

Newchurch Community Primary

English Policy

Mission Statement

Newchurch will give every child a flying start by working in partnership with parents, staff and the community to develop well-rounded citizens who will contribute in a positive way to society.

Persons with Responsibility

Curriculum Team Two
Jayne Narraway
Jessica Tonge
Sue Storey
Toni Dixon
Sara Lawrenson

Linked Policies

Teaching and Learning
Special Needs
Able Pupils
Assessment
Feedback and Marking

Next Review: June 2019



Rationale

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential role of a primary school.

At Newchurch, 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 through-out 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)

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 quality first teaching, one to one support and small groups. We plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with disabilities outlined in the SEND Code of Practice. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that 'pupils... who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised' (p13).

Spoken Language

Children are taught to use speech in a way that is appropriate for different purposes. They are given opportunities to adapt their vocabulary and tone when working in various settings, and with types of audience ranging from 'shoulder partners' to large public events. They develop turn-taking techniques, understanding of how to follow instructions and the ability to be a 'good listener', who can offer constructive advice. In all aspects of English, 'peer-evaluation' plays an important role in skills development. Speaking and listening skills are also developed through a 'buddy' (friendship group) format in which older children work with younger ones on various general activities.

All staff make use of the Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures which scaffold the children's communication activities.

Reading

- Children in Early Years and KS1 receive two guided reading sessions a week whilst in KS2 at least one with the class teacher.

- Children make subsequent responses to a key question based on what they have read and this is recorded in their reading record.
- Pupils are taught and encouraged to be confident, independent readers who can access a wide variety of texts for enjoyment and information. They are given opportunities to examine authors' views critically.
- Various approaches to the teaching of reading are used. From their entry into school, children are, as soon as possible, taught how to recognise words visually. Their introduction to sounds (phonics) begins early in children's school lives. A systematic approach to phonic skills development provides children with the ability to increase their ability to decode words independently. The school used Letters and Sounds.
- The advantages of using visual, grammatical and contextual clues are also pointed out in the reading process. Techniques are modeled. Readers develop a range of reading strategies from an early age.
- The involvement of parents in developing reading is crucial, especially for KS1 readers who clearly benefit in terms of skills and motivation from the active involvement of adults. Very early in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are given words (and then reading books) for study at home.
- Teachers are aware of the range of fiction and non-fiction genres that children should study matched to the cohort they teach. Such genres are presented through the use of big books (for explanatory purposes), longer texts, extracts, sets of guided reading materials and increasingly ICT resources. The use of IWBs has a significant impact on all aspects of teaching and learning.
- Staff are very aware that resources need to be checked to ensure that they are suitable for developing readers. Teachers are alert to elements of bias, intolerance and stereotyping (such as gender, race and disability etc). Materials which contain positive images that reflect multi-cultural society are used. Children are taught to be wary of website content, since the accuracy, credibility and integrity of authors is unknown. This is a life skill.
- Texts that reflect bias or stereotyping are used in a planned way to stimulate discussion among older pupils, in English and across the curriculum.
- The school library is a valuable asset in promoting reading across the curriculum.
- Teachers use additional adults, including class governors, to hear children who may struggle with reading read.

Writing

As with reading, children are expected to develop into independent flexible writers who can express themselves in ways that reflect the purpose of their writing.

- From the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to 'write' as a way of expressing their ideas. Such 'emergent writing' is valued as a vital step in the writing process. Staff may add a commentary to decipher meanings, but it is

vital that all pupils recognise the importance and respect with which their efforts are viewed and celebrated.

- All areas of continuous provision are enhanced with writing opportunities which show purpose for writing.
- As a child's development dictates, spelling conventions are introduced. Throughout the school, spelling is taught through phonic and whole word approaches.
- Emphasis is placed on spelling patterns and rules, but are also made aware that many words (perhaps for historical reasons) have irregular spellings.
- Spellings are linked to the common exception words for each year group and also the expectations of the National Curriculum.
- The Liverpool Spelling Tool Kit is used to ensure progression and acquisition of spelling skills which are age appropriate.
- Children have a weekly spelling test where words are tested within the context of a sentence.
- Spelling errors in written work are highlighted by teachers using the marking key and corrected by pupils. Support is given to pupils who have special needs. It is felt important that they are not inhibited by an over emphasis on spelling rather than main content or genre features. However, staff aim for the highest standards and will use their discretion in correcting spellings.
- The use of the 'Thinking Hats' approach helps children of all ages to focus on specific aspects of writing (or reading).
- Children are given opportunities to draft (and re-draft) work in the light of 'modelling' of exemplar work and/or peer evaluation. Proof reading is a key feature of the writing process.
- A sense of audience and purpose will be developed. This will be further enhanced through the use of ICT and a variety of communication methods, blogging, animation etc.
- On occasions, children are given planned opportunities and advice about how to write within specific time limitations on tasks that preclude drafting.
- Each week, the children have an extended writing session called 'The Big Write'. We focus on a variety of genres and use the pupils' work as the basis for improving language use, grammar, vocabulary choice, style etc. Teachers follow a blocking grid to ensure equal coverage of narrative and non-fiction genres, and also include opportunities for cross-curricular writing every third week. Teachers mark against the Age Related Expectations for their year group and then provide a Red Robin Response which focuses on the up-levelling of the children's writing against age related expectations.
- Pupils experience opportunities for Guided, Modeled, Shared and Paired writing.
- Handwriting is taught through school with the aim of balancing an individual's development of a personal style with the need to be fluent and flexible. The use of a cursive style is used from the Early Years Foundation Stage and taught weekly to address age related expectations.

