



The Oaks Primary School Bringing Learning to Life

English Curriculum Overview and Policy

Intent

At The Oaks, our aim is to provide our children with an engaging, exciting and empowering English curriculum that equips them for today and tomorrow.

Our English curriculum is designed to:

- build on children's prior knowledge
- provide engaging learning experiences
- allow the children to develop interpersonal skills
- become creative, critical thinkers.

Our curriculum unites the important skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, discussion and reflection. Through reading in particular, our children have an opportunity to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Implementation

English is taught across school using the National Curriculum objectives for English (2014). These are fed into 'The Oaks English Curriculum' documents.

A minimum of 5 lessons are planned for each week.

Pupils engage in:

- Practical activities
- Learning by Questions
- Discussion using appropriate vocabulary
- Consolidation of basic skills
- Application into cross curricular objectives

Speaking and Listening

At The Oaks children are taught to:

- share their views and opinions with peers and adults
- develop their ability to take turns and to listen to others
- listen and respond to stories, poetry, rhymes and songs
- articulate thoughts and feelings of characters in the books they read
- understand the need to adapt their choice of language in different situations and contexts
- participate in drama activities throughout the school year, such as class assemblies, school performances and relevant role play
- engage in drama sessions

Early Reading

Reading is high priority from the start of Reception. Children have individual reading books and are supported well at home. Phonics and whole class reading are taught daily. Children read in small groups regularly with teaching staff. Through the teaching of systematic phonics, our aim is for children to become fluent and confident readers who have been immersed in a wide range of texts.

Reading

Teaching children to become excellent readers is an integral part of what we do at The Oaks as we believe that reading is a key tool for life. We encourage our children to actively engage in reading for pleasure across the curriculum, both at home and at school. Each class has a library stocked with a variety of age-appropriate books and there is a wide range of reading material available in the resource areas and school library. We also borrow books relating to our half termly projects from the Schools Library Service.

We develop the children's reading skills by:

- creating daily opportunities for reading across the curriculum
- providing two guided reads a week for KS1 children
- providing at least 4 whole class reading sessions a week for KS2 children
- teaching comprehension skills taught as part of whole class reading, on a weekly basis
- providing additional support for individuals or groups of children
- providing a structured and stimulating range of quality fiction and non-fiction and poetry texts
- regular, systematic and differentiated teaching of phonics, spelling rules and other word level activities
- teaching children a range of strategies to understand the meaning of a text and decode new words
- building up the recognition of high frequency words starting in Reception
- reading aloud to children and discussing texts – sharing a love of literature.
- encouraging children to be independent and reflective readers who are able to develop their own personal tastes
- teaching higher order reading skills such as skimming, scanning, inference and deduction to obtain specific information
- learning how to access non-fiction texts to support learning in all areas
- creating opportunities for children to access the library on a regular basis
- providing each child with a reading book and reading record from reception onwards.

Phonics and Spelling

We develop the children's skills by:

- teaching children to hear and identify sounds (phonemes) in words
- teaching children to use knowledge of rhyme to identify families of rhyming words
- teaching children to remember visual patterns
- partitioning words into syllabic parts
- creating mnemonics for difficult words
- developing an understanding of spelling rules and exceptions.
- using dictionaries, word books and spelling journals to improve and check spelling
- using the 'Look Say Cover Write Check' method to spell independently
- using and developing fun and lively ideas from the No-Nonsense Spelling scheme

Phonics is taught every day for at least 20 minutes in Reception and KS1, following 'Letters and Sounds'. Phonics sessions are also taught in Year 3 for children requiring additional support.

Spelling is taught two or three times a week within KS2. The No Nonsense Spelling Scheme is used from Y2 to Y6. This allows children to learn spelling rules and patterns linked to the national curriculum for each year group and provides opportunities to consolidate prior learning and acquire new knowledge.

Spelling Books

Spelling books are sent home every week for children to practise their new spellings and prepare for their next test. Children are given one week to learn their words and complete the test at the back of their book on the same day each week. Class teachers keep a record of weekly scores.

Writing

We develop the children's writing skills by:

- creating opportunities for emergent writing through structured play
- participating in valuable shared, guided and independent writing activities
- modelling the thought process involved in writing
- encouraging independence and responding positively to the children's efforts
- providing key words to enable children to write with confidence
- providing opportunities to write for a specific audience and purpose
- using self and peer assessment to develop and improve writing
- teaching children the writing process of planning, drafting, editing and proof-reading in a systematic way
- emphasising the links between reading and writing
- teaching children how texts are structured
- encouraging children to be adventurous in their choice of vocabulary and to use a thesaurus
- providing opportunities to develop children's skills in punctuation and grammar through meaningful activities
- exploring the use of ICT as a tool for stimulating, constructing and producing pieces of writing

Progression of writing skills

Specific writing genres are taught in every year group following a teaching sequence:

- 1) Activities relating to a good quality stimulus (book/film/picture/event/object) at the start of a unit of learning e.g. annotated texts, WAGOLL, character descriptions, vocabulary lists, notes made whilst watching a film clip, photos of drama activities etc.
- 2) SPAG activities appropriate for the genre being taught
- 3) planning, drafting, writing and editing opportunities e.g. shared writing, guided writing, slow writing - opportunities to write a mixture of short and extended pieces all building up to the final outcome
- 4) An independent version of the genre that has been studied.

After the children have been taught a particular genre, they are given the opportunity to apply their knowledge when writing for a real purpose.

Assessment:

As an ongoing assessment, staff use the National Curriculum objectives to assess children. Children are also formally assessed twice a year using the NFER Tests for Reading. This helps to inform teacher's judgements as to which level a child is working at.

Children in Years 2 and 6 are assessed at the end of the year through the national SATs.

Impact

Children at The Oaks are competent in the arts of speaking and listening. They are confident and expressive users of the language with a secure understanding of how the English language works. Children at The Oaks read confidently, fluently and with understanding. They are interested in books and they read for both pleasure and information.

Children at the Oaks write confidently in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation. They plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing and use a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing. They also apply the skills they have learnt in English lessons when writing for real purposes across the curriculum.