



English Policy

Summer 2021

STATEMENT OF INTENT

English is at the heart of every child and adult's life. We live in an environment where written text is all around us and we use the fundamentals of writing and reading in our daily lives. This is why at Monksdown we believe that English should be at the heart of all aspects of school life.

We recognise that at our children have varied life experiences and the ability to read and write effectively directly impacts their life choices. We understand that reading and writing skills also has a direct impact upon progress and attainment in all areas of the curriculum and also upon a child's self-esteem, well-being and motivation to learn. Therefore, we recognise that children need to develop a secure knowledge of the skills in literacy which follows a clear path of progression as they develop through the school. This is crucial for our school as we support them to become lifelong writers and readers enabling them to participate as full members of society.

At Monksdown Primary School, English and the teaching of English is embedded across the curriculum. Our aim is to ensure that every child progresses in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We believe in supporting our children to love reading and writing. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and adapt their language and style for a range of contexts. We believe in setting high standards in the presentation of writing along with setting the important foundations in spelling and grammar. We aim to inspire children in their writing by providing opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across the curriculum. We value reading as a key life skill and we are dedicated to enabling our pupils to become lifelong readers. We believe that through supporting our children to learn to read, they will be able to read to learn for the rest of their lives. Reading is key for academic success. We believe in developing reading fluency and all comprehension skills coupled with promoting a love of reading so all of our children can access the delights and rewards that reading provides.

IMPLEMENTATION

The aims of our English curriculum are:

- To ensure children have access to a broad, balanced and creative literacy curriculum
- To promote a positive attitude to reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- To develop children’s ability to become confident users of language, both oral and written.
- To enable our children to become fluent and responsive readers.
- To enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstance and demands.
- To enable children to evaluate their own and others’ contributions through a range of drama/role play activities.
- To develop a lifelong love of reading and writing
- To provide clear and consistent teaching throughout the school.

With these aims in mind, writing and reading opportunities are timetabled daily across all year groups.

Reading

In Reception Key Stage 1 daily phonics supports the development of early reading skills. Additionally, to this the children learn to read using a fully phonetically decodable reading scheme to ensure they can put their phonetical skills to use to read for understanding. In years 2 – 4 daily guided reading sessions provide the children with opportunities to develop word reading and comprehension skills, incorporating all strands of reading comprehension using the VIPERS questioning model. Whole class guided reading is used to encourage high level vocabulary, inference techniques, prediction skills, explain their thinking around a text, learn how to retrieve information and sequence and summarise information they have read. In addition to the discrete daily reading, a diverse range of reading opportunities are embedded across the curriculum. Quality texts are used as a lead into many writing opportunities where new vocabulary can be learnt and applied; whole class texts are shared with the children to allow time to listen to and enjoy stories.

Reading is celebrated at Monksdown and there are many opportunities for the children to develop and enhance their love of reading across the school year. Our book week coincides with World Book Day. We spend the week focusing on reading, with competitions, local library visits, creative activities and sharing stories to expose our children to new authors and promote the enjoyment of reading. We celebrate our fantastic readers each month with the ‘Reader of the Month’ where each winner receives a golden coin to use at our book vending machines.

Curriculum Organisation

Our teaching is planned from the Pathways scheme, Development Matters and the National Curriculum programmes of study. The Pathways planning ensures children’s learning builds on prior knowledge using a range of skills. We plan literacy sessions flexibly and ensure that the appropriate balance of whole class, group and individual teaching is retained.

In the Foundation Stage the skills of listening, attention, understanding and speaking are encompassed in the prime area of Communication and Language and are fundamental to allow children to be successful in all other learning.

Teachers provide activities which are interesting and motivating and provide the best context for increasing children's knowledge about the English language. It is also necessary to focus on aspects of knowledge about the language such as phonics, spelling and grammar so that children learn what they need to know in a systematic way.

Each child is given a home reading diary for staff and parents to record their additional reading. In each classroom there are dedicated reading areas with a range of non-fiction, fiction books and poetry books from a range of publishers. We encourage children to read as regularly as possible with an adult at home.

