

New Hope Christian School (NHCS) English Policy Statement

We aim to develop a love for the English language in its written and spoken forms. We encourage children to develop skills to communicate effectively in speech and writing and to listen with understanding, to be responsive, enthusiastic and knowledgeable readers. We recognise English as a core subject and as a pre-requisite for educational and social progress empowering children to communicate creatively and imaginatively. We aim to provide an environment for language development, which is stimulating and is characterised by high expectations of success so that the fullest potential of each individual may be realised.

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of English at NHCS.

Aims

To provide children with access to an integral programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing and to strive for excellence in all areas.

At NHCS we work towards every child becoming literate.

By the age of 11 we aim for a child to be able to:

- Read with confidence, fluency, enjoyment and understanding by providing a wealth of reading material with access to a range of text covering a balance of fiction and non-fiction
- Use a range of independent strategies to; self-monitor and correct, retrieve information and evaluate what has been read
- Use higher order reading skills including deduction and inference through the use of text referral, assessment of author's intentions, justification of their opinions and judgements in the pursuit of critical awareness
- Write with confidence, imagination and enthusiasm with an awareness of purpose and audience
- Use grammar and punctuation correctly to attain high levels of English writing
- Understand and use technical vocabulary when discussing their reading and writing
- Write to a high standard in a range of genres, in the style of different authors and structure their writing in narrative and non-narrative styles
- Understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately
- Communicate effectively, speak with confidence and structure their talk in ways, which are coherent and understandable
- Listen carefully with good concentration so they are able to respond thoughtfully and appropriately
- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate and clarify their understanding
- Write with fluent, legible joined handwriting and take pride in the presentation of all their work

Curriculum Management and School Organisation

All children having a minimum of one hour literacy Practice every day.

The objectives and structure of the literacy hour are being followed on classes from year one upwards. In Reception the elements of the literacy hour are covered in the course of a school day in the second and third terms, but not necessarily as a designated hour.

Independent tasks take place at the same time as guided group work and work is differentiated according to ability groups.

Outside of the literacy hour, children will also be allocated ½ hour fortnightly for library study and approximately 1 ½ hours per week will be spent engaged in independent quiet reading and cross-curricular aspects of literacy.

Planning

Teachers plan on a weekly basis using the schools standard planning format, a balance is provided between fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Weekly plans are collected by the deputy head-teacher and monitored for consistency by the English Co-ordinator on a half termly basis.

Planning meetings to share ideas are held weekly. A meeting is held to draft the medium term plans towards the end of each term.

Class teachers are responsible for weekly planning; they will identify appropriate teaching and learning strategies and provide a balance and variety of content in accordance with the Teaching and Learning Policy.

Teaching Style and Classroom Organisation

High expectations and pace are fundamental to our teaching and learning.

The first half-hour of all literacy hours will be Individual led and working at own pace

There will also be a proportion of direct teaching although children will be actively involved in this stage of the lesson.

Teachers will clearly state the transition between different stages of the lesson so that children are aware of what is expected of them.

The class teacher will spend a minimum of 20 minutes with each group of children in turn during the week for guided activities.

All lessons will close with a plenary session where learning objectives will be reviewed and reinforced.

Grammar, punctuation and spelling skills will be directly taught during the first half of the literacy hour using text as a basis so that learning is put in context, children will be given opportunities to explore, experiment and practice during the group activities.

Handwriting will be taught outside of the literacy hour unless it is forming part of a guided session, children will not be expected to practice handwriting during group work. Activities involving the development of presentation skills will only form part of the group work when good handwriting ability has been developed.

Class teachers will take responsibility for organising their classroom environment for the literacy hour.

Organisation will be such that children are able to see texts clearly.

Objectives for the week and day will be displayed clearly in the language appropriate to the children.

Organisation will be such that children understand their task and are able to access resources to work independently.

Assessment

It is the role of the class teacher to carry out regular formative assessment to inform their future planning. Where objectives are being revisited for as a result of this it will be indicated in the planning.

Assessment should be used as a tool to identify children's progress against teaching objectives, determining what a child has already achieved and moving them on to the next stage of learning.

All class teachers will keep records of reading conferences undertaken with children with reference to progress made and 'next step' targets.

Reporting procedures are in line with DFES regulations. Parents receive an

annual written report and are invited to three parent evenings throughout the academic year.

SEN Provision

The School will be supported by a Special Needs Support Assistant who may be employed to work with children on the COP or alternatively support other children whilst the teacher works with this group.

Additional Literacy Support is used in years 3 and 4 and a pilot intervention programme used in year 1 to support those children who are unlikely to achieve expectations by the end of respective key stages.

