



# English Policy

Written: November 2016

Review: November 2017

# White Meadows Primary Academy

## English Policy



### Background and Aims

At White Meadows we recognise the vital need for children to be confident, creative readers and writers who develop an enjoyment of the subject and a desire to develop their skills post primary school.

As a school we have the following aims for the learning of reading and writing for all children:

- Developing fluency in reading, including the ability to decode, comprehend and infer meaning from a wide variety of genres
- Be confident and accurate with their use of grammar
- Use a variety of techniques to ensure accurate spelling
- Use fluid and legible styles of handwriting
- Write creative, interesting and well-structured texts for a variety of genres and audiences
- Be exposed to and enjoy high quality texts
- Have positive attitudes towards both reading and writing

### Schemes of Learning and Mastery

*Read Write Inc.*

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the Read Write Inc. synthetic phonics programme. They progress onto Reading with RIC scheme once they can read with accuracy and speed.

The programme is for pupils from Reception to Year 2 who are learning to read and write. We also use it for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly as an intervention strategy.

Using Read Write Inc. Phonics allows pupils to:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills

- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read
- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Write confidently, with a strong focus on vocabulary and grammar
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- Acquire good handwriting

In addition, we teach pupils to work effectively in 'buddy pairs' to explain and consolidate what they are learning. This provides the teacher with opportunities to assess learning and to pick up on difficulties, such as pupils' poor articulation, or problems with blending or alphabetic code knowledge.

In Reception, we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly learn sounds and the letter or groups of letters they need to represent them. Simple mnemonics help them to grasp this quickly. This is especially useful for pupils at risk of making slower progress. This learning is consolidated daily. Pupils have frequent practice in reading high frequency words with irregular spellings - common exception words.

The children are assessed and placed in small groups according to their ability. At the end of each half term the children will be assessed again to check they have made progress and will be grouped again.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher supports their increasingly fluent decoding.

Once children complete the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme they are taught in their year group using Read with RIC scheme. This integrates reading, writing, thinking, and spoken language in all activities, to ensure the daily development of children's comprehension and wider literacy skills.

### *Reading Workshop*

Key Stage 2 use reading workshops during the week to develop reading skills. This method allows a mixture of independent reading tasks and group reading tasks with a teacher or a teaching assistant. This is usually run through a carousel approach and has recently had the addition of specific 'reading for pleasure' time to enhance enjoyment of reading and also supplement the requirement for Accelerated Reading.

## *Spelling*

For Reception to Year 2, Read Write Inc allows the children to spell effortlessly so that they can put their energy into working out what they want to write. When using 'Read Write Inc' to write the children will:

- Learn to write the letters/letter groups which represent the 44 sounds (graphemes)
- Learn to write words by sounding them out and then writing the corresponding graphemes
- Learn to write simple and then increasingly complex sentences
- Compose a range of texts using discussion prompts
- Compose stories based on picture strips

From Year 3, students are given differentiated weekly spellings that they can take home and learn. These are based on National Curriculum 2014 age-related spelling schemes.

Spellings are also supported in a manner of other ways too:

- Visual display of key words linked to topics and subjects , especially on working walls
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- Using dictionaries and thesauruses independently in class to correct and enhance words
- Using texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have
- Targeted one to one/small group support where appropriate
- Student use of 'vocab book' to independently try to write a word before investigating
- Teacher will recognise 'some' of the important spelling mistakes that a student may make in their English and Independent Writing book
- Student response to marking outlines that students will write out chosen corrections to practice correct spelling structure

## *Writing*

At White Meadows, we strive to provide as many opportunities to write as possible. To ensure that these expectations, set out by the National Curriculum 2014, are met that include: the ability to: write at length, use the correct spelling and punctuation, be grammatically correct and write in a wide range of ways and purposes, we use the 2014 National Curriculum and our Reach2 'Milestones' as a framework for planning English.

We also support the students in many ways to achieve including:

- 'Do time' for mark making in Reception
- Valuing children's writing at all stages
- Providing real opportunities for writing across all subjects
- Good modelling of writing processes from teacher
- Opportunities for collaborative writing, especially within 'Talk for Writing'
- Writing frames to assist where appropriate
- Teach grammar as a separate lesson where necessary
- Encourage and promote 'talk for writing' (See below)
- Providing time for planning, editing and revising
- Marking extended pieces of writing, especially Independent Writing, and set targets with the pupil
  - Use Learning Intention checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate so they can evaluate effectively
- Encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed

### *Talk for Writing*

Talk for Writing enables children to imitate the key language they need for a particular topic orally before they try reading and analysing it. Through fun activities that help them rehearse the tune of the language they need, followed by shared writing to show them how to craft their writing, children are helped to write in the same style. We have adopted the approach have not only increased their children's progress but have found that children and teachers enjoy this method.

It follows three key processes: Imitation, Innovation and Invention. In the imitation phase children will Children then learn a model text, supported visually

by a text map and physical movements. Children hear the text and say it for themselves before they see it written down.

Once the children know the text well they 'read it as a reader'. This involves in depth discussions around the text, focussing heavily on vocabulary and oral comprehension. They are encouraged to express opinions on their likes and dislikes regarding the text in order to improve their own writing.

The next stage is 'read as a writer' which involves identifying the underlying patterns of both the overall organisation, as well as how the writer creates different effects. The text is 'boxed up' (broken down into key sections) so that the structure becomes obvious and can be used as a basic planner.

