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RAF BENSON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
POLICY DOCUMENT
English Policy

Signed: Signed on original		Date: 26 September 2023	
Head Teacher			
Policy has been adopted/reviewed by Governing Body:			
Signed: Signed on original		Date: October 2023	
Chair of Governors			
Committee responsible for policy review	Full Governing Board	Linked Policies	Curriculum Policy

English Policy

At RAF Benson Community Primary School we believe that every pupil has the right to be able to read and write effectively and to be able to communicate eloquently with others. Pupils will be given the opportunity to learn and apply their English knowledge and skills, within a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum.

Aims

- To further strengthen quality first teaching in English across the school so that we increase the proportion of children who achieve the expected standard and greater depth in each year group.
- To provide an English curriculum that is motivating, inclusive and challenging for all children working at every level, including children with SEND.
- To establish high expectations for teachers in the teaching and assessment of English.
- To promote continuity, coherence and progression across the school.

In order to achieve these aims, the teaching of English, in all of its forms, has a high profile within the school.

We follow the 2014 National Curriculum for English which aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

The areas of English included are

- **Spoken language**
- **Reading** (word reading / phonics; comprehension – both listening and reading)
- **Writing** (transcription – spelling and handwriting; composition)
- **Spelling** (phonics)
- **Vocabulary, grammar & punctuation**

Spoken Language

Spoken language is vital for the development of language and grammar in reading and writing, as well as for the understanding of other curriculum areas. We teach children to make themselves understood and to organise their thoughts in order to write coherently.

As part of children's reading, children are also taught to read aloud, recite poetry and to listen to performances and speech with the aim of recalling or recapping information.

Through the use of targeted questioning and detailed discussion we teach children to justify their ideas and explain their thoughts clearly.

Through drama we teach children to adopt roles, understand character and motive. We also provide regular opportunities to improvise and perform to an audience.

EYFS- Reception Class

The spoken language is the basis of all communication, reading and writing. As such it is focussed on to a higher degree in Early Years. 'Communication and Language' is a prime area of learning in the Early Years curriculum and as such added focus is given to the early learning goals of 'Speaking' and 'Listening, Attention and Understanding'.

Much of children's understanding of other curriculum areas is developed and assessed through talk between peers and with adults.

Reading

Our approach to teaching reading is based upon the theory that decoding skills and understanding are viewed as equally important and as such should both be taught as a way of reading, with comprehension becoming a focus once phonics-based decoding and speedy recognition of familiar printed words are securely embedded. We encourage our children to read for enjoyment and therefore reading is taught through a variety of methods and approaches throughout the class week.

A variety of genres and reading materials is encouraged from EYFS to Y6, by regular use of the 'Rocket Phonics' systematic phonics scheme, class book collections, differentiated guided reading book sets and the school library. Classes are given a small purse at the beginning of each academic year with which to purchase books for their book corners and to support incentives such as annual book corner competitions, to encourage classes to create inviting and motivating areas for the classrooms, which helps to foster a love of learning amongst the children.

EYFS- Reception Class

At the start of Reception children are introduced to wordless, picture books designed to develop their spoken vocabulary, ability to discuss stories and comprehension skills. Parents are informed of the importance of picture books through a reading information meeting in the first four weeks of the school year. When the books are sent home, they are accompanied by an information sheet which provides parents with a range of strategies on how best to explore them with their children at home.

Once the class has reached the required point of teaching in the Rocket Phonics scheme, children are given fully decodable books to take home. They then progress through the scheme matching the teaching in the classroom. On a child's given reading day, their reading books are changed, and they read one to one with an adult with all notes of these sessions recorded in the child's reading record. Those identified as the 'First 20%' of readers are read with daily. Children are also encouraged to choose an additional book from the class library to take home to support their development of high-level vocabulary, storytelling and comprehension skills. It is expected that parents read the library book to their child as they are not fully decodable, and children should not be expected to read them. Parents are made of all of this at a reading information meeting in the first four weeks of the school year and through information published on the class webpage.

The Early Learning Goals for Literacy- Word Reading' state that children must be able to:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

This is the aim for all children at the end of Reception.

Word Reading / Phonics

Decoding skills are primarily taught through phonics sessions. From Reception, children follow the Rising Stars Rocket Phonics scheme progressing to Rocket Phonics Next Steps in Year 2. Sessions are taught five days per week and last for 30 minutes.

In order to further apply these skills, decoding is also taught through shared and individual reading sessions.

Independent reading happens regularly during the class week with all children being heard by an adult at least once a week and our First 20% of children, every day. This is to teach and evaluate the child's decoding strategies, ensure good quality teacher talk laying a foundation for contextual vocabulary and comprehension, and to motivate pupils to develop a love of reading.

