



*Aim High, Work Hard, Have Fun and Care for Others*

# **Fairfield First School**

## **English Policy**

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# Fairfield First School

## English Policy

This statement is a policy of our aims, principles and strategies for teaching English at Fairfield First School. It is defined by current national guidance on best practice, in-service training and staff discussion.

### **Intent**

We work in partnership with parents to ensure each child plays their full part in the school community and strives to reach their full potential. Our motto is to 'Aim high, work hard, have fun and care for others.'

We aim to create fluent readers and writers with all the vital language skills they need for life. The children at Fairfield First School are immersed in high quality texts which inspire learning and act as effective writing models. We believe this has a significant impact on their vocabulary as well as the quality of their writing. We want all of our children to leave Fairfield First School with high standards of written and spoken literacy as well as a life-long reading habit and a love of literature.

### **Implementation**

#### **Speaking and Listening**

During Reception and Year 1, pupils learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. The EYFS follow the 'Teaching Children to Listen' approach. Through effective teacher modelling, they are encouraged to use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

As they progress through Key Stage 2, pupils learn to adapt and develop the way they speak to suit different situations. They are encouraged to develop their skills through class debates, performance poetry, class drama and school productions. Throughout the school, children have lots of opportunities to share ideas with learning/talking partners as well as being encouraged to participate in whole class discussions. At Fairfield, we believe in the motto, 'Great writing floats on a sea of talk' and we utilise the 'Talk for Writing' approach. We believe oracy is essential for promoting high standards of literacy. Retelling stories and composing sentences orally enable children to become increasingly familiar and confident with grammatical structures. They can also experiment more freely with vocabulary choices before selecting the most effective words to create effect in their writing.

#### **Phonics/Early Reading – please see our separate Phonics Policy**

#### **Reading**

We encourage a love of reading amongst all of our pupils at Fairfield First School. Every day, we enjoy sharing stories, poems and non-fiction texts through a variety of activities. By making these sessions fun, the children are encouraged to read for pleasure as well as developing valuable learning skills. The children keep us informed about their favourite stories and authors so that our school library and class libraries are stocked with a wide range of popular books as well as children's magazines and newspapers. Throughout the school, we are committed to developing the children's vocabulary and actively encourage the children to be inquisitive about new words as well as incorporating them into their writing.

- In Reception, the children begin the process of reading by sharing books with an adult. In the early stages these books may not have words, as pupils are encouraged to develop comprehension skills through the use of picture and contextual clues. This also helps to develop their vocabulary and imagination. As the children are introduced to phonics, they begin to apply this knowledge by blending sounds in order to read simple words. They also begin to recognise 'tricky words'. We use a variety of reading schemes linking in with the Letters and Sounds programme which we use to structure our phonics teaching at Fairfield.

These books are colour banded to match phonics taught and to allow the children to progress at their own pace.

- In Year 1, the focus is still very much on reading through phonics. The children learn all the remaining letter combinations needed for decoding words (such as 'ay' as well as 'ai' taught in Reception). They also begin to learn that some letters can be pronounced in different ways such as 'ow' on *owl* or *snow*. The children's progress is monitored closely to ensure that their phonic knowledge is secure. Pupils not on track to meet national standards are supported in small booster groups to help them catch up with their peers. The children regularly practise their word reading and comprehension skills through whole class reading, by reading to an adult in guided groups as well as individually to adults and peers.
- In Year 2, we give children regular opportunities to build their fluency by reading words automatically without overt sounding out. This is monitored individually to ensure that children are able to meet the national standard of 90 words per minute. Additional practice time is given to pupils as necessary. Comprehension skills are taught as whole class and guided group activities with shared text extracts. Most pupils progress rapidly through the colour banded book system. Children falling behind are identified quickly and interventions are put into place.
- By Year 3 and 4, the teaching of reading focuses more on comprehension and responding to texts. We have whole class guided sessions at least once a week where pupils can continue to practise their word reading skills, developing their use of expression. Children not attaining 90 words per minute fluency rate in Year 2 are identified for intervention. The children continue to have colour banded books available to take home although some of our Key Stage 2 pupils are 'free readers' and can choose from a wider range of books from the school or class library. All children have access to these books in our regular library sessions, where they get to choose a book to read at home and at school where they can share books that may be above their current personal word reading level.

Ensuring pupils are exposed to high quality texts is important because it provides children with opportunities to respond to literature; it gives students appreciation about their own cultural heritage as well as those of others; it helps students develop emotional intelligence and creativity; it nurtures growth and development of the student's personality and social skills; and it transmits important literature and themes from one generation to the next. Quality texts are also used to inspire children to plan and write for different purposes and audiences that ensure a range of writing outcomes.

