

Featherstone Primary School

English Policy



Agreed by Governors: Curriculum, Standards and SEND

Implementation date: 10.01.23

Review date: Every two years

Whole School Philosophy

At Featherstone Primary School we aim to develop the abilities of all children to communicate effectively in speech and in writing. We wish to develop children into enthusiastic and responsive readers so that they can read for pleasure as well as academic achievement. Through our curriculum we aim to use a wide range of multi-cultural literature and reference materials, to develop the self-esteem of all children and an understanding and respect for all cultures alongside their own.

Aims

At Featherstone Primary School we aim to develop in all children:

- a positive attitude towards all aspects of English;
- the ability to communicate and respond effectively in both written and verbal forms;
- a keen awareness of audience in all areas of Literacy, across the range of Literacy skills;
- confidence and independence;
- persistence and stamina.

Objectives

- To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing.
- To develop in children an interest in and a love of books and literature.
- To value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play.
- To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop their confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audience.
- To teach essential skills in spelling handwriting and punctuation.
- To foster in children the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing.
- To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Teaching and Learning

At Featherstone Primary School we follow the principles set out in the National Curriculum and EYFS Statutory Framework. Language and Literacy skills are taught on a daily basis from Reception – Year 6 during English lessons. These skills are then applied in cross curricular learning opportunities in other subjects.

Phonics, early reading and writing

Our pupils learn to read and write effectively and quickly using the 'Read Write Inc. Phonics' programme.

This programme is for:

- Pupils in Reception to Year 2 who are learning to read and write;

- Any pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 who need to catch up rapidly.

In the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, pupils will:

- decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge;
- read common exception 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 and;
- acquire good handwriting.

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 Reception, we emphasise the alphabetic code. The pupils rapidly 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 – common exception words. We make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence. The children see themselves as readers.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to write simple words and sentences. We encourage them to compose each sentence aloud until they are confident to write independently. We make sure they write every day. Pupils write at the level of their spelling knowledge. 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.

Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible. The sooner they complete it, the sooner they will be able to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level.

English Lessons

In addition to the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, children across the school have English lessons, which cover reading, writing, GPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling), speaking and listening.

We use CLPE's Power of Reading scheme in all year groups to structure our English teaching. Following the Power of Reading scheme, Teachers plan their English sessions around a high-quality text which becomes the focus for between 2-4 weeks. Each text project will cover outcomes for Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Each plan will have a

writing outcome with a particular purpose and audience in mind. Over the academic year each year group will cover a balance of Narrative, Non-Fiction and Poetry text types.

Within these sessions a range of teaching strategies are used including drama, roleplay and art activities to engage students and provide opportunities to explore texts in a variety of different ways. A high focus is put on speaking and listening as we believe that children must be able to speak a sentence before they can write it.

Children in Key Stage 1 receive a weekly Grammar and Punctuation lesson where key writing skills are taught separately. These are then applied to writing that takes place in Power of Reading sessions.

Reading Sessions

In Key stage 1, Children are taught to read during their daily Read Write Inc. Phonics session and receive at least 4 guided reading session a week. The Read Write Inc. Phonics programme texts are of graded difficulty and are closely matched to the phonic knowledge of the children. During these sessions children are also taught comprehension skills. All sessions take place in a group no bigger than 15 children.

Once children complete the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, children will move away from book scheme books and into a whole class/group reading lesson that mimics the format of Key Stage 2 at an age appropriate level.

In Key Stage 2, children receive at least four whole class reading sessions per week. These sessions provide opportunities for children to develop their independent reading skills, inference skills and comprehension skills. As well as using written texts to support reading skill development, children are also given the opportunity apply their inference skills to new contexts such as images, video clips and advertisements.

Home reading

Children from Reception to Year 2 will take home reading books linked to the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, two books will be sent home at a time. These will be changed in accordance to the teaching sequence in school. This will usually be once a week.

Children in Years 3-5 will take home a reading book that will be changed once a week. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that children are regularly taking home books appropriate to their reading level and to communicate effectively with parents the children's progress through the use of the reading record books.

In addition to home reading books, children also have access to 'Bug Club' our online reading portal and additional texts from classroom and school libraries.

Handwriting

At Featherstone Primary School, cursive handwriting style is taught from Reception. The aim is to ensure all children are joining their letters by the end of Year 2. This is then consolidated throughout Key Stage 2.

Spelling lessons

Key Stage 1

Once children in Key Stage One have completed the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme, they will move on to daily spelling sessions. These sessions teach the spelling objectives prescribed for each year group and consolidate the good phonic knowledge taught by the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme.

Key Stage 2

Daily spelling sessions take place in Key Stage 2. These sessions teach the spelling objectives prescribed for each year group. The focus for these sessions is to review, teach, practice and apply taught spelling patterns in a fun and creative way to apply these in their writing.

Whole school spelling and home spellings

Every Friday morning, Children in Years 1-6 take place in 'Ice Cool Spelling' sessions. Ice cool spelling is a successful spelling scheme that is built on repetition and challenge. The children are split into ability groups and tested weekly on a list of common words and words that are set out in the national curriculum. A copy of their current 'Ice Cool Spelling' list will be sent home weekly. All spellings must be correct in the list to move on to the next level. As children progress further into the programme, they will be expected to use the spelling words provided in grammatically correct sentences that demonstrate that the children understand the words being spelt. The aim of this is to improve vocabulary and also encourage the use of spelling words in every day writing.

Inclusion

All children will be given opportunities to participate on equal terms in all English activities and due consideration will be given to the principles of Inclusion.

Children with Special Educational Needs and the more able children

During Literacy lessons, tasks and materials are differentiated by the class teacher to meet the needs of individual children. Children identified as having Special Educational Needs may need greater differentiation of materials and tasks consistent with that child's Educational Plan (ITP). More able children will be challenged and motivated by greater differentiation of materials and tasks. The class teacher will also aim to identify those children who may be gifted in English and provide them with appropriate learning opportunities.

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

As an inclusive school, we plan teaching and learning opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language or who have language difficulties. We use one to one support, small groups and cross-phase work to help with this.

Assessment, Records and Reports

Progress in English will be monitored through ongoing teacher assessments, periodic writing sampling for writing and guided reading records for reading.

Children's learning will be assessed against individual objectives from the English National Curriculum.

At the End of Years 2 and 6 children's learning in reading and spelling and grammar will also be assessed using national statutory papers. In Year 2 these tests will be internally marked

and used to support teacher judgements. In Year 6 these papers are externally marked and form the child's end of school assessments. Children in Year 1 take part in the national Phonics Screening Test to assess phonic knowledge.

Parents

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in their child's education by supporting them in a positive way – both generally and specifically. We ask that parents read at home with their children regularly, support them with homework tasks and the learning of spellings. Children should bring book bags to school daily so that they can be provided with high quality books and resources to contribute to their learning at home.