Every child has their own reading record, within which it is expected staff and parents will record the child's reading, noting areas of strength and additional support needs. It is expected children will read at home on a daily basis and should record entries in their reading record at least five times a week. Reading records are monitored regularly by teachers and SLT in order to identify any gaps in reading provision for individual children.

The reading of Phase 2- 5 high frequency words is strengthened by use of high frequency cards, the progression of which can be achieved through quick recognition, and which are given out with reading books in Reception in accordance with the Rocket Phonics scheme, and published in the centre of each child's Reading Record from Year 1 onwards, until all 300 high frequency words can be read on sight. From Year 1, words assessed as known by the child are highlighted in their Reading Record book, facilitating targeted home practice of words yet to be learnt.

The participation of parents in children's progression in reading is strongly encouraged and parents are asked to read with their children regularly and note this in children's reading records. Parent workshops are offered at regular intervals through the year, and resources are available on the school website, such as recommending reading lists.

Children are expected to read at home daily with an adult in order to embed both word reading and comprehension skills. Children whose reading records show regular reading at home with an adult are recognised for their effort and good practice.

Comprehension

Reading comprehension is taught through individual, shared and differentiated guided reading. Class texts linked to school values are chosen to provide motivating and stretching vocabulary and context, to support understanding and challenge to a level that the children could not read by themselves. It is enhanced by application across the curriculum whereby facts and information can be sourced for other subjects.

Guided reading is timetabled daily, with a carousel of activities to include reading with the teacher, independent reading, comprehension practice and a SPaG activity. These sessions should develop vocabulary and understanding across a range of texts, and be positioned at a level appropriate for each child. Standard planning framework and recording sheets are used across the school to ensure a consistent and thorough approach.

EYFS-Reception class

Children start Guided Reading sessions at the beginning of the summer term. These begin with whole class teaching before moving to small group carousels in preparation for Year 1. The sessions are designed to encourage independence and develop comprehension skills.

The Early Learning Goals for Literacy- Comprehension state that children must be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and during role-play.

This is the aim for all children at the end of Reception.

Writing

Transcription

There is a high level of expectation for children's writing, for consistent and accurate handwriting that reflects letters of the correct formation and relative size, in accordance with the 'Rocket Phonics'. Presentation in books of any subject, should be neat and consistent with the school presentation guide included on the front cover of maths and English books. Children should be given the opportunity to develop an effective, cursive style of writing and by the end of key stage 1 should have adopted this cursive style in a larger proportion of their writing through KS2. School-generated reference learning materials, including displays, should model this style of writing to support children in their writing style and accuracy.

Children are taught:

- how to hold a pencil/pen using the correct and comfortable grip.
- to form letters properly, that is, where to start and where to finish.

- to form letters of regular size and shape.
- to use the correct terminology of ascenders and descenders.
- to form upper- and lower-case letters.
- to write from left to right and top to bottom of the page.
- to put regular spaces between letters and words.
- how to join letters, and which letters are best left unjoined.
- to understand the importance of neat and clear presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively and read back their work for editing.
- to write legibly in both joined and printed style with increasing fluency and speed.
- to use different forms of handwriting for different purposes.

Handwriting should be viewed as a means of clear and effective communication and as such integral to any 'best' work. To encourage children to work with care, rubbers are kept to a minimum and not used at all during handwriting practice. Problems with handwriting in children's work can be brought to the child's attention through the marking policy. Pen licences are rewarded to children in Year 3 – Year 6 where handwriting is consistently neat across the whole curriculum.

EYFS-Reception Class

Children are taught letter formation as they learn each new letter, as part of the 'Rocket Phonics' programme.

Handwriting and letter formation is covered in two Early Learning Goals;

- Literacy- Writing which states that children must be able to "write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed."
- Physical Development – Fine Motor Skills which states that children must be able to "hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases."

Left handed writers

Teachers will employ strategies to enable left-handed writers to access the handwriting programme successfully. Teachers will model sky writing with left and right hand. Left-handed children will sit on the left of right handed children to allow more space for movement. Teachers will give attention to left-handed writers to ensure bad habits are not formed.

Composition

We believe that to raise standards in writing across the school, children need to have the opportunity to write at length in a purposeful and regular way, working systematically on necessary skills. Children also need to develop a 'writing voice' which showcases higher order writing which is different to that of everyday speech.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching of writing follows a consistent learning journey framework. This framework is expected to be repeated twice a half-term, though the duration of each is set at the teacher's discretion.

- Cold write – children write independently in the form about to be taught, using knowledge that they are familiar with, such as a topic taught the previous term or a personal experience, in order for the teacher to assess ability with this genre of writing and to adjust planning, including support and challenge, accordingly.
- Stimulate and generate – children are immersed in vocabulary and opinion linked to a text driver, before completing an independent application write demonstrating the correct use of new vocabulary within a familiar form of writing.

