

**Norton CEVC Primary School**  
**English Policy**  
*Learn Believe Achieve*  
*Hand in hand with God and each other*



### **Introduction**

Our vision, 'Learn, believe and achieve: hand in hand with God and each other', is reflected fully in our provision for teaching and learning in English. It is our intention when teaching the English curriculum that our pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become lifelong learners and linguists. Our pupils receive a well-rounded learning experience when reading, writing, speaking and listening which will equip them with the fundamental tools to achieve at Norton and beyond. It is our intention to immerse pupils in the wonders of quality texts to instil a love for reading, a passion for discovery and a confidence to explore their imagination. All children will have the belief that they can succeed.

English is a core subject of the National Curriculum and a prerequisite for educational and social progress as it underpins the work undertaken in all other areas of the curriculum. The acquisition of language skills is of the utmost importance to us here at Norton. Confidence in basic language skills enables children to communicate creatively and imaginatively, preparing them for their future journey through education and beyond. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations. The English curriculum at Norton CEVC Primary School also provides many opportunities for children to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, from Reception to Year 6.

### **Aims**

The aims of the teaching of English are 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.

### **Teaching and Learning**

At Norton CEVC Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning approaches in our English lessons, as recommended by the National Curriculum 2014. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding. We use a range of research-informed pedagogical principles, including EEF Guidance and the Walkthrus CPD programme, to ensure teaching and learning is effective.

Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and are able to support their work with a variety of resources, such as computer technology, dictionaries, thesauri, accessibility aids and helpsheets. Children use computing in English lessons where it enhances their learning, for example, in researching, drafting or publishing a task. Learning is usually inspired by themes which interlink different curriculum areas and we encourage children to apply and integrate their learning in these other areas into their reading and writing. In all classes, children have a wide range of abilities so teaching is adaptive. This is achieved through the use of scaffolding, and the way support is deployed and provided.

### **English Curriculum Planning**

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum 2014. In reception through to Year 6, children are taught English within their classes. Through adaptive teaching and the support of teaching assistants, all children will receive high quality teaching and appropriate support in order for every child to reach their

full potential. Children may receive additional support if necessary outside of the English lessons, and this will include children who receive support for a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND).

Curriculum planning shows the development of skills and knowledge throughout the school. We refer to the National Curriculum 2014 statutory requirements for each year group and sometimes include the non-statutory guidance to help with planning. 'Learning Intentions' and 'Success Criteria' are shared with the class in order that the children understand what they are trying to achieve and how to do so. For spelling, grammar and punctuation we refer to the statutory appendices in the National Curriculum 2014. Grammar and punctuation objectives are broken down into year groups and are introduced, revisited and built upon systematically. In Foundation Stage and Year 1, children follow the Read Write Inc programme to support the teaching of phonics, reading and writing. Children are assessed and grouped accordingly, using Read Write Inc resources, and are closely monitored as they progress.

### **The Foundation Stage**

Children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We give all children the opportunity 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.

### **Approaches to Phonics**

The teaching of phonic skills is embedded within English teaching in each class. Additional provision is made each day in discrete Read, Write Inc sessions in the Foundation Stage and Year 1. These comprise of learning different graphemes, focusing on oral and aural phonological skills and sight vocabulary. During these sessions, children are also explicitly shown how to apply their developing skills to their writing. All children are grouped in accordance to their individual needs and are in phase appropriate groups. The delivery of phonics after Year 1 is through intervention for those pupils who did not achieve the pass score in the Year 1 Phonic screening, those who lack confidence or those at risk of failing to maintain progress.

### **Approaches to speaking and listening**

Opportunities for speaking and listening permeate every session. A range of teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We aim for children to be able to speak clearly, fluently and coherently, to be able to listen attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy, and to contribute to group discussions effectively. We achieve this by:

- giving our children confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value their conversations and opinions. We also encourage a respect for the views of others.
- being aware that as adults, we provide a model of speakers and listeners in our day-to-day interactions with them and with other adults in our school.
- helping them to articulate their ideas and provide purposes and audiences for talk within a range of formal and informal situations and in individual, partner, group and class contexts.
- by providing opportunities to perform to a larger audience, in assemblies and productions, where children's efforts and skills are acknowledged by staff, parents, carers, visitors and peers.
- by providing a range of experiences where children can work collaboratively and participate in opportunities to reflect on, talk and explore real and imagined situations through role play, hot-seating, drama and discussions.
- by developing the children's ability to listen with attention and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and, where necessary, asking and responding to questions appropriately.

