



English Policy

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Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Children in Reception work towards the Early Learning Goals. These goals allow them to work within the 7 Stages of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social, emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children in EYFS are assessed using Development Matters and P levels. It is a statutory requirement to assess using Early Learning Goals however Development Matters (for lower levels) give the steps that children need to work towards Early Learning Goals.

Key Stage 1 and 2

The National Curriculum 2014 is divided into 3 Key Stages:

- Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)
- Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)
- Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6)

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. The National curriculum 2014, gives detailed guidance of what should be taught at each Key stage under the following headings:

- Spoken language
- Reading
 - word reading
 - comprehension (reading and listening)
- Writing

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)
- vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

The aims of English are:

- to develop confident, independent readers;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through;
- a range of texts, including challenging and lengthy texts;
- to help children to enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to develop children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work;
- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- to enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama activities.

Spoken Language

In order to encourage confident speakers, children are given lots of opportunities to perform and speak to an audience. Through a range of cross curricular activities, all children learn to speak to their peers. This could be working through a problem in Maths or presenting research in History or Geography. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, Show and Tell is a vital part of developing spoken language skills.

Children take turns to share something from home and it is important that children listen and respond to what is being said. Children in all year groups enjoy sharing their exciting news with their peers and therefore time is always allocated to allow them to speak to their whole class.

To develop our pupils as readers we:-

- teach them to read accurately and fluently using a range of reading strategies;

- help them to understand and respond to what they read, using inference and deduction where appropriate, through discussion or follow-up activities;
- promote an enjoyment and appreciation of reading;
- encourage them to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books;
- support attempts to read independently and to self correct;
- teach them how to seek information and learn from the written word.

To develop our pupils as writers we: -

- teach them to write effectively for a range of purposes and a range of readers, adapting their vocabulary and style as appropriate;
- encourage them to write with interest, commitment and enjoyment;
- try, where possible, to make writing tasks have a real purpose and audience;
- show them how to write in a variety of forms such as stories, poems, reports and letters;
- show them how to evaluate and improve their own writing;
- show them how to use punctuation to make meaning clear to their reader;
- give them the knowledge and the strategies to become confident and accurate spellers;
- teach them a fluent and legible style of handwriting, promoting and understanding of how to present work appropriately.

To add to our pupils' knowledge about the English Language we: -

- make them aware of the way our language varies and in this context explain the importance of standard English;
- draw their attention to features of standard English grammar which differ from local speech;
- introduce them systematically to the conventions of spelling and punctuation;
- encourage them to extend their vocabulary;
- explain in simple terms some basic features of English grammar

Synthetic Phonics

All children in Holmwood School have access to high quality phonics teaching through the Letters and Sounds program. Letters and Sounds is designed to help practitioners and teachers to teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling. Systematic, high quality phonics teaching is essential and is needed for children to achieve the goal of reading. Letters and Sounds is designed as a time limited programme of phonics work aimed at securing fluent word recognition skills for reading by the end of Key Stage 1 and as an intervention in Key Stage Two. It is the aim at Holmwood School to ensure that all children needing support in phonics receive it no matter which key stage. To support progression at the pace the children need Letters and Sounds phases are deliberately porous so that no children are held back or unduly pressured to move on before they are equipped to do so.

Beginner readers will be taught:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through a word to read it
- to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

To support the skills and letter sequences taught through Letters and Sounds teachers have access to The Dandelion Launchers Readers scheme, the ICT Splash Phonics program and Education City phonics resources.

Reading

Language and Literacy are central to our ability to understand, interpret, and communicate about the world and with each other. Reading is a thoughtful process which requires the reader to contribute his or her own experiences and thoughts to the comprehension of the written word. The ability to read is fundamental to many aspects of life, and is central to developing understanding in a wide range of areas of the curriculum. As print occurs all around, it is important to think of reading in a wider context than only books.