English as an Additional Language

Children with English as an additional language will be assessed immediately on entry to school.

Language Support material is provided on the Accelerated Christian Education Curriculum (A.C.E) for students whose English is the second language and NHCS will provide a range of bilingual texts appropriate to the child's first language.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils are given access to the English Curriculum, regardless of age, sex, religion or ethnic origin.

We will strive to provide a range of texts and activities which reflect the diversity of our culture.

Able Learners

Extension activities will be prepared to challenge more able learners, especially for occasions where tasks are completed early.

Within classes, no group should be rigid and opportunities for moving into and out of groups should be given where the class teacher deems it appropriate.

Homework

Homework will be set regularly.

Reading books should be taken home nightly and spellings will be given weekly, these should be differentiated into a minimum of 3 groups appropriate to the children's ability.

Handwriting

In Key Stage 1 the children undertake 2, 15 minute sessions per week. In Key Stage 2, 1, 20 minute sessions per week.

In Reception, children are taught correct pencil grip, correct letter formation, orientation and size, incorporating 'flicks' on letters in preparation for joining. They write broadly ruled lines to enable them to distinguish between pictures and writing.

From Year 1, the children write on lined paper in exercise books designated specifically to writing.

All children are taught to discriminate between capital and lower case letters and how to set out their work with appropriate spacing. Correct letter and join formation is taught and expected of children in all subjects. All children should be using a consistently joined form by the end of Key Stage 1.

Where materials, resources, labels etc for the children to use is being prepared, teachers should use the school style of handwriting or the appropriate font on the computer so that this style is being reinforced.

Spelling

Children are taught spelling rules and strategies as well as key words relating to their individual/ability group as detailed in the A.C.E CURRICULUM

Each week spelling tests are given containing a combination of these. The spelling rule is taught during the whole class section of the literacy hour and activities relevant to the rule planned into the week's teaching, texts highlighting the rule being taught are used where possible. Children are given spelling lists to learn,

relevant to the objective being taught and the children's ability (lists should be differentiated in a minimum of three ways). The lists are written in a homework book, taken home and learnt for the following week. (See Homework Policy). In Reception children are taught about rhyme and its relationship with spelling patterns. Progression in Phonics is used to teach alphabetical letter knowledge, order, phonetic spelling, sounds and blends. Key words from the National Literacy Strategy framework are taught using word banks and look, cover, write, check strategies. Key words are sent home for practice. Progression is ensured throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 by following the specific guidelines laid down by the literacy strategy framework.

Dictionaries and Thesauruses

Children are introduced to first picture dictionaries from Reception. From Year 1, they use basic word based dictionaries and specific dictionary training begins in Year 2.

All children have access to dictionaries and thesauruses appropriate to their age and ability, which they are expected to use for spelling correction and vocabulary improvement. IT spellcheckers will be introduced in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, all children have their personal word book, for some children, these may continue to be used in Year 3.

In Key Stage 2, personal spelling logs are used to record word level work carried out in the literacy hour. This aims to build a bank of words with specific or irregular spelling patterns for the children to refer to. It is also used for the children to record the correct spelling of words which they consistently spell incorrectly in their own writing.

Assessment

Children are tested on the list they have learnt on the same day each week. The test takes place outside of the literacy hour. Children are taught rhymes and mnemonics to remember spellings, as well as identifying words within words. They are actively encouraged to generate their own methods for remembering spellings as well as using the look, read, cover, write, check method. Children are tested for spelling in the end of year in preparation for end of year test exams.

Reading

A range and balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry is covered in each term. These texts take the form of photocopied extracts, group readers, big books, posters and overhead transparencies. Shared reading takes place daily for approximately 15 minutes during the whole class section of the literacy hour.

For guided reading, the children are ability grouped. They are given an appropriately challenging text and taught specific strategies and skills, links are made with spelling and vocabulary work. Each child has a personal reading log which will be brought to guided reading sessions for the teacher to sign that the child's progress has been assessed. The texts used for guided reading should be unseen so that reading skill specifically may be assessed. Children will choose books to take home for reading practice. These books are from a range of reading schemes "Individualised Reading Programme". Additionally the children may also take one book from the school library during their class library session. (See Library Policy).

Daily opportunities for quiet independent reading are given in both key stages. Between 10 and 15 minutes a day is spent reading the child's choice of materials. The range in the classrooms includes fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and topic relevant texts, suitable for a range of interests and abilities. The class teacher spends this time targeting individual children, conferencing or for further guided activities.

Assessment

Home/School Record

This records the reading scheme books read by the child and encourages parents' comments. Class teachers will monitor how regularly pupils are reading and how often books are changed.