Our bespoke curriculum maps National Curriculum Speaking and Listening objectives across the units of study for each year group in English, supplemented by a supporting progression of skills.

### **Approaches to Reading**

Pupils have opportunities to undertake guided, shared and independent reading tasks throughout the school. A diverse range of group reading books and a staged reading scheme are available. From midway through Year 2, children enjoy whole class Guided Reading sessions; the structure of these sessions follows EEF recommendations and prioritises discrete vocabulary learning, fluency practice, and a graduated approach to comprehension. We do not use any one published scheme to teach reading,

instead we believe that it is important to provide pupils with a selection of reading books and experiences from different genres and subject matter, therefore we operate using 'book bands' in line with Oxford Reading Tree, complemented by thematic books.

Strong readers in Key Stage 1 and 2 are signed up to the Accelerated Reader Programme. Accelerated Reader is an online platform that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. The children pick a book at or around their own level and read it at their own pace. When finished, they take a short quiz on the computer. These quizzes provide many metrics for monitoring a child's progress through their independent reading habits. Accelerated Reader is not a 'teaching' tool: however, it gives both children and teachers purposeful feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help the child set targets and direct ongoing reading practice.

Staff will use the Star Reading Test to assess the reading levels of those on the Accelerated Reader platform. The Star Reading test is part of Accelerated Reader and uses intuitive algorithms, whereby questions continually adjust to the child's responses. If the child's response to a question is correct, the difficulty level of the next question is increased. If the child misses a question, the difficulty level of the next question is reduced. The test uses multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 20 minutes. The test provides many useful analytics which complement those derived from Accelerated Reader, but also allocates each child a ZPD level range (Zone of Proximal Development) which they can use to inform their selection of books at an appropriate level of challenge.

Staff are deployed throughout the school to work with children in order to improve their fluency, intonation, decoding skills and comprehension. Home reading is encouraged and is an integral part of the child's development. In order to have strong communication between teachers and parents/carers, each child has a reading record where both the staff and parents can write comments about how the child is progressing with his/her reading. At the end of each day, children settle down for a story from their teachers – this helps us to model good reading and introduce children to a wide range of authors and adventures, but moreover, and very simply, to lose ourselves in a book for those precious moments each day! Our recently refurbished library is well-stocked with a very diverse range of titles, including many current titles which reflect children's ever-evolving tastes. We keep the library stock up to date and our mission is to ensure representation for all children: every child at Norton School should be able to see themselves in a book. Pupils are encouraged to undertake the annual county library reading challenge.

### **Approaches to Writing**

To develop our children as writers we:

- inspire children, from the earliest stage, to be writers who have ideas that they will want to communicate.
- encourage children to build on writing skills they have acquired and their knowledge of print from their environment.
- ensure that a variety of high-quality texts (including visual texts) and other stimuli inspire and provide models for good writing.
- provide experiences where the children can acquire confidence and a positive attitude to writing.
- develop and sustain writing skills by providing opportunities for children to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- use guided writing sessions to model writing skills, teaching children how to compose, amend and revise their writing.
- teach children to become critical readers of their own writing through the use of metacognitive approaches, in order that children plan, monitor and evaluate their progress and can edit and improve.
- teach grammar and punctuation in the context of children's own writing, as well as through discrete lessons.
- teach children to develop their ability to organise and present imaginative and/or factual writing and poetry in different ways.
- teach strategies for spelling to enable children to become confident and competent spellers.

The school follows the CUSP Spelling programme which enables the children to recap on the previous year's spelling concepts as well as introducing new concepts. This programme complements the National Curriculum programmes of study for spelling. Children in Years 2-6 take home a linked activity

sheet, to support their learning in class. Those who have been identified as requiring additional spellings support receive additional support.

### **Handwriting**

Handwriting begins in the EYFS with mark-making and patterns. All pupils are given access to a wide range of writing tools and mediums to practise the early fine motor skills. The needs of left-handed children or those with physical difficulties are also taken into consideration and where necessary accommodated with resources or specific intervention. Pupils are encouraged to develop fluent lines of correctly orientated letters from an early age and emergent writing is encouraged. Correct posture, pencil grip and positioning of paper or books are also emphasised during these sessions. Letter formation and handwriting is taught and modelled using a range of resources. The national expectation at the end of year 6 is that children will join their handwriting. Staff use Nelson Handwriting scheme to ensure children reach this point as soon as possible. As the children move up through the school they are encouraged to think carefully about the presentation of their work and to develop clear, legible and fluent handwriting. It is hoped that most children will be able to write in pen in class by Year 5.

