



Curriculum and Pupils
12.06.24

Signed.....

ENGLISH POLICY

Policy statement

The teaching of English at Portway Infant School embraces all aspects of language, both spoken and written. We believe that by developing skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing, children become more able to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and communicate with others effectively, both orally and through the written word. They will use the vocabulary and grammar of Standard English, read a wide range of texts and write using a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes.

Organisation

At Portway Infant School, English is taught through the EYFS Curriculum and the National Curriculum.

Class teachers are responsible for the English teaching and assessment in their class.

Aims

Speaking

- To develop the children's understanding of the spoken word.
- To develop the ability to express themselves for a variety of purposes using the vocabulary and grammar of Standard English.
- For children to speak confidently about their ideas, feelings and experiences.
- For children to use language in imaginative ways and express their ideas and feelings appropriately.

Listening

- To listen and respond appropriately to what others have to say
- To follow verbal instructions with increasing accuracy

Reading

- To foster an enjoyment of reading through extensive experience of children's literature.
- To develop the ability to read and respond to all types of writing.
- To develop information retrieval skills through the understanding of non-fiction material.
- For children to read with growing confidence and independence.
- To teach the children a variety of reading strategies in order to decode unfamiliar words with a particular emphasis on phonic skills.

Writing

- To encourage confidence and independence when writing for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- To encourage children to write with interest and convey meaning accurately, relevant to the task and audience.
- To teach a variety of strategies to encourage children to become confident and competent spellers.
- For children to develop a clear and legible handwriting style.
- For children to enjoy writing and see the value of it.

Objectives

Speaking

- To speak clearly, fluently and confidently to different people.
- To join in as members of a group.
- To participate in a range of structured role-play and drama activities.
- To be introduced to some of the main features of spoken Standard English and be taught to use them.
- To develop an understanding of how speech varies in different circumstances and when taking account of different listeners.
- To participate in paired and group talk to clarify and discuss ideas.

Listening

- To listen, understand and respond to others
- To participate in a range of structured role-play and drama activities.
- To develop an understanding of how speech varies in different circumstances and when taking account of different listeners.

Reading

- To be taught to use a range of strategies to make sense of what they read.
- To be taught to hear, segment and blend phonemes in words (see separate Phonics section).
- To be taught to link sound and letter patterns.
- To be taught to sound and name the letters of the alphabet.
- To be taught grammatical awareness (how word order affects meaning).
- To be taught contextual understanding (how meaning can be derived from the text as a whole).
- To be taught word recognition and graphic knowledge (recognising on sight high frequency words, words with common spelling patterns, parts of words, e.g., suffixes, prefixes, plurals, etc.).
- To develop their understanding of fiction, poetry and drama.
- To use the organisational features of non-fiction texts to find information.
- To read books of a range of genres suited to their abilities and learning styles.

Writing

- To use increasingly more adventurous and wide-ranging vocabulary.
- To begin to use a clear structure to organise their writing.
- To assemble and develop their ideas on paper and on screen.
- To plan and review their writing with increasing confidence
- To sequence events and recount them in appropriate detail.
- To be taught how punctuation helps a reader to understand what is written.
- To develop a range of spelling strategies to attempt unfamiliar words.
- To be taught to develop a legible handwriting style (see separate handwriting section).
- To write for a range of purposes and audiences.

Assessment

Assessment is made through:

- Pupil Progress meetings
- EYFS Profile
- Verbal feedback on work
- Home/school reading records
- Ongoing teacher assessment
- O-track (does this need changing if we are having a different system?)
- Phonics trackers and individual phonics assessments
- Guided reading notes

- The Phonics Screening Check in Year 1 and in Year 2 for the children who failed to meet the standard in Year 1.

Inclusion

As a result of formal or teacher assessment and in consultation with parents, a child may fall behind age-related expectations. The school will follow the SEND policy. A wide range of resources are available to support children with SEND in English.

The full English curriculum will be made available to all children irrespective of race, gender or physical disabilities.

Children with English as an additional language will be offered equal access to the English curriculum. Support from relevant outside agencies will be sought.

At Portway Infant School, we are careful to avoid books and resources containing gender bias, racial or religious stereotyping and actively seek to provide books and resources that deal with issues reflecting today's society including LGBTQ+

Planning

In order to complete medium term and weekly planning we use:

- The EYFS Curriculum
- The National Curriculum
- Write Stuff scheme of work
- Unlocking Letters and Sounds
- Available software

Phonics

We believe that successful reading depends on learning to use a range of strategies. We will equip children with as many of these strategies as possible. We recognise that effective, systematic teaching of phonics is the prime means in which children learn to read and spell words.

Aims

At Portway Infant School we have adopted a synthetic, systematic, phonics (SSP) programme called Unlocking Letters and Sounds.

Through this we aim to:

- Foster children's speaking and listening skills, recognising them as valuable in their own right and as preparatory to learning phonic knowledge and skills.
- Enable children to decode (read) and encode (spell) words accurately with ease.
- Make learning fun, interactive and multi-sensory.
- Enable children to apply their developing skills in interesting and engaging reading and writing activities.
- Enable children to see the relationship between reading and spelling from an early age.

