



Dovecot Primary School



Date of review	
Reviewed by	
Signed	
Next review date	

English Policy

DOVECOT PRIMARY SCHOOL

VISION STATEMENT

Learning together, growing together

Curriculum Intent Statement

At Dovecot Primary School the curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning, provide first-hand learning experiences, allow the children to develop interpersonal skills, build resilience and become creative, critical thinkers.

Every child is recognised as a unique individual. We celebrate and welcome differences within our school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values. We provide enhancement opportunities to engage learning and believe that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time where there are no limits to curiosity and there is a thirst for new experiences and knowledge.

Children leave our school with a sense of belonging to a tightly knit community where they have the confidence and skills to make decisions, self-evaluate, make connections and become lifelong learners.

Our core values:

- Excellence in all areas of school life.
- A broad and challenging curriculum.
- Engaged and motivated children.
- High standards of behaviour and expectations.
- A love of lifelong learning.
- Strong and positive relationships within the community.

"Education's starting point should not be about us. It should be about them, their needs, their aspirations and goals."

(Dr Maggie Atkinson, Children's Commissioner for England September 2013)

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this is necessarily cross-curricular and a constant throughout school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

***'Teachers should develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.'* (P10 National Curriculum)**

English provides an essential means of communication, both in and out of school and it enables pupils to express themselves creatively and imaginatively. We believe that children need to develop their use of language in order to learn, and to play a full and active role as individuals within society; it is the key to independent learning. We see the need to acquire and develop language skills as a major part of the school curriculum. English is therefore given a high priority at Dovecot Primary School.

Aims and Purposes

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.
- Encourage children to reach their potential in a language rich environment in Literacy lessons and throughout other curriculum areas.

Key Areas of Focus

Spoken Language

"Talk is not merely a conduit for sharing information, or a means for controlling the exuberance of youth; it is the most important educational tool for guiding the development of understanding and for jointly constructing knowledge." Hodgkins and Mercer, *Exploring Talk in Schools*

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach children to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose, listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. Children develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

From Reception to Year 6, all children are encouraged to:

- Justify ideas with reasons.
- Ask questions to check understanding.
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge.
- Negotiate.
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others.
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication.
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations.
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas.
- Organise their ideas prior to writing.

Phonics

We aim to provide high quality, systematic phonic work taught in Reception and KS1 for a minimum of 15 minutes per day. We believe that phonics sessions should be engaging, interactive and delivered at a quick pace. Sessions should include aspects of physical development and engagement as well as oral and auditory phonics practice.

Phonics groups are taught by teachers and teaching assistants in Reception and KS1. Children work in ability groups, learning the relevant GPCs, blending and segmenting skills and spelling rules for their phase to ensure that teaching and learning is effective.

Teachers assess children's phonetic development at the end of each phase to ensure that errors, misconceptions and gaps in learning are quickly identified.

In Reception, parents are invited to attend a Phonics meeting early in the school year. The aim of this meeting is to share resources, key terminology and information to ensure that children can be properly supported at home to learn phonics accurately. There is an expectation that children practice their sounds at home with their parents.

In Reception and key stage 1, written phonics work is completed during phonics sessions. This may include letter formation and practice, word segmenting or sentence writing. The children will be tracked half termly to monitor progress. For children who still require phonics input in KS2, booster sessions and groups are delivered by teaching assistants to ensure that children learn the skills required to be an effective reader and writer.

Writing

At Dovecot Primary School, we place a high value on writing. The children are encouraged to:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length.

- Use accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Be grammatically correct.
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations.
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read.

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is organised into 7 areas of learning and Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The areas of learning that link specifically to English are:

- Communication and Language which includes listening and attention, understanding and speaking.
- Physical development in particular the moving and handling aspect of learning and development
- Literacy which includes reading and writing

Teachers consistently monitor children’s writing and partake in rigorous cross phase moderations to ensure that there is consistency throughout school. Our curriculum planning and teaching demonstrates a clear balance between skills and content; a wide range of genres to be studied; interesting stimuli that encourage active learning (drama, singing, ICT etc.) and writing outcomes that have purpose and an audience.

