



LATCHMERE
ACADEMY TRUST

English Policy

Status	Curriculum
Review Cycle	Annual
Date written/ last review	September 2019
Date of next review	September 2020

NB: Throughout this document Latchmere Academy Trust may be abbreviated to "LAT"

The purpose of this document

The purpose of this policy is to reflect the Trust's values and philosophy in relation to the teaching and learning of English and set out the framework within which teaching and learning takes place. It provides guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. This document has been prepared by the English Subject Leaders in consultation with staff. It has been produced for all teaching staff, teaching assistants, school governors, parents, the LEA and OFSTED.

Philosophy / Rationale

Our aim is to enable children to become confident and skilled in all aspects of English. We aim to help children to develop a love of the English language through the spoken and written word. We believe that through speaking and listening, reading and writing, children develop their powers of imagination, originality, creativity and reflection. Using language skilfully empowers children to communicate creatively and imaginatively, as well as allowing them to engage with the world at large.

English is a core subject within the National Curriculum and a pre-requisite for educational and social progress. We recognise that mastery of the English language is an essential pre-requisite for every child's social development as well as educational progress. English is the main instrument for learning through which children access other subject areas, as well as communicate understanding. To this end, the teaching of English skills is not isolated to English lessons but is also delivered through application across the curriculum.

Fundamentally, it is our intention that children leave school as lifelong learners with a desire to read and write with enjoyment for the rest of their lives.

Overall aims for English learning and teaching

We strive for children to become fully literate. By the age of 11, we aim for every child to be able to:

- Speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control, showing awareness of the listener
- Develop and use a wide range of vocabulary, understanding appropriate use in different contexts
- Listen to others with respect, focus and understanding, responding appropriately.
- Use role play and drama to explore characterisation, events, themes and issues
- Enjoy reading a variety of books and other text for both pleasure and purpose
- Use a variety of reading strategies to become fluent readers of fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts
- Use knowledge of phonics, spelling conventions and sight vocabulary to spell accurately
- Have an understanding of the grammatical features of their writing
- Utilise their grammatical knowledge to alter the effect of their writing
- Have fluent and legible cursive handwriting
- Have an interest in words and their meanings and an ever growing vocabulary

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of fiction, poetry and non-fiction genres
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing for presentation
- Become an analytical reader, able to evaluate and justify their preferences
- Through discussion, drama, reading and writing, develop their powers of imagination, creativity and reflection.

Reading

Our aim is that all children experience the joy of reading in a stimulating environment. We aim for every child to become an enthusiastic, independent and confident reader, developing their phonic knowledge and language decoding skills at the earliest possible stage. We want all children to develop skills in comprehension and interpretation, and the ability to form substantiated opinions of a broad range of fiction and non-fiction texts.

Phonics

Our intention is that all children develop fluent word reading skills and good foundations in spelling by the end of KS1. We teach early reading and spelling skills using **'Letters and Sounds'**, a six-phase teaching programme which determines systematic, high quality phonics work, beginning in Nursery and continuing into Reception and Key Stage 1. In the early phases, the focus is on children exploring sounds, increasing their stock of words and improving their command of dialogue. Our teaching staff provide children with a broad and rich language experience, using the power of stories, rhythm, rhyme, drama and song to develop both excitement and skills.

Phonic skills are taught as the first approach to reading and spelling. These skills are taught through:

- Systematic phonics teaching using a clear system of progression
- Discrete, daily sessions for all children in Reception and Year 1, with ample of opportunities to apply phonic knowledge and skills throughout the day
- A multi-sensory approach using songs, actions, movement and games
- Explicit links made between decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling), with both skills being taught and applied alongside each other
- Ongoing monitoring and assessment of every child's progress

High frequency 'tricky' words

Alongside phonic decoding, children are taught to read and spell high frequency tricky words. These are words that cannot be sounded out and blended because they have unusual or as yet untaught grapheme-phoneme correspondences and, therefore, they have to be learnt by recognition. They are introduced in Reception in a sequence given by the Letters & Sounds scheme. In addition, each year group from 1-6 has a set word list which is addressed through explicit spelling teaching and across the curriculum.

Shared Reading

Shared reading is a whole class activity using a common text. Teachers may use shared reading to focus on the following: comprehension, specific language features such as word and spelling patterns, the layout and purpose of a text and the structure and organisation of sentences. During shared reading, the teacher may choose texts that are slightly more challenging than pupils might read independently. This is because the teacher is able to support the reading and discuss the text in more detail. This is an important opportunity to enthuse about texts and share the joy of reading as a class.