The teaching and learning of reading will run across the entire curriculum. We aim to provide a rich reading environment to develop the children's skills in reading. Teaching strategies aim to enhance children's motivation and involvement in reading and to develop their skills through the following:

- Reading with other children
- Reading with an adult
- Shared Reading
- Guided Reading
- Building phonic skills
- Developing vocabulary
- Understanding of sentence structure and punctuation
- Comprehension, inference and implication
- Ability to skim
- Understand persuasive writing
- Instructions
- Story/character/plot/setting
- Idea of an audience
- Reading and interpreting dictionaries, index, glossary, contents
- Developing critical skills
- Participating in play reading
- Performance of poetry, song etc
- Reading aloud to the class
- Independent reading

All children are issued with a reading book based on their reading age which they will be encouraged to read at home and on a 1:1 with a member of staff

daily. Reading will be recorded in class and children work towards their individual reading targets based on their current level.

Reading is given a high priority within school and teachers will build opportunities for reading for pleasure into their individual timetables.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG) / Phonics

The teaching of phonics plays a vital role in children's ability to spell therefore phonics lessons in Key Stage One take place daily. They are planned by teachers and taught in small groups by teachers and teaching assistants so that progress can be closely monitored.

As children move through Key Stage One into Key Stage Two, the emphasis shifts from the teaching of phonics to a more focussed teaching of spelling strategies.

Some children do require additional spelling support in Key Stage Two. For these children, daily phonics interventions are led by teaching assistants to consolidate the skills taught in Key Stage One.

Spellings in Key Stage Two are taken from the National Curriculum (2014). Children receive a list of spellings to learn at home on a weekly basis. Teachers use their SPAG lessons to support the learning of spelling patterns and will test children the following week. To ensure that the learning of spellings is meaningful, children are given a sentence which will test their spelling in context, as well as develop dictation skills. Where a spelling pattern has been learnt, children may be asked to write words that have not appeared on their list, yet follow the spelling pattern. For example, if the children are learning 'sight', they may have 'bright' and 'light' on their spelling list. The expectation is that having learnt the rule they could also spell 'sight', even if they had not been specifically asked to practise this word at home.

Key Stage One children learn SPAG in context in an English lesson so they are familiar with correct grammatical terms and use correct grammar in spoken and written English. The purpose of grammar teaching is to enable pupils to become conscious of patterns of language which they can apply in their own work to enhance meaning.

The purpose of punctuation is to clarify the meaning of texts. Readers use punctuation to help make sense of written texts while writers use punctuation to help communicate intended meaning to the reader. Although there is a Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar test in the Key Stage Two SATs, the main purpose of teaching SPAG is to help children improve their writing. If children understand how their writing is constructed, they can make better

choices about what they write and why they are writing it. SPAG is taught through both discrete sessions, using cross curricular themes, as well as in context in a writing session.

Reading for Pleasure and the school Library

At Holmwood School we believe that children deserve a rich curriculum which encourages extensive reading of whole books and other kinds of texts. We believe that active encouragement of reading for pleasure is a core part of every child's educational entitlement, whatever their background or attainment because we know that extensive reading and exposure to a wide range of texts make a huge contribution to students' educational achievement.

At Holmwood School we aim to promote the concepts of reading for 'fun', 'enjoyment' and 'pleasure' and we ensure that we include a range of 'real books' within the Curriculum for English as well as the opportunity for sustained reading from a range of other self chosen fiction and non-fiction texts from our school Library. We believe that the staff and adults who work at Holmwood School should be 'reading role models' and we try to ensure that adults share their favourite texts with the children.

Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of the curriculum. Curriculum work across the school uses literacy targets, relevant to the child's individual levels, as focus within planning, teaching, marking and assessment. We seek to provide activities that are interesting and motivating and lead to worthwhile outcomes. Such activities provide the best context for increasing children's knowledge about the English language. It is also necessary to focus separately on aspects of knowledge about the language at times so that children learn what they need to know in a systematic way.