Teaching of Writing

At Dovecot, it is important that the children are aware that writing is a necessity for life and we ensure that every opportunity is taken to plan for cross curricular links in our curriculum. To ensure that there is a seamless link between reading and writing, teachers plan a ‘text-based approach’ which uses one main text to teach all reading and writing from. Children are encouraged to find key structures and grammatical features of the text and use these in their own writing. Teachers model expected writing using key skills which will be specifically taught in each year group, in accordance with the National Curriculum objectives.

Handwriting

Because handwriting is a basic tool used in many subjects — taking notes, taking tests, and doing classroom work and homework for almost every content area as well as in language arts classes — poor handwriting can have a pervasive effect on school performance. Moreover, when handwriting is perceived as arduous and time-consuming, motivation to write may be greatly reduced, leading to a lack of practice that may further compound difficulties with writing. Typically, when first learning to write, children ‘print’ their letters. They then move on to ‘joined up’ writing at a later stage. Learning two styles of handwriting can add an extra layer of difficulty and cause confusion. It is, therefore, much more helpful for our children to use a single system of handwriting right from the start.

At Dovecot, we employ a cursive handwriting style. Its most important feature is that each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper – and consequently, each word is formed in one, flowing movement. The key advantages to this system are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children’s hands develop a ‘physical memory’ of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape;

- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q);
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case;
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling.

At Dovecot, we aim to teach 'handwriting' so that it becomes an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking. We aim to equip children with the dexterity and fluency needed to access the whole curriculum.

We use our own handwriting scheme (a cursive and dyslexia-friendly approach) which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides a structured and progressive approach. At the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

Different types of print are evident in our school environment as found in the wider world, however, we use the cursive font wherever possible to model a good quality standard of joined script. We want our pupils to be proud of how they present their work and to take particular care in our cursive and joined-up handwriting style.

Method

Teachers model neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwriting tasks, marking and comments.

For children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills - including left-handed children, and children with special educational needs - will be given additional support as necessary to help achieve their optimum handwriting level.

Reception

During their first stages of writing we teach the children to:

- Hold a pencil in an effective manner for writing and be encouraged to correct any errors in grip or stature.
- Understand that letters are written on a base line and that all cursive letters 'start on the line' and 'end with a hook'
- Begin to form some recognisable joined-up cursive letters, capital letters and numerals.
- Have an understanding of writing their own name.
- Understanding different shaped letter families.

Key Stage

In Year 1 and 2, the children are encouraged to:

- Write legibly using upper and lower case letters with correct joins.
- Ensure that letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation.
- Leave the correct space between words.

- Form capital letters and use where appropriate.
- Form numerals that are consistent in size and sit on the base line.
- Begin to form printed letters and understand when they are to be used.
- Improve the speed of writing and begin to write automatically so promoting creativity in independent writing.

Key Stage 2

From Year 3 to 6, the children are required to:

- Improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting.
- *Quality*: Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.
- *Speed*: Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take 'quick notes' at a faster pace.
- *Stamina*: Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.
- Have full knowledge and ability of the different forms of handwriting for different purposes:
 - ✓ Neat, joined, cursive letters for writing passages and large amounts of text, lists and letters.
 - ✓ Printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling, and form filling.
 - ✓ Speedy handwriting for note-taking and dictation where neatness is not as important and shortcuts, such as + instead of 'and', can be used.

Reading

We ensure that the children leaving Key Stage 2 can read fluently, understand extended prose and read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'Reading allows pupils to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. Children are taught how to decode words through high quality phonics teaching as well as how to understand texts through regular class, guided and one to one reading sessions.

Library

Our school aims to develop and foster a love of reading as well as encourage independence. The role of the school library is central in supporting our children's learning, as it plays a key role in helping them develop their communication, information handling and research skills. The resources in our library support the aims and objectives of the national curriculum, promoting the ability in children to read fluently a range of literary and non-fiction texts, and to reflect critically on what they read.

Each class visits the library once a week as a class and Key Stage 2 children are allowed to change their books independently.