Guided Reading

Guided reading takes place with a small group of children and may last about twenty minutes. It enables the teacher to work with a group of children for a sustained period to develop their reading. Teachers use this as an opportunity to both teach and assess word level, sentence level and text level learning objectives.

Individual Reading

In Nursery, children are encouraged to share books with adults as part of everyday Nursery practice.

Reception and Key Stage 1: Children are allocated individual reading books based on the 'Cliff Moon' colour-coded system. Using this system, which includes both real and scheme books, teaching staff, parents and children are able to select and change reading books appropriate for the child. Children are regularly assessed against these reading levels and move onto the next colour as appropriate.

Key Stage 2: Children have opportunities during the school day to read independently a novel or non-fiction book of their own choice. These may be chosen from the class library, the main library or brought from home.

Home / School Reading Records

We value the home-school partnership and know that our children greatly benefit from the practical support that parents give by hearing reading both in school and at home. With this in mind, home / school diaries or 'Reading Records' are used to record and comment on children's reading.

- In Reception and Key Stage 1, the focus is on dialogue between parents and teachers, commenting on the child's reading skills, areas for development, motivation and other relevant information.
- In Key Stage 2, the children are increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for recording their reading and enter into this written dialogue. Expectation of dialogue is increased throughout the school.

- In lower Key Stage 2, there is a high emphasis on verbal dialogue between the teacher and child on the child's progress. The children are encouraged to comment on their reading at school in a written format.
- In upper Key Stage 2, the children are reading more independently, the teacher will encourage a more critical and reflective dialogue. The children are encouraged to recognise different focus areas of reading and should develop their comments to link with each strand over the course of the year. Increasingly, a more in depth comment is encouraged and a sustained dialogue will take place between the teacher and child.
- At all times, parents are encouraged and welcomed to respond in the reading record.

School Libraries

We are continuing to develop and enhance the facilities in the school library. Year 6 monitors have the responsibility of maintaining up keep of the library by making sure books are in the correct places, mending books and updating posters. These librarians are all responsible for thinking of book-based competitions over the year.

Buddy / Peer Reading

From Year 1 onwards, all children in school have a 'buddy' from another year group. 'Buddy' classes regularly meet for paired reading or other shared activities. This is an opportunity for our children to be supported in their reading or model their reading skills to others. On both sides of the 'buddy pair', this is a highly positive and motivating experience.

Writing

Our aim is for all children to become creative, confident and independent writers who are able to apply their skills appropriately in different contexts.

Handwriting and transcriptional skills:

To ensure early independence in basic writing:

- Activities which help develop gross and fine motor skills are introduced in the Nursery and extended in the Reception year.
- Letter formation is taught using the cursive handwriting style. This begins during Reception, and continues through all other year groups.
- From Year 2, children are taught to join their letters using the cursive style.
- Handwriting and presentation are an important focus throughout the school. Allocated time is given to teach these important skills.

Whole class shared writing:

Teachers use shared writing as a key strategy in order to model and teach writing skills.

- Text-types read in class are used as models for writing.

- Pupils are encouraged to share ideas and compose verbally before writing.
- Teachers explicitly share and discuss success criteria with children.
- Through shared writing, teachers model and teach the processes of thinking, planning and composing as well as proper punctuation and grammar.

Group guided writing:

Guided writing groups are mini writers' workshops in which all children's contributions are valued. Emphasis is on applying writing skills, resulting in improved independent writing and consolidation of targets.

Teachers:

- encourage and stimulate children's interest in literature through drama activities, poetry and stories;
- value and recognise children's efforts by displaying high-quality work in the classroom, showing excellent written work in assemblies and including pieces of writing in the weekly newsletter;
- offer positive incentives to children in recognition of their efforts (stars, stamps, team points, merits, quality marks; teacher praise and peer praise; showing work to the head teacher);
- further children's learning by writing comments and targets in their English books;
- teach children how to use punctuation (capital letters, full stops, question marks, commas and speech marks; and as they progress through the school, more advanced punctuation such as brackets, hyphens, colons and semicolons);
- teach, by example, and in class and group activities, the rules of grammar and syntax;
- help children learn how to proof-read their work, as well as its significance in the writing process;
- model how to vary writing to suit audience and purpose.

Spoken Language

Our aim is that all children will become effective and reflective oral communicators. They will have the ability to interact, confidently, sensitively and competently, with a wide range of peers and adults within a wide range of situations.

We acknowledge that "Speaking and Listening" is fundamental to the thinking process. It is therefore a prominent feature in all learning and teaching across the curriculum.

We believe that children need to verbalise their thinking in order to fully understand their learning and only then are fully able to apply that learning in written form.

We adhere to the National Curriculum 2014 guidelines to ensure appropriate progression.

