English Policy

This policy should be read alongside the new National Curriculum in England (published September 2013) and other documents from the Standards and testing Agency.

Our Curriculum overview, medium and short term planning can help support this policy, as can the Reading for Pleasure policy.

Rationale & Aims
The study of English develops children’s ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. 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 media texts. 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 National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school. At Eastcroft Park 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 pupils’ 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)

The aims of teaching English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly, and to take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration, in order to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to show children how to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to teach children effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, through a variety of drama activities;
- to help them become confident, independent readers, through an appropriate focus on word-, sentence- and text-level knowledge;
- to develop enthusiastic and reflective readers, through contact with challenging and substantial texts;
- to foster the enjoyment of writing, and a recognition of its value;
- to encourage accurate and meaningful writing, be it narrative or non-fiction;
- to improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work.
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 SEN code of practice.

**Teaching and learning style**

At Eastcroft Park School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in our English lessons, as recommended by the National Literacy Strategy and Mind Based Learning pedagogy. Our principal aim is to develop children’s knowledge, skills, and understanding. We do this through a daily lesson in which children experience a whole-class reading or writing activity, a whole-class focused word or sentence activity, a guided group or independent activity, and a whole-class session to review progress and learning, although the content can be flexible depending on the objectives and focus of learning.

Whilst there is a high proportion of whole-class and group teaching, the independent activity gives an opportunity to talk and collaborate, and so embed and enhance learning. Pupils have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts, and to support their work with a variety of resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses and phonic paddles. Children use computing and technology in English lessons where it enhances their learning, as in drafting their work and use multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum and in “Big Write” sessions.

In all classes children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. In some lessons we do it through differentiated group work, using a variety of resources, tasks and starting points. In others we provide a starting point or intended outcome and encourage children to explore their preferred or chosen method of recording, be it a verbal presentation, a written report or a multimedia project. We deploy teaching assistants to support both SEN and AGT children to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

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.
Our aims and connected provision
We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions with panache, using higher level vocabulary. We teach children 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. Children develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

Ways in which we support this 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 talk-time at home through ‘talk homework’ which is shared in “Big Write” lessons or assembly and by encouraging reading and talk about books.
- Talk for Writing.
- School Plays.
- Class debates.
- Weekly assembly.
- Events within the community.
- School Council.
- Talk partners.
- Drama/role play.
- PSHE and circle time.

Children who are in need of extra support in this area benefit from Speech and Language link.

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.

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. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.
Our aims and connected provision

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics in Key Stage One, regular reading to adults in school, guided reading and incentives to read at home.
- Pupils develop skills in reading for understanding using a number of books which we have in school. We adapt which books we use to meet the needs of our pupils. In guided reading they read books which are more challenging than those which they might be able to read independently. They may then use these books for various tasks including comprehension, writing and speaking and listening tasks.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, library visits and high quality attractive books in classrooms and reading areas.
- We advocate reading for pleasure (see 2.1 and Reading for Pleasure policy) and pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read and a rich variety of reading materials. Children are also permitted to read in the “Reading Hut” during reading clubs or as an incentive/reward.
- Pupils also need to read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way every term.
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts from their literacy heritage during their school career. Each class has three authors whom they study and immerse themselves in each year.
- Key Stage Two pupils or children who are level 2c and above benefit from reciprocal reading during guided reading sessions. This approach incorporates speaking and listening as well as comprehension skills.

Children who are struggling or all falling behind their peers in reading and phonics benefit from extra reading and phonics session delivered on a regular basis.

2.1 We advocate “Reading for pleasure” at Eastcroft Park, to ensure that our children are encouraged to develop a love of reading. We promote and model a ‘Reading for Enjoyment’ ethos throughout the school. Reading is developed through shared, guided and individual reading, both within Literacy lessons and across the curriculum. Children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One follow the ‘Letters and Sounds’ phonic based programme, which promotes speaking and listening, phonological awareness and oral blending and segmenting as well as reading comprehension. At Key Stage Two, children are encouraged to develop their skills in inference and deduction and analyse the use of author’s language to establish further understanding of texts. All children across the Key Stages follow a structured reading scheme and take home a variety of phonic based and other reading books to create a healthy balance, and children are expected to read their book every night.

2.2 We have recently introduced a Reading Hut, with lots of new resources. It is used when delivering 1:1 or small group reading interventions, and additional book clubs. Children look forward to time in the Reading Hut and use it to further enhance their love of reading. Similarly, class Readers, ERIC time, class author studies, competitions and a rich variety of reading materials are used to promote and stimulate reading for pleasure.
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.

