CHALKWELL HALL INFANT SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

Reviewed and Approved by: Standards Governing Board

Review date: Spring 2022
Rationale
We understand that English is both a subject in its own right and a medium for teaching the wider curriculum. ‘Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects’ (pg.11, National Curriculum). With this in mind, we strive to advance pupils’ language development and communication, ability to listen with understanding and for all pupils to progress in the skills of reading and writing.

Aims and objectives
Our English Curriculum develops pupils’ ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes and text types so that they are equipped with the skills to prepare them for their future school lives and beyond. Pupils are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic readers and writers of stories, poetry and non-fiction texts. We believe it is our duty to address the ‘cultural capital’ deficit in some of our pupils through a curriculum that immerses pupils with a variety of texts and language and develops a love for reading and writing.

Throughout their time at Chalkwell Hall Infant school, all pupils will be taught:

1. How to apply their knowledge of phonemes to read (decode) and spell (encode) phonetically plausible words.
2. To read and spell common exception words appropriate to their year group.
3. To write letters accurately, legibly and efficiently.
4. To include correct grammar and punctuation to construct sentences.
5. Skills to develop comprehension of texts

Early Reading and Writing
The phonics skills needed to learn to read and write are established in the Foundation Stage with the introduction of phonics lessons based on the ‘Read Write Inc’ programme. In the Foundation Stage, the pupils begin by looking at sounds in the environment around them and hearing and repeating rhymes before being exposed to the 44 phonemes in their basic form and taught to blend and segment confidently. In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught alternative graphemes for the 44 phonemes. By the end of KS1, phonics lessons cover the spelling rules outlined in the National Curriculum, 2014.

Alongside our teaching of phonics to read phonetically plausible words (green words), our pupils learn to read some words by sight. The aim of teaching sight reading is to improve the fluency of developing readers. Sight words are referred to as ‘red words’ and each year group has a set of red words that the pupils will be taught. With a pupil’s developing phonological knowledge, some red words may become decodable ‘green’ words at a later date (for example ‘he’ is a red word in FS but becomes a green word once they learn that the letter ‘e’ can make the ‘ee’ sound.) These must still be learnt by sight, and therefore become ‘speedy green’ words meaning, although decodable, pupils are encouraged and expected to sight read them.
It is important that pupils develop strong fine and gross motor skills as a pre-requisite to becoming successful writers and therefore, at the Foundation Stage, we have adopted daily ‘Funky Fingers’ lessons. During these sessions, pupils will have opportunities to develop their fine and gross motor skills needed for pencil control and letter formation. Teachers lead a small group writing activity within this session where pupils can apply the skills they have been taught. Pupils are taught the correct letter formation from the outset but we do not use yellow writing or tracing over letters as methods of learning to write.

Developing Reading and Writing

Writing

At Chalkwell Hall Infant school, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop all pupils’ knowledge, skills, and understanding of the English Curriculum. We do this through a daily lesson which could include whole class input, group work and/or an independent activity. Technical skills, including grammar, punctuation and sentence construction are taught and reinforced regularly to support pupils in becoming confident in composing accurate sentences. These lessons are sometimes taught discretely or embedded within a lesson depending on which is most suitable at the time. Pupils also have regular opportunities to develop their cursive handwriting skills through short lessons. Our approach to writing includes strategies and philosophies from a number of key figures in English, including Alan Peat and Pie Corbett. It is integral that pupils can apply their skills of writing to a variety of text types including stories, poetry and non-fiction texts, and using scaffolds and ‘talk for writing’ can be useful tools to support this. Often, the context in which pupils practise their writing skills, relate to their topic being covered to make learning more exciting and meaningful.

Independent Reading

Pupils’ individual reading books are closely matched to progression in phonics and sight words in order to support developing readers and aid fluency. The colour band system consists of a vast range of colour banded books ranging from books with no words to chapter books with challenging vocabulary. Pupils work their way through the colour bands at their own individual pace of learning (as their phonic and sight word knowledge develops). Pupils have opportunities to read these books to their class teacher, other adults in school, and they are also taken home to encourage reading and discussion with parents. Pupils are also able to access the online ‘Bug Club’ provided by Pearson.

Whole class comprehension

In addition to whole class phonics lessons, we also teach comprehension skills and reading strategies in order for pupils to become accomplished readers. These skills are taught through a daily whole class teacher-led session where pupils are exposed to a variety of texts at or above their independent reading level. Within this session, pupils are taught the specific skills of inferring, predicting, identifying word meanings, sequencing events, linking what they have read to their own experiences, discussing and expressing views, and asking and answering questions about what they have read. In EYFS, whole class reading sessions encourage pupils to engage with a
shared text through opportunities to role play, use small world and story sacks related to these texts. Pupils will become familiar with fairy stories and traditional tales, join in with predictable phrases and recite rhymes and poems.

**Shared reading**
A class story is shared with the pupils every day. These texts are carefully selected to ensure that our pupils are exposed to a variety of authors and genres across their time at our school. This will ensure pupils have access to a world beyond their immediate experience, exposure to rich language and will enhance a love of reading.

**ERIC time**
KS1 pupils are encouraged to read a book daily during ERIC (Everyone Reading In Class) time in order to practise and refine the skills taught. They have opportunities to read by themselves or with a partner and discuss what they have read, thus creating a culture of reading for pleasure. During this time, the class teacher will carry out group reading (see below) and/or 1:1 reading with pupils.

**Group reading**
Pupils will take part in a structured, small group reading session with the class teacher during ERIC time. They will be supported to engage with texts enjoyably and independently. The texts will be carefully matched to the ability of each group and the aim will be to move pupils onto the next colour band swiftly by developing fluency.

**Assessing English**
Short-term assessments that teachers make, as part of every lesson, help them to adjust their daily plans. Written or verbal feedback is regularly provided to help guide pupils’ progress, and pupils are also encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work through self-evaluation or discussions with their learning partner. Regular Writing assessments are also made through half-termly writing assignments so that progress can be monitored and recorded on assessment tracker (SIMS). This writing portfolio moves through the school with each pupil as clear evidence of progress. Moderation takes place regularly to validate teacher judgements. The moderation takes place both within school and externally.

Assessment of the ability to recognise and blend phonemes in addition to sight words (red and green words) begins from the beginning of FS and continues until the pupil is secure and can read fluently. Assessment data is recorded on SIMS and used to identify pupils who may need extra support to meet age related expectations. In Reading, teachers are able to carry out running reading records when a pupil appears to be ready to move up a colour band if they wish extra validation, but teacher judgement (made through regular reading with that pupil) is acceptable. Teachers regularly monitor reading progress and any pupil not making expected progress or meeting the expected standard will be identified and steps will be implemented to support that pupil.

**Equal Opportunities**
At Chalkwell Hall Infant School, we provide learning opportunities to all pupils, whatever their ability and individual needs to enable all pupils to make good progress. Assessment against the National Curriculum Outcomes allows us to
consider each child’s attainment and progress against expected levels. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child’s needs.

**Monitoring and Review**

The leaders of the English curriculum will:

- support colleagues in their teaching, by keeping them informed about current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- will provide guidance and support on the implementation of policy;
- will stay up to date on developments;
- will ensure staff are aware of resources that may support the teaching of English;
- will monitor implementation and planning;
- will monitor the standards in books;
- will liaise with outside agencies and other English Leaders;
- will moderate the assessment of reading and writing.

Members of the school’s governing body are also briefed to oversee the teaching of English.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.