



Abacus Primary School

English Policy

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English Policy
Language, Literacy and Communication
Updated November 2019

Updated Areas: Accelerated Reader, Guided Reading, Talk 4 Writing

Our Mission Statement and Aims

Aspire, Believe, Achieve, Create, United, Success

- To be welcoming, friendly and caring, so that pupils feel secure, safe, happy and purposefully employed.
- To provide a stimulating and varied curriculum.
- To achieve high standards and expectations.
- To provide access to an ICT rich environment.
- To ensure children develop confidence, independence, self motivation, concentration and high self esteem thus achieving their potential.
- To inspire all who contribute to the life of the school to be successful.
- Parents to be treated as partners in education, to be courteously received, listened to, fully informed and asked to use a similar code of conduct as that employed by the school.
- To involve the community to participate in the life of the school.
- To value one another in an ever changing world.

Aims

At Abacus Primary School we aim to:

- promote high standards of language and literacy
- foster a love of reading for pleasure and enable children to justify their book choices
- develop critical thinkers who are able to engage in speaking and listening activities by focusing and delivering their points clearly
- develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and other's contributions and the language used
- enable children to write across a range of genres
- support children in planning, drafting, revising and editing their writing

Role of Subject Leader

The Subject Leader should be responsible for improving standards of teaching and learning in English through:

- Monitoring and evaluating English including: pupil progress and attainment; scrutiny of planning and books; observing lessons; attaining pupil perceptions; and analysing the quality of the learning environment;
- Taking the lead in policy development;
- Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD;
- Purchasing and organising resources; and
- Keeping up to date with recent English developments.

Subject Organisation

The planning format for each year group involves a Long Term and Weekly Plan.

Weekly planning will include: learning objectives; whole class teaching input; individual/group tasks including differentiation; focus groups; key vocabulary; a plenary and resources including websites. Planning should show challenge to ensure progression.

Teachers plan a 'hook' at the start of each English unit to engage and motivate the children and ensure that learning is meaningful.

The same standard of English skills is expected across the curriculum and sustained writing is planned in different subject areas to provide cross-curricular writing opportunities.

Guided Reading/Comprehension lessons are recorded on separate plans. In EYFS and Year 1, a five-day structure is followed: vocabulary development; fluency and expression; two comprehension lessons; and inference and prediction. In Year 2, a three-day structure is followed: vocabulary development; fluency and expression; inference and prediction as well as an additional comprehension session. In KS2 comprehension lessons are linked to the class text or focus in English and are planned weekly to coincide with the rest of the English planning.

Phonics, GPS and handwriting are taught as discrete lessons outside the English lesson; lesson plans are also written for these to indicate the development of skills being taught. Phonics lessons follow the Letters and Sounds programme in Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1. In Years 2, 3 and 4, the Rising Stars spelling scheme is used to supplement the teaching of the National Curriculum, whilst Year 5 and 6 use Grammarsaurus.

Accelerated Reader

Teachers monitor KS2 students' regular reading practice through Accelerated Reader. This program gives teachers the information they need to ensure that students are habitually reading and understanding the books that will best develop their reading skills. Accelerated Reader is aimed mostly at year 2 upwards (Year 2 begin to use Accelerated Reader in the spring term) but children in Year 1 are able to access the program if their teachers deem it suitable.

How Accelerated Reader works

A student's reading level is determined by a STAR Reading assessment. This is a computer-adaptive test that takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. It gives rise to the student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the ideal range of text complexity for that student. Students achieve the most significant gains in reading skills when they read books that are neither so easy as to be unchallenging nor so hard as to be frustrating.

AR Book Levels are determined with the ATOS readability formula, which measures the complexity of the text of an entire book. The formula takes into account the average sentence length, average word length, the difficulty of the words used and the total number of words in the book.

Using Book Levels and their reading range as a guide, the student then chooses books that interest them and reads them. A free online book-searching tool AR BookFinder allows students, teachers and parents to find interesting books at the appropriate level.

After finishing a book, students take an online Reading Practice quiz within AR. These quizzes check that the student has understood the book and provides an opportunity to praise the student and give verbal or written feedback.

