



# Picknalls First School

## English Curriculum Statement 2022-2023



### Intent

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

At Picknalls First School we support the aim for English expressed within the National Curriculum:

*'To promote high standards of literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.'* - **National Curriculum**

### Implementation

#### **Spoken Language**

This underpins the development of reading and writing and is vital for pupils' development across all aspects of the school curriculum. We provide children with a wide range of opportunities to hear and use good quality vocabulary, focusing also on variety. Children are encouraged to ask questions, discuss in pairs and groups and to use conventions for discussion as well as debate. Opportunities for drama are sought throughout the curriculum as it is recognised that the skills that are developed through this medium are unique.

#### **Reading**

Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 children engage with high quality picture books, novels, poetry and non-fiction through a wide range of teaching approaches. Children are immersed into the text through music, art, drama, discussion and role-play. Other approaches include responding to illustrations, Story Sacks, story mapping and book making. Children take ownership of the text and engage with it deeply.

Our aim is to teach children to read fluently and accurately so that they have a full understanding of text, resulting in enjoyment of what they have read. We share this aim with parents, and to this end, use a variety of strategies, including guided reading sessions and 1:1 reading opportunities. Our children's reading experiences continue and develop with them learning to read for a purpose – why are they reading? This of course reflects directly upon their writing skills, when the two are allied and the connections are made known to the children! Children are, therefore, encouraged to make choices about their reading matter, according to why they are reading. When reading for information, higher reading skills are taught so that they can skim/scan text for what they need.

Skills such as recapping on what children have read, predicting what might happen next and inviting opinion as to why, are **vital** to children progressing as readers and these skills are encouraged from our earliest readers.

#### **Phonics:**

We ensure that our children receive high quality phonic teaching on a daily basis throughout school. We use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' teaching scheme in Reception and Key Stage 1 and move on to Support for Spelling in Key Stage 2 to ensure that our children are well placed to read and spell words with fluency and confidence.

*'Phonics is taught well in the early years and key stage 1. This helps pupils become independent and confident readers.'*  
**OFSTED, January 2020**

*'Phonics teaching is well organised in key stage 1. This helps pupils in Years 3 and 4 become confident, independent readers. The 'river of reading' provides good-quality modern and traditional books which are well matched to pupils' ages and abilities.'* **OFSTED, January 2020**

*'The school places a high importance on reading and, as a result, pupils read well. The daily teaching of phonics has resulted in improved teaching and pupils' achievement in this area. Consequently, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check has been above the national average for the last two years. In particular, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard was in line with other pupils in the school in 2015 and above other pupils nationally.'* **OFSTED, April 2016.**

## **Writing:**

Learning to write is a complex process that involves a variety of skills but is an extremely powerful medium. It can last longer than the spoken word and can, and often has, been immortalized. We encourage all our children to become "authors" in their own right.

Initially, a child needs to be able to form the letters needed and then be able to express their ideas using these letters. Through shared and guided writing opportunities, we equip children to develop the skills of writing clearly and legibly. When the child is confident with these basic skills, they will work towards being able to write with a greater sense of purpose and learn to organize their writing according to this purpose. Children are equipped with the necessary tools to do this, being given daily opportunities to focus on spelling and/or grammatical structures.

Our children work using a variety of real texts as stimuli, and each fortnight have the opportunity to complete a Big Write – the link between reading and writing is made very clear.

*'Pupils write about many different topics and their writing is improving. In Year 2, for example, pupils learn about Samuel Pepys and how he wrote what pupils eloquently described as a 'first-hand account of the Great Fire of London.'*  
**OFSTED, January 2020**

*'Writing has been a focus for development and, as a result of good leadership and improved teaching, pupils are now making faster progress. Pupils start school with average skills in writing and communication. As a result of improved teaching and focused support, pupils have developed much better writing skills.'* **OFSTED, April 2016.**

## **Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling**

At Picknalls First School we aim for our pupils to become fluent and effective writers. Accurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) is a means to that end. We use the National Curriculum 2014 as a basis for teaching GPS by introducing patterns or conventions and continually practising those already introduced.

GPS strategies are taught explicitly in short interactive and investigative sessions. Pupils are taught to recognise which strategies they can use to improve their own spelling. Pupils are encouraged to apply learnt strategies to their independent writing.

In KS1 children learn spelling largely through their daily phonic sessions. In KS2 Children are taught spelling strategies and rules during the English lesson which they then practise for homework. The teaching and learning of grammar and punctuation is embedded within the English teaching sequence. This means, grammar and punctuation skills and knowledge are built into a sequence of preparatory work which is then applied within longer pieces of writing at the end of the teaching sequence.

As they become more confident, children are encouraged to check spellings using a dictionary and to expand their vocabulary using the thesaurus.

