



Literacy (English) Policy

2021-22

Contents

1. **Subject Statement**
2. **Teaching and Learning**
3. **Assessment**
4. **Planning and Resources**
5. **Organisation**
6. **EYFS**
7. **KS1 and KS2**
8. **Equal Opportunities**
9. **Inclusion**
10. **Role of the Subject Leader**
11. **Parents**

1. Curriculum Statement

Intent

At William Patten we believe that a quality Literacy (English) curriculum should develop children's love of reading, writing and discussion. We have a rigorous and well organised English curriculum that provides many purposeful opportunities for reading, writing and discussion. Our curriculum closely follows the aims of the National Curriculum for English 2014 to enable all children 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 Literacy, 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.

Implementation

Early reading is supported through the Read Write Inc scheme. Regular training and development days ensure that staff are equipped to teach with the expertise and skills required to promote excellent progress, as well as a love of reading. In KS2, when children have completed the RWI programme, they develop deeper reading skills in line with the Hackney Loves Reading Scheme and the Hamilton scheme. Each class's timetable is organised to enable weekly access to the KS1 and KS2 library, with an up to date selection of books to provide quality reading materials for all children to promote reading for enjoyment. The children also take part in organising and developing their classroom reading area and an annual competition ensures that efforts are recognised.

When planning literacy lessons, teachers make links to other areas of the curriculum to ensure that cross curricular links provide further context for learning. Teaching blocks focus on fiction, non-fiction or poetry, in line with the 2014 National Curriculum and comprehension, grammar and writing are embedded in lessons. Lesson sequences themselves build progressively towards an extended piece of writing. Handwriting is also taught within literacy lessons, and outcomes in KS2 are recorded in literacy books to promote a high level of pride and presentation across all written outcomes.

To enrich the literacy curriculum, the school hosts the annual Stoke Newington Literary Festival Schools' Activity Day. This ensures that children, including those from other local schools, have access to writers and book illustrators from the local and wider community as positive role models. As part of the preparation for this, children design 'book boxes'

creating a scene from a well-known book of their choice. Children also take part in poetry and creative writing competitions, which are celebrated in whole school assemblies.

Assessment for Learning is embedded in literacy lessons and children are active in reviewing the successes in their work and identifying, with support from their teacher, target areas for development to ensure a continuous and individualised approach to improving their work.

Impact

The organisation of the English curriculum, has realised a community of enthusiastic readers and writers who enjoy showcasing their developing literacy knowledge and skills. Children are confident to take risks in their reading and writing, and love to discuss and share their ideas. Outcomes of work in both literacy and topic books evidence the high quality of work and the impact of varied and cross curricular writing opportunities. These enable children to write across a range of forms and adapt their writing successfully, considering the purpose.

Attainment at the end of EYFS, KS1 and KS2 is above that of Hackney and the National Average. Children also achieve highly in the phonics screening check.

2. Teaching and Learning

Our literacy provision follows the 2014 National Curriculum and is taught through daily literacy lessons as well as a varied enrichment programme. Lessons run for approximately 1 hour x5 days a week to ensure continuity and rigour in teaching and learning of knowledge and skills.

We recognise that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that children hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers ensure the continual development of children's confidence and competence in their knowledge of spoken language and listening skills. Children are assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy any misconceptions.

Building on this foundation, we teach literacy using a range of strategies which include:

- Group Discussion – Children discuss and interrogate new ideas in a small group or whole class setting. They listen to and value each other's ideas whilst taking on board feedback so as to improve their own explanations.
- Partner Talk – Children work with partners to discuss their ideas. They are able to explain their ideas about texts they have read and prepare their ideas before they write.
- Questioning – Teachers use a range of questioning strategies to establish children's current understanding and develop their learning. Higher level questioning is used to elicit a deeper understanding.
- Modelled Writing – Teachers model writing and editing to demonstrate the high expectations they have. They verbally 'think aloud' in order to make the writing process explicit and provide a rich and varied vocabulary for the children to utilise in their own work.
- Shared Writing – Teachers use the ideas from the children to create shared pieces of writing. This enables the children to see the writing process in action as well as having pride and ownership over the finished piece.
- Comparing, Analysing and Evaluating – Children review written texts, speech and drama and compare, analyse and evaluate them. They establish the strengths and weaknesses of different examples and incorporate these ideas into their own work.

