Heathrow Primary School Literacy Policy

Rationale:

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

At School we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this is necessarily cross-curricular and a constant through-out school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (p10 National Curriculum)

We are an inclusive school; we set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We use one to one support, small groups and cross-phase work to help with this. We plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with disabilities outlined in the SEND code of practice. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that 'pupils…who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised' (p13)

1. Spoken Language:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10). They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

1.1. Our aims and connected provision:

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We understand that pupils need to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose. Listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions. We are constantly providing children with opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and using this as a way to assess their depth of understanding.

Ways in which we support this rationale include:

- Activities which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate
- Encouraging reading and talk about books using strategies such as David Crystal's Grammar mantra/Chambers 'Tell me Grid'/visualisation/response to illustration
- School Plays/class assemblies
- Class debates
- Weekly celebration assemblies
- Events within the community
- School Council
- Talk partners
- 'Book Club' and whole class reading sessions
- Hooks within the English lesson such as Conscience Alley, hot-seating, drama etc
- Editing and response partners

2. Reading:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (p13) Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13). Schools are expected to have library facilities and support and encourage reading at home.

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

Intention

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. At Heathrow Primary School it is our intention that our pupils foster a lifelong love of books and reading throughout their primary school life and way beyond. We immerse our pupils in the wonders of quality texts to instil a love for reading, a passion for discovery and a confidence to explore their imagination.

The school uses a variety of reading schemes to enable the children to access and read a wide range of texts. These include: Take One Book (High quality texts), Project X, Oxford Reading Scheme, alongside classic and modern literature. The aim of this is to ensure that our pupils have access to a wealth of quality reading material that motivates them to want to read.

Implementation

We have a clear, consistent, whole school approach to reading. Reading is closely linked with writing – the two activities reinforce each other. Children become successful readers by using a range of strategies to get to the meaning of the text. We believe literate children should read with confidence, fluency, expression and clear understanding. In order to achieve this they need to be taught the full range of reading strategies, including:

- phonic knowledge (visual information)
- grammatical knowledge (structural information)
- word recognition and graphic knowledge (visual information)
- contextual knowledge (meaning)

During Book Club sessions, teachers teach these skills and monitor pupils' reading to allow them to:

- Develop an interest in words and their meanings, developing a varied and rich vocabulary.
- Read a range of genres in fiction and poetry.
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- Develop their own powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.
- Discuss books with reference to author, illustrator, genre, theme and characters and express personal responses with increasingly fluency and confidence.
- See the reading process being modelled by their teacher and participate in activities with the whole class, as a member of a smaller group or individually.
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading.
- Show an interest in books, read with enjoyment and evaluate to justify their preferences.

Impact

We strive to ensure that our children's attainment is in line or exceeds their potential when we consider the varied starting points of all our children. We measure this using a range of materials, whilst considering the age-related expectations for each year group. We intend that the impact of our reading curriculum will ensure our pupils are academically prepared for life beyond primary school and throughout their education journey.

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics (RWI) in Reception and Key Stage One, regular reading to adults in school, 'Reading Buddies' and incentives to read at home.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, library visits, book corners/areas and high-quality picture books to facilitate discussions.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using Reading Buddies, quiet reading time, Book Tasting sessions, Book Club sessions, listening to an adult read during English lessons and at the end of the day during story time.
- 'READ as a Writer, WRITE as a Reader' is our whole school quality text-based approach to English lessons.
- The use of high-quality books within the reading curriculum is at the heart of Heathrow Primary's successful approach in engaging and supporting children to be motivated and independent readers. If the children enjoy reading, they read more frequently and become better readers.
- We have designed an English curriculum that is centred around classic, modern and high-quality picture books, as well as new and upcoming authors and texts. We are continually adding to our rich selection of texts so that children are immersed in exploring the way authors use language, to develop the writer within themselves. There is a wealth of

research to say that one of the most effective ways to becoming a powerful writer is to be an avid reader; to unpick language from books and use this as a model for quality writing.