Reading

Teachers at Monksdown Primary School are committed to the reading development of all our pupils.

We use the Letters and Sounds programme to deliver daily discrete phonics lessons in Foundation Stage and KS1; enabling children to decode effectively. This is continued into KS2 where necessary (using Fast Track Phonics).

Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opportunity to develop their own reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during daily whole class guided reading time. During guided reading there is a particular focus on questioning, using the VIPERS model, to promote an in-depth understanding of the text. A fully phonetically decodable reading scheme is in place to support early readers as well as book banded 'real books'. Those children in KS2, who are not working at ARE have access to a different phonetically decodable scheme.

Reading for pleasure

Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books, e.g. 'World Book Day' - where children are immersed in storytelling, author quizzes, book discussions and the opportunity to dress up as a book character and share their favourite books. Other opportunities include reading to children in a local nursery setting. We recognise the value of adults (both in school and at home) reading aloud to children, in order to improve their grasp of story language, enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers.

Home Reading

In KS1 and KS2, children take home a book which is appropriate to their level of ability. Children are expected to progress to a 'free reader' status so they are able to read any book from their classroom or school library. Each child has a book bag and a home school reading record that teachers and parents can use to share information about a child's reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their child

daily. Information is given on how to support their child in reading on the school website, curriculum letters, parent information evenings and parents' evenings.

Writing

Writing is taught using the Pathways scheme of work. Through the use of a quality texts and teaching of 'mastery keys' we teach the children to infer, understand and use high-level vocabulary and a range of punctuation. Each text is purposefully selected in order to promote a love of reading, engagement and high-quality writing from each child. We ensure that each year group is taught the explicit grammar, punctuation and spelling objectives required for that age group. Writing is celebrated across the school with high quality displays along with sharing successes for the children in our celebration assemblies.

As well as teaching the national curriculum objectives, teachers are able to embed the skills throughout the year in cross curricular writing opportunities.

In Foundation Stage, emergent writing is encouraged through the use of different writing materials, including felt tipped pens, crayons, chalk, sand, magnetic letters, big brushes, water, paint and computers, as well as writing in all areas of learning, such as postcards, menus, invitations and labels. Alongside this, children take part in a range of activities to encourage and develop gross and fine motor skills necessary to write in a legible script. Daily phonics lessons build their phonic and spelling knowledge to enable them to sound out words and spell high frequency words correctly.

Teachers model writing skills and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in modelled and shared writing sessions, delivered as part of the daily English lesson. Guided writing sessions are used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals. Children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions at the end of a unit; applying their taught skills to an unsupported piece of writing. Throughout the year there are several themed weeks e.g Reindeer week, World Book Week and author visits which allow the children to write for purpose.

Each year group is provided with a 'Progression in Skills' document, which gives detailed information about the genres and statutory requirements that each year group should be following. The documents show progression with genres across the year groups. Teachers will use the resources to plan daily English lessons that are differentiated and tailored to a classes needs.

Handwriting and presentation

Handwriting is a key area of focus within the curriculum, which has specific statutory teaching requirements for each year group. We use the Debbie Hepplewhite Handwriting Scheme in school to help children develop fluent, clear and legible joined up writing (see Appendix 1 for further details).

High standards of presentation are expected at all times (see Appendix 2).

Spelling

At Monksdown Primary School we recognise the importance of spelling. We use the Liverpool spelling toolkit as a framework for teaching spelling from Year 1 to 6. Spellings are taught discreetly and as part of the English lesson.

Spellings may also be taken from the key technical vocabulary for Mathematics, Science and other curriculum subjects. Learning these key words (and their meaning) supports learning across the curriculum.

Assessment

Assessment of pupil progress is on-going and forms part of the class teacher's formative assessment. In addition to this, pupils are tracked on our Phonics tracking sheets. At the end of Year 1 all children take the Phonics Screening Check as part of the government statutory requirements to track phonological development. Formal summative assessments, SATS, are carried out at the end of each Key Stage. NFER testing in Reading, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation occurs at the end of every term. A question level analysis is carried out.

