

# Hillborough Junior School



## English Policy

Adopted: October 2022

Review: Annually

At Hillborough Junior School, we are passionate about the teaching and learning of all the aspects of the English Curriculum. It is our philosophy that good Literacy skills are fundamental to academic success and underpin all other areas of the curriculum.

### 1. AIMS

We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading & Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English within a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught Literacy skills.

It is our aim that pupils at Hillborough Junior School will leave Year 6:

- reading and writing with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct
- with a love of reading and a desire to read for enjoyment
- with an interest in words and their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms
- understanding a range of text types, media types and genres
- able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation
- using their developing imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness
- with suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

### 2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This policy has been written in accordance with the Renewed Literacy Framework, 2014.

At Key Stage Two (Years 3-6), children learn how to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

### 3. SUBJECT ORGANISATION

Throughout Key Stage Two, children have daily English lessons, which incorporate grammar for writing. Additional Literacy sessions, outside of the specific English sessions, include reading, comprehension, handwriting, spelling, grammar skills and a class novel (which is read at the Teacher's discretion at a time throughout the week).

Pupils in each year group may be grouped according to a variety of factors, including academic ability. This flexible organisation enables teachers to target support towards specific groups of pupils. Further provision is made for children who need extra support or further challenge through teaching scaffolds, intervention programmes and well-planned use of resources. Pupils who are working at a level

significantly below their peers may have access to 'class 14', a smaller class, especially equipped with teachers and resources to support the acquisition of early Literacy skills.

Literacy skills are also developed across other areas of the curriculum.

#### **4. APPROACHES TO SPOKEN LANGUAGE**

The strands of Speaking and Listening (Speaking; Listening; Group Discussion and Interaction and Drama) permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

Opportunities to develop these skills include: assemblies; talking partners; group and whole class discussions; drama activities and an annual performance for each year group. We are a 'skills builder' school which means that we follow a universal framework to help pupils build essential skills at every stage of life. The skills of speaking and listening are specifically targeted through these sessions. Children who require extra support in Spoken Language, benefit from social skills classes and language groups. We recognise the need for pupils to speak, read and write Standard English fluently and accurately, while acknowledging that a pupil's own dialect, or other language is of prime importance. It is our school policy to model our own language to the children which encourages Standard English in both speaking and writing.

#### **5. APPROACHES TO SPELLING, GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION (SPaG)**

In addition to discreetly teaching SPaG throughout English lessons and other areas of the curriculum, it may also be taught in occasional standalone sessions. The Grammar and Punctuation sessions introduce terminology that pupils are expected to know, understand, and use whilst also providing opportunities for the children to apply the skills taught.

Weekly Spelling lessons focus on spelling patterns as set out in the National Curriculum, with any exceptions discussed and explored. Pupils are set weekly spellings that they are tested on. These incorporate words from the spelling objectives of the National Curriculum, as well as the statutory word lists. The lists are a mixture of words pupils frequently use in their writing and those which they often misspell. For children who have a particular weakness in the area of spelling, we offer interventions, strategies and resources such as dictionaries, spellings tutor, Clicker and individualised spelling programmes.

#### **6. APPROACHES TO READING**

At Hillborough Junior School, we place an extremely high emphasis on reading. It is our belief that reading is the key to unlocking pupils' potential across our broad and varied curriculum.

Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opportunity to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during whole class reading and comprehension sessions. Independent reading provides time for both assessment and one to one teaching. For pupils that require it, phonics interventions sessions are continued throughout Key Stage Two.

A range of reading schemes are used to support early readers as well as book banded 'real books'. Teaching assistants support reading activities to ensure that children have more frequent opportunities to read with an adult. We also have a number of reading volunteers in school through the 'Beanstalk' and 'School Readers' programmes.

Children take home a levelled book from school according to their ability. Parents/ Carers are encouraged to hear their child read the book and then record how they have got on. Once a child has completed a book and the content has been discussed, they take a comprehension quiz on a computer based programme, 'Accelerated Reader'. The aim is for pupils to gain 80% on their quiz. Once the quiz has been taken and passed, children are given a new book. If a child consistently does not pass a comprehension quiz, the teacher will engage in a conversation with them and discuss the best next steps forward. Each child has a home-school record that teachers and parents can use to share information about a child's reading, helping to assist teacher-parent communication. Parents are encouraged to read with their child daily. Guidance for Parents/ Carers on reading is provided during the year.

In addition to the levelled reading book, children are given the opportunity to select a library book. Our library books are also linked to 'Accelerated Reader' who help children make an informed choice when selecting their reading material.

