

English Policy

Our Bespoke English Programme of Study

To ensure we are working towards our school vision, our English programme of study has been structured to develop functional life skills. Our APP grids have been structured to follow our life skills strands of decoding, comprehension and communication.

Phonics Provision and Programme of choice

As a school we have chosen to follow the *Read Write Inc.* Phonic programme.

The programme is designed for:

- pupils in Year R to Year 2 who are learning to read and write
- any pupils in primary who need to catch up rapidly.

Our secondary department follow *Read Write Inc.* Fresh Start.

Reading

In addition to our phonics policy, reading will be delivered at word, sentence and text level. At word level we will focus on phoneme development. At sentence level we will focus on word order and syntax. At text level, we will focus on comprehension and listening skills. We will use the opportunity to read out loud to support confidence building and audience awareness. We will explore the purpose of texts and who the intended audience is. This will reference our 5 different purposes of English; influence, inform, guide, engage, playing fair and entertain.

Writing

Writing will be delivered at word, phrase, sentence and text level. At word level we will focus on phonics, morphology and lexical semantics. At phrase level we will develop writing through word group knowledge and an initial awareness of writing for a purpose. At sentence level we will continue the development of writing for a purpose and begin to think about the intended audience. We will follow the 6 different purposes of English and communication; influence, inform, guide, engage, playing fair and entertain. These purposes will be developed and contextualised at text level, whilst exploring a variety of documents; narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations. We will plan, revise and evaluate writing whilst exploring handwriting alternatives for students with low level fine motor skills.

Speaking and listening

Speaking and listening will be assessed over two subjects; English and Drama. This is to distinguish the use of skills across different contexts. Drama will be planned to follow the 6 different purposes of English and communication; influence, inform,

guide, engage, playing fair and entertain. We will use discussions to learn and presentations to display new learning.

Wider English Delivery

Each classroom will be equipped with a selection of reading for pleasure books, bespoke to the students within the group.

We will increase a variety of learning activities which promote understanding, meaning and the context of new language. We will utilise opportunities to communicate ideas and emotions.

Phonic techniques and terminology within our embedded literacy delivery

We teach pupils to:

- decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- read 'tricky' 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

There are a range of techniques specifically designed to develop these functional literacy skills. These will be delivered as standalone skills and embedded across the curriculum.

- Pure Sounds

Pure sounds is the term used to describe the precise pronunciation of the 44 phonemes. Pure sounds focuses on single letter phonemes and multiple letter phonemes; aw, ou, ar.

- Tricky Words; red and green words

Words are categorised into groups based on their phonetic make up. Green words are phonetically decodable words, whilst red words do not follow the usual phonetic rule. Categorising words allows children to choose the relevant strategies to work out a new word.

- Dots and Dashes

Dots and dashes are a strategy for word decoding. Dots symbolise single letter phonemes and dashes multiple letter phonemes. To identify the dot and dash sounds in words aids decoding skills, spelling rules and learning new words.

- Chunking Words

When words are chunked into syllables we can identify sounds more easily. Chunking words breaks down their potentially intimidating form. It allows new words to be more accessible and builds confidence in developing a wider vocabulary.

- Word walls

Word walls are a reference point for subject specific language

- Dictionary and thesaurus use
- Reading for Pleasure

In addition, we teach pupils to work effectively with a partner 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.

We group pupils homogeneously, according to their progress in reading rather than their writing. This is because it is known that pupils' progress in writing will lag behind progress in reading, especially for those whose motor skills are less well developed.

In our Early Years and Primary departments we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils 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 – 'tricky words'.

We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the 'tricky 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.

Alongside this, the teachers read a wide range of stories, poetry and non-fiction to pupils; this is to ensure exposure to a range of texts and establish a love of reading to support the development of confident readers.

Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge, that is, they use their knowledge of the alphabetic code and the tricky words they have learnt. They are soon attempting to spell more complex words confidently and accurately; with the ability and skills to correct using subject dictionaries or peer support. The quality of the vocabulary they use in their writing reflects the language they have heard in the books the teacher has read to them; they have also discussed what the words mean. This happens across all subjects. Language development is essential for our

population to ensure they have the appropriate life skills to express themselves in as much details as possible.

Due to the population within our school, this phonics programme is used through each academic year. The terminology of our phonics programme is used across our curriculum to ensure we develop transferrable literacy skills for our pupils.

Achievement in our school

Assessing and tracking progress

During our English lessons, we assess all pupils at the beginning of each academic year on the *Read Write Inc.* Sound and Word Entry Assessment and we use this data to assign them to either *Read Write Inc.* Phonics. This gives us a very good indication of how well they are making progress relative to their starting points. We do this for all pupils, whenever they join us, so we can track all of them effectively, including those eligible for the pupil premium.

For those on the *Read Write Inc.* Phonics programme, we record their starting date and entry point on the tracker to monitor the rate at which they are making progress. We can also easily identify those who joined the programme later.

In addition, we use a standardised reading test [Burt Word Reading and Suffolk Comprehension] so that we can ensure that the gains our pupils are making are appropriate to their potential; this is mapped against national progression guidance.

Our current population work within the following phonics programmes:

EYFS: Read Write Inc. Pure Sounds

Primary: Read Write Inc. Pure Sounds

Secondary: Fresh Start Read Write Inc.