From Year 2, homework should include at least one book review per half term. During guided reading the teacher will also note when individual children have been assessed, in the home/school record, to keep parents informed of the child's progress.

Phonic Knowledge Record

In Reception a phonic knowledge record is begun which tracks letter sound/name correspondence, knowledge of blends and phonemes. This record continues through Key Stage 1 and in some cases into Key Stage 2.

Reading Conferences

A diagnostic reading conference takes place a minimum of twice a year (autumn and summer), where possible termly. The individual child is heard read for approximately 5-10 minutes and discusses with the class teacher their progress to date. Reading targets are set and the assessment noted on Reading Conference Record sheets.

Testing

Diagnostic reading comprehension tests are carried out at the beginning of the year and targets set.

Book Reviews

Children in Year 2,3 and 4 will complete a half termly book review to demonstrate their understanding and express their opinions about a given text.

Writing

In Reception, children are encouraged to write independently by using emergent writing. Scribbling for children is used where appropriate.

In both key stages children write during the independent activities and guided writing takes place regularly. Opportunities for other types of writing are made in other areas of the curriculum and extended writing takes place at least once a half term.

Reasons for writing are made clear to the children, they are taught the value of editing and redrafting their work and given the strategies to do this effectively.

Independent writing activities are planned carefully to reinforce previous work in shared sessions. They are expected to write in the style of the genre or author they have been studying, based on the whole class shared examples. In independent activities, children are given opportunities to practice aspects of grammar and punctuation. They are taught that these are vital to successful writing and are expected to apply their knowledge and skills in all written work.

As part of the planning process, year teams collect samples of writing from their year group to discuss and moderate at least twice a year, with the Literacy Co-ordinator, this ensures consistency across the year group.

Assessment

Each half term, children in key stage 1 complete one piece of writing where they are encouraged to demonstrate the skills they have required. This is annotated and 'next step' targets set.

Each half term, children in Key Stage 2 complete a timed piece of writing (45 minutes), as far as possible unaided, on a genre agreed by the year group. The children are encouraged to display the skills they have acquired. This is

annotated and 'next step' targets set.

Written Presentation

- If writing is on plain paper, a line guide must be used, ranging from broad 15mm lines in year 1 to narrow 8mm lines in year 6.
- On lined, the top line will be used and the very bottom line left blank.
- In Key Stage 1, the whole of the top line will be used for the date, years 3 and 4 will begin in the centre of the line and years 5 and 6 will place the date on the right. The date will be written in full.
- Titles and dates will be underlined from year 3.
- The title will be placed on the line below the date and then one line left before the main writing begins.
- Before a new piece of work begins, a line will be left under the previous piece of work and a ruled line drawn. The new piece of work will begin on the next line.
- Apart from the two instances above and other than in pieces of work to be edited, no lines will be left empty.
- All underlining will be done with a ruler.
- Crossing out errors will be done with a straight ruler line, using a pencil. No rubbers are to be used unless the work is a final draft for display or publishing.
- New paragraphs will be identified by an approximate 2 centimetre indentation, no lines will be left empty.
- Tippex and eraser pens are not allowed in any work.
- Fountain or ink pens may be used by any child who is deemed by their class teacher to have reached a good level of joined handwriting.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening during the whole class shared section of the literacy hour, contribution and opinion from the children is actively encouraged through carefully planned questioning. The plenary section is a planned opportunity for the children to share their learning, they are encouraged to explain their task and what they have discovered from it. Spoken language is the most vital part of a child's early development and particularly in Reception and Year 1, but in both key stages to some degree, role-play forms an important part of the literacy hour. In Reception and Year 1

classrooms an area or 'home corner' should be designated for the sole purpose of imaginative play.

Every year group has planned time for drama activities, encouraging public speaking to wider audiences, including school productions and assemblies.

Speaking and listening forms an important part of every area of the curriculum, but particularly PSME, where through circle time, every child has an opportunity to contribute.

Children's spoken contributions are responded to positively, all contributions are accepted.

Assessment

Each year group plans one activity per term to assess children's progress. This may range from observation of children's role-play in Reception to the planning and presentation of a 3 minute talk in Year 6.

English Across the Curriculum

In both key stages, the children will engage in a minimum of 1 hour per week of additional Literacy. This will be addressed through other subjects such as written recording in Science or as part of topic work.

Where a specific skill is required to complete a task in another subject area, these skills may be taught as part of the literacy hour. Opportunities for extended writing, for discussion and for speaking and listening will be planned into other curriculum areas and acknowledged as part of individual subject policies.
FEB 2008