Time allocation and Teaching

All children receive a total of at least 20 minutes whole class focused phonics teaching every day. Phase 1, 2, 3 and 4 is primarily taught in EYFS, phase 5 in year 1 and phase 5 revision in year 2, before moving onto the Essential Spelling Programme. Support sessions are implemented where necessary to support children who are not on track.

Planning

Separate weekly phonics planning identifies which phonemes are to be taught using the 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds' SSP phases and the activities through which they will be delivered.

Inclusion

Our phonics scheme is designed to give all children access to the phonic skills they require to become successful readers, with flexibility between the 5 phases and the boundaries between the phases not being regarded as fixed.

Teachers are able to judge the rate at which their children are able to progress and adapt the pace accordingly.

Assessment and recording

Children's progress is tracked using a phonics tracker that provides a reliable assessment process which identifies learning difficulties at an early age. Children's letter knowledge and ability to segment and blend need to be assessed individually, as their progress may not be sufficiently well ascertained in group activities. The teaching materials for 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds' include assessment for each phase

Every session in phases 2-5 of the 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds' programme includes grapheme recognition or recall practice, and blending and segmentation practice. During these activities, there is also the opportunity for assessment. Children practice reading alien words to assess how well they are applying phonic skills.

Parental involvement

Phonics videos are sent to parents in foundation via class dojo, where the teacher films themselves teaching phonics each week. This can be shown at home as homework, but also provides parents with the knowledge to support their child at home.

Handwriting

Aim

The aim of the handwriting policy is to encourage children to develop legibility and fluency in style, allowing progression from early movement training to beginning cursive writing.

Implementation

The main scheme Portway Infant School has adopted is a style from 'Martin Harvey' Achieving Excellence in Handwriting.

- They are first taught an effective pencil grip through a consistent and whole school approach called the 'Pencil Pick Up'.
- Children are taught simple strengthening techniques to support their gross motor skills and posture called 'Making Our Bodies Stronger'
- Children are taught 'Funky Fingers' techniques to support their fine motor skills.
- After consolidation of lowercase letter formation in EYFS, children will be taught the basic joins, starting with the first digraphs in year 2.

Planning

Handwriting is taught every day for at least 15 minutes in all classes which follows a set outline in line with the Martin Harvey Handwriting Scheme. All teachers recognise the importance of practising little and often.

Pre-writing in EYFS

In the EYFS, fine and gross motor skills are practised daily. These are covered either as whole class, groups, one-one or within an intervention where children have been identified as needing additional support:

Fine motor

- early letter formation and pattern making
- dough disco
- funky finger activities

Gross motor

These include,

- 'Rammies Little Movers' which is an early year's version of physical literacy
- physical literacy as a way of supporting core strength

- squiggle dance (pattern making in the air and on paper)
- making our bodies stronger exercises
- tummy time

Beginning writing

Letter formation

In the EYFS letter formation is taught through:

- Introducing sound and formation alongside Unlocking Letters and Sounds
- Asking children to form letter shapes in the air, on another child's back, etc.
- Forming letters using whiteboards, IWB, large pieces of paper, in sand, playdough, paint, etc.

In EYFS and Key stage 1

The letters are grouped into stroke-related families and relate to the Martin Harvey handwriting scheme which are:

- k, l, i, t, j Also called 'straight line' letters
- c, a, o, g, e, d, q Also called 'coat hanger' letters
- m, n, r, h, b, p Also called 'The Bridge family' letters
- v, w Also called 'zig zag' letters
- u, y Also called 'smile' letters
- x, f, s, z Also called 'misfit' letters

The capital letters can also be grouped into stroke-related families, and it is suggested that the following sequence is used:

- I, L, T, J, H, F, E Mainly right-angled
- D, B, P, R Vertical stroke and clockwise
- O, Q, C, G Anti-clockwise
- A, K, V, W, N, M, X, Y, Z Diagonals
- U, S An odd pair

The sets can be taught in order, but it is important that they are taught in families.

Number formation is practised as part of the Martin Harvey scheme.

Left-handed writers are given support if necessary (information may also be given to parents of left-handed children if they are having difficulty with formation or pencil control).

Joining letters

Starting to join

There is a need for children to develop a fast, efficient handwriting style to cope with the different demands of writing that will be made on them. Children will begin to write letters using the 'joining line' and will begin to practise joining letters alongside learning new digraphs in phonics.

The four basic joins are:

- Baseline joins (in, um, am, ar, etc.)
- Top joins (op, ou, fi, wh, etc.)
- Joins to anti-clockwise letters (ac, ag, ed, ad, etc.)
- Alternative and optional joins (joining p, s, y, etc.)

Again, it is not necessary to teach these joins in the order of the sets, but they should be taught in families.

Assessment

Individual assessment sheets can be used where there is cause for concern.

Children who are found to be having difficulties with pencil control or letter formation may be given extra worksheets or exercises to practise at home. They may also be given pencil grips to improve their control. There are lots of opportunities for assessment in the Unlocking Letter and Sounds phonics programme as the children practise segmenting words for spelling and writing captions and sentences.

Parents

We provide information on the school website as well as the following,

- An early reading workshop is offered every year to parents throughout school, where they can join their child in class to watch a live lesson.
- A reading guide is sent out to all parents in the Autumn term.

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