

# English Policy



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At Nelson Primary School, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills. Through the English curriculum, we will help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners. We want children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

English enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving these order and meaning. Because literacy is central to children's intellectual, emotional and social development, it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

### Rationale:

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

Reading is the key to unlocking the curriculum At Nelson we understand how vital it is that all children are taught to read fluently in order to be able to access the information they need to develop their knowledge in other curriculum areas.

As a school we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. 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 pupil's 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)

We are an inclusive school - we set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We use one-to-one support, small groups and cross-phase work to help with this.

At the heart of our English teaching from EYFS to Year 5 is the Pie Corbett 'Talk for Writing' approach to teaching. Talk for Writing enables children to internalize the key language and structure of the text through imitation. This is followed by shared writing to show pupils how to craft their writing, and children are helped to write in the same style the model text. As a result, they rapidly develop their writing and language skills. **(See appendix 1 for the Talk for Writing approach used in school)**

## **1. Spoken Language:**

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10) They should:

- Use talk for writing approaches including imitation.
- 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.

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach the children to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose. Listening and responding to literature including participating effectively in group discussions helps them to obtain the oral skills they will need as they grow up.

Ways in which we support this include but are not limited to:

- Talk for writing activities, which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability and age.
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate.
- Encouraging talk-time at home through cross curricular projects and learning logs.
- Poetry recital
- School Plays
- Class debates
- Class assemblies
- Events within the community
- School Council
- Talk partners
- Book talk sessions
- Drama / role play
- PSHE and circle time

## **2. Reading:**

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as an 'extreme importance, since through it pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (p13) Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13). Nelson pupils have access to library facilities, and we support and encourage reading at home.

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

We know that both these elements are essential to success and work hard to ensure the acquisition of both, through rigorous phonics teaching, guided reading and comprehension. These areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.

## **2.1 Our aims and connected provision**

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics in Key Stage One, regular reading to adults in school, reading partners and incentives to read at home.
- Pupils in Y2 upwards who have gaps in phonic knowledge are identified quickly and have daily intervention until they can read fluently.
- The regular phonics sessions in KS1 follow the Little Wandle letters and sounds revised programme.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, library visits and high-quality attractive books in classrooms.
- Books are purchased to reflect a diverse range of cultures.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read and the various methods outlined above.
- Pupils also need to read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way as per our assessment cycle.
- Pupils are exposed to a range of texts during their school career and as a result of the Talk for Writing process, they will learn a range of texts orally as well as reading them.
- Children participate in guided reading sessions with an adult.
- Pupils are exposed to cross curricular text which develop their subject knowledge and offer context to different topics.
- Parent workshops develop parents' skills in helping their child with reading at home.

## **3. Writing:**

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- 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 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)

- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

Our aims and connected provision

- Talk for Writing (T4W) is at the centre of our provision in EYFS to Year 5. Year 6 link their writing to their class reading texts.
- We teach spelling, grammar and punctuation during a skills session each day from Year 2 to Year 6.
- We correct grammatical errors orally and in written work (where appropriate) following the school's marking policy.
- We have a systematic approach: we revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas from phonics, through to grammar and spelling.
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice.
- We provide writing frames and or images to support the least confident.
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising.
- We mark extended pieces of work in-depth and give gap tasks for the pupils.
- We use success criteria checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess, when appropriate, so they can evaluate effectively.
- We encourage and teach joined handwriting to support spelling and speed from year 1 onward.
- We follow a handwriting scheme to ensure teaching consistency from Year 1 upward.
- We use drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view.
- Support for pupils with learning and motor difficulties.
- Meetings and workshops with parents to help them support their child.

#### **4. Vocabulary Development:**

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' (p11) since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active.
- Progressive/ systematic.
- Making links from known words.
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning.
- Include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations.
- Subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words.
- Strategies to help children clarify meaning.

#### **4.1 Our aims and connected provision:**

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:

- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learnt.
- Display of key words on the working walls.
- Using the correct vocabulary orally.
- Discussions around unfamiliar vocabulary found in texts.
- Using dictionaries and thesaurus.
- Carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils.
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate, using catch up literacy.
- Structure for vocabulary activities during guided reading to make sessions meaningful.

## **5. Marking, Planning and Assessment:**

### **Planning:**

- Long term overviews can be found on the long term plans produced at the start of a year for Key Stages One and Two.
- Planning monitored to ensure a range of texts are covered
- Pupils are taught in single age classes.
- Medium term (half –termly) planning is produced as a sequence of learning.
- English is planned for separately to other subjects using the school’s planning proforma.
- Schemes of work for phonics, grammar and spelling are used to ensure developmental learning building on prior knowledge.
- Short term planning is flexible allowing for assessment for learning after each session/ group of sessions.
- Pupils may be streamed by ability for some sessions/ types of homework/ support.
- Pupils identified in pupil progress meetings who are falling behind, will receive intervention through either quality-first teaching or small group interventions with a TA or intervention teacher.
- Pupils with EAL will be given additional English support. This is monitored during Pupil Progress Meetings (PPM).