Our aims and connected provision

- We teach grammar as a separate lesson where necessary.
- We correct grammatical error orally/written work (where appropriate).
- 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 encourage and promote ‘talk for writing’.
- We provide story maps and writing frames to support the least confident.
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising.
- We mark extended pieces of work in-depth and set targets with the pupil.
- We use checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively.
- We encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed.
- We use drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view.
- Support for pupils with learning and motor difficulties.

3.1 Additional English time is allocated each fortnight for children to complete “The Big Write”. This allows children the time to complete extended pieces of writing whilst applying and further developing Literacy Skills. In addition, it provides opportunities for teachers to consolidate and enhance understanding and focus upon any particular areas requiring further attention.

The context of the Big Write is often linked to the children’s current curriculum topic but will frequently be inspired by an event that may have had an impact on the children. Similarly, teachers regularly plan ‘high impact’ activities to inspire writing within Big Write sessions. On alternate weeks SPaG lessons are delivered which enable teaching and learning to explicitly focus on the technicalities of spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction.
4. Language Acquisition & 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.
- Include ‘instruction verbs’ used in examinations.
- Subject specific - accurate mathematical and scientific words.

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 and pronouncing higher level vocabulary correctly and in context
- In-depth word based lessons looking at patterns.
- Using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar programmes.
- Carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils.
- Targeted one to one/small group support, where appropriate.

4.1 Daily vocabulary teaching focuses upon extending existing vocabulary in order to enhance the sophistication of our children’s word power. Each week children in all year groups are exposed to three higher level words; they study the word class, the correct pronunciation, the definition, synonyms and how the word can be used in context. This word power impacts upon Spoken English and the quality and standard of dialogue modelled and expected on an informal level; the children are encouraged to use their “words of the week” within day to day dialogue and within their writing. This work is further enhanced through topic inspired role play areas in every year group. As well as having a positive impact on writing, we have found that children are more confident to articulate themselves accurately and with panache.

4.2 Spellings, key words and spelling rules are taught systematically across the school. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, spellings are predominately taken from the ‘Letters and Sounds’ programme, where children are largely encouraged to spell by sounding out words phonetically. In Key Stage Two, the focus lies more with spelling patterns and spelling rules.
5. Planning and Assessment

Planning:

5.1 We use the National Literacy Strategy components and Mind Based Learning 4-phase lesson delivery as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.

5.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The National Curriculum details what we teach in the long-term. Our yearly overview teaching programme identifies the key objectives in literacy that we teach in each year.

5.3 Our medium-term plans give details of the main teaching objectives for each term. These plans define what we teach, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term. The subject leader is responsible for monitoring and reviewing these plans.

5.4 Class teachers complete a weekly (or sometimes two weekly, depending on the unit) short-term plan for the teaching of English. This lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes for each lesson, and gives details of how the lessons are to be taught in accordance with the agreed non-negotiables of good practice at Eastcroft Park. It also includes details of what each group of children will be learning, how they will learn and key questions the teacher will ask. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and the class teacher and subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis. The subject leader is responsible for keeping and reviewing a sample of plans from each year group on a termly basis, or in accordance with the monitoring cycle of the school.

5.5 Staff are encouraged to promote English within the school environment through appropriate display. Within classrooms/teaching areas, these should include interactive displays with working walls. Individual targets are also displayed and referred to regularly. In other areas of school where displays are possible, use of language and literacy skills are incorporated and promoted.

Assessment:

5.6 Our rigorous assessment process monitors and tracks a range of aspects:

- Staff assess pupils' learning during and as part of every session - they adapt their practice accordingly.
- Regular ‘Big Write’ tasks are levelled and this is tracked.
- Weekly spelling lists and key words are assessed using Assertive Mentoring and pupils spelling ages are tested using the Schonell Spelling assessment and the beginning and end of the academic year.
- Reading Ages and Phonics are assessed on a termly basis using Salford Reading test and Assertive Mentoring respectively and are tracked and monitored.
- Formal assessments of Reading Comprehension and Spelling and Grammar (SPAG) ability are carried out, tracked and monitored, at least termly.
- Writing levels are assessed using Assertive mentoring/ APP - these are tracked termly and monitored.
End of Key Stage Assessments are analysed by the Head Teacher and Subject Leader and feed into the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF), School Improvement Plan (SIP) and performance management.

5.7 One piece of homework is given each week. This is in addition to home readers and weekly spelling lists. As children progress to Year 6, this increases to allow for extra revision and for end of Key Stage tests. Occasionally, teachers will send home “Talking Homework” which requires children to discuss a theme or idea with someone outside of school. This is quite often linked to the Big Write and is used as a preparation task.

6. English and inclusion
   6.1 At our school we teach English to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this.