## **Handwriting**

We strive for our children to form correct letter formations, joining and good handwriting habits so that they can write fluently and legibly by the end of KS2. Using the Oxford Owl handwriting IWB programme, handwriting is taught with a sequential and progressive approach with teachers and TAs modelling the handwriting style. We believe that children's self-esteem and pride in their work can be raised by good quality presentation.

Each aim is considered equally important:

-  To teach children to write with a flowing hand which is legible, swift and pleasant to look at.
-  To enable children to develop their own style of handwriting as they progress through Key Stage 2.
-  To support the development of correct spelling and to aid in the elimination of letter reversals by the learning of word patterns and the correct joining of letters.
-  To ensure that children of differing abilities are provided with appropriate and achievable goals.
-  To assist children in taking pride with the presentation of their work.
-  To teach correct letter formation.
-  To appreciate handwriting as an art form.
-  To display excellent examples of handwriting in every classroom and around the school.

During lessons, we ensure that children sit, position their paper/book and hold their pen/pencil correctly using their other hand to hold their work firmly. It is important that in the Early Years and at Key Stage 1, children are observed closely during the lesson to ensure that letter formation is correct and corrected if needed. In addition to specific handwriting lessons children are expected to apply their learning in their exercise books and to show care for the presentation of their work.

## **Impact**

Subject Leader and Senior Leaders continually monitor the impact of the effectiveness of this curriculum through self-review activities including lesson observations, book scrutinies, learning walks, pupil conversations and environment checks.

Data is analysed and as a school we aim to consistently perform above the national average in Reading, Writing and phonics.

Regular termly Pupil Progress meetings are held to ensure that all children are making progress; intervention sessions are provided by experienced teachers where children are falling below, and close monitoring of PP, FSM and SEND pupils is carried out.

Performance Management targets for teachers are linked to above national % for reading and writing. INSET and professional development opportunities are offered to staff to ensure excellent teacher's subject knowledge.

Subject Leader attends termly Subject Updates and cascades relevant information to staff. As a MAT we have been involved in moderation of reading and writing with other schools to ensure consistency for all children.

## **Next Steps**

### **Focused Priority 1: Writing**

Data in Key Stage 1 shows writing to be the weaker out of Reading, Writing and Maths, although we are still above national. Therefore work will focus on strengthening and improving sentence structure and grammar. To begin with we will:

-  Spend time as a year group and Key Stage discussing barriers within the classroom that may hinder children's progress
-  Revisit Assessment Focus for each year group and re-examine the I Can statements to check that all teachers are aware of year group expectations
-  Work with LEA Subject specialists where possible to access appropriate skills grids and assessment tools

## **Focused Priority 2: Implementing A Systematic Synthetic Phonics program**

- 📌 Buy and distribute Little Wandle Letters and Sounds material
- 📌 Organise INSET training for all staff
- 📌 Arrange parent workshops
- 📌 Monitor the teaching of phonics with regular observations by subject leader
- 📌 Reading Leader to analyse assessment data

## **Background Priorities:**

- 📌 Publish half termly Home learning activities for English on the school website for each year group to enable parents to have instant access on topical and relevant study for their children.
- 📌 Speaking and Listening: to continue to provide opportunities for regular speaking and listening activities on the timetable.

Written by Mrs J De Soyza  
English Lead



## **Appendix 1**

Quality Texts used as a stimulus in English lessons:

EYFS: Jack and the Beanstalk, Elves and the Shoemaker, The Three Billygoats Gruff, Goldilocks, The Magic Porridge Pot, The Dragon's Egg, The Dragon Machine.

Year 1: Handa's Surprise, Lazy Lion, Ugly Five, Lion Hunt, The Three Little Pigs, Cinderella, Twisted Fairytales, Lost and Found, Meerkat Mail, Man on the Moon, Journey Into Space, Lost at the Toy Museum, Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs, Queens Knickers, Katie in London, Billy's Bucket, The Queens Hat.

Year 2: The Katie Morag stories, Mr Percy's Magic Greenhouse, The Tiger Who Came to Tea, non-fiction texts on Queen Elizabeth I, Samuel Pepys, and Florence Nightingale; Dear Green Peace, Don't Forget to Write, Dougal's Deep Sea Diary, The Light House Keeper's Lunch series of books, Little Red Riding Hood traditional tale and variations.

Year 3: Anthony Browne stories, Stone Age Boy, Dave's Cave, Ug, How to wash a Woolly Mammoth, Greek Myths and Greek Plays, Wonderful World, Around the World in 80 Days, Escape from Pompeii, various non-fiction and performance poetry.

Year 4: Beowulf, Eric the Red, Titanic: the Disaster that Shook the World, Iron Man, Oliver Twist, Polar Bear, Arctic Hare poetry, Ice Trap: Shackleton's Incredible Expedition, Arctic Tale, Marvel Characters.