and Objectives (INTENT)

- 1.1 The study of English develops a child's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. Our curriculum aims to enable children to develop expertise in reading, writing and spoken language articulately, creatively and imaginatively, both orally and in the written word. It supports them in being capable of speaking and writing with confidence, fluency and accuracy. The progression in English allows children to develop independence in these skills. Through the study of English they become critical readers of stories, poetry and plays, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. They use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking, listening, reading and writing across a range of different situations. The teaching of English forms a key part in developing our core values of curiosity, independence and aspiration.
- 1.2 At Whitehall the aims of English are:
- to develop children's aspirations of becoming confident, independent writers, readers and critical speakers;
 - to enable children to speak and express themselves clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
 - to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify and follow the main points of what they have heard;
 - to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances, situations and demands;
 - to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language being used;
 - to develop children's confidence at participating in a range of dramatic activities, evaluating their own and others' contributions;
 - to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on grammar, punctuation, spelling and text-level knowledge;
 - to encourage children to become thoughtful, reflective readers through contact with challenging and stimulating texts;
 - to foster an enthusiasm for reading which will develop children as life-long readers;
 - to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in a variety of narrative and non-narrative genres;
 - to develop children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work;
 - to help children to enjoy writing and appreciate its value;
 - Opportunities to take part in reading or writing challenges or year group debates support our core values of aspiration, curiosity and independence.

2 IMPLEMENTATION: KS1 and KS2

- 2.1 English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We follow the new National Curriculum as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.
- 2.2 We structure planning in English in three key phases – long term, medium term and short term. The long term plan gives an overview of the main units of work to be studied over the course of the year. These include elements of fiction, non-fiction and poetry each term. The medium term plan details what will be covered in each week of the term, with references to the grammar, punctuation, spelling and text level objectives. Teachers then plan for each week (short term planning), outlining the specific learning intentions to be taught in that week, the activities that will be used to facilitate this and the resources necessary.
- 2.3 Whitehall currently uses Curriculum Maestro to support the planning and delivery of the English curriculum. The school uses the TT Education Progression guides to ensure children make effective progression through the English pillars of reading, writing and spoken language. Curriculum leaders support teachers use their professional judgement to ensure that the most appropriate tasks are chosen to teach each learning intention. Supplementary textbooks are used to provide additional opportunities for the teaching of grammar, punctuation, spelling and comprehension.
- 2.4 Whitehall uses a systematic, synthetic phonics programme, ALS. This ensures a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, guided and shared reading, and writing throughout the school. Teachers and Teaching Assistants are trained in the ALS model of delivery for these aspects of the English curriculum. INSET for new and existing teachers is updated each year.
- 2.5 Shared Reading is the session in which teachers introduce new teaching points or strategies for reading. Teachers explicitly model the strategies used by good readers with a focus on one key strategy. The whole class joins together with the teacher to chorally read short sections, increasing the length and speed as they progress through KS2. The teacher leads discussion of the application of the chosen strategy. This teaching is then re-enforced during the subsequent guided reading sessions. There will usually be one shared reading session each week in KS2 and KS1.
- 2.6 Guided Reading is the main opportunity for teachers to hear children read and assess their progress towards meeting objectives. Children work in groups of no more than six, having a Guided Reading session with a teacher or TA. This is usually done weekly, although as children reach the higher stages of reading competence in the Upper Phase, it may only be fortnightly. Guided Reading texts are stored in the main corridor for teachers to access. These books are levelled according to the Reading Recovery levels and cross-levelled to match the National Book banded

Reading levels. In Year 1, teachers also use phonic decodable guided reading books, matched to the appropriate phonic phase that children are working at.

- 2.7 Reading books are sent home and parents are encouraged to support their child at home. Workshops are held every year to help parents to understand how best they can do this at each stage of their child's primary years.
- 2.8 We plan and deliver teaching of English to build upon prior learning, with consolidation, reinforcement and progression of basic skills throughout the school. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and make progress, being continually challenged to achieve their best.