### **Writing and Grammar**

At Fairfield, we are committed to using both the 'Talk for Writing' and 'Reading into Writing' approaches. We believe writing is closely related to reading and the two activities reinforce each other. By sharing high quality texts together, the children are able to identify techniques, vocabulary and language patterns used by authors and poets which can be applied to their own writing, creating an effect on their reader. As well as using texts to model writing, we also use 'shared writing' as a tool to demonstrate success. It is important to share the process of writing with our children by modelling these regularly and from early years. After discussing ideas, pupils get to watch their teachers and peers experiment with vocabulary choices, punctuation and sentence structure. Afterwards, they can apply these new skills with greater confidence in their own work. It is important that pupils learn to write independently from an early stage and as they develop, pupils are shown how to plan, draft, edit and improve, proofread and then publish their work.

The teaching of phonics, spelling and handwriting is an essential part of the writing process and is used to build up accuracy and speed. Children are taught to punctuate their writing correctly, using a range of different punctuation marks. We teach grammar and punctuation skills in line with the National Curriculum and to fit in with the style of writing covered in class. After reading texts which model appropriate sentence types and features of language, the children go on to write independently. We plan 'sequences of learning'

where children have opportunities to learn and practise specific skills. These skills are then identified on the success criteria for extended pieces of writing.

At Fairfield, we believe that children should transfer their phonics, spelling, handwriting skills into all of their writing. In addition, the children are encouraged to maintain the highest possible standards by applying and embedding their knowledge of language and writing across all areas of the curriculum.

### **Handwriting and Presentation**

It is important that children are able to write clearly and neatly when presenting their ideas. Correct letter formation is taught from the beginning in Reception, using a cursive script. Handwriting is taught regularly to enable our children to develop a fluent and legible style as well as practising their handwriting skills to ensure their work is presented in the best possible way to a high standard.

**See Presentation Guidelines for further information**

### **Spelling**

Great emphasis is placed on spelling within English lessons and across the curriculum. Spelling strategies and rules are taught as discrete lessons within the timetable. For KS1, this forms part of the Letters and Sounds Curriculum. KS2 have regular sessions allotted within their timetable. Spellings for KS1 are generated through the L & S curriculum and Y2-4 use the 'No Nonsense Spelling' programme for each year group. The children are given regular opportunities to apply their spelling knowledge in dictation and independent writing. In Key Stage 2, the children are taught how to use a dictionary in order to develop their independent proofreading skills.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We believe that all children irrespective of background, race, gender, and ability should have equal access to the curriculum. Our school practice should provide opportunities which reflect the cultural diversity of the community and locality. To reflect the diversity of our world, we ensure that children have access to a wide range of resources and first hand experiences both in school and with the wider community around us.

### **SEND**

At Fairfield First School, we recognise the need to cater for children with special educational needs and disability, including children with higher abilities. Work is differentiated to assist children's learning in terms of:

- Learning outcomes
- Tasks
- Teaching methods
- Resources
- Small group work or individual interventions

Tasks can be broken down into small steps, giving children achievable goals. Activities should reinforce children's enjoyment and understanding of the subject.

In line with our 'Growth Mindset' approach, all children should be given open-ended tasks and opportunities for more challenging work. Children showing particular talent and gifts for English will be registered as Gifted and Talented and provided with enhanced activity sessions coordinated by the G&T lead professional – often in conjunction with other schools.

### **Reading Interventions**

If children are not progressing as expected or we feel they need a confidence boost, we:

- Identify rapidly and assess next steps depending on reason/s for lack of progress;
- Ensure children are given regular times for booster sessions with either teacher/TA;
- Where necessary, a child might benefit from a half termly intensive programme in order to close the gap and ensure expected progress.

## **Health and Safety**

Health and safety regulations in class based lessons apply as for any other subject.

## **Impact**

### **Assessment and Recording**

Assessment procedures for English are consistent with the school's Assessment Policy. A variety of assessment strategies are used to provide evidence for judgements related to speaking and listening, writing, reading fluency and comprehension. Teachers assess pupils as an ongoing formative process as well as using more formal summative assessment tools.

Phonics tracking systems are in place for Reception and Year 1. Children who are falling behind are identified quickly for further support and intervention. From Autumn Term 2019, fluency in reading is to be monitored in all year groups, in addition to Year 2. A range of assessments are used for assessing reading comprehension, giving both standardised scores and reading ages. This data forms part of pupil progress monitoring. Writing is assessed continually with reference to National Curriculum guidelines. This informs planning and future provision.

### **Monitoring and Review:**

The subject leader is responsible for:

- The monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of the teaching in English.
- Providing support for colleagues in the teaching of English.
- Renewing, updating and complementing the resources needed to deliver the English curriculum.
- Monitoring whole school planning, to ensure progression and continuity.
- Keeping staff informed of developments or changes in the English curriculum.
- Providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject across the whole school.