At Hillborough Junior School, as well as independent reading, we place a high importance on pupils sharing books with their grown-ups at home. We believe that this not only helps to develop inferential skills but also supports a lifelong love of reading. We recognise the value of adults (both in school and at home) reading aloud to children, in order to improve their grasp of story language, enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers.

## **7. APPROACHES TO WRITING**

We aim to develop the children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Teachers model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals. As well as independent writing, we encourage paired and group writing where appropriate. Regular conferencing sessions in Upper Key Stage Two provide detailed feedback to pupils on an individual basis.

Extended writing takes place as a culmination of an English unit, to provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate the skills learnt throughout the sessions. These pieces of writing are completed in first and then final drafts and marked with appropriate 'next steps' which help form pupil targets.

The children are given frequent opportunities in school to write for a range of purposes. Where possible, we try to incorporate real-life writing contexts, often linked to other curriculum themes. High quality resources and texts are used as a model for writing for different audiences and purposes. A range of strategies are used as a stimulus for writing. Drama, film, story extracts, school trips/visits and other curriculum areas help to inspire high quality outcomes.

At Hillborough Junior School, children are always encouraged to take care in their presentation and pride in their work. We have a separate handwriting policy which outlines, in detail, our approaches to handwriting.

Every half term, independent work in specific, 'Writing snapshots' books helps to inform the teacher to establish which areas of the writing curriculum have been achieved by individual pupils. It also assists in reviewing personal writing targets and setting new ones.

## **8. CROSS CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES**

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross curricular links. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. A particular focus in our school is to ensure that there are writing opportunities within all subject areas, where the same standard of writing is expected as seen in English books.

## **9. ASSESSMENT AND MARKING**

Regular assessments of pupils' progress are essential aspects of the Renewed Framework. Formal English assessments are outlined in the assessment cycle- see assessment policy.

Formal assessments are analysed for areas that need further development and this informs the planning cycle and individual/ group targets for pupils.

Informal assessments take place on a daily basis. Work is marked in line with the marking policy. Where appropriate, pupils are given 'next step targets' to address in their books.

In addition to teacher assessments, pupils are also encouraged to self and peer assess work, providing constructive feedback.

## **10. INCLUSION**

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English, according to their individual abilities. Through our rigorous assessment cycle, we identify pupils who are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Academically more able and ambitious pupils are also identified and suitable learning challenges and opportunities are provided.

In line with the school policy on Special Educational Needs, the SENDCO, English lead and the teacher will be involved ensuring that pupils will have work planned to meet their needs. Teaching Assistants also help to provide additional support where necessary. Those pupils with significant needs in English, and access additional support, are monitored closely and interventions recorded on a provision map. Some pupils have specific English targets within an IEP (individual Education Plan). These targets are addressed regularly throughout the week. A further small group, Class 14, runs daily for pupils specific that struggle to access the standard of year group learning.

## **11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Hillborough Junior School has universal ambitions for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged.

In order to engage all children, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all valued and celebrated. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children.

We believe in 'valuing what the child brings to the school' and recognise the importance of supporting a child's first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English.

## **12. HOMEWORK**

Homework is mostly set online through google classrooms. Online learning platforms, such as 'Education City' are utilised across the school and progress is monitored by group teachers and teaching assistants. The amount of homework varies throughout the school, with the maximum amount given in Year 6, in preparation for secondary school. In Year six, children also have access to workbooks to aid revision for the end of key stage standardised tests, In addition to the set homework online, children are expected to read and practise their spellings at home.

## **13. SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSC)**

English is an ideal vehicle to explore the issues within SMSC. The content of most English lessons facilitates the delivery of key aspects of SMSC. English lessons are delivered in a manner which encourages participation, listening, empathy and collaboration.

For example, English provides opportunities to promote:

- *Spiritual development*, through: sharing literary texts which encourage a sense of awe and wonder and studying texts, creating time for reflection and contemplation.
- *Moral development*, through: class discussion and debates of current affairs or moral dilemmas; persuasive writing performing in assemblies.
- *Social development*, through: paired, group and whole class discussion; team work opportunities; collaborative reading and writing and understanding and writing stories from different viewpoints.
- *Cultural development*, through: sharing and exploring a variety of texts and stories from different cultures and writing stories from different viewpoints.

## **14. MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

The teachers, the English lead, the Head teacher and the Governing Body will monitor the approaches detailed in this policy.

This policy is due to be reviewed in the Autumn Term 2023.

**See also:**

- School assessment and marking policy.
- School equal opportunities' policy.
- School monitoring and evaluation policy.
- School handwriting policy