



"You are the light of the world, let your light shine." (Matthew 5:14-16)

English Policy

January 2024
Review: Jan 2025

Overview:

Speaking and listening, reading and writing are fundamental for children to access learning and to develop as well rounded individuals; they are everywhere, from books, to maths, to design technology and a conversation with another person. As such, at Whaddon we aim to develop children's English skills throughout our whole curriculum, enabling children to see language, reading and writing as both useful and enjoyable skills in their daily lives.

Aims and Objectives:

At Whaddon, we aim to ensure that:

- Children are given a secure foundation for literacy in Foundation Stage, through a child-led approach within which children's language and communication skills are given time to develop
- Oracy is used throughout the curriculum to develop children's confidence and communication skills
- Children develop confidence and fluency in reading and a love of reading
- Books are central to our school; our curriculum includes high-quality books and each class has an attractive and well-used reading area
- Children are given a purpose for reading and writing
- English skills are used, developed and embedded throughout the wider curriculum
- Children feel confident about their reading and writing skills, whatever their age or ability
- Children are given opportunities to use their developing English skills to pursue their own interests and ideas
- Teaching is carefully matched to children's abilities, skills and interests to maximise learning potential

Development of Speech and Language:

Children's spoken language is fundamental to developing their reading and writing skills. Talk is therefore central to teaching and learning at Whaddon; in Foundation Stage, the child-led curriculum ensures children are communicating with each other and adults all day, with adults modelling effective spoken language. Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 (KS1 and 2) children are given opportunities to work collaboratively, use 'talk partners' to share ideas and articulate their opinions and ideas. This is the case throughout the curriculum.

Reading:

Throughout the school, books are used as a source of enjoyment and information. Children have free access to reading areas, including the library, and are encouraged to use them either during child-led learning, whole-class reading sessions and to support learning and research during lessons. Books are central to the curriculum, ensuring that children build up a 'bank' of books they know and love.

In Foundation Stage, the children are introduced to the phonics scheme Little Wandle from the beginning of their time in school. This ensures that they are encountering decoding skills, and have a reading book that carefully matches their phonics level. The children in Foundation Stage also take a reading book for pleasure home. Individual reading sessions with an adult ensure that children develop pleasure in reading and can develop at their own pace.

Phonics continues in KS1 and, where needed, KS2 as well through the Little Wandle scheme, allowing children to catch up on areas that they need to revisit and revise.

In KS1 and KS2 we teach through guided reading, using high-quality texts from the scheme The Literacy Tree. The children will read a text through the week and complete comprehension activities based on what they have read. This gives all children access to quality reading material, no matter what their decoding ability, and ensures their comprehension is carefully pitched at the right level, whilst still remaining challenging alongside their word reading.

During these sessions, questions and learning objectives are closely matched to the 2014 Curriculum. Any children who are behind ARE in reading also read with an adult on a 1:1 basis several times per week.

Writing:

Our aim for children is that our children feel confident in their writing ability and able to use their written skills purposefully across the curriculum.

In Foundation Stage, teachers use Drawing club to explore a rich and varied set of texts that enhance their writing. Creating a code, the children develop sentence structure and ideas. This allows them to practice and refine their writing technique, advancing to creating full sentences.

In KS1 and KS2 children continue to build their written skills whilst accessing a diverse range of texts through The Literacy Tree. This scheme embeds grammatical features into pieces of writing, and also allows the children to write extended pieces linked to the text that they have been studying. Combining all the features of the processes of writing enables the children to hone their skills and practice using the grammatical features that they have learnt.

Children are supported to develop an enjoyment of writing. Teachers value children's attempts by taking an interest in their work, listening to them and sharing the work with the rest of the class. Wherever possible, writing should be given an engaging context to motivate children to write.

Handwriting:

Before children can form letters or hold a pencil, they must develop secure fine and gross motor skills. In Foundation Stage, children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to do this, through their child-led learning; for example, a climbing frame develops their upper body strength while using tweezers to explore a tray of objects builds their fine motor skills. They also begin forming letters in a range of contexts, such as outside with a water and brush, on a whiteboard or in the sand. All of these activities ensure that writing skills are built up gradually. By the end of Foundation Stage the aim is for children to form most of the letters correctly.