3 English Curriculum Planning: Foundation Stage

- 3.1 We begin teaching of English in the Foundation Stage classes. In both Nursery and Reception, the children's English work is related to the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum guidance, which underpins the curriculum planning for children from birth to five years of age. This is divided into the areas of Communication and Language, which includes Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking; and Literacy, which includes Reading and Writing. Some English objectives are also specified in PSED (Personal Social and Emotional Development) and Physical Development.
- 3.2.1 Children's development in English is carefully planned in the Foundation Stage through structured, adult-led focus lessons and activities and through cross-curricular learning and provision. The teaching of phonics begins in the Foundation Stage with a daily lesson, taught following the ALS model.
- 3.2.2 Throughout the Foundation Stage children are given opportunity to develop their English skills, knowledge and understanding through play. Spoken language is central to the Foundation curriculum and all adults model vocabulary effectively. This ensure all children are able to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy, learn about, and use words and text in a range of situations.

4 IMPLEMENTATION: Teaching and Learning Styles

- 4.1 A variety of teaching and learning styles are used in our delivery of the English curriculum, with the principal aim being to develop children's knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence in English. We do this primarily through at least one

daily lesson which may include whole-class and group teaching. In some activities children will work with others of a similar ability and in some activities a mixed-ability grouping is more appropriate and valuable for learning.

4.2 **Differentiation and Adaptation**

In all classes there are children of differing abilities and with differing experiences of speaking and using English at home. **Therefore, it is necessary to adapt all tasks to ensure equal learning opportunities for all children.** Teachers employ a variety of teaching methods and styles to provide suitable activities and learning situations for the children. These may include such things as: teacher modelling or instruction; paired and small group activities using drama, discussion and role-play; investigation and feedback; writing for a purpose and reading in a variety of situations. We also acknowledge that children may have preferred learning styles and aim to incorporate activities to stimulate and support visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. These may be identified on weekly plans.

5 **Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas**

5.2 The acquisition of skills in English- in reading, writing, speaking and listening- underpins a child's ability to make progress in nearly all other areas of the curriculum. In order for a child to fulfil their true potential, it is vital that they have opportunity to maximise their progress in English.

5.3 **Mathematics**

For children to be able to develop mathematical skills they need to be able to read and interpret written problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They will encounter graphs, charts and tables from which they will need to extract information. They are encouraged to vocalise their mathematical thinking and explain the processes used to solve problems.

5.4 **Science**

As children develop their scientific skills they need to be able to articulate their observations and findings and use appropriate technical vocabulary and language for recording their scientific investigations and evaluations. As with Mathematics, they will encounter data in a variety of forms from which they will need to extract information.

5.5 **Computing**

The use of technology is now a vital and intrinsic part of our society and reading is an intrinsic part of using technology effectively – being able to read and interpret instructions, research information and communicate in a wide variety of situations in the modern world. Children are encouraged to learn how to use their language skills to access the technology available to them as they progress through the school and onwards.

5.6 **Foundation Subjects**

Within the range of Foundation Subjects (French, Music, R.E., Geography, History, Art and Design and Design Technology), children will use English in all its forms. Many of these subjects will include discussion, along with reading for information and writing in a variety of different genres. Teachers try to ensure use of cross-curricular opportunities for writing.

5.7 Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

Within PSHE children are encouraged to formulate and articulate their opinions on a wide range of topics, developing the skills of both listener and speaker. This may be as part of discrete PSHE lessons, circle times and daily classroom situations.

5.8 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)

The teaching of English supports the social development of our children through the way we expect them to work with each other in lessons. We group children so that they learn to work collaboratively with one another, and we give them the chance to discuss their ideas and results. This also includes the wider aspects of moral and social awareness such as Fairtrade and EMAS.