Once the children have internalised the text they are ready to start innovating. Younger children and less confident writers alter their text maps and orally rehearse what they want to say. More confident writers use the boxing up planning tool, and then turn their plan into writing. At this stage the teaching is focussed on generating and crafting composition.

Finally, children move into invention where they write the text type independently and apply what they have learnt across the curriculum. Several 'inventions' are written and the most successful edited for publishing.

### *Accelerated Reader (AR)* (Due to be implemented Jan 2017)

We use Accelerated Reader scheme to ensure that pupils will develop reading skills most effectively. This often occurs when they read appropriately challenging books - difficult enough to keep them engaged but not so difficult that they become frustrated. Using this scheme, students will take the STAR reader test online to determine an appropriate reading range or 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD). As pupils are retested, their ZPD ranges increase and broaden so they continue to read suitably challenging literature.

Once a child has read an appropriate book, they can take a quiz to ascertain comprehension of the text. By passing this quiz, the student can gain an allocation of words that get stored in their records.

AR gives our teachers additional information to monitor students' reading practice and make informed decisions to guide their future learning.

A comprehensive set of reports reveals how much a student has been reading, at what level of complexity, and how well they have understood what they have read. Vocabulary growth and literacy skills are also measured, giving teachers

insight into how well students have responded to reading schemes and class instruction.

This has been found to be a great scheme to encourage children to read further for pleasure. We will create inter-class competition, individual prizes to celebrate those that have achieved in this scheme.

## **Weekly English Structure**

In Foundation Stage and KS1, phonics teaching occurs for the first hour of each day, using the Read, Write, Ink scheme of work. Pupils who have not secured their phonic understanding by the end of Y2 will continue to have phonic specific teaching throughout Y3, according to need. KS2 use reading workshops and guided reading to develop comprehension and inference understanding.

There is an expectation that children write some work every day, with four days of the week dedicated to topic based writing. The fifth day is an independent write, which allows pupils to choose the writing that they do and apply the skills of writing in an unaided context.

Dedicated grammar sessions occur in each year group, with the expectation that the pupils are then able to apply this in their work.

White Meadows has a dedicated spelling scheme which specifies, by year group, spelling expectations. Spelling practice occurs every day, with the contexts decided within year group teams and appropriate to the children's stage of development.

## **Planning and Teaching**

Lesson planning is conducted by class teachers, under the monitoring of year group leaders and SLT. Sequences of lessons should be flexible enough to respond to the needs of the children and annotations should indicate how the lessons have been altered to take this into account. Writing targets for each child, based on their next steps in learning, should be fixed into their books and accessible during each lesson. These targets are regularly reviewed by the class teacher and updated accordingly.

Working walls are used in every classroom to support the children's learning. These develop over sequences of lessons and are not intended to be 'pretty' displays. Key vocabulary, images, modelling and pupil explanations are all included to enhance writing understanding. Working walls are part of the resource bank in the classroom and help to develop pupils as independent learners. Thesauruses and dictionaries are available in every classroom to support vocabulary and spelling development.

## **Marking and Assessment**

Children should be involved in the marking of their work wherever possible and feed forward comments are left by teachers in at least three pieces of written work per week. These take the form of questions designed to extend the understanding of children in their class and encourage them to think critically of their work. Peer marking is also used across the school and children are taught how to be critical friends to their peers. Time is given each day for pupils to respond to teacher and peer comments.

Attainment and progress data for reading and writing is recorded half-termly on O-Track, the school's data tracking system. In order to have mastered a particular concept pupils are required to show independent application through a range of problems. SAT tests are set for children to take at the end of year two and year six. When the school has the results of these the data is analysed by a combination of the English lead, year six lead and SLT. Measures will be taken to address any issue that arise as a result.

## **Presentation**

Children must be set high expectations for the presentation of their work and be taught to have pride in their learning. Every piece of work should have a date (in the top left hand corner of the page) and title (in the centre of the second line) which are underlined using a ruler. Learning intentions and success criteria should be cut accurately and stuck in, under that date and title, parallel with the horizontal lines on the page. Where children have made an error, one horizontal pencil line should be used, with a ruler, to cross out the unwanted writing. The expectation is that pupils will have developed their handwriting to a point where they can use pen to write by the end of Y2. However, for those pupils that find this more challenging, extra support with pencil handwriting will be given, in the form of interventions, to bring the children up to this standard.

Presentation issues should be picked up, either verbally or during written marking, but should NOT form the basis of feed forward comments.

## **Evaluation and Monitoring**

High quality writing and reading will be maintained through the following monitoring procedures:

- Lesson observations
- Book looks
- Monitoring of reading records
- Planning monitoring
- Learning walks
- Data analysis

Teachers will be given timely feedback if any actions are required to maintain consistency and quality of learning. Staff development meetings will also be used to disseminate up to date developments in best practice reading and writing teaching and the English lead will look for appropriate CPD to help develop staff confidence and competence in the teaching of mathematics.

## **Equal Opportunities**

English at White Meadows is taught so that all pupils can succeed.

- Our expectations do not limit pupil achievement
- Targets are set with each individual pupil's next steps at the forefront
- Children are challenged and extended to increase their need for independent thinking
- Interventions take into account the level of understanding of the child and help them to develop appropriately

