



Picknalls First School

English Curriculum Statement 2023-2024



Intent

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak, read 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.

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. We 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. Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised draws on the latest research into how children learn best; how to ensure learning stays in children's long term memory and how best to enable children to apply their learning to become highly competent readers. Phonics is a fundamental part of teaching our children to become fluent and confident readers and we provide many opportunities for repeated practice daily within every class, not just within our phonics lessons.

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. 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. Our aim is to teach children to read fluently and accurately so that they have a full understanding of text, resulting in confidence and enjoyment of what they have read. Children in our lower school all complete 3 group reads a week, which is part of our Little Wandle phonics scheme. Each read has a different focus with the end goal being that children are 95%-100% fluent by the end of the week. These reads are carried out

every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning in Early Years and Year 1. We optimise the use of our adults within the school to ensure every child is read with within this time. At Picknalls, we have adopted a positive reading culture and are all passionate about supporting and developing early reading skills to provide our pupils with the best opportunities to become successful, confident and fluent readers. When children are ready to exit the scheme, they will move onto independent reading books to continue to read a wide variety of stories and non-fiction books. All children will remain on the Little Wandle reading scheme until they are ready to move on.

'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, all our pupils begin their early years journey by learning how to speak and listen confidently and carefully. They are taught how to communicate effectively and are encouraged to speak enthusiastically about the world around them and their real-life experiences. Once they are confident communicators they are now able to use their phonic knowledge to construct simple sentences effectively. A child needs to be able to form the letters needed and then be able to express their ideas using these letters. The handwriting journey begins at this stage and through the Little Wandle teaching methods pupils learn where to start and finish their letters correctly. The Early Years children also begin their writing journey with "The Drawing Club". Pupils are exposed to a variety of vocabulary and stories. They use their imagination to bring their writing to life. It provides all pupils a purpose to writing and they all feel accepted and able to complete a writing task.

Key Stage 1, after some transition weeks, begin the text type pedagogies to writing. Pupils are taught that writing has a purpose; to entertain, to inform or to persuade. Pupils are taught how to write for these purposes in a variety of forms. Our pupils revisit and apply learning objectives throughout the years 1 – 4. They become confident and able in these writing skills so that they can apply them to the full range of writing audiences and forms as they progress further through their schooling.

'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 within the text type units so that they can instantly apply and give purpose to the rules learned. 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, moving onto looking at spelling rules within Little Wandle in Year 2. In KS2 Children are taught spelling strategies and rules during the English lesson. 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 Little Wandle and 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 all 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 Leaders attend the termly subject updates and cascade relevant information to staff. As a MAT we have been involved in the moderation of reading and writing with other schools to ensure consistency for all children.

English Action Plan 2023 2024

Focused Priority 1: Writing

Data in KS1 and KS2 shows writing to be the weaker out of Reading, Writing and Maths. Therefore, work will focus on strengthening and improving spelling, sentence structure and handwriting.

- 🔗 Monitor the new way of teaching through text types – ensure progression is clear across year groups and high expectations are implemented throughout the school.
- 🔗 Both Mrs Fenton and Miss Adams to assess the impact of Little Wandle phonics in independent writing.
- 🔗 Introduction of “Drawing Club” teaching methods to be monitored in EYFS and Year 1 transition weeks.
- 🔗 Letter formation, presentation and joined handwriting expectations raised across the school. Classroom resources monitored.

Focused Priority 2: Implementing our 3 reads a week with 10 adults.

- 🔗 Reading with all 10 reading groups in Year 1 and Early Years every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning.
- 🔗 Ensuring this is our main priority and no group is missed. We have ‘backup’ adults to ensure this.
- 🔗 Miss Adams to arrange another staff training day to ensure quality reads are being carried out.
- 🔗 Miss Adams to regularly monitor reading sessions to assess impact.
- 🔗 Reading Leader to analyse assessment data to monitor progress and impact.

Background Priorities:

- 🔗 Speaking and Listening: to continue to provide opportunities for regular speaking and listening activities on the timetable.
- 🔗 Reading aloud to pupils in class for enjoyment.

Written by

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English Leads



Appendix 1

Quality Texts used as a stimulus in English lessons:

EYFS:

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, Ug, How to wash a Woolly Mammoth, Greek Myths and Greek Plays, Escape from Pompeii, various non-fiction and performance poetry.

Year 4: