

*Sonning Common
Primary School*

**POLICY
STATEMENT
ON
ENGLISH**

POLICY STATEMENT FOR ENGLISH

'The surest means by which a child is enabled to master his mother tongue is by exploiting the process of discovery, through language in all its uses.'

HMSO, Bullock Report

'Language is a system of sounds, meanings and structures, with which we make sense of the world around us.'

Cox Report, D.E.S. 1989

AIMS

The teaching of language in Sonning Common Primary School will endeavour to:

- Encourage a love of books and the enjoyment of reading, both as an individual and a social skill.
- Encourage the development of critical appreciation of a full range of different reading material in relation to genre, purpose and audience.
- Encourage enjoyment of the use of spoken language.
- Encourage the development of critical thought through discussion and response to language in a variety of media.
- Encourage pupils to articulate their thoughts and to listen to those of other.
- Encourage the desire to express feelings, use imagination and communicate ideas through writing.
- Nurture confidence and bring a sense of achievement, by extending pupils to realise their potential in language areas.
- Nurture a realisation that language is not a subject in its entirety but that it permeates all curriculum subjects and all other areas of life.

The following statements will integrate the requirements of the revised National Curriculum for English and the National Literacy Strategy (NLS).

READING

'Reading is much more than the decoding of black marks on a page. It is a process that requires understanding and response to all types of writing.'

Margaret Meek

It is agreed classroom practice to include the following in the teaching of reading:

- that reading is established as a worthwhile experience.
- that there will be a range of different styles of texts which pupils should hear and read, including Media and ICT texts and texts from a variety of cultures and traditions.

- that pupils are encouraged to develop preferences in their choice of books and to investigate the layers of meaning and to make a critical response to what they read.
- that there are different strategies offered for helping pupils to read and these may include: phonics, word recognition, picture clues, prediction and context.
- that drama strategies are used to explore the meanings of texts.
- that the links between reading and writing are recognised and encouraged.
- high frequency words from the NLS and words from reading schemes will be displayed and learned.
- that reading for information will be reinforced in other subjects.
- that titles and labels connected with reading books are displayed around the classroom.
- silent reading will take place at least twice a week.
- that on-screen texts are used for reading (overhead transparency projector and computer).
- that methods and strategies such as Shared and Guided Reading are used to encourage pupils to read accurately for meaning and pleasure. pupils will be taught how to use the community library on site.
- pupils will be given an appropriate reading scheme to follow by their classteacher or in some cases by the Special Needs Coordinator. Independent readers will choose books from the class library, the local library or from books obtained from home.
- pupils will be expected to listen to the class reading book on a regular basis and to discuss the plot, the characters and the ideas in the book.
- pupils will extend their referencing skills by working with non-fiction books, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and the world wide web, especially during their Humanities project work.

WRITING

'Writing is the growing ability to construct and convey meaning in written language. It is a complex process where the child learns the range of social functions that writing can perform - to inform, to entertain, to instruct, and to persuade.'

It is agreed classroom practice to include the following in the teaching of writing:

- that writing is established as a worthwhile and enjoyable activity.
- children will have experience of writing in a variety of forms: narrative, poetry, letters, play scripts, journals, notes, labels, instructions, posters, diagrams.
- pupils will learn to choose the form and content of their writing to suit purpose and audience.
- pupils will have a variety of aids to writing available to them - word books, dictionaries, word banks, wall displays and thesauruses.
- children's work will be valued and care will be taken to display, 'quality' work around the school.
- pupils will use planning and re-drafting to improve and develop content, style and accuracy of writing.
- pupils will be given opportunities to discuss and respond critically to their own and other pupils' writing, analyse strengths and weaknesses and make improvements at a formative stage.

- pupils will be encouraged to write with commitment and vitality and develop independent, distinctive and original styles.
- use of correct grammar terminology will be encouraged.
- general organisation of writing and punctuation will be addressed frequently both with individuals and in class work.
- pupils will be reminded how to use the main rules and conventions of written English.
- pupils will have opportunities to compose both on paper and computer screen using different formats and layout to present work.
- pupils will be encouraged to write for a range of purposes: to communicate to others, create imaginary worlds, explore and describe experience, organise and explain information, imagine and explore feelings and ideas, use language creatively to engage the reader, explain and inform the reader and to persuade.

SPELLING

'Spelling is the act or process of writing words using a system of letters that is conventionally accepted by writers of that language.'