### **Marking**

Marking is used as part of our formative assessment to inform planning as well as help the children to improve their work. Work is marked using a two colour system. Green highlighter is used to pick up the good work children produce that meets the learning objectives. Pink highlighter is used for identifying handwriting, spelling, grammatical, word choice or sentence structure errors, which help the children to improve. We allow the children time in lessons to respond to their comments.

### **Assessment:**

- Staff assess pupils learning during and as part of every session, they adapt their practice accordingly.
- Formal assessments of reading, writing and spelling are carried out in both Key Stage 1 and 2 at least once per term. The results are analysed and inform reports to parents, target children and a future planning.

- Writing is assessed using the Teacher assessment frameworks in year 2 and 6 and target sheets in years 1,3, 4 and 5.
- Speaking and listening is assessed against the national curriculum statements.
- All staff attend moderating sessions within school and some staff attend external moderation sessions.
- Children's progress in English is assessed using nationally prescribed tests with the Phonics Screening test taking place at the end of Year 1 as well as the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 SATs.
- End of Key Stage Assessments are analysed by the Leader and Head teacher and feed into the school SEF, Development Plan and performance management targets.

#### **6. Professional development:**

- All staff have received training in the T4W approach to raise attainment and progress in writing.
- All staff receive phonics training.
- Staff are expected to attend relevant courses during the school year.
- Moderation takes place in house, as well as within our schools network.
- Staff subject knowledge audits take place annually and inform training and support.
- Staff are expected to carry out the necessary research in order to ensure they have the secure subject knowledge required to teach English effectively.

#### **7. Specific groups:**

- Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly, pupils who are slow moving or making little or no progress are discussed in PPMs and plans made to accelerate their progress.
- Pupils with early English acquisition are given additional support in all aspects of English.
- Pupils who are gifted and talented receive additional targeted support and a differentiated curriculum.
- Pupils with SEN will have English based targets on their ITPs. These are reviewed termly.
- Pupils identified as being in the bottom 20% of readers as targeted for additional reading support.

## **Appendix 1**

### **A summary of the Talk for Writing Stages**

Talk for Writing, developed by Pie Corbett supported by Julia Strong, is powerful because it is based on the principles of how children learn. Talk for Writing enables children to imitate the key language they need before they try reading and analysing it. Through fun activities that help them rehearse the tune of the language they need, followed by shared writing to show them how to craft their writing, children are helped to write in the same style. Talk for writing is taught in 3 stages called the 3 I's, imitation, innovation and invention. The stages are explained below:

#### **Stage 1 – Imitation**

The teaching begins with some sort of creative 'hook' which engages the pupils, often with a sense of enjoyment, audience and purpose. The model text is pitched well above the pupils' level and has built into it the underlying, transferable structures and language patterns that students will need when they are writing. This is learned using a 'text map' and actions to strengthen memory and help students internalise the text. Once students can 'talk like the text', the model, and other examples, are then read for vocabulary and comprehension, before being analysed for the basic text (boxing up) and language patterns, as well as writing techniques or toolkits. All of this first phase is underpinned by rehearsing key spellings and grammatical patterns. Short-burst writing is used to practise key focuses such as description, persuasion or scientific explanation.

#### **Stage 2 - Innovation**

Once students are familiar with the model text, then the teacher leads them into creating their own versions. A new subject is presented and the teacher leads students through planning. With younger pupils, this is based on changing the basic map and retelling new versions. Older students use boxed-up planners and the teacher demonstrates how to create simple plans and orally develop ideas prior to writing. Ideas may need to be generated and organised or information researched and added to a planner. Shared and guided writing is then used to stage writing over a number of days so that students are writing texts bit by bit, concentrating on bringing all the elements together, writing effectively and accurately. Feedback is given during the lessons, so that students can be taught how to improve their writing, make it more accurate, until they can increasingly edit in pairs or on their own.

#### **Stage 3 - Independent application and invention – the 'hot' task**

Eventually, children independently apply what has been taught and practised. Students are guided through planning, drafting and revising their work independently. Writing may be staged over a number of days and there may be time for several independent pieces to be written. With non-fiction, students should apply what they have been taught across the curriculum. The final piece is used as the 'hot' task, which clearly shows progress across the unit.

It is important that at the innovation and independent application stages, the writing becomes increasingly independent of the original model rather than a pale copy. Whilst KS1 pupils may only make a few simple changes, older students should be adding, embellishing, altering and manipulating the original structure.