- 'Book Fairs' take place twice yearly and provide the school with the opportunity to buy new texts for all year groups and expose children to a range of genres and authors.
- We offer an afterschool club called 'Reading Gladiators', which is designed to meet the rigorous requirements of the reading framework. Reading Gladiators™ helps prepare pupils for these demands, immersing children in quality, challenging and varied books while fostering reading for enjoyment.
- Reading Gladiators™ is designed to provide the challenge to support higher attaining readers. Furthermore, it creates reading advocates within a school who inspire other children to become aspirational readers.
- Topic boxes from the library service are sent at the beginning of each term – these include a range of fiction and non-fiction books centred around each year group's new topic.
- Library Corners are topped up every term with quality books from ILS displaying a range of genres, new authors and reflecting realities.
- In Key Stage 2, the progress made in Key Stage 1 is built upon. The focus is on developing higher order reading skills such as inference and deduction, skimming and scanning and the ability to read texts critically. Where necessary, specific phonic support is used to develop pupil's reading skills through the use of interventions. Pupils continue to participate in guided reading sessions daily.
- Class sets of texts are available to enable teachers to have whole class reading sessions during 'Take One Book' sessions.
- 'Take One Book' Book Club sessions run from Year 3-Year 6 using high quality books and planning recommended by CLPE. RWI programme is in place from Reception to Year 2
- Reading for pleasure is developed through story time at the end of the school day; access to high quality books through 'Book Tasting' sessions, Reading Gladiators, World Book Day and creative curriculum weeks which provide fun ways for pupils to explore texts.

3. Writing:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

3.1 Our aims and connected provision:

- We teach grammar as a separate lesson where appropriate.
- We correct grammatical error orally/ written work (where appropriate) to avoid future misconceptions.

- We have a systematic approach, we revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas from phonics, through to grammar and spelling.
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice.
- We provide writing frames to support the least confident.
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising to ensure that children are exposed to genuine authorial processes. Children use grammar stations, editing and response partners throughout the school.
- We cover a wide range of genres and teach skills that support children to write purposefully.
- We mark independent, assessed pieces of work in-depth and set targets with the pupil (at least once per half term).
- We use checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively.
- We use slow writing and structure strips in lessons to ensure children are confidently using grammar and punctuation skills.
- We encourage joined, cursive handwriting to support spelling and speed.
- We use drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view.
- There is support for pupils with learning and motor difficulties.
- Our spelling test sentences model how to use grammar and punctuation within our writing effectively.
- Differentiated response to marking (green for growth) enables pupils to reflect on their writing and make further progress through next steps.
- We provide challenge for all children within writing lessons.
- When necessary, meetings can be held with parents to help them support their child.

4. Vocabulary Development:

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' (p11) since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active
- Progressive/ systematic
- Making links from known words
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning/etymology/morphology
- Include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations
- Subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words

4.1 Our aims and connected provision:

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:

- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learn
- Display of key words linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- Using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar programmes
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary has proved to impact positively upon learning
- Word of the week boards in every classroom.

5. Planning and Assessment:

5.1 Planning:

- Long term overviews can be found online for Key Stages One and Two
- Pupils are taught in mixed Key Stage Classes and planning shows differentiation by age and ability
- Medium term (half –termly) planning is stored centrally.
- English is planned for separately to other subjects using agreed pro-forma.
- Short term planning is flexible allowing for assessment for learning after each session/ group of sessions
- Pupils may be streamed by ability for some sessions/ types of homework/ support
- Pupils entitled to Pupil Premium funding will be given additional English support which is tracked and monitored termly
- Pupils with EAL will be given additional English support which is tracked and monitored termly

5.2 Assessment:

- Staff assess pupils' learning during and as part of every session, they adapt their practice accordingly
- Assessments of Reading Comprehension ability are carried out, tracked and monitored at least termly
- Writing is assessed and this is tracked termly – extra support is offered to any child that is identified.
- Staff attend moderating sessions within their phase groups, whole school sessions and with other local schools.
- End of Key Stage Assessments are analysed by the Co-ordinator and Assessment Co-ordinator and feed into the school SEF, development plan and performance management

6. Specific groups:

- Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly, pupils who are slow moving or making little or no progress are discussed and plans made
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium are given additional English support and this is monitored for effectiveness termly
- Pupils with EAL are given additional support in all aspects of English
- Pupils who are gifted and talented receive additional support, differentiated curriculum and may be entered for Level 6 tests at the end of Key Stage Two
- Pupils with SEN will have English based targets on their SSP. These are reviewed termly

7. Homework

- All children are expected to read at home and parents sign a Home School Link Book.
- Children have weekly spellings to learn and are asked to use their new words within sentences to show better understanding.
- Homework grids have a range of writing tasks appropriate to what the children have been learning.
- Half term homework includes a variety of writing and reading competitions to engage children.

8. Conclusion

It is our aim that through careful implementation of the guidelines set out in this policy, pupils at Heathrow Primary have the opportunity to develop confidence and competence in their use of all aspects of the English language, a genuine love of literature and the ability to communicate successfully in many different ways.

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