To support the schools ongoing commitment to a creative curriculum, English teaching is linked to work in other areas of the curriculum. For example during the English lesson, pupils might be searching and retrieving from information texts used in science, studying myths or stories linked to a study unit in history or writing instructions linked to a technology topic. The focus of teaching in the English lesson must be on the English objectives however links with the rest of the curriculum are fundamental to effective teaching. Other subjects should be treated as a vehicle for literacy work and not displace it from its primary focus in the English lesson.

It is important that our pupils are immersed in English through all subject areas. This is particularly relevant as part of our efforts to raise the achievement of boys in English. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening will enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work at school.

Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in school. Children develop their understanding of number, pattern, shape and space by talking about these areas with adults and other children. They meet stories and rhymes that rely on counting and sequencing and, later, are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. The pupils can explain their work to others during plenary sessions, developing their mathematical vocabulary.

Computing

The use of computing enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Our pupils will be shown how Computing can be applied to their work and given opportunities to explore these possibilities.

The Gender Issue

Boys' achievement in English is an area in which we strive to improve, specifically in writing. Reading and listening are predominately left-brain activities. Research has shown that there are differences in the hemispheric functioning between the brains of males and females. Females use both hemispheres to process language and spatial tasks from an early stage. Boys' left-brain function develops at a slower rate than that of girls; therefore boys are disadvantaged during lessons dominated by listening and text activities particularly in the early years of education. At Holmwood we have a significantly high male population (approx. 75%). It is important to consider the specific steps that can be taken to ensure that boys benefit from all aspects of the English Curriculum.

- Plan specific structured oral tasks, drama and role-play activities.
- Where possible, writing tasks should have a real purpose and audience.
- Present tasks as a challenge to allow for a competitive element where appropriate.
- Ensure the opportunity for kinaesthetic activities.
- Make learning objectives clear at the beginning of the lesson.
- Where possible English teaching should be linked to other curriculum areas.
- Boys should be encouraged to make independent choice of reading material including non-fiction.

We make clear to the children the qualities we are looking for in their work. Children are given opportunities to evaluate and reflect on their own work in order that they may develop their own sense of quality. Teachers give clear feedback to children so they know where they have succeeded and what they need to do to improve further. This is clearly reflected in our school marking policy.

Planning

Good planning underpins good practice by helping to ensure teaching focuses on what pupils need to learn to make good progress. A medium term plan identifies the coverage of non-fiction, fiction and poetry with specific focus on the genre. Weekly planning identifies how the objectives are to be taught and focuses upon the success criteria of each individual child to ensure teaching is differentiated to the needs of each child to ensure progress is made.

Assessment

To ensure children are assessed at a level suitable for their learning, teachers plan, teach and assess to individual literacy targets which are taken from 'Holmwood School Learning Ladders'. Assessment reflects these targets and the next steps needed to ensure progression.

Throughout the school children are actively encouraged to assess their own abilities against their own success criteria using their pupil voice. The children take great pride in achieving their success criteria and visually seeing their own development across the subject.

Pupils are regularly assessed by Teacher Assessment using the Holmwood School Learning Ladders. Furthermore, English targets within each child's IEP are assessed and used to inform planning as well as set appropriate targets for the next half term. This information is used in end of year assessments and school reports.

Marking

Marking is an implicit part of assessment, complementing and assisting teaching and learning. It is an integral part of the National Curriculum statutory procedures. It is a positive strategy that can make significant contribution to constructive feedback and enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills.

All written pieces of English work will be marked in green referring directly to the success criteria, It will then identify the next stages for learning for that individual child.

The level of independence will also be reflected through the marking using:

A/I - Achieved Independently

A/H - Achieved with Help

P/I - Partially Independent

G/U – Good Understanding

O/F – Oral Feedback given

When it is considered appropriate, spelling mistakes will be identified with a green wavy line underneath the mis-spelt word. The correct spelling may be given above the word or the child may be asked to find the word in a dictionary and make the correction.