### **Resources**

There is a budget for English and the Library. The school is well-resourced with a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of other support materials as well as well-stocked shelves of age-appropriate fiction. In addition to fiction titles, the library contains a wide selection of non-fiction books and graphic novels to support children's individual reading and research skills.

### **Assessment and Recording**

Teachers assess children's work in English in different ways for different purposes. Informal short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback (given in the moment of writing) helps guide children's progress. Teachers use different strategies, such as 'green pen marking', to show where pupils need to edit their work and children respond using a purple pen. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own or their peers' work, and use the purple pen to edit and improve their writing in guided sessions independently. Teachers and support staff model these processes and draw attention to instances where the explicit teaching of metacognitive thinking is both necessary and appropriate.

Each term, every child in the school takes part in the same independent writing challenge, and these tasks alternate between fiction and non-fiction. Children are guided towards a theme or purpose for their writing and provided with some visual stimuli and a chance to discuss or plan some ideas for this. Children enjoy these tasks as they offer an opportunity for them to use their own ideas and imagination to make their writing their own. Teachers assess these pieces to determine individual action points or whole-class areas for development as they see fit. These tasks are moderated periodically so that a picture of writing across the school can be taken, and so teachers can truly understand the journey that the children take as writers from early years to the end of Key Stage 2.

For reading, in addition to the STAR reading test, pupils undertake PiRA assessments termly towards the end of each term. Data from the PiRA assessments is used to assess pupils' summatively as well as formatively, showing progress between points in time, as well as question-level analysis of curriculum areas. Additional teaching assistants and a team of reading volunteers are also deployed to ensure children, particularly those who are vulnerable to falling behind their peers, are supported daily with their reading. We maintain a list of these readers and this is updated termly or as applicable.

Children are given teacher-assessed general assessment levels for English Reading and Writing each half term, which are used to monitor attainment and progress at class, individual and whole school levels. Teachers make long-term assessments towards the end of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments, they are able to set targets for the next school year, and to summarise the progress of each child before reporting it to parents and carers. The next teacher then uses these long-term assessments as the planning basis for the new school year. Y1 children sit the national Phonics Screening Test, and Y2 and Y6 take part in Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) in the summer term.

### **Integrating Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural opportunities in the English Curriculum**

The English curriculum at Norton CEVC Primary School provides several opportunities for children to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, from Reception to Year 6. Some of these ways are outlined below. From their earliest days at school, teaching staff aim to inspire awe and a love of learning to encourage writing and reading. Class libraries, and the school library, contain numerous texts from other cultures, thus giving pupils the opportunity to compare their own culture and community with those which are different. This assurance that children will explore diverse texts from a range of settings also provides opportunity for children to address wider issues, for example, inclusion, loss, war and racism. Furthermore, children encounter a wide range of texts in their reading comprehension and class stories which address and provide opportunities to challenge further discriminatory issues and stereotypes with regards to age and gender. As children read a wide variety of stories from different authors, they are given the opportunity to develop empathy for characters and understand their feelings and emotions in the text. Pupils are also encouraged to make reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas that occur in texts, and discuss them, both in a written and oral manner. When discussing such issues, children are encouraged to listen to the views of others and express their own respectfully and with clarity. In Key Stage 2, classes study persuasive and discursive writing on a range of challenging themes including pollution, deforestation and graffiti. Intangible concepts such as love, beauty and nature in poetry are explored through figurative language and imagery. As children progress through the school, and their writing becomes longer and more detailed, they are supported in developing their own characters and exploring ways in which they can evoke readers' emotions.

Enrichment experiences are provided for the children, including the staging of dramatic productions and the chance to enjoy the works of theatre companies, to bring the school community together and instill in our children an early love for culture.

### **Equal opportunities and Special Educational Needs**

Our English curriculum is developed in a flexible way, which gives equal access to all children regardless of gender, race or ability. Teachers provide adaptive learning opportunities matched to the needs of the children.

### **Monitoring and review**

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of the English subject leader, Mr Peter Mabbitt. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader has leadership and management time in order to enable him to review samples of the children's work and undertake lesson observations of English teaching across the school. The subject leader reports to the governors' Assessment and Learning Committee regularly. Staff are keen to improve their subject knowledge and the subject leader takes an active role in disseminating best practice and making recommendations for staff development.

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