In order for children to be successful, independent readers, they need to possess a secure knowledge of word reading and comprehension skills. These are:

- A familiarity with the genre of stories and an ability to make links between stories.
- A good visual memory.
- A good auditory memory.
- A recognition of the letters in the English alphabet.
- A knowledge of the grapho-phonetic construction of words.
- A familiarity with the syntax (sentence structure and grammatical arrangement) of English text.

This knowledge and these skills are taught explicitly through our two reading approaches – Read Write Inc and Hackney Loves Reading – and are continually referred to during additional reading opportunities in literacy lessons and wider curriculum subjects.

All literacy lessons have clear success criteria so that the children understand the expectations of the task and how they can achieve their best in the lesson. Success criteria are consistently referred to during teacher modelling and used effectively for self and peer assessment at the end of a task. The success criteria are clearly referred to when feedback from the teacher is given, either verbally or in writing. Success criteria can be altered for different ability groups in the same lesson where appropriate. All success criteria include a 'Challenge' for every lesson so that children have the opportunity to stretch themselves and deepen their learning (See Marking Policy).

Literacy activities are effectively differentiated so that all children can achieve the success criteria and feel empowered by their own accomplishment. Nevertheless, all children are given the chance to reach the same high level in every lesson. Effective differentiation is in place so that all children have the opportunity to meet every learning intention through having vocabulary word banks, scaffolded worksheets, sentence starters, mixed ability groupings and adult support.

Extended writing opportunities take place across the curriculum and occur twice every term in science, humanities and RE. This provides children with the opportunity to demonstrate their literacy knowledge and skills, showing depth and mastery and allows them to write about a familiar topic without explicit literacy success criteria guidance.

Displays are used throughout the school to promote reading, writing and discussion. We recognise the important role display has in the teaching and learning of literacy. Each class displays work, which celebrates a variety of children's achievements to a high standard of presentation. All aspects of the literacy learning process are illustrated through displays including vocabulary enrichment, grammar and punctuation support, the planning process and finished pieces of writing. Every classroom has an attractive book corner designed and made by the children to promote and celebrate a love of reading.

3. **Assessment**

Children are assessed formatively through thorough questioning and marking to ensure that teachers understand where children are currently in their learning and what their next steps need to be. This helps to ensure that maximum progress is made throughout literacy teaching across the school.

In addition to this, regularly timetabled summative assessment opportunities are planned into the academic year to ensure that the progress in knowledge and skills that each child makes is accurately measured. Summative assessment opportunities are used to support teachers

in their assessment judgements and should not replace teacher judgement based on experience of the child in everyday lessons.

Reading Assessment

In Early Years and KS1 children are assessed termly by the Read Write Inc. (RWI) Coordinator to establish which sounds they are confident in and which strategies they are able to use to effectively read familiar and unfamiliar words. These include common irregular words and 'alien' nonsense words (see RWI Policy for further details).

In KS1 and KS2, classes complete a P & A comprehension activity each half term. These are selected to match the instructional reading level of the individual child and so often children in the same class will complete different activities. Guidance is provided by the RWI Coordinator, in relation to individual children in KS2 who are continuing with the RWI programme, as to which reading comprehension assessment they will complete.

In KS1 these assessments will be kept in a Reading folder until the end of the year, and in KS2 they are kept in the child's Reading Journal. Reading targets are generated from these assessments and then shared effectively with the children. In KS2 they are used by the children to inform their own target setting. These targets are also shared with parents during open evenings and are stated on the end of year report.

The RM Benchmarking system may be used to accurately level a child's reading ability and to find out the strategies they are using to understand the text. Teachers often use this to help assess the levels of those children who appear to be making less progress.

Writing Assessment

As well as ongoing formative assessment (see Marking and Presentation policy), teachers from Reception to Year 6 assess the writing of every child half termly. A piece of writing from each child will be assessed at six points throughout the year by the class teacher, in accordance with appropriate fundamental objectives according to their written attainment. Teachers also take into account work completed throughout the term. Writing assessment tasks are saved on the Shared Drive and disseminated by the Assessment Lead.

4. Planning and Resources

From Y1 – Y6 the Hamilton Trust literacy plans are used as a foundation for creating our own exciting and varied literacy lessons. These help to ensure that coverage of the National Curriculum is secure and that year group expectations are met.

We use Nelson handwriting resources to support the teaching of handwriting throughout the school from Reception – Year 6. Handwriting teaching resources are accessed online and additional practise books (KS1) and text books are stored within individual classrooms.

There are also literacy resources stored throughout the school which are used on a regular basis.

KS1 Reading Room

Multiple copies of books (for guided reading) are kept in the KS1 group room. The guided reading books are levelled using the book band system. The 'Oxford Reading Tree' Scheme which is used by Reception teachers are kept here.

PM Daily Supported Reader Texts

Levelled group sets of PM Books are kept in the filing cabinet between the two Reception classrooms. These are used in weekly guided reading sessions in Reception.

RWI Resources

RWI Resources are kept in cupboards in the bottom hall near the Reception and Year 1 classrooms. (For more information on this see RWI Policy).

KS1 Library

The KS1 library has an excellent stock of fiction and non-fiction books. The library is timetabled for KS1 children to enjoy reading books in the library. They are able to take books out weekly.

KS2 Reading room

Multiple copies of levelled high quality books are kept here for 'Hackney Loves Reading' sessions as well as dual language books.

The KS2 library

Like the KS1 library, the KS2 library has an extensive range of fiction and non-fiction books and is used by children from Y2-Y6. School staff are responsible for ordering and cataloguing books. The PA to the Headteacher organises the timetable for classes and a member of staff opens the library at lunchtimes.

5. **Organisation**

Literacy lessons take place 5 times per week from Year 1 to Year 6. In Y1 – 6 these lessons are created in conjunction with the Hamilton Trust literacy plans and focus on developing the knowledge and skills needed for developing writing in a particular genre. E.g. instruction writing or suspense story writing. Where possible literacy lessons will have a cross-curricular approach and support work done in other areas of the curriculum when topics allow close links.

Discrete literacy knowledge and skills are woven through these lessons to make sure that children are able to develop mastery of the National Curriculum objectives. These range from word level knowledge such as using expanded noun phrases to sentence level skills where children are able to demonstrate their knowledge of increasingly complex sentence structures.

In addition to this, 3 x 15 minute Handwriting lessons occur each week from Reception – Year 2. These are based on the Nelson handwriting resources (see Handwriting Policy for further information) and take place in the Nelson handwriting practice books. In KS2, handwriting is taught at the beginning of the literacy lesson and outcomes are recorded in literacy books.

6. **EYFS**

In Nursery and Reception literacy lessons take place 4 times per week and are based on a core text, which changes on a weekly basis. The core text is selected to fit with the wider topic in EYFS, for example *Handa's Surprise* might be used to add depth to a topic on Journeys. In Nursery and Reception, this text is explored further through focus activities led by an adult. In Reception literacy focus activities are differentiated and are completed once a week for each child and are recorded in their literacy book.

Across EYFS literacy knowledge and skills are also developed through the continuous provision of the environment. Each classroom has resources available to be selected by the

children to support their emergent reading and writing skills. These vary from phonics sounds cards to mini-books. A well-resourced book corner highlights the importance of reading to the children, and the writing tables have activities based around the skills being taught that week.

In Nursery and Reception children also practise writing their names using self-registration boards, and from the Summer term Reception children replace self-registration with opportunities to practise irregular high frequency words.

RWI is taught 4 x per week in Reception in streamed ability groups based on the sounds the children know and their ability to blend as they read. In the second half of the year the children in Nursery also begin to learn their sounds. (See RWI Policy for further information).

7. KS1 and KS2

Literacy Lessons

In Years 1 – 5 literacy lessons take place 5 times per week and are taught to the whole class by the class teacher. They are effectively differentiated to ensure that every child can access the learning objective and success criteria and high expectations are had for all pupils.

These lessons cover knowledge and skills in reading, writing, spelling and grammar and discussion. They are informed by the Hamilton scheme through the use of flexible blocks to ensure sufficient teaching of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. In Year 6 literacy lessons take place 4 times per week and the classes are taught spelling, punctuation and grammar discretely 1 x week as a whole class in a separate GPS book.

Spelling

In Years 3-5 weekly spelling tests take place in the purple spelling book. In Year 6 weekly spelling tests take place in the back of the GPS book.

Read, Write, Inc.

Children begin the RWI phonics programme in Reception and continue with it until they have learnt their sounds and can accurately 'instant sound blend'. Children who are participating in the RWI programme in KS1 and KS2 have 5 x 40 minutes lessons per week in small ability groups. (see RWI policy for further details).

Hackney Loves Reading

When children have completed the RWI phonics program from Year 2 upwards they participate in Hackney Loves Reading lessons. These 40 minute lessons take place 5 x week and cover the National Curriculum reading objectives as well as many of the oracy and discussion objectives too.