6 Teaching English to children with special needs

6.1 At Whitehall Primary School we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to all pupils, whatever their ability. We provide learning opportunities that are matched to the ability of children at each stage of their progression through the school. Early identification of children who may experience difficulties in the acquisition of English skills is a key factor in being able to provide the necessary support. A wide variety of interventions are used to address any learning difficulties and may include in-class support, 1:1 support, or small group withdrawal to focus on such elements as phonics, handwriting, grammar and punctuation, inference or speech. Effective pupil tracking through formative and summative assessment and Pupil Progress meetings helps to ensure that these children are identified. Specific targets are given for children who are on the SEND register. Children who are identified as being academically 'gifted' in aspects of English are also provided with extension activities and enrichment opportunities. These may be highlighted on weekly plans.

6.2 Whitehall School aims to provide appropriate support for children with specific learning, physical or emotional needs. Teachers make provision for children with dyslexia and receive advice and training in making their classrooms and daily routine 'dyslexia-friendly' as made explicit in the Dyslexia Friendly Policy.

7 Teaching English to children with EAL

7.1 English should be achievable and accessible to all. Many of our children start at Whitehall with little or no spoken English. Support is given to children and their families where English is a second language and this starts with the first visit to the family before the child starts school. Additional EAL support is provided in the Nursery for one day each week as appropriate. Some members of staff are fluent in community languages

which enables extra support to be given where necessary. Throughout their time at Whitehall, the progress of children with EAL is closely monitored and where appropriate, extra support and intervention will be given, in class or individually.

8 Resources

- 8.1 Whitehall Primary School is a very well-resourced school and there is plenty of provision for the effective teaching and learning of English. As new initiatives and requirements are introduced we aim to acquire the necessary resources to deliver these as quickly as possible.
- 8.2 All classrooms have a range of age-appropriate dictionaries and text-books to support the teaching of basic skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, comprehension and writing. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, a range of practical apparatus to support early language acquisition in all its aspects, as well as the structured teaching of synthetic phonics, is available.
- 8.3 Reading books are largely located in the corridors and organised by reading stage. The main core of reading scheme books was Oxford Reading Tree with supplementary material from Project X and Collins Big Cats, this has now been widened to include a wider range of reading materials. There is a good base of phonic based reading material to support the teaching of phonics throughout the school. These books are regularly checked to identify where stock needs replacing or updating. Each class also has a range of books, in a small class library, within their classrooms, to encourage reading for pleasure.
- 8.4 Further fiction books to enrich and extend a child's reading in KS1 and KS2 are located in the school library. The library also contains a range of non-fiction books which are organised according to the Dewey system. Each class in KS2 has a timetabled slot during playtime where children may come to choose books from the library. Big Books for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are located near the library or in the FS corridor.
- 8.5 Children have access to the internet and word processing skills through the Computing Hub and each classroom also has a computer, laptop and an interactive whiteboard available for use.

9. Assessment and recording

At Whitehall Primary School we recognise that regular and accurate assessment lies at the heart of promoting learning and raising standards of attainment. The assessment procedures within our school include:

- Making ongoing assessments and responding appropriately to pupils during 'day-to-day' teaching. These 'immediate' responses are mainly verbal and are not normally recorded. Annotations are made on short term plans to evaluate lessons and to inform future planning. Written feedback in books is given in response to the Learning Intention and success criteria for the lesson;
- Using knowledge of pupils drawn from ongoing pupil tracking records
- Adjusting planning and teaching within units in response to pupils' performance;
- Marking in line with the school's marking policy; using blue and red marking dots against each lesson's Learning Intention and making comments on children's work where necessary;
- For the Foundation Stage, continuous, on-going observations and assessments take place, using the Early Years Outcomes Document through Nursery and Reception, and the Foundation Stage Profile at the end of Reception.
- In KS1 and KS2 optional assessment tests for each year group have been purchased and support teachers' summative assessment data.
- The National SATs (Year 6) are externally marked. In Key Stage 1 (Year 2) the National SATs are administered and marked by the class teacher with some external moderation to ensure consistency and accuracy. External moderation of Year 6 writing takes place some years, as decided by the LA.
- Teachers in all year groups moderate reading and writing judgements regularly. Moderation also takes place across other schools within our development group.
- The Foundation Stage is moderated by the LA in two areas of their curriculum, every four years.

