

English Curriculum-Intent, Implementation, Impact

'The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go!' Dr Seuss

Intent

At Woodhall, we believe that a secure knowledge base in English is crucial for children to be secure learners across the curriculum and so prepare them for the wider world. An English curriculum should ignite children with a love of reading, writing and discussion. Our curriculum is designed to acknowledge that each child comes from a unique background; recognising that the local area of South Oxhey is one with significant socio-economic deprivation. It is our job to provide a language rich environment and expose children to a range of high quality literature that they might not otherwise have. Throughout the curriculum, a heavy emphasis is placed on speaking and listening activities as we know that pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. We aim for a nurturing culture whilst also providing appropriate challenge for every child.

Children take pride in their writing and are able to write coherently and adapt their style of writing in a range of contexts. All pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills across all areas of the curriculum. We aim for all children to become enthusiastic and independent readers and for them to develop a rich vocabulary with no limit to their aspirations.

Implementation

Children are taught as a whole class so that all children have access to age-appropriate skills, with scaffolds and support being provided. Children's groupings may vary from day-to-day to reflect the different needs. There are a range of planned interventions for those who may not be reaching their potential or who need a further challenge.

We follow the Letters and Sounds programme of study for phonics. Our Nursery children have Phase One phonics embedded throughout their daily routine, focusing on their speaking and listening skills. In Reception, children have a daily phonics lesson, with the aim that all children will be secure at Phase Four by the end of Reception. During their own exploration time, children can explore a widely-resourced book corner as well as books related to specific learning areas. Children learn how to form their letters as they learn the sounds and are able to embed these with mark making opportunities during their child initiated learning.

In Key Stage One, the timetable is structured so that skills taught in daily phonics sessions can immediately be embedded through application, in the form of guided reading. This in turn, is followed by a language rich English lesson based around captivating texts. Children begin to learn a pre-cursive style of writing in Year One, with teachers modelling the correct letter formation in both discrete handwriting sessions and through modelling throughout the curriculum. As children become more secure with this, Year Two children begin to learn the joins needed.

Children in Key Stage Two have a daily guided reading session, allowing them to read and respond to a text both with an adult and independently. In addition, Year Six children take part in a weekly VIPERS session (Vocabulary, Inference, Punctuation, Explain, Retrieve, Summarise) to support the development of their comprehension skills.

We have invested in the Bug Club reading scheme to ensure that children are able to read books appropriately matched to their phonics level, using both traditional books and on-line materials. Children are expected to read daily at home and change their reading books when they can read the book fluently and demonstrate their comprehension. High-quality texts are provided across the curriculum to provide children with a language rich environment and further opportunities for reading.

In Key Stage One, parents are invited into school on a weekly basis to share books or play reading games with their child. We recognise the needs of our families and so provide bespoke meetings, for example, reading and phonic workshops.

Each year, we hold special events such as World Book Day and 'Love that Book' Week where every class engages with a selected text throughout the curriculum. We provide opportunities for visiting the theatre each year as many of our children would not otherwise have that experience. Children are also taken to the local library and are encouraged to join with their families and take part in the Summer Reading Challenge.

To ensure a broad and balanced English curriculum, teachers select units from the Hertfordshire for Learning long-term plan. The Detailed Education Plans provided by Hertfordshire offer suggestions for high-quality texts. The Hertfordshire progression documents are used to ensure lessons are planned to the correct pitch with appropriate steps for progression for each child. Teachers plan sequences of lessons based on the agreed 'Writing Journey'. This exposes children to a range of genres which helps to utilise and embed the writing skills. Using their knowledge of the differing groups of learners and vulnerable children in their class, the sequence is planned with individual children's needs in mind. The purpose for the unit is always shared with the children at the beginning of the unit so they can see the value of their work, for example, their work may be published in a class book or they may perform in an assembly. Careful consideration is given to the choice of texts used to ensure children's curiosity is aroused and they are introduced to an ambitious vocabulary. As children are introduced to a text type, there are plenty of opportunities for speaking and listening, for example, role play, hot-seating or debating. The grammar objectives are then taught explicitly through the text type. Children then have a plan, write, review cycle of writing in the genre. Class teachers ensure that the working walls are regularly updated to document learning through a unit, with modelled examples provided for the children. Where the links are purposeful, teachers make links to the class topic.

In Key Stage Two, spelling is taught through the No Nonsense Spelling programme. This covers the National Curriculum objectives for each year group and enables children to learn through a range of spelling strategies; taking into account the different learning styles of our learners.

Impact

Children make good progress from their own individual starting points. We measure the effectiveness and impact of our English curriculum in a variety of different ways.

Each half term, children from Year One upwards read an age appropriate text with their teacher to check for their progress with reading fluency. If they cannot read the age appropriate text fluently, the child is targeted for intervention.

Teachers have the opportunity to moderate children's written work as a staff each term as well as attending local cluster groups to moderate across schools. We look for children to use the skills acquired in their writing across the curriculum. A portfolio of assessed work is collated by the subject leader for teachers to refer to.

Standards in English are monitored regularly by the subject leader through lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny. From this, general strengths and weaknesses are identified and feedback is given to each teacher. Actions are then put into places to support individuals or all teachers, with the impact then measured in subsequent monitoring. The newly formed 'Core Curriculum' working party of governors meet to discuss progress towards the School Development Plan objectives for English. This is reported termly to the full Governing Body.

The impact of our writing, grammar, spelling and punctuation curriculum can also be measured through the acquisition of pupil voice and talking to the children about their own learning. Pupil voice indicates that the children are enjoying their learning and can talk about the subject and curriculum opportunities. Children are proud of their writing and they are given opportunities to show this by sharing their work at whole school achievement assemblies.

We hope that when our children leave us, their creativity, passion for English and high aspirations travel with them and continue to grow and develop as they do.