- Beginning with initial emphasis on one-to-one interactions
- Increasingly effective interactions with groups of peers
- Larger group discussions, presentations to class/year/whole school

- Public Speaking
- Performing texts aloud from memory

Our children are given opportunities to:

- discuss their work
- express feelings and opinions
- ask and answer questions
- give and respond to instructions
- recall experiences, real and imaginary
- describe events, processes and observations
- comment on what other people say
- argue a case
- explain ideas and respond to the ideas of others
- predict with reasons what may happen
- listen actively and recall messages or reports from others
- read aloud, recite a poem learnt
- act out stories or scenes from books, or create their own
- use role play to explore other characters/people's thoughts and motivations
- present and make up dialogue for puppet shows
- learn how words can evoke feelings
- take part in performances
- listen to each other and to adults giving detailed explanations and presentations (reading aloud, describing how a model works, through recordings on video or tape).
- develop debating skills and presenting a reasoned argument

Teachers:

- recognise what the child already knows about spoken language in order to extend their language development
- respect and show interest in what the child has to say
- discuss activities they are engaged in and help them to articulate what they are trying to say - encourage, suggest and challenge what they are doing
- provide support through explanation and interpretation
- provide models of new language and extend vocabulary
- ask open-ended questions
- provide opportunities for collaborative group work and paired work
- ensure that children have the opportunity to participate in a range of drama activities, in the classroom at hall times and performances.
- recognise the importance and value of "home languages", in developing children's confidence in their own communication skills
- provide opportunities for public speaking and debate
- provide opportunities for performance of texts and poetry from memory

Our classrooms provide a stimulating and challenging environment within which the child can become actively involved in creative learning situations which will encourage the use of language.

We ensure there are:

- areas where children can experiment, investigate and try things out by themselves or with others
- opportunities for a wide range of collaborative activities
- opportunities for drama, improvisation and performances of various kinds including role-play activities, puppet theatres, and opportunities to take part in class assemblies and school plays. Also the opportunity to respond to drama children have watched, as well as that in which they have participated
- cross-curricular opportunities for language work, e.g. in describing and discussing a science investigation, or a maths project
- opportunities for growing things/observing/looking at and touching artefacts/natural phenomena
- book areas stocked with a wide range of literature and reference materials, including poetry songs and rhymes, and that children have opportunities to discuss these with their teacher and their peers
- opportunities to use a wide range of resources and audio-visual aids to assist learning
- opportunities to use Computing to support English activities and to use Computing as an information source and communication exchange
- opportunities to draft and redraft longer pieces of written work on the computer
- quiet reading times in the classroom when children can practise their reading skills by reading to themselves or aloud to a teacher, another adult or a friend

Spelling

Good spelling is important in writing because it eases communication and understanding, creates a good impression, frees the writer to be more expressive and ultimately improves the quality of written work. Good spelling is not automatic and it needs to be systematically taught and learned. We employ a range of strategies in order to help children to become good at spelling.

- We emphasise the importance of spelling words correctly at the same time as valuing and encouraging children's attempts at spelling. Children are encouraged to 'have a go' and use sounding out strategies as their primary approach to spelling new words.
- The key spelling strategy is phonic decoding. Through the teaching of phonics, the teaching of reading and spelling words is taught and applied alongside each from Foundation Stage onwards. (Ref Letters and Sounds document)
- Good spellers employ a broad range of strategies, including phonics, skills morphology (use of prefix/suffix), recognition, grammatical awareness and adaptation of existing knowledge. Our teaching of spelling encourages the development of these strategies.
- Sight vocabulary of high frequency words is achieved through contextualised experience (shared and guided reading and writing), backed up with learning strategies such as visualisation of words, pattern-spotting and 'look-say-write-check'.

- The investigative approach is employed to enable children to “discover” spelling conventions.
- Pictures, mnemonics and games are used to help with the learning of “tricky” spellings
- Children may use personal dictionaries or word cards in which they can write words they use in their own writing.
- Marking is used as a significant strategy to assess and improve spelling. Teachers correct spellings as appropriate for the child’s level and the piece of work in hand and are given time and opportunity to revise misspelled words.
- Assessment of spelling takes place through assessing the extent to which they can apply learned words and spell in the context of their own writing.
- Specific spellings / spelling rules are learnt in accordance with the 2014 National Curriculum.