   6.2 Teachers provide help by using:
   • texts that children can more easily read and understand;
   • visual and written materials in different formats;
   • ICT, other technological aids and recorded materials;
   • alternative communication, such as signs and symbols; translators and amanuenses.

6.3 Specific groups
   Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly; pupils who are slow moving or making little or no progress are discussed during pupil progress meetings and provision is made. Appropriate ‘Wave 2’ intervention is also put in place for those children who are not achieving age related expectations; these include booster literacy, FLS, Talk Boost 1 & 2 and additional Letters & Sounds sessions. All are intended to accelerate progress and are identified on Year Group Provision maps.

   Pupils entitled to Pupil Premium are given additional English support, if required, and this is monitored for effectiveness termly.

   Pupils with SEND will have English based targets on their EHC (Education & Health Care Plan). These are reviewed termly. Intervention and provision for children with Education & Health care plans (EHC Plans) may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to English. Children who are Wave 3+ are withdrawn outside the literacy lesson to work in small groups and specifically focus on their EHC plan targets.

   Pupils with EAL are given additional support, if required, in all aspects of English and this is tracked and monitored termly.

   Pupils who are AGT (able, gifted or talented) receive additional intervention to support and challenge them further, and may be entered for Level 6 tests at the end of Key Stage Two.
6.4 We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning English. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a theatre trip, for example) safeguarding procedures are put into practice, such as the completion of a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

7. **English in EYFS**

We teach English in Reception classes as an integral part of the school’s work. As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the English aspects of the children’s work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Children in Reception participate in a daily “Letters & Sounds” session; the number of teaching inputs increases as the children progress through the year. In Reception teaching focuses upon Phases two and three; Phase one is introduced to Nursery children when developmentally appropriate. We place a large emphasis on the development of Speaking & Listening skills, which is ongoing throughout the day, and particularly focussed on during directed activities. 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 vocabulary and communication skills. They have the opportunity to explore words and texts, to enjoy them, to learn about them, and to use them in various situations.

8. **Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas**

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every topic of our curriculum. The children’s skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school.

8.1 **Mathematics**

The teaching of English contributes significantly to children’s mathematical understanding, in a variety of ways. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these matters with adults and other children. Children in Key Stage 1 meet stories and rhymes that involve counting and sequencing. Children in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to read and interpret problems, in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during plenary sessions, and they communicate mathematically through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

8.2 **Personal, social and health education (PSHE)**

English contributes to the teaching of PSHE and citizenship by encouraging children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. Older children also research and debate topical problems and events. They discuss lifestyle choices, and meet and talk with visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom also encourage children to work together and to respect each other’s views.
8.3 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and British Values

From September 2014, promotion of British Values includes:

“acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain”

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can offer critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and with texts from a diverse range of cultures. The organisation of our lessons allows children to work together, gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results and ensures that all pupils within the school have a voice that is listened to.

8.4 Computing

The use of information and communication technology, with clear learning objectives, will promote, enhance and support the teaching of English at word, sentence and text level. It also offers ways of impacting on learning which are not possible with conventional methods, for example interactive and non-linear stories.

ICT and media equipment is used at whole-class, group and independent level. The screen projection of text enables it to be read and shared. The projection of text also enables the reading and writing processes to be modelled effectively. A wide variety of text types are available through the Internet or various computing programmes to encourage the framing of explicit questions. Groups can work independently on laptops or ipads and input text via standard or overlay keyboard. A range of software is used to develop specific grammatical and spelling skills. Lessons can focus on what pupils have achieved using ICT, or ICT can provide the means of presenting their outcomes (via multimedia presentation or the school website).

9 Resources

There is a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries, thesauruses and a variety of age-appropriate small apparatus, located on a “Help Desk” which aims to promote independent learning. Each classroom has a topic based role play area and/or speaking and listening area, with audio texts available. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts in class libraries and/or quiet reading areas. Years 2-6 receive weekly newspapers and KS2 receive copies of ‘Aquila’ magazine each month. Each year group have author packs which contain various books by the chosen author. The Reading hut is available for small group or 1:1 reading and has its own selection of books for children to choose from. Children have access to the Internet, Interactive Whiteboards and various computing devices belonging to that class/year group and the school library contains a range of books to support children’s individual research.
10. Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the standards of children’s work and the quality of teaching in English is the responsibility of subject leader.

The work of the subject leader also involves

- regular lesson observations in accordance with the school’s Monitoring cycle
- taking an active role in disseminating best practice and making recommendations for staff development
- supporting colleagues in their teaching
- being informed about current developments in the subject
- providing a strategic lead and direction for English in the school.

The subject leader gives the Head teacher an annual summary report evaluating the strengths in the subject, and indicating areas for further improvement. The named governor responsible for English also receives a copy of the annual report in order to review progress.