10 Responses to children's work

- 10.1 At Whitehall Primary School we recognise the importance of responding to children's work, whether orally or in writing. We seek to encourage children by highlighting positive achievements and suggesting future targets for development. Verbal and written praise is given and work shared with other children who are encouraged to value and respect the work of others. Children may also receive house points or achievement certificates to acknowledge their effort. Effort is valued along with attainment. Displays of children's work may also be used where appropriate. Children's work is formally shared with parents at Parents' Evenings but may also be shared informally at other times.

11 Impact: Monitoring and review

- 11.1 Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching of English is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team and the English Curriculum Leaders. It may take place in the following ways:
- Learning walks
 - Reviewing marking and feedback
 - Planning scrutiny
 - Book scrutiny
 - Pupil interviews
 - Lesson observations
 - Staff feedback

12. Staff Development

Teachers are offered a vast range of opportunities to develop their literacy and their teaching of literacy skills. This includes:

- Staff INSET days
- Local authority training and courses
- Monitoring sessions for staff to discuss and compare samples of children's work in order to ensure consistency of marking and levelling;
- Moderating of aspects of English across the school's Development Group, with meetings taking place termly at different host schools;
- Support for colleagues in the teaching of English from the English Curriculum Leaders (who are informed about the current developments in the subject, and facilitate in-house and external training where appropriate);
- Regular lesson observations made by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or English Curriculum Leaders to ensure that standards of Quality First Teaching are being maintained and identify where further support or training may be necessary;
- Observation of Guided Reading lessons and monitoring of folders by the ALS leader.

13. Link Governor

The named link governor, Julie Nesbitt, is responsible for:

- Monitoring the impact of the subject across the school and on pupils
- Monitoring teacher workload and professional development
- Ensuring subject action plans are suitable
- Monitoring the quality of resources
- Keeping a track of pupil and parent engagement with the subject
- Keeping up to date with the curriculum (what's taught, why it's taught, and how it's taught)

14. Links With Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually with consultations made if amendments are necessary.

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Appendix A

Reading

The ability to read is fundamental to being able to make progress and fulfil potential in all areas of the curriculum. At Whitehall Primary School a high level of importance and funding is given to having the appropriate reading material for children to experience and enjoy. Below is a brief guide to how the system for the organisation of reading books and development of reading is structured at Whitehall.

- The main reading books used throughout the school covers a range of text types
- This comprises a central core of progressive readers, both fiction and non-fiction, from wordless books up to Stage 16+ for fluent, confident readers who are nearly ready to read freely. Through Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, a large proportion of these books are phonic based to link with the teaching of synthetic phonics. Some of these books have also been introduced for their particular ability to motivate reluctant readers and appeal to boys.
- At Whitehall we use the National 'Book Banding' by colours for our 'take-home' reading books in KS1 and EYFS. Reading books are given a numbered and coloured sticker relating to the stage of the book. This makes it easy for parents to follow the progression their child is making. Guided Reading books are levelled according to Reading Recovery levels and cross-levelled to National book banded levels.
- Children read a selection of books at each stage, incorporating some fiction and non-fiction at each stage. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and for children making slower progress into Key Stage 2, a larger number of these books are likely to be heavily phonetic in content, although it is recognised that not all children will respond positively to learning phonetically and may need another approach. Children will build fluency of phrasing, expression and vocabulary in natural language structures through books they can phonically decode.
- We use the PM Benchmarking system to ensure best match of book to child. This system allows a teacher or TA to administer an individual test to a child to help ascertain the child's readiness to move to the next stage or confirm whether they are reading at an appropriate level. Benchmarking covers technical reading skills, along with comprehension of text and allows for analysis of a child's specific reading needs. Benchmark tests should ideally be carried out at least twice a year for children in Foundation Stage and Middle Phase, and at least once a year for children in Upper Phase, or as necessary to make accurate assessments. For children who are reading confidently at a level higher than Reading Recovery level 30, Benchmarking will not provide a suitable assessment and teacher judgement will need to be used. The Benchmarking kits are shared between year groups;
- As children begin their reading journey through the school, they will have a 'Reading Diary' where parents and carers can record the reading undertaken at home. This home-school communication is vital in keeping some record of the reading experiences and 'reading miles' gained. This can also help identify and monitor children who will need additional reading support at school;
- From Foundation Stage through to Year 2, all children have a daily session of systematic synthetic phonics teaching, taught to the whole class, in line with the

