

Stedham Primary School



English Policy



Literacy Lead: T. Noble



Stedham Primary School English Policy

Reviewed Autumn 2023



What we believe

At Stedham Primary School, we believe that the teaching of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read, spell and write for a wide range of purposes, including the communication of their ideas, views and feelings. Children are enabled to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama, as well as of non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by looking at its patterns, structures and origins.



Children are given opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking, reading and writing across a creative curriculum, enabling them to make connections between subjects and their learning experiences.

The central belief that we hold at Stedham, when it comes to Literacy, is that reading and being exposed to good quality texts underpins all learning. We therefore have decided to make good quality texts the starting point for our topics choices and our literacy lessons. The vast majority of literacy lessons that are taught in our school are based on the text that the class will be reading at that time.

As a staff we all agree:

- All pupils have the right to access, progress and achieve in the English curriculum at their own level of ability
- That all teachers have responsibility for the development of English across the school
- That all teachers are responsible for the development of literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum

Our aims for the teaching of English

1. To raise the standard of speaking and listening, reading and writing across our school;
2. To provide pupils with a range of relevant and purposeful opportunities to develop their ability to read, understand and engage with various types of text for enjoyment and learning;
3. To enable children to communicate using written language effectively, making and shaping text appropriately, according to context, purpose, reader or audience.
4. To improve the planning, drafting and editing of their written work;
5. To teach children phonics through a structured programme in order to support their reading and writing;
6. To enable pupils to express and communicate meaning in spoken language, listening to and interpreting what others say and matching style and response to audience, context and purpose;
7. To improve the presentation of their written work via the use of a standardised handwriting policy across the school- this is based on the Twinkl Handwriting Scheme.

Role of the Teacher

In the teaching of literacy, the teacher fulfils a number of roles in all modes of language.

- **model:** as a skilled user of language, the teacher's role is the central element in fostering positive attitudes towards literacy, including learning to enjoy reading for pleasure.
- **facilitator:** providing a supportive and stimulating environment, purposeful activities and enabling children to develop independent literacy skills;
- **initiator:** providing a variety of resources and opportunities for a wide range of balanced and differentiated activities to encourage the development of skills in talking, listening, reading and writing, and to cater for different learning styles;
- **monitor:** observing and recording the development of skills in literacy;
- **assessor:** evaluating and assessing the development of skills in literacy.

The approach of using literature at the core of English teaching in the primary school

Aims

The English National Curriculum (2014) states that:

'The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.'

We believe the exposure of children's literature within the primary school setting is vital as a rich context for learning; not only within English as a subject but to support building a reading culture throughout the school. We have recently spent a considerable amount of money making our library area into a more colourful and relaxed space for reading for pleasure and have bought into a scheme called the Literary Tree to place reading at the centre of everything we teach at Stedham.

We aim to use high quality books that offer opportunities for empathy and can aid philosophical enquiry, as a means of developing the spoken language requirements through debate, drama and discussion using the issues raised through, and within, the text.

Methodology

By placing books at the core, we are allowing teachers to use the text as the context for the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum states that:

“This guidance is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers’ creativity, simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons.”

This would suggest that a context for learning is vital – and this is where our chosen approach can support teachers with ensuring that objectives for reading and writing, including those for grammar can have purpose and are given an exciting context through the use of a good quality text.

We will always aim for our writing opportunities to be meaningful; whether short or long and that the audience is clear. We believe books offer this opportunity: our final aim would be that that children have real reasons to write, whether to explain, persuade, inform or instruct and that where possible, this can be embedded within text or linked to a curriculum area. Writing in role using a range of genres is key to our approach as is writing a critique of the text and making comparisons – all writing skills that will support children in preparation for their time in secondary school and beyond. This sits comfortably alongside the following statement from the English national curriculum:

‘The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.’

Resourcing and coverage

Through use of The Literary Curriculum scheme we have mapped the coverage of the entire English Programme of Study for KS1 and KS2, as well as meeting the needs of the statutory (March 2017) Early Years Framework. In many cases, objectives are covered more than once and children have opportunities to apply these several times over the course of a year, as well as to consolidate prior knowledge from previous years. We believe

strongly that children should be secure in applying the skills of curriculum 2014 within their writing and their reading and that this approach is fully comprehensive. Where needed, planning sequences are adapted, personalised and differentiated by the class teacher to ensure all access arrangements can be made to support children with the requirements.



The
Literacy
Tree

Education Consultancy
for Primary Schools

Speaking and Listening

Aims

We aim to enable our children:

- To communicate effectively.
- To speak confidently and to express themselves clearly in a variety of situations.
- To listen attentively and respond to others, having respect for the different opinions of others.
- To develop the skills needed for group discussion.
- To participate in and respond to drama.

