



English

The Curriculum at Holmwood School

The Intent, implementation and Impact of our Curriculum – English.

Intent

At Holmwood School, English and the teaching of English is the foundation of our curriculum. Our main aim is to ensure every single child becomes primary literate and progresses in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Staff at Holmwood feel it is seminal to highlight and be aware of the differing groups of learners and vulnerable children in their class. Once this information is acquired, teachers can plan and teach personalised English lessons which focus on the particular needs of each child. We recognise that each child has their own starting point upon entry to every year group and progress is measured in line with these starting points to ensure every child can celebrate success.

English at Holmwood will not only be a daily discrete lesson, but is at the cornerstone of the entire curriculum. It is embedded within all our lessons and we will strive for a high level of English for all. Through using high-quality texts, immersing children in vocabulary rich learning environments and ensuring new curriculum expectations and the progression of skills are met, the children at Holmwood will be exposed to a language heavy, creative and continuous English curriculum which will not only enable them to become primary literate but will also develop a love of reading, creative writing and purposeful speaking and listening.

When the new curriculum was implemented in 2014, many professionals commented that the creativity had been eliminated and children were expected to be taught a diet of very dry grammar and punctuation skills. At Holmwood, our vision is for the creativity to be at the helm of our English curriculum and for children to learn new skills in a fun and engaging way.

Implementation

With these aims in mind, first and foremost, an overhaul of the timetable was required and a discrete lesson for reading was incorporated into the morning session for all years. This ensured that reading was explicitly taught every day and that each group of children had time with the teacher, in the reading session, once a week. Vulnerable groups could be highlighted and support staff could be used to support these groups further to ensure progression and specific year group skills were secure. Resources to support and enhance these lessons were purchased so that all staff felt proficient and skilled in delivering these sessions effectively. With a structured timetable of learning tasks being rotated throughout the week, children are not only learning comprehension skills but also independence, a love of wider reading and exposure to rich vocabulary, which is absolute key in all sessions for all learners.

Reading is not only celebrated in classrooms at Holmwood, around school you will find displays which celebrate authors, children's favourite books and reading for pleasure. In addition, throughout the school year the importance of reading is enhanced through World Book Day, author visits, reading areas and a range of trips and visits which enrich and complement children's learning.

As we believe consistency and well-taught English is the bedrock of a valuable education, Holmwood we ensure that the teaching of writing is purposeful, robust and shows clear progression for all children. In line with the new national curriculum, we ensure that each year group is teaching the explicit grammar, punctuation and spelling objectives required for that age groups. As well as teaching the objectives, teachers are able to embed the skills throughout the year in cross-curricular writing opportunities and ensure that most children are achieving the objectives at the expected level and that some children can achieve excellent progress. In this sense, assessment of writing is also more fluid as teachers can assess against a set framework. All year groups use the same format for assessing writing which have been produced in line with the end of Key Stage assessment frameworks as published by the Department for Education.

In order to expose children to a variety of genres which helps to utilise and embed the writing skills. Writing is taught through the use of a quality text, which exposes the children to inference, high-level vocabulary, a range of punctuation and characterisation. Each text is purposefully selected in order to promote a love of reading, engagement and high quality writing from each child.

Impact

The impact on our children is clear: progress, sustained learning and transferrable skills. With the implementation of the writing across the curriculum being well established, children are becoming more confident writers and by the time they are in upper Key Stage 2, most genres of writing are familiar to them and the teaching can focus on creativity, writer's craft, sustained writing and manipulation of grammar and punctuation skills

As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum, cross curricular writing standards have also improved and skills taught in the English lesson are transferred into other subjects; this shows consolidation of skills and a deeper understanding of how and when to use specific grammar, punctuation and grammar objectives.