It is agreed classroom practice to include the following in the teaching of spelling:

- common words will be made familiar by displaying them on the walls in the classroom
- pupils will be taught the names and sounds of letters
- pupils will learn and practise the alphabet
- banks of words on different topic areas will be kept in a class word book or on display
- spelling of words will be taught by a combination of whole word recognition and by phonics
- pupils will learn to spell accurately and to identify the reasons for mis-spellings
- recognising the link between writing and spelling- all pupils will regularly use the Look-Cover-Write-Check method
- letter strings will be practised verbally and in handwriting practice and as part of the spelling programmes
- rhyming words, spelling bingo, games, songs and rhymes will be used to reinforce spelling
- regular use of dictionaries and thesauruses will be encouraged
- pupils will study the relevance of word origins, families and root words
- during the writing process, pupils will be encouraged to attempt to spell words themselves with guidance from another pupil or an adult. Pupils will use a vocabulary/word book as a personal resource
- high frequency words from the National Literacy Strategy will be taught and practised throughout the year

HANDWRITING

'Handwriting is a skill that aids communication.'

It is agreed classroom practice to include the following in the teaching of handwriting:

- infant pupils will practise letter patterns with a variety of implements to encourage fluency
- pupils must practise correct letter formation until it is secure
- pupils will be taught the correct pencil grip, the correct sitting position and the correct position for their book or paper
- pupils will be allowed to progress individually, in accordance with their ability
- pupils will be encouraged, as they develop, to link some letters together – pupils will join letters of familiar words which they read and write frequently
- pupils will have the opportunity to sample different types of writing implements
- pupils will be encouraged to develop legible handwriting in both joined and printed styles
- handwriting will be practised daily
- the practising of ‘patterns’ will be employed to encourage quick and legible handwriting
- wide-spaced line markings will be used in the early years and at the beginning of the juniors leading to the use of regular line spacing and blank paper in the upper juniors. A variety of guidelines will be available for the children’s use.
- pupils who progress rapidly will place the emphasis of their handwriting practice on speed, presentation and individual style
- pupils will be encouraged to develop a sense of pride in the presentation of their work
- pupils will be encouraged to use different forms of handwriting for different purposes
- pupils who write with their left hand will be encouraged to develop a ‘fluent’ hand by holding the pen away from the tip, angling the bottom corner of the paper towards the stomach and maintaining an upright posture.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

‘The development of spoken language is concerned with the importance of effective communication through the use of clear, articulate speech and attentive listening.’

It is agreed classroom practice to include the following in the teaching of speaking and listening:

- speaking and listening are highly valued
- pupils will be encouraged to deliver verbal messages of differing complexity to other children and teachers
- pupils will be given opportunities to talk about their own experiences either to the whole class, a group or the class-teacher
- pupils will learn to listen to one another and to take turns
- pupils will be asked to make explanations in a variety of situations
- pupils will be expected to listen to the teacher reading from a story book for extended periods of time

- pupils will be expected to take part in a presentation – this may be as part of a small group or in assembly as part of the whole class
- children will take part in drama or role-play situations where accent, characterisation and emotions are all part of the communication process
- pupils will be encouraged to join in discussions and to give their opinions
- circle time and Human Values sessions will give children the opportunity to comment on other children's ideas
- at KS2 older children will be expected to prepare and present talks on topics and books of their own choice and to join in debating sessions
- pupils will be encouraged to appraise critically other children's talks in a positive way
- the teacher will 'listen in' on problem solving situations to see how children interact with one another
- through 'booktalk' in guided reading, children will be encouraged to share their opinions and discuss the meanings inherent in the plot and the inferences of any sub-texts
- children will be encouraged to collaborate and negotiate to achieve an overall aim
- pupils will have the opportunity to listen to their own 'talk' recorded on tape in order to check for mistakes in pronunciation and fluency.

DRAMA

Classroom practice will include the following in the teaching of drama:

- to encourage pupils to use role-play within the literacy hour to extend children's understanding and enjoyment of literacy texts
- to use drama to explore meanings of text – characters, actions, themes, emotions and ideas
- to participate in spoken performances, dramatic interpretation and improvisations across the curriculum
- to write original scripted plays and to adapt other authors' scripts for different purposes
- to evaluate the effectiveness of - professional, amateur or class performances.

ICT

Classroom practice will include the following in the teaching of ICT when using a language bias:

- pupils will have opportunities to compose directly on screen
- pupils will be taught to use word processing techniques to develop writing skills
- pupils will learn to use a range of fonts and layout presentation features in relation to audience and purpose
- pupils will check for written accuracy using grammar and spell checkers
- pupils will learn to use computers to read for information from CD ROMs and the Internet.