Teaching of Reading

At Dovecot Primary School, we not only teach children how to read, we aim to nurture a love of reading. We teach English using a text-based approach. Our English Curriculum Map ensures that every child is exposed to good quality literature as they move through school. These books have been chosen as core texts that will inspire and engage our children and help drive our English

Curriculum. The teaching of reading is also embedded in the wider curriculum, giving children opportunity to transfer and apply their reading skills in other subjects.

The school uses a variety of books from a wide range of scheme and non-scheme publications. In Reception, Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2, books are banded and teachers choose specific books for children to take home and read. In Upper Key Stage 2, children are allowed to choose books themselves, from the classroom or Library.

Across the whole school, children read aloud to an adult regularly. In Reception, when children are ready to read a banded school reading book, they are sent home and changed twice per week. Children also have key and tricky words to learn to read and write which are also sent home via the child's reading record book. Children read to a teacher or teaching assistant on a one-to-one basis at least once a week. Where children require further support, they read on a more regular basis.

From Key Stage 1, the children take part in guided reading sessions. In Years 1 and 2, the children work in small groups focusing on decoding, vocabulary building and developing their viewpoint about a text. This forms part of a carousel style of teaching which provides the children with a variety of ways to practice and record their reading skills.

In Key Stage 2, these reading sessions take more of a whole class approach with teachers and teaching assistants working with a guided group. These sessions are where children are taught specific reading skills according to their year group objectives and consolidate skills already taught. All reading tasks are linked with a quality text so that children can make links between their reading and writing.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, children take part in reading sessions that take place in and out of English lessons. Children who are deemed to be making slow progress with their reading will have appropriate intervention put in place and will read one to one more regularly.

Parental Involvement

The school actively encourages parents to read with their children. Strategies to support reading at home are shared with parents in Reception. In Reception and KS1, parents are required to read with their child at home daily. Communication regarding reading is shared between parents and teachers via 'Reading Records'.

In KS2, when children have developed independence, children are responsible for reading independently for at least 20 minutes daily. Children record their own reading in their homework diaries. Parents and teachers are required to check and sign homework diaries on a weekly basis.

Organisation of the English Curriculum

We follow the English Curriculum as laid out in the National Curriculum for English (Key Stages 1&2). English units are planned using the National Curriculum End of Year Expectations. An appropriate balance of word, sentence and text level work, and a high level of direct and interactive teaching are maintained. A specific, systematic and explicit sequence of speaking and listening activities is

planned into the foundation curriculum subjects alongside a planned cross-curricular approach to reading and writing across the curriculum.

Reception

A discreet Literacy session is delivered four times per week. After this whole class session, children may work with a teacher or teaching assistant to complete group or independent work. Children also practice and apply literacy skills in areas of provision around the classroom when working more freely. Children have an exercise in which all guided and supported writing is evidenced. Where children write independently, such evidence is gathered in a child's 'Learning Journey'.

Key Stage 1 and 2

Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2, the children are taught English in their classes. English lessons occur daily with extra sessions out of lessons for reading. Children have access to a wide range of resources to help their learning including: iPads and the ICT suite used when necessary. Children record their work in exercise books which they use daily.

Teaching Strategies

We aim to deliver meaningful and relevant content with an emphasis on interaction to ensure maximum pupil engagement and enjoyment, for example: Circle Time, Showing and Telling, Drama (including role-play), Media work, Story Time, Group Reading Sessions, Silent Reading, Diary/News, Spelling/Handwriting lessons, Reading Partner Sessions, Interactive Whiteboard activities, clips of educational TV programmes, videos to support language activities and study of texts as well as modelled, shared and guided reading and writing sessions.

Children are presented with tasks which are differentiated appropriately to ensure that they experience challenge at a level where they are able to experience success on a regular basis whether that be for children with special educational needs or to extend our most able pupils. Lesson outcomes are shared with children during lessons and teachers explicitly share success criteria with children to ensure that they all know how to achieve. ICT supports the teaching and learning of English through a variety of interactive programs, which reinforce talk for learning, reading, writing, spelling and grammar e.g. Bug Club, Purple Mash, Story Birds etc.