Moderation

Children's work is moderated both internally and externally in order to ensure assessments are rigorous and consistent.

In-house moderation of writing takes place half termly, with staff working as part of cross phase teams to ensure accurate judgements.

Teaching English to children with additional needs

English is planned to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of all children.

Teachers provide help with communication and literacy by:

- Ensuring texts are matched to the needs and ability of the children.
- Daily support from Teaching Assistants and Teachers who will deliver sessions to support pupil targets.
- Reviews of progress, made by school SENDCo, class teacher and teaching assistant, to make sure that targets are being met.
- Using visual and written materials in different formats.
- Engaging children with computers, other technological aids and audio materials;
- APPs to enhance learning e.g Nessy, Lexia and Bug Club

Children who have English as an additional language will be supported in a variety of ways to ensure that they can access the English curriculum and develop a full range of language skills. This support will include:

- Assessment and monitoring of pupil progress by the class teacher, the EAL teacher and the SENDCO
- Develop opportunities for the children to hear stories in their own language.
- Additional support from our EAL teacher

In addition, children recognised as 'Gifted and Talented' are given extension opportunities through the Pathways scheme.

Teaching Assistant Support

It is vital that Teaching Assistants have support and clear guidance in relation to supporting groups with word and sentence level work. Support should be given with phonic work for younger children and this should be carried out daily.

It is important for each teacher to share the group reading and writing targets with the Teaching Assistants and provide activities that support learning in these areas. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to provide resources/activities that match the ability of the children. Teaching Assistants have been trained to deliver various intervention strategies.

Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the coordinators to ensure policies are up dated with the latest initiatives. Evaluation will include: effectiveness, ease of implementation, identifying any amendments needed and additions required to the policy as a result of legislation changes.

Teachers should ensure that they are confident with the subject matter and inform the English Coordinators of their training and support needs. The English Coordinators should ensure that they are well-informed of current ideas and developments in Literacy by attending appropriate courses and keeping up to date with new initiatives. They should disseminate gathered information to colleagues.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All teaching and non-teaching staff at Monksdown Primary School are responsible for ensuring that every pupil, regardless of gender, race, culture, background and ability have the opportunity to experience education at an appropriate and challenging level. To ensure that pupils experience high standards of success, English needs to be taught with regards to pupil's abilities to ensure progress. We aim to identify and minimise barriers to learning and take account of gender, ability, disability, social, cultural, and linguistic background when planning lessons. Provision is made to enable all pupils to participate effectively in curriculum and assessment activities. A wide range of gender specific and cultural images that challenge stereotypes will be used.

Individual teachers consider carefully the groupings they have. These might depend on the experiences the children have had in their home environments.

Staff Development

At Monksdown Primary school, staff development is undertaken in the following ways:

- By identifying areas for development during Performance Management reviews (personal development).
- In the School Improvement plan (whole school development).
- By discussion with the Head Teacher and/or co-ordinator.
- By making staff aware of relevant courses.
- By observation and feedback.
- By whole school INSET.

Subject Leadership

The Subject Leaders will:

- Ensure that the subject is regularly discussed, reviewed and monitored within the school.
- Keep resources up-to-date and relevant, particularly in preparation for each unit of work.
- Promote good subject practice throughout the school.
- Set a good example of subject practice.
- Support long term planning for the whole school.
- Inspire learning
- Provide support and guidance to colleagues on teaching the units of work
- Purchase and organise resources
- Maintain equipment and make them easily accessible for teachers
- Attend courses for CPD and report back to staff

INTENDED IMPACT

As a result of our robust and well-planned curriculum, ongoing formative and summative assessment and moderation our children will be able to:

- 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.

These aims are embedded across our literacy lessons and the wider curriculum. We will provide the means for children to develop a secure knowledge-base in English, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. Rigorous assessment and review will ensure that we are able to provide targeted support so that all children experience success in literacy; we believe that a secure basis in literacy skills is crucial to a high-quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as a member of society.