Quality of teaching in our school

The programme's 'cycle of instruction' means, after direct instruction and guided practice, the pupils teach another pupil. In this way they all rehearse and consolidate what they have been learning. This helps the pupils to make their understanding clear to themselves and helps the teacher deal with any misconceptions. 'Partner teaching' (peer assessment) is a key assessment tool. We also use this approach very effectively in other subjects.

The homogeneous groupings allow the teachers to focus on all pupils for the whole lesson. This means that all the pupils are engaged, with a positive impact on their behaviour. We differentiate within the class setting and a staff member is allocated to the group. They learn to participate fully: we agree with them the rules for working in a group or discussing with a partner. We discourage 'hands up' for answering questions because we believe that all pupils should answer every question. The teacher selects pupils to answer.

The *Read Write Inc.* programme has detailed lesson plans, however class teachers design their lessons to ensure pupil needs are met; in relation to behaviours and confidence levels. Every activity in every lesson is prepared thoroughly and has a very clear purpose. The teacher explains this at the beginning so that the pupils understand, during the activity, what they are learning and why.

Simple teaching strategies and a lively pace ensure that all the pupils participate fully– there is no chance for them to lose concentration and miss out key elements. This is also supported by the consistent staff support within the learning environment.

Enhanced Literacy Provision

Data is used effectively to ensure gaps are closing between all groups – in particular those eligible for the pupil premium (*Read Write Inc.* assessment and tracking, standardised reading tests, phonics screening check).

Our enhanced literacy provision focuses on pupils who are currently working at their LQ target or not making expected progress in at least one of the three English strands, as per National Progression Guidance. The Subject Lead for English will identify these pupils starting at the top of the school in KS4 and working down the school. Pupils are selected using the following criteria:

- Identified strand not making expected progress (evidenced by data set)
- Lack of engagement, confidence or work completion during English lessons (evidence through annotation and observations)
- Phonic knowledge lower than comprehension level (evidence through Suffolk reading test; reader vs independent attempt)
- Phonic knowledge not being applied to spelling and reading across curriculum (evidence through annotation across lessons and observations)
- Comprehension level lower than phonic/ reading ability (evidenced through reading tests; word reading vs comprehension reading)

Pupils are set two to three targets to work towards over a half term. They are assessed at the beginning and the end of the half term to show progression toward these targets.

We select pupils from key stage 4 and downwards due to our primary mission as a school; to ensure all our pupils leave Brackenfield with independent functional life skills and the ability to navigate the world around them.

Feedback and marking

In English, we emphasise constructive feedback. For example, we praise pupils for what they do well; such as displaying the behaviour they all need for their learning to be successful. Teaching partners are praised for their effective teaching.

We have clear systems for marking pupils' work. Pupils know their teacher's expectations for each activity. We mark short activities with the pupils in the lesson. Extended pieces are marked afterwards. We discuss the outcomes with the group and individuals so that the marking is genuinely used to take forward pupils' learning and progress.

We also complete pupil feedback during plenary activities to reinforce learning objectives and the relevant next steps for the individual. This runs alongside our half termly review of current levels and next steps. This is completed across the three traditional strands of reading, writing and speaking and listening.

In our marking policy, we have specific reference to marking for life skills across the curriculum. This forms our assessment for learning.

Please see the marking policy for further details.

Homework

Homework is promoted within our English lessons, to help pupils achieve greatness. We send home weekly spellings, relating to our phonic and word related learning. This is differentiated by ability groups. We also send homework relating to sentence level work. This ensures short activities, achievable with the levels of concentration we have within our population.

We have invested in reading programmes to support and develop our culture for a love of reading, as well as develop life learning. We allow children to take relevant literature home for their reading level and interest. We promote independent reading to build confidence, and support reading where challenge is in place. We understand pupils may not receive the same support in their home setting, therefore we ensure we discuss and review any independent reading within our timetabled reading sessions.

Behaviour and safety in teaching and learning

Pupils have very positive attitudes to the programme. We support this behaviour by using silent signals for gaining their attention, for setting up partner routines and managing the way pupils move around the classroom. Everyone uses the same signals. The teachers are encouraged to use these strategies in other lessons too, so the approach to behaviour is consistent throughout the day. This is part of our wider LiAC initiative.

We believe that the partner work and the homogeneous groupings help the pupils learn to work together. Effective partner work has the benefit of helping pupils to work closely with others – especially those who are not their best friends. Quick bonding activities help new partners to get to know one another. Potential bullying is explored and discussed so pupils know how this can develop and how to deal with

it if it does. Our population struggle maintaining solid relationships. Partner work enables pupils to focus on other tasks, working well together, rather than the focus of being friends; embedding team work and peer appreciation on a daily basis.

Praise for hard work and good behaviour is fundamental to pupils' progress. The values of courtesy, consideration and kindness are at the heart of every lesson, taught through the programme and embedded in other lessons. Praise must be relevant and obvious, ensuring it is genuine to model and sustain expected behaviours and attitudes.

Attendance

The programme is intensive and cumulative, so poor attendance severely disrupts the progress of any pupils who are absent, for however short a time. We monitor this across pastoral teams and our English Coordinator supplies relevant independent work to support and maintain skills already taught. Due to our population, we embed repetition of learning ensuring skills become transferrable. This means there will always be the opportunity to catch up during a half term.

If attendance becomes an obvious barrier to learning, we will implement bespoke 121 support.

Leadership and management in our school

Shared vision

The school's shared vision is every pupil leaves school being functionally literate and numerate. The headteacher supports this vision as a cross curriculum focus for learning. Strategic development and implementation is led by our LiAC (Life Skills across the Curriculum).