ALS scheme. Many resources, such as Phonics Bug and Oxford Owl, which can be accessed at home, are available to support this;

- Parents are invited into school for workshops to help them understand ways in which they can support their child and listen to them effectively at home;
- Children are heard to read by their teacher in Guided Reading sessions and children who are in need of extra support may be heard by a TA in addition to this. A wide range of Guided Reading texts is available in the main corridor, Reading Recovery and Oxford Reading Tree levelled for both fiction and non-fiction. Some poetry and playscripts are also available. As a teacher plans a session for a group, their plans should be printed and stored in the pack for other teachers to use, if appropriate.
- As part of our aim to promote and develop reading for pleasure, we have a range of 'Special Selection' books in each Upper Phase classroom which include books of different styles and genres that children may not otherwise have access to and which can be enjoyed in a single session, or 'dipped into'. Children in each class should be given frequent opportunity for sessions where everyone in class is reading or sharing books. This is particularly important in developing a child's ability to develop sustained reading skills;
- Teachers are expected to read to their children, providing an opportunity for them to enjoy being immersed and engrossed in a story over time, without the requirement of analysing the book in some way as part of an English lesson. Through this, we aim to foster a child's love of reading which will help them become lifelong readers for pleasure;

Appendix B

Writing

Being able to write coherent and cogent texts in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes is an important skill for children to acquire in order to equip them for life beyond school. The teaching of writing skills takes many forms, some of which are detailed below:

- The school uses the twinkl handwriting scheme alongside Penpals resources. This begins in the Foundation Stage with pre-writing skills and progresses up to Year 6 so that there is continuity and uniformity throughout the school;
- Some children who have SEND may receive extra support with physical writing skills (using specific practical writing aids where appropriate) and structure of writing;
- Basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught both as discrete lessons and as implicit factors of independent writing. Where skills have been taught in a discrete lesson, teachers will provide opportunity for these to be practised in independent writing tasks;
- Children will do fortnightly writing tasks, either as part of English lessons or linked to cross-curricular tasks. Their writing is assessed in line with the end of year group expectation statements and children made aware of how they can develop and improve their skills;
- Writing obviously forms an integral part of many other areas of the curriculum and children will have the opportunity to practise skills learnt, to write for different purposes. Standards of presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are expected to be maintained in all areas, not just in discrete English lessons, and work is marked accordingly in line with the school's marking policy. Dictation supports children's fluency in transcription skills particularly in the earlier years. Guidelines are given to staff as to expectations of work and regular monitoring takes place;
- Moderation takes place both within year groups and phases, and within the school's Development Group;
- Where children may be struggling with accurate spelling, not every spelling mistake will be corrected; the focus will be on words that the child is expected to know at their current stage of attainment;
- Spellings, according to age and ability, are sent home every week to learn, and tested in school. Spellings will be taken from the relevant programme of study so may be phonetically linked or chosen for etymological reasons. They will also cover the expected word list for the year group;
- English homework is given to reinforce aspects of work covered during the week and to practise basic skills of technical English;
- Children have access to word processing through the Computing Hub and classroom computers, ipads or laptops. Written work for display purposes may be word-processed or handwritten, depending on the suitability for the task.