Hackney Loves Reading (HLR) is taught as a whole class. Two days per week the children work in mixed ability pairs to read and analyse a class book at the age expected level. Two/three days per week the children work in ability pairs to read and analyse a text at their instructional level. The reading skills explicitly taught in HLR are:

- predicting
- clarifying
- asking questions
- summarising
- inferring
- making connections
- evaluating

The children record their reading progress in a Reading Journal in which they write short 'selfies' showcasing their ideas from the lesson, fortnightly 'Big Picture' comprehension activities and termly 'Reading Portraits' where they reflect on their progress and set themselves targets for the upcoming term.

8. Equal Opportunities

All children have equal opportunities to reach their full potential across the English curriculum, regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, and ability, or of any physical or sensory disability.

9. Inclusion

Children with English as an additional language:

It is vital that children who have English as an additional language have English modelled accurately by all staff at school. Collaborative work with peers (where English is their first language) is essential and EAL children are provided with consistent opportunities for this verbal interaction. Dual language books are available for each class (available from the Inclusion Department) and each classroom has a display key words associated with current topics being studied. All teachers include a range of strategies to support children with EAL which includes: teacher and peer modelling and consistent use of visual support, repetition and recasting of language features, word banks and scaffolded speaking and listening activities.

Teachers work with the Inclusion Coordinator to best meet the needs of individuals within their classes. Children who are new to English are assessed and support is put in place by the Inclusion team to help them make rapid progress.

In addition, class teachers deploy teaching assistants to provide targeted support and the use of home language support and peer-buddying is encouraged.

Assessment data is used to inform and allocate appropriate intervention, including speech and language groups. The school will also support EAL children and their families through drop in sessions for parents and carers, in line with the inclusion policy.

Special Educational Needs

Class teachers inform the SENDCO and Inclusion Department if they are concerned that a child may have underlying learning difficulties. Support for children with identified SEN includes the following, as appropriate:

- Volunteer readers
- Reading buddies
- Language groups
- Social skills groups
- Booster classes
- Toe by Toe
- Get Spelling scheme
- One-to-one RWI

(see SEN policy for further details).

High Achievers

Children who achieve highly in Literacy will be supported and given opportunities to deepen their knowledge and skills through the reading and writing groups and differentiation. They will also have opportunities to work with outside agencies when appropriate.

10. Role of the Subject Leader

The role of the subject leader in literacy is to coordinate the teaching of reading, writing and communication across all phases of the school. This is in order to secure high quality literacy provision for every child, including outstanding literacy teaching and learning, effective use of resources and the highest standards of achievement for all.

Key duties that the literacy subject leader will undertake over the course of the year include:

- Monitoring of literacy, reading, handwriting and spelling books
- Reading walks and participation in lesson observations
- Planning and organising literacy enrichment opportunities and competitions
- Helping identify and facilitate the professional development needs of staff
- Liaising with SLT to implement school improvement priorities and report on actions, progress and impact
- Liaising with the school SENDCO to best support children experiencing difficulty in literacy
- Organising, maintaining and cataloguing resources
- Keeping abreast of new initiatives in literacy teaching, including attendance of borough forums and dissemination of key content.

11. Parents

We recognise how crucial the home/school link is for supporting children to have the highest standards of achievement in literacy. At the 'Meet your teacher' meeting at the beginning of every academic year, the literacy standards of the year group are explained, as well as further meetings throughout the year to support parents to understand new literacy initiatives. Regular RWI meetings for parents also take place throughout the year to support parents to help their children's phonics progress.

Homework is a crucial component in a successful literacy home/school link and is organised as follows.

Reception

- RWI sound sheet, ditty or phonics book to be read at home in accordance with the RWI teaching cycle
- Two picture books chosen by the child from the class Book Corner to be taken home each week (this is to be shared with an adult)
- From the Spring term, children also take home two Oxford Reading Tree books

KS1

- RWI phonics book to be read at home in accordance with the RWI teaching cycle
- One picture book chosen by the children from the KS1 Library to be taken home each week
- One spelling activity to be completed at home each week

KS2

- One book chosen by the children from the KS2 Library to be taken home each week (to be changed as and when it is has been read due to the differing lengths of more advanced books)
- One spelling activity to be completed at home each week

In addition to these homework tasks, children may also be asked to complete literacy activities at home to address areas that they find particularly challenging. This could include additional spelling or handwriting homework. Children may also be given the opportunity to complete literacy-related competition entries at home or other literacy activities which support their reading and writing development.

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