Planning and Evaluation

All teachers are responsible for planning, evaluating and teaching English, and we use the Liverpool Literacy Plans. The National Curriculum stipulates the expectations which form the long-term plan from which the teachers write medium term plans to achieve balance and coverage over a term or half term. The more detailed weekly/fortnightly short term planning will focus on the teaching process. The teaching sequence should follow these stages:

1. Read and Respond (Immersion in the text, sequencing, drama activities, understanding of character, setting and plot).
2. Identify and Magpie (How does the author achieve certain effects? Create believable characters? Powerful settings? Look in closer detail at grammatical features and magpie ideas for use in own writing).

3. Plan, Draft, Edit (Apply what they have learnt to an extended written outcome- try and give a real purpose for writing).

Class teachers meet regularly to ensure continuity of provision and moderation in terms of expectations and outcomes across the year groups.

Assessment, recording and reporting

Short and medium term assessment is the responsibility of the class teacher and is in line with the Assessment Policy. However, teachers will use informal assessment and observation on a daily basis to determine what children can do independently and therefore plan next steps for learning. Regular and informative feedback is given to the children and they are expected to act up on it (see Marking & Feedback Policy).

Formal writing assessments take place on a half-termly basis in order to focus on tracking children's achievement rigorously. This results in an analysis of individual points' progress and informs whole class, group and individual curricular targets. Writing data is loaded on to the 'O-Track' system on a half-termly basis using evidence from the formal writing assessments as well as the informal evidence collected throughout a half term.

Reading attainment is decided on using evidence from a range of guided reading sessions, one to one reading as well as formal reading tasks. This data is also uploaded onto O-Track.

Pupil progress will be reported to parents in writing during the summer term and orally during the parent consultation evenings of the autumn and spring terms. Non-statutory QCA/ NFER tests in English will be administered to children in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 during May each year. Children in Years 2 and 6 take part in statutory KS1 and 2 SATs respectively. Reception pupils are assessed using the Foundation Stage Profile. Pupil profiles are established for each child in Reception and assessments are made against the Foundation Stage Profile statements.

Continuity and Progression Continuity and progression underpin the teaching of English. In school, we ensure that objectives and concepts are reviewed and reinforced before further extension takes place. The transfer from Reception to Year 1 as well as Year 2 to 3 is monitored closely. Assessment data and incidental information is moderated and passed on to the relevant teacher who ensures that the transition between Key Stages is as smooth as possible. Evidence uploaded onto O-Track to inform new class teachers of children's achievements, levels in reading and writing as well as next steps in learning. Similarly, the transfer from Year 6 to Secondary school involves the passing on of information.

The role of the subject lead

In addition to the roles outlined in the overarching curriculum policy the English Lead must:

- Liaison with network and partner schools, governors and School Improvement Liverpool on matters relating to English

Resources

The school uses reading schemes, picture books, poetry, fiction and non-fiction books to provide a range of texts. The scheme books are colour coded according to guidance from 'Book Bands for Guided Reading – Reading Recovery Programme'. In the Foundation Stage and KS1, books are class based- each teacher being responsible for their supply- replacing and supplementing when necessary. In KS2 books are centrally stored. Those children who are confidently reading a range of literature have a range of fiction and non-fiction books to choose from and their choice will be monitored.

Homework

Homework in English will be set in line with the school policy. There is a clear expectation that all children will spend time reading / sharing books at home on a regular basis- see reading section of this policy. From Year One to Year 6, children are given spellings patterns or rules to learn. They may also receive sets of High Frequency words to revise. These, will be individual to the children. Spelling tests will take place using similar patterns and rules.

Links with other subjects

Pupils should be taught in all subjects to express themselves correctly and appropriately and to read accurately and with understanding. At Dovecot, we recognise the importance of using high quality texts across the curriculum. Speaking and listening, reading and writing are embedded into cross curricular and theme planning. Since Standard English, spoken and written, is the predominate language in which knowledge and skills are taught and learned, pupils should be taught to recognise and use Standard English. Pupils should be taught the technical and specialist vocabulary of subjects and how to use and spell these words. They should also be taught to use the patterns of language vital to understanding and expression in different subjects.