Going into Year 1, the children are introduced to the Oxford Owl handwriting scheme, where they are taught to recognise the different sizes of the letters and to place letters on the line. Throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, children continue to use the Oxford Owl scheme to improve their fluency and legibility of their handwriting.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar:

The 2014 National Curriculum places significant emphasis on Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) skills. We have developed a whole-school overview of SPaG to outline what children should cover year-on-year, ensuring that all of the key skills are embedded by the end of KS1

A key component of SPaG is Phonics. In Foundation Stage, children learn one way to read and spell each sound in the English language. They learn how to blend and segment words, providing them with the building blocks to read and write simple words. In Year 1, the children learn alternative spellings for each sound and further secure their blending and segmenting skills. The Phonics Screening Check in June of Year 1 assesses children's ability to decode words. In Year 2, children focus more on spelling rules and conventions.

Throughout Foundation Stage and KS1, children learn to read and spell Common Exception Words, this continues into KS2 as well, where the children are exposed to a wider range of spellings, as well as understanding the etymology of words to enhance their understanding of spelling rules and patterns. KS2 children also have access to online assessments of spag through the website SPAG.com, which can be used to target specific children grammar objectives, specific children or whole class activities.

Learning Outside the Classroom:

We recognise that opportunities for children to learn outside of the traditional classroom context are vital for both their education and their wellbeing. As such, teachers provide for and plan opportunities for children to learn using the school grounds as well as the wider community. In Foundation Stage, children have continual access to the outdoor environment where, through their own learning and adult interactions, they use and develop their English skills in real-life contexts.

Teachers look for LOfC opportunities wherever possible, often through giving children the choice of learning indoors or outdoors, but also by taking them off the school premises and into other learning contexts. When planning school visits and follow up work, opportunities to use English skills are maximised; for example, older children regularly contribute to our school newsletter by reporting on trips and events.

Other subjects and writing:

Writing doesn't occur only in Literacy lessons, as such there will be specific genres of writing that are taught explicitly in some subjects – for instance completing investigations in Science. Through understanding that writing occurs throughout the curriculum, the children will develop an appreciation of different writing techniques, as well as a use of higher tiers of vocabulary – and the way that they can be used across not only a range of genres, but a range of subjects too.

Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural:

We aim to support children's SMSC development throughout everything we do at Whaddon School. Through the English Curriculum specifically, this includes:

- Exposure to our literary heritage, particularly through traditional tales and poetry
- Exposure to texts from a range of cultures
- Discussions of stories, specifically characters' actions and motivations
- Opportunities to work collaboratively
- Development of a love for reading and writing
- Developing spirituality through stories from the Bible and other religious texts

Assessment:

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Teachers assess children in a number of ways to ensure that future teaching is closely matched to each child's needs. In Foundation Stage, teachers continually play with, observe and assess the children in order to move their learning on. In KS1 and KS2, teachers and teaching assistants continually assess children throughout a lesson, and developmental marking and feedback with the children ensures that misconceptions are addressed instantly, and that children's learning is continually moving forward. Assessment at the end of each lesson informs the next lesson's planning and teaching.

Children begin to self-assess in KS1, where they are encouraged to read and check their work to see if it matches the Learning Objective and success criteria. Children will also begin to peer assess in KS2. This allows them to critically, but positively assess each other's work and suggest improvements, whilst also being exposed to ideas and techniques that their peers are using.

Equality of Opportunity and SEND

The school is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all pupils. All children should be allowed access to and given confidence in the different activities offered, regardless of their ability, gender, religion, or cultural/ethnic background. The content of lessons and the resources available should ensure that all pupils are valued equally, are able to participate with enjoyment and are able to achieve qualities and standards appropriate to their age, experience and abilities.

Where a particular learning need is identified, teachers draw up a Special Education Needs provision map for a child. Through targeted teaching and extra 1:1 or small group support, gaps in English skills and knowledge are narrowed.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

In September of each academic year, the subject leader produces an action plan for the development of English throughout the year. Actions are carried out throughout the year and further areas for improvement are identified as needed. Actions include, but are not restricted to:

- Learning walks □ Team teaching
- Professional development opportunities
- Analysis of data
- Interviews with children
- Book scrutinies

In July, the subject leader writes a report summarising the year's actions and achievements, which is presented to the governors.