Policy Review

This policy was last reviewed: Summer 2021

Date of next review: Spring 2023

Appendix 1

All children are expected to write in a joined legible style, at speed, by the end of Year 6. This includes using the correct pencil grip, sitting correctly, accurate letter formation and producing work in a consistent size. Pupils and staff at Monksdown use a cursive handwriting font created by Debbie Hepplewhite. This easy-to-use approach has been proven successful in developing a consistent, joined style.

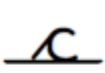
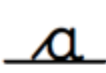
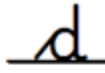
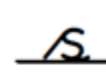
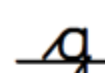
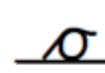
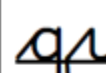
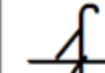
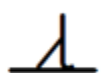
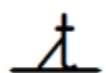
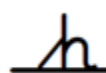
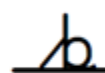
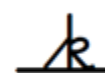
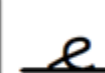
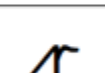
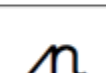
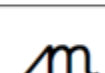
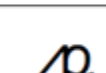
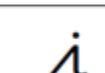
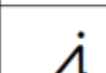
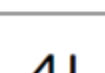
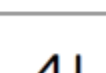
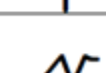
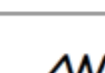
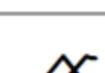
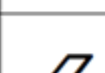
For more information, see the website:

<https://debbiehepplewhitehandwriting.com/>

This website has instructional videos by Debbie Hepplewhite, that explain her approach to handwriting; she also demonstrates the correct letter formation for her scheme.

The order of teaching the lower case letter shapes

The style is taught as separate letters at first – not letter strings – and all the letters with their joins are taught to proficiency and automaticity before starting to join the letters into words. It is important to teach the letters which start like the letter c to fluency before the other letters. For the subsequent letters, we describe and model how to form each letter paying careful attention to the description of how to form the letter (where to start, the route to take and the finish point of the formation) as well as the orientation on the line (size and position on the line in relation to other letters).

Upper case letters are print letter shapes which do not join other letters. We teach that capital letters start from just below the upper writing line. When writing a whole word which requires a capital letter at the beginning, a small space is left after the capital letter and the second [lower case] letter starts 'on the line' with all subsequent letters in the word are joined.

Progression in handwriting:

Nursery: The focus is very much on mark making

Reception: Focus on pencil grip and initial letter formation including the lead in and out 'flicks'

Year 1: Practice letter formation including lead-ins and outs

Year 2: Learning to join letters

Year 3 and 4: Continue to be taught the correct joins

Year 5 and 6: Refine handwriting, by developing legibility, speed and stamina.

Appendix 2

A high standard of presentation will be expected in all books as they underpin the quality of pupil outcomes. Therefore, we must ensure that pupils have a sense of pride over their work that is upheld by all teachers across the school.

- All Maths work should be completed in pencil.
- The handwriting pens provided by the school should be used for all work completed in pen.
- All children should be told to follow the school's agreed cursive handwriting style. (Please see Appendix 1))
- Number formation should also be clear and correct (avoid reversals)
- We will follow the DUMTUMS method to ensure consistency: Date, Underline, Miss a line, Title (or L.O), Underline, Miss a line, Start

All pupils must write the date at the top left hand side of the page (the short date for maths is acceptable).

- Neat straight lines must be drawn through any mistakes with a strictly no scribbling out rule.
- Any grid or table should be drawn neatly using a ruler and pencil.
- Any worksheets should be stuck in neatly and carefully, lined up with the margin.

In the first instance it may be necessary to ask pupils to repeat work until they are clear about standards of presentation. Additionally, teachers will address issues with presentation whilst live marking.

Pupils should be told from the very beginning about the presentation guidelines and that books must be cared for and never defaced. Staff must share the expectations with the children from the outset. Time must be spent on ensuring pupils understand how their books should look. They should be encouraged to take care of books and avoid the pages and covers ending up repeatedly bent or folded.