- Capture, sift and sort – a model text and scaffolded apprentice write are used to teach and apply grammar in line with the curriculum and the form of this writing.
- Create, refine and evaluate – children plan, write and edit a piece of independent writing as the final output for this learning journey (hot write).

In addition to these learning journeys, Key Stage 1 and 2 children complete an extended write each half-term. This should be in a form taught the previous term, but the hook can be at the teacher's discretion, linked to topic, a personal experience such as a class trip, or a separate hook designed to motivate and inspire children in their class, such as a scenario set up in class or a resource such as British Pathé, Literacy Shed or Pobble 365. This writing activity provides the children with an opportunity to apply their English learning into a meaningful and lengthy piece of writing.

Writing for Purpose and linked to the wider community is also a way of motivating children to write. This might take the form of a thank-you letter following a trip or to a visitor into school, a writing competition, or science ambassadors writing an article for the base newsletter, ROAR, as a summary of school activities during British Science Week.

Children are encouraged to use correct English skills throughout the rest of the curriculum and writing in other subjects is marked according to the English marking policy.

EYFS-Reception Class

From the start of Reception, children are expected to complete at least one adult led writing task a week that matches their level of development. When children are ready, a second independent task is added.

The Early Learning Goals for Literacy- Writing state that children must be able to:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

This is the aim for all children at the end of Reception.

Progress

Exposure to writing at different levels and for different purposes, enables children and teachers to have sight of how writing should be progressing in terms of handwriting, presentation, content and volume, in the form of school displays and regular book monitoring, across phase within school and between schools.

Spelling (Phonics), Punctuation & Grammar

Spelling

The ability to spell with confidence and accuracy is essential in order for children to write fluently and legibly. We aim to create an environment that allows children to develop the ability to learn spellings and to use them subsequently to produce an effective piece of writing. We want children to be able to draw on the learning strategies devised by peers as well as teachers, and to develop

confidence in using available resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses, spelling word banks (on desks or working walls), spelling journals and computer spell checks effectively.

At RAF Benson in Years 1-6, we teach primarily the spellings set out on the statutory 'appendix 1' in the 2014 National Curriculum. This is done in tandem with the common exception words provided for each class, beginning in Reception within the Rocket Phonics scheme. Children are assessed termly on these with the expectation that they will successfully spell around 80% or more by the end of the period (Y1, Y2, Y4, Y6).

To meet these statutory requirements we follow 'Rocket Phonics' systematic phonics from Reception to Year 2, before moving on to ' Babcock No Nonsense Spelling' in Year 3, once children have been successful at their phase 5 sounds. If phonics support is required in Year 3 and beyond, 'Rocket Phonics' is delivered in targeted interventions to support, or in place of, the class spelling sessions for individual children or a small working group.

The phonics screening check is statutory at the end of Year 1, and again at the end of Year 2 if a child has not reached the required advised standard by the end of Year 1, or if the check was not completed at that time, perhaps due to moving from another national curriculum.

Punctuation & Grammar

We teach pupils the vocabulary children need to develop their spoken language, including when discussing their reading and writing. In line with the 2014 national Curriculum, we also believe; " It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching".

We teach the different elements of this according to 'Appendix 2- Vocabulary, Punctuation and Grammar' of the 2014 National Curriculum.

Grammar assessment is through a combination of teacher assessment and formal summative assessment papers for Years 1-6. Our marking and feedback policy also supports summative assessment and the ongoing correction of misconceptions within children's written work through adaptive planning and teaching, regular and effective developmental comments in feedback given in books, and with timely interventions to address identified gaps.

Year 1

“Pupils entering Year 1 who have not yet met the Early Learning Goals for literacy should continue to follow their school’s curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their word reading, spelling and language skills. However, these pupils follow the Year 1 programme of study in terms of the books they listen to and discuss, so that they develop their vocabulary and understanding of grammar, as well as their knowledge more generally across the curriculum, in line with their peers.

“If they are still struggling to decode and spell, they need to be taught to do this urgently through a rigorous and systematic phonics programme so that they catch up rapidly.” 2014 NC. Therefore identified children in Year 1 will follow the EYFS curriculum throughout the Autumn term if needed.

SEND

In all aspects of English, where a child is not attaining in line with their peers, the specific difficulty is identified through the use of tools such as summative assessments, SEND descriptors and if appropriate with a diagnostic tool such as the phonics assessments within the ‘Rocket Phonics’ scheme. These difficulties are then targeted and monitored through intervention records to ensure urgent and accelerated progress. Results are used to inform class pupil profile reviews and SEND children’s Pupil Learning Plans, the latter of which are shared with parents to ensure a fully transparent conversation and assessment of progress.

More Able

Children are stretched and motivated through extension work to deepen their understanding and application, rather than extending into the next year’s curriculum.