Talk 4 Writing

The Talk 4 Writing approach is embedded throughout the school. The concept was developed by the author Pie Corbett and is a fun, creative yet rigorous approach to develop writers. Talk for Writing begins with enjoying and sharing stories or non-fiction texts, and during the 'Imitation Stage' the class will focus on learning these off by heart. They will then retell the text using actions and expression (and a text map to support them): this enables them to learn new vocabulary and language structures which they can use in their later writing. During the 'Innovation Stage', children adapt the original text through the shared writing approach by making key changes e.g. to the characters/setting. Finally, they write their own text independently at the 'Invention Stage'.

Children complete a Cold Task at the beginning of each unit to indicate how well they can already write in a particular genre. Teachers then use this to plan the sequence to ensure any gaps are filled. Children complete a Hot Task at the end of the unit to show progress. The genres taught can then be used in 'cross-curricular writing' or 'free writing' throughout the year to ensure the knowledge of features is retained.

Short-burst writing is used throughout the unit in order for children to apply the skills taught in grammar lessons and further develop their understanding before the Invention Stage.

Teachers place a large emphasis on poetry which is taught at the beginning of each unit as a means of developing vocabulary. Whole school poetry slams are held half-termly where each class performs for the school.

Handwriting and presentation of work

Pupils are encouraged to present their work carefully. Continuous cursive handwriting is taught across the school and is modelled by teaching staff. Pupils are able to earn the right to use a handwriting pen from Year 2 by demonstrating consistent cursive and appropriate sized formations and all pupils write in pen from Year 5 onwards. Cursive handwriting displays are also used to support this initiative.

Displays

Each class promotes writing by displaying written work throughout the year on a specific writing display board. New writing is placed over previous pieces of work in order to demonstrate progress; these may be top copied pieces used to assess pupils writing, cross-curricular writing and/or writing showing their editing skills. Children are encouraged to celebrate not only their own achievements but those of others by displaying their work in the school and sharing within celebration assemblies. Each class also has a reading corner to promote the enjoyment of reading in school.

The use of Computing

Opportunities to use Computing to support the teaching and learning in English will be planned and used as appropriate to enhance learning. Cineliteracy is a developing part of English and can offer an access point for children that are reluctant readers, as well as develop the use of senses in writing. Classes plan for at least two film-based units per year.

Assessment and Target Setting

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment policy. Verbal and written feedback provide next steps to support children in progressing with their learning.

Reading

- Target tracker updated half termly
- Pira assessments - Autumn, Spring and Summer for Year1-5 (no summer assessment for Year 2)
- SATs Year 2 and 6
- Year 1 children Phonic Screening Check
- Star Reading Tests completed half termly- KS2, Year 2 (from Spring term) and appropriate children in Year 1
- Accelerated Reader Quizzes completed after each book read - KS2, Year 2 (from Spring term) and appropriate children in Year 1

Spellings

- Phonic phase assessments
- GAPS tests each term - year 1-5 (no summer assessment for Year 2)
- SATS Year 2 and 6
- Foundation Stage profiles

Writing

- Target tracker updated half termly
- A balance of fiction and non-fiction writing to be used to assist assessment each term
- SATS Year 2 and 6
- Foundation Stage profiles

Spoken Language

- Target tracker updated half termly
- Teacher assessment - drama, imitation, presentations and debates

Marking and Self-Assessment

Marking will be carried out in accordance with the marking policy. When writing, children will be encouraged to peer and self-assess in order to develop their ability to edit work. Editing passes are used to support this process in Key Stage 2. Teachers ensure that they identify grammar and spelling errors, appropriate to their year group, in each piece of writing in any subject area.

Parental Involvement

Parents can support children with English by regularly reading with them, promoting verbal communication and supporting them in completing homework when given. Parents may also support children in their writing by encouraging opportunities to write: this might include letters and diaries/journals.

Homework

Half termly spellings are sent home in Years 2, 3 and 4. Statutory spellings for each year group are sent home to be learnt over the year.

English homework is given fortnightly in Years 1-6 which could focus on reading, writing or grammar linked to the children's current learning.

Children in EYFS are expected to read with their parents every day. They are expected to read regularly in Years 1 and 2 and at least three times per week in Years 3-6.

Conclusion

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy;
- Assessment Policy;
- Making Policy;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;
- Equal Opportunities Policy;
- Homework Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy.

November 2019

Miss E Mitchell