Classroom environment

It is our aim that our classroom environments encourage an atmosphere where all children have equal opportunities to talk, and in the knowledge that their contributions are valued. Opportunities for talk are planned into the class curriculum, and the children understand that this forms part of their learning.

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

- Teachers plan opportunities for speaking and listening activities in their medium and short term planning.
- The teacher provides opportunities which enable children to take part in both formal and informal types of talk, e.g.
 - listening to and reading stories, songs & poems
 - talk partner activities
 - describing events, observations and experiences
 - giving reasons, explanations and opinions
 - responding to others
 - planning, predicting and investigating in small groups
 - presentation to different audiences
 - imaginative play and role play
 - drama and hot seating
 - taking part in class discussions and school council
 - circle time.
- Classroom organisation and management provides opportunities for children to work in different ways.
- The teacher may model specific types of talk through demonstration or role play.
- Teachers will make selective use of television and radio, and computer software as appropriate.
- Speaking and listening activities will offer opportunities to link learning in reading and writing and other curriculum areas.

Reading

“Books are a uniquely portable magic.”
— Stephen King

Aims

We aim to enable our children:

- To read independently, fluently and expressively, with understanding and enjoyment.
- To read a wide range of texts, including text on screen both for pleasure and for information.
- To engage with and respond to what they read.

The National Curriculum perhaps puts it best when it says that children should:

‘...develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.’

Classroom environment

Our classrooms promote the importance of reading. Each classroom houses either a reading corner or bookcases, containing quality fiction and non-fiction texts which are inspired to encourage all children to read. Books are displayed in classrooms and form part of topical and informative displays throughout the school. The library contains a range of non-fiction and fiction texts, and books are also incorporated into library displays. The range of available texts in both the classrooms and library is continually under review, and additional resources will be purchased as required.

Scholastic Reading Pro



We currently subscribe to Scholastic Reading Pro, which enables us to keep track of our free-readers' reading habits; progress; and ability in reading. The majority of our books across the school have been lexiled (which means they have been given a difficulty score). Each lexiled book also has an associated 10-question quiz attached to it- this means that we can keep track of children's progress and attainment to make sure they are reading books at a suitable and challenging level. Children are given certificates when they reach certain landmarks in their reading journey.

There is an expectation throughout KS2 that a Scholastic Comprehension quiz is undertaken regularly - at least once a month- this will enable us to make good observations about children's progress. We also have bought in 'Scholastic Short Reads' - short, differentiated texts that the children can quiz on, should they be reading a thicker book that takes them longer to complete than a month- this makes sure that every child takes a quiz regularly and no child is slipping through the net or coasting along when it comes to making progress in reading.

Reading Rockets

After pupil and parent conferencing, we made a decision to try and increase the motivation of reading for pleasure at home. We have therefore created Reading Rockets, a bespoke reading reward system for reading at home. Each classroom has the Reading Rocket Reward chart displayed prominently in their classroom and this should be updated regularly as children read throughout the year.



Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

We use a range of teaching styles and strategies across our school. This enables us to vary the children's learning experiences and to cater for individual learners at the different stages of their reading.

Examples of our approaches and organisation:

- Teachers read aloud to children in their classes on a regular basis from a wide range of good quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry- each class will have an age appropriate class read on the go (with the exception of Rabbits class who will usually finish a book in one sitting)
- Paired reading with peers or an adult.
- Word recognition skills are developed systematically in the EYFS and KS1 using the National Strategy Letters and Sounds materials.
- Modelling of reading strategies.
- Guided reading in small groups, including comprehension skills.
- Shared reading using high quality texts.
- Provision for reading support.
- Library time to select books to support class learning or personal interest.

Progression

Our school currently uses the Scholastic PM Reading Scheme as our core reading scheme, supplemented by a growing collection of 'real books' and other scheme material, such as Oxford Reading Tree (see below). Reading materials are regularly reviewed and resourced to ensure all genres are included and meet the needs of current pupils. The Scholastic scheme was decided upon as it grouped the books into smaller bands than the previous Oxford Reading Tree scheme did, this mean we can track children's progress more accurately as they go through the school. Some Oxford Reading Tree books are still used lower down the school for our emerging readers due to their progression fitting more exactly with the phonics planning.

Writing

"Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass."
— Anton Chekhov

Aims

We aim to enable our children:

- To write clearly, accurately and confidently for a variety of purposes and audiences, including word processing with IT.
- To develop a consistent, clear, fluent and joined handwriting style and to be aware of the importance of the presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To understand the conventions of writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- To plan, draft and edit their writing.
- To feel valued as writers and to appreciate the writing of others through critical and supportive peer feedback.

Classroom Environment

Our classrooms aim to provide a stimulating environment where children are encouraged and inspired to write. Word walls, dictionaries, thesauri, word banks, and topic glossaries are all made available to children as appropriate.

Classroom displays may contain writing in different forms, including the children's own work, extracts from fiction and non-fiction texts, information boards and illustrations..

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

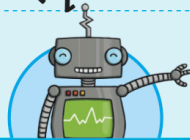
- We provide a wide variety of reasons and purposes for writing and across the school may provide many opportunities for child initiated and role-play writing- many of units of work will incorporate some degree of outdoor learning as part of our general ethos and vision for our school.
- Much of our writing is based off the text that that class is currently reading and this rich quality text will provide the basis and foundation of what we write.
- Children become familiar with the structure and language features of different forms of writing, including letters, diaries, lists, invitations, and notes.
- The children write for a range of audiences and purposes, e.g. writing for themselves, each other, the school, and the wider community and to amuse, persuade or frighten the reader.
- Teachers show children how to approach a writing task by writing themselves, explaining what they are doing as they go along (modelled writing) or by scribing the children's ideas (shared writing).
- Writing sessions may include time for discussion and planning as required.
- Children are encouraged to revise and redraft in some forms of writing as appropriate- edits will be made in a different colour pen (usually blue, but may be black dependent on the child's normal writing colour)
- Children engage in collaborative writing in small groups from time to time, enabling them to share the ideas of others as a stimulus for their writing.

- We use the Letters and Sounds materials to support the teaching of phonics and encourage children to 'have a go' at writing as soon as possible and to apply their developing phonic skills and knowledge to spell.
- We use the Twinkl Handwriting Scheme, as soon as children are able to form most letters correctly and have a good pencil grip- this was chosen for its close similarity to the Bug Club Phonics handwriting exemplification on the Bug Club Phonics software.
- Once the children have mastered the basic letter formation from Bug Club Phonics, they will move onto the 'looped Twinkl' handwriting style.

How to Write Cursive Letters

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn

Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz



Spelling

Aims

We aim to enable our children:

- To teach children the patterns, rules and exceptions in spelling to enable them to become confident writers.
- To expose children to a wider variety of vocabulary to extend their word choices when writing.
- To enable all children to use appropriate dictionaries and thesauruses to define words; to check their spellings; and to increase the complexity of their vocabulary.

Teaching approaches and organisation of learning

- To make sure that children are familiar with the spelling approach at Stedham, there will be a certain degree of standardisation throughout the four classes.
- Each class have weekly differentiated spellings to learn and practice.
- There will be time dedicated each week (Monday after break) to the actual teaching of each specific spelling pattern.
- An occasional standardising testing system is in place to assess spelling. This assessment will be undertaken every term to give children a quantifiable score and reading age which will enable the class teachers and English subject leaders to assess the progress of individual children in an accurate and succinct fashion.
- At Stedham we follow the Spelling Shed scheme of work- the rationale for this can be found below.



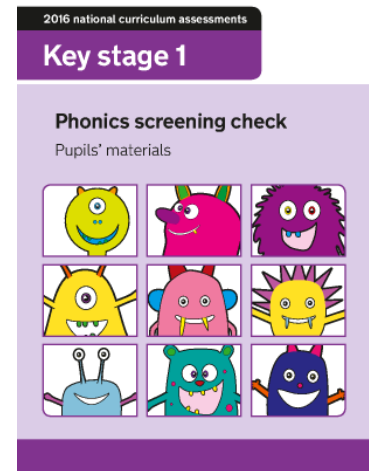
Spelling Shed

Phonics

What is phonics?

Phonics provides the building blocks of both reading and writing. At Stedham Primary School we follow the DFE's Letters and Sounds programme for the teaching of phonics. This is not age specific but split into developmental stages and is used across the school not just in Rabbits class.

Phase 1 begins with encouraging children to listen and hear sounds within sequences. The phases that follow teach the groups of letter sounds that the children come across most frequently. These groups of sounds can also be put together to make words. We teach these phases with Jolly Phonics to ensure that all children receive multi sensory learning. Children see, hear, feel and do each letter sound.



Teaching approaches and organisation of learning



Every day, in the classes that have been assessed as requiring phonics, we have a 30 minute phonic session. This consists of the following;

- Revisit and Review previous learned letters, blending and segmenting
 - Teach a new letter and/or any Tricky words
 - Practise reading or spelling of new words with new letter
 - Apply reading or writing a caption containing new letters
- In a typical week, 4 sounds will be taught using the Bug Club Phonics software.