Drama

- Children have opportunities to develop their dramatic skills in a variety of ways. Kinaesthetic learning helps pupils in developing their understanding of viewpoints and/or concepts. It increases creativity, imagination and raises self-esteem.
- Children use role-play throughout school to enhance learning. This is particularly important for speaking and listening.
- Verbal and non-verbal techniques are developed to help children to express their feelings or views.
- To enhance the sense of purpose, tasks are often given a level of performance. Audiences may vary from classmates to large groups of adults.
- All children are given the opportunity to perform in front of parents at whole school performances.
- Year 4 and Year 2 perform a play at the Autumn Term and Year 6 at the end of the school year.
- Visiting theatre groups regularly perform in school.
- Pupils are encouraged to appreciate and evaluate drama both as participants and observers.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils are given full and equal access to all aspects of the English curriculum. Children with Special Needs will be supported by appropriate adult intervention, this being the class teacher, a learning support assistant or a parent helper. These children may also have additional support as documented in their Personal Education Plan. Additional materials may be sent home for work with a parent. Further support materials can be obtained from the school SENDCO.

A child's PEP should specify particular access strategies and/or teaching styles that will help the child to learn and include the pupil and parent voice.

Further support may be provided through bespoke and credible intervention programmes.

More Able, Gifted and Talented Pupils

When children have been identified as being gifted in English, there is an obvious need to ensure they are catered for. Their English targets must reflect their level of reading and writing. They should be then included on the register for Gifted and Talented children held by the SENDCO, and have a More Able Plan written for them in line with the school's Challenge Policy.

The Classroom Environment

Classrooms should provide a rich environment that holds English in high profile. Every classroom should have an attractive, well organised and well-resourced area designated to English and the love of literature. This will include:

- An attractive reading area with front facing books, books to attract the interest of the children in the class, author of the month and a place to sit and read
- Alphabet frieze matched the phonic phase the children are working at within the class
- Examples of grammar and punctuation in context as a point of reference
- A working wall which reflects the current learning of the pupils

Assessment

- Informal and formal continuous assessment forms a natural part of assessment in English. Teacher track progress against the age related objectives for each year group.
- Formal tests are used as a basis for confirming individual pupil progress and teacher assessment. Performance is related to targets/expectations. All pupils are tested termly during Progress Week and is followed by rigorous moderation. PIRA tests are used for the assessment of reading and provide a standardized score. These are used to support teacher assessment.
- Children's writing is assessed against the age related expectations for each year group. Writing must be at an independent level. See appendix A for further details of independent writing. Teacher assessment of writing is completed using the children's workbooks. In Years 2 and 6, the intermin assessment framework provided by the Standards Testing Agency is used to make teacher assessments.
- Year 2 and Year 6 are tested using the SATs materials for Reading and Spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Pupils are given targets on a regular basis linked to age related expectations
- Attainment and achievement in The Early Years Foundation Stage is measured using Development Matters throughout the year, and then against the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage.

Monitoring of Standards

The Senior Leadership Team and Curriculum Team Two examines teachers' planning. Children's work is also monitored for coverage, pitch and expectation.

As part of our monitoring and evaluation policy, Curriculum Team Two will monitor English by:

- Scrutiny of teacher's planning

- Scrutiny of children's books
- Carrying out pupil conferences
- Conducting learning walks
- Lesson observations
- Observations of the learning environment

Policy Review

Curriculum Team Two is responsible for the bi-annual review of the policy. This is done in consultation with staff and Governors.

Review date: June 2019

APPENDIX A

Independent Writing

- Writing can and should be marked.
- Children can edit and re-draft their own work and it will still be considered to be independent. However, if they are specifically directed to add something e.g commas, then commas could not be used as evidence of meeting criteria. Anything that is not specifically directed can be considered to be independent writing.
- Generic comments such as 'check your punctuation and spelling' are acceptable but specific comments such as 'add in some exclamation marks' or 'there is a spelling error on this line' would not be part of the independent writing assessment. However, if pieces of work were regularly marked with 'correct your punctuation' it would suggest that **the learning is not embedded** and that the children would not be able to independently use punctuation without being regularly prompted.
- Moderators do not want to see 'Writing Portfolios'. They need to see the work that has gone on beforehand to be sure of its independence and how it builds on prior learning.
- It is perfectly acceptable to highly model genres of writing, create success criteria, identify good vocabulary and phrases to use during the learning process providing that by the time they come to write their own piece at the end of the unit, those things are used **without direct prompting**.
- The use of working walls showing vocabulary and 'WAGOLLS' etc is acceptable if children are **accessing them independently**.
- The use of success criteria such as 'non-negotiables' is acceptable providing they are used to check the writing afterwards. However, if the child cannot write a piece of writing without those prompts then it suggests the **learning is not embedded**.
- If 'next steps' are identified on a piece of work and the child refers to those for the next piece of writing, it would not be considered independent.
- Self-assessment is acceptable.
- If a child requires work to be highly scaffolded, then please continue to do that to support the child. It may just be that the child would not be considered to be at age related expectations.

- Not all criteria needs to be in every piece of writing, but **most should be in most pieces**. Basic punctuation and grammatically correct sentences would be expected to be in all pieces though.
- All teacher assessment should be done, and will be assumed to have been done with **professional integrity**. The question to be asked is: can they do it without being directly prompted?