We teach children to:

- write each letter of the alphabet
- discriminate different letter sounds within a word
- write common letter strings
- spell words with common prefixes and inflectional endings
- identify rhyming words
- develop visual and oral acuity to enable them to relate the written word to its spoken sound
- learn spellings by the LOOK - COVER - WRITE - CHECK method
- use visual imagery to relate the word to its spoken sound
- identify and recall the common spelling structures
- remember the exceptions to accepted spelling patterns
- write in a cursive style as early as possible, by using script with a “flick” ready to join
- check the accuracy of their spelling by using wordbanks and dictionaries

Teachers will provide children with a variety of learning experiences to develop awareness of spelling patterns and to teach and consolidate spellings. These will include the following: classroom displays, word banks of words in family groups or in letter clusters, spelling lists of words which do not follow rules, spelling lists of frequently used words, handwriting practice which uses sounds and words children are learning to spell, word-searches, crossword puzzles, anagrams, personal dictionaries containing most used words and spaces to add additional words, commercially produced dictionaries, have-a-go spelling / dictionary books.

Additional aspects of English

Computing and Visual English

- Children have access to English software, such as ‘Education City’ and ‘Espresso’.
- Work begun in English lessons may be extended and developed during computing.
- The interactive whiteboard provides an opportunity to model writing and share good resources.

- Further visual stimuli used to support and enhance the teaching and learning of English includes: Espresso and Education City resources; Story Spinner and British Film Institute materials; Smartboard and PowerPoint Presentations; DVDs; images and video clips.

Inclusion

- We ensure that all pupils have equal access to the English curriculum, irrespective of race or gender.
- Boys and girls have equal access to reading resources and provide a range of books suitable for both: staff are responsible for buying suitable reading books for their classroom and these are checked for race, class, gender and ability stereotypes in terms of text or illustrations.
- Every child should be given the opportunity to reach their full potential using appropriately differentiated work.
- Differentiation is not based on the amount of work a pupil is expected to complete; rather, it is used to ensure that each child is supported and challenged as necessary.
- This differentiation should be clearly marked on short term planning.

Intervention strategies

- 'School Start' Sound Awareness and Language Groups support early phonic development.
- Reading with an adult 1:1.
- Narrative groups.
- English booster group, which focuses on grammar, punctuation, structure and generating ideas.
- More able readers are part of a reading comprehension group which focuses on higher level questioning.
- 'Cusp' readers are supported by a reading comprehension support group.
- Our Dyslexia Support Teacher works 1:1, and with small groups, supporting children with dyslexic tendencies and liaising with the teachers.

Planning

- The long-term plan for the school follows the 2014 National Curriculum.
- Medium-term plans give an overview of how English is taught across each term.
- Weekly short-term plans indicate the objectives, and how these will be taught, including differentiation and support needed.
- Weekly short term planning is undertaken by year groups, modified and reviewed at year group meetings.
- It is each teacher's responsibility to plan for English during the term.
- Where possible, links with other subjects are used to give greater meaning and depth to children's learning experiences.

Assessment for Learning and Feedback

We use continual formative and summative assessment in order to understand to what extent children have achieved their learning intention(s), identify strength and those areas to target in future teaching.

See Marking and Feedback Policy

Summative Assessment

English is assessed as part of “Baseline” assessment at the beginning of Reception, and also at the end of Reception within the EYFS profile. English assessments are also carried out with SATs in Years 2 and 6. Teacher assessed independent writing tasks are used by the teacher to assess writing. These are moderated within year teams, between year groups and across the Latchmere Academy Trust throughout the year. For further information on this, please see the Assessment Policy.

The statutory Phonic Screening takes place at the end of Year 1. The children who do not achieve the pass mark are given additional support in Year 2 and are then screened again at the end of the year.

Formative assessment

Ongoing formative assessment is continually being used by teachers to assess teaching and learning in the classroom. Valuable examples of this are:

- classroom observations
- classroom discussion (with the whole class, small groups or individuals)
- teacher notes and annotations of planning, noting children who either did not meet expected learning objectives or those that exceeded them
- children’s self-assessment in the form of reflective comments in their book or as a dialogue with the teacher
- marking a piece of written work with ‘what went well’, as appropriate, and a target for improvement

See marking and feedback policy

Monitoring

- All monitoring and evaluation supports school improvement and development in learning and teaching.
- English books are reviewed regularly by the English leaders and SLT.
- Planning is monitored by the BPMs in their year group. Overall continuity and progression within, and between, year groups is monitored by the English leaders.
- Observations of teaching and learning are conducted by the head teacher and the deputy head teacher.
- Analysis of results is done by year groups, fed back and discussed with the English leaders, the head teacher and the deputy head teacher. Action plans are based on these discussions.
- Children’s progress is tracked by teachers.

- Pupil progress is reported to parents twice a year through parents' consultations and also through Records of Achievement (ROA) written annually in the summer term.
- Assessment is undertaken in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and Key Stage 1 and 2 SATS each year to highlight areas of strength and weakness and to identify points for action. Whole school targets are formulated as a result of this process.