The sound that is taught in the morning will then be revisited in the afternoon to cement learning.

There is an expectation that the children will be exposed to the phonics check assessment materials throughout the year with increasing frequency as the date of the test draws closer in order to familiarise and normalise the expectations and structure of the test with the children who will be taking it- this is particularly important when it comes to children understanding alien (nonsense) words.

Phonics will be monitored regularly by the literacy lead after discussions with each class teacher and the phonics groups will be observed once a term.

Early Reading

In keeping with the expectation of fidelity between early reading and phonics, we also use the Bug Club books which enable us to make sure that the books that the children are reading are broadly in line with what they are being taught in their phonics lessons. The children will have their books read with an adult once a week (or more) and these books will be changed at the professional discretion of the member of staff who is hearing the child read.

The Bug Club book scheme will be used by the child until they reach Phase 5 of the scheme. Once they can read this level of book fluently, they will then move off the scheme and begin reading carefully selected Scholastic books in order to bridge the gap between 'book scheme reading' and 'free-choice reading'.

All children still on the phonics scheme will take home flashcards with sounds that they still need to learn and these assessment sheets that track the progress of the sounds learnt can be found in each child individual link book. In KS1 and for individual children in KS2, also in the link book, is an assessment sheet for high frequency words that the child needs to learn to read. High-frequency word flashcards will also be sent home and changed in school, again at the professional discretion of a staff member.

English Planning

Long term and medium term planning is firstly based on the National Curriculum and then taken and adapted from the Literary Tree Scheme for English.

We have carefully looked how to link the book(s) we are focussing on in each term to the wider curriculum, so there will be many cross-curricular links across each unit of work. Medium term planning is produced on a termly or half-termly basis, depending on Key Stage or topic taught.

Medium term plans are monitored by the English Subject Leader or Headteacher on a termly basis.

In KS2, guided reading planning is again based of key texts and taken from the literary tree scheme which will adapted to suit the needs of the individual children within each class.

In KS2, spelling planning is based on the Spelling Shed scheme of learning. This was chosen because it followed a structure that seemed to fit the need of the children at Stedham and also gives teachers confidence that each objective in the spelling curriculum is taught. The whole school has been assessed on their spellings and children go to different groups on a Monday morning depending on their own needs. Spelling activities are then brought back to their base class to practice throughout the week.

Assessment and recording

Assessment is at the heart of the teaching and learning process.

- In the EYFS, children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Most of the observations for assessment are based on those activities that children initiate and engage with independently across the range of provision.
- In Key Stage 1 and 2 teacher assessments are based on NC and end of year or key stage expectations.
- As children move on through the school, teachers continually observe children's attainment and progress, using this to inform next steps for planning. Curriculum targets for the end of the academic year are set and teacher assessments are recorded at six points during the academic year and entered onto the Twinkl spreadsheet (see assessment policy)
- Year 1 children undertake the Phonic Screening tests during the summer term.
- Progress is monitored each term in Pupil Progress Meetings to ensure children are on track, and intervention strategies are put in place if necessary.
- Staff meetings, locality moderation events and INSET days provide opportunities for formal and informal discussions, whole-school and external moderations of work, and reviews of pupil progress.
- At the end of KS1 and KS2, the children are rigorously assessed using the new 2017/18 ITAF checklist and accompanying exemplars. These enable teachers to have a solid and authoritative grounding in their assessment judgements.
- At least once a year, a class teacher will attend an 'Area Moderation Meeting' this gives teachers a 'second opinion' on their writing assessment judgements throughout the year

Monitoring and Evaluating

The Head Teacher and the English subject leader are responsible for monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievements in the subject, including reading, writing and spelling. The English subject leader will monitor English throughout the school. This includes learning walks, work sampling, observing and talking to children about their work in class and their learning targets. The subject lead will support staff development and training, model teaching and visit other classes.

IT

Teachers can carefully use IT to promote speaking and listening, spelling, reading and writing across the curriculum. IT can provide opportunities for collaborative writing and the editing and drafting of cross-curricular pieces of work. The presentation of word processed writing can be altered to reflect purpose or audience.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The needs of children requiring additional support for English will be discussed by the English Subject Leaders, SENDCo and the class teacher. Intervention strategies will be put in place and progress will be monitored. The English Subject lead is aware of the individual interventions that go on throughout the school.

Equal Opportunities

All children have an entitlement to participate fully in English, regardless of gender, race, age or ability, in accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy. Children whose second language is English receive appropriate support as necessary. We are aware of the research that suggests boys under-achieve in literacy. We will give equal access to materials, teacher time and attention. We aim to raise standards among all children equally.

Reviewed September 2023

Date of next review: September 2024