LANGUAGE STUDY

Classroom practice will include the following in the teaching of the formal conventions of Standard English:

- an understanding of grammatical features of written Standard English
- fluent use of spoken Standard English according to a range of circumstances
- how word order and choice are crucial to meaning and effect
- relevance of word families, roots and origin of words
- use different forms of handwriting for different purposes

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The school will endeavour to acknowledge and value the variety of different experiences, interests, social and cultural backgrounds of pupils and use such differences constructively to raise confidence and self-esteem. All staff will ensure access to learning at an individual level, through differentiated teaching and learning strategies. Planning will set high expectations and provide appropriate learning opportunities for pupils from all social backgrounds, ethnic groups and for those who are disabled. The school will seek to provide texts from a range of cultures and which are free from discrimination and stereotyping, and to provide resources to support specific learning difficulties.

DEVELOPING LITERACY IN THE HOME

The school recognises that the role of the family is central in supporting the child's language development as a speaker, reader and writer. Families, pupils and teachers will be regularly informed of progress and access to records will be provided. Home-school contracts and homework policies will be linked to developing literacy at home. Teachers will provide guidance on what families can do to extend their child's competence in using spoken and written language.

ASSESSMENT

It is agreed classroom practice that the teaching and learning process should be clearly linked to learning objectives:

- learners should be actively involved, through an explicit understanding of learning objectives, self-evaluation and target setting for personal improvement
- records should track progression, analyse what has been achieved in relation to learning objectives and set future targets
- a variety of methods of assessment should be used, both formative and diagnostic.

ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT – ENGLISH

AUTUMN TERM:

1. Word level assessment test. Sheets to be distributed to individual teachers in November. As far as possible, tests should be administered verbally to the whole class at once. Results sheets should be returned to the coordinator in an ordered list on completion.
2. Spelling assessment test. A selection of words from the high frequency list for the appropriate year group in the NLS and words from the Spelling Scheme – Spelling Made Easy.

SPRING TERM:

February – Narrative writing.

March – Non-fiction writing.

All scripts to be given levels. At moderation Inset, scripts will be given a grading of a, b or c along with a level. This system will occur across the Year groups and the scripts will be kept by the coordinator as a 'benchmark' to compare against the next year's set of scripts.

SUMMER TERM:

SATs at all year groups except Y1. These will include the elements of reading/comprehension, writing, spelling and handwriting.

Suitable tests for Y1, Reception and Rising 5 classes will be devised by the individual teachers concerned.

Continuous assessment of Speaking and Listening to be updated

All tests to be assigned levels. Ordered lists to be drawn up.

At Inset, 'trends' to be investigated throughout the school.

Each term – write up of assessment of each individual child's talk on official 'Speaking and Listening' record sheets.

School Agreement on Literacy Expectations

Principles

All the work undertaken in English and literacy should take full account of the principles agreed by the staff and governors. In addition to these principles, over the seven years of primary schooling, we are committed to providing the opportunity/opportunities:

- for all children to see live performances
- to work with an author, illustrator or poet
- to participate in performances

- to make their own fiction or non-fiction book at least once a year or a class book
- to take part in a debate in Key Stage 2
- to participate in Story Time once a term

Allocation of Curriculum Time

Reception

3 hours per week, to components of literacy hour	3 hours
15 minutes per day for story session	1 hour 15 minutes
60 minutes per week for drama and role-play	1 hour
60 minutes per week for other reading activities e.g. 1-to-1 or small group activities	1 hour
Total	6hrs 15minutes

Years 1 & 2

3 hours per week, to cover components of literacy hour	3 hours
30 minutes per day for story sessions	2 hours 30 minutes
30 minutes per week for drama and role-play	30 minutes
90 minutes per week for other reading & writing activities e.g. 1-to-1 reading, extended writing, book changing book making	1 hour 30 minutes
Total	7 hours 30 minutes

Years 3 & 4

3 hours per week, to cover components of literacy hour	3 hours
15 minutes per day for story sessions	1 hour 15 minutes
30 minutes drama per week (or equivalent block of time)	30 minutes
1 hour library session for research & developing library skills	1 hour
60 minutes per week for other reading and writing activities	1 hour
30 minutes speaking & listening activities (talks)	30 minutes
Total	7 hours 15 minutes

Year 5 & 6

4 hours per week, to cover components of literacy hour	4 hours
Story sessions	30 minutes
Drama & role play, debate & discussion	30 minutes
1 hour library work (may include independent reading)	1 hour
1 hour other work in reading & writing e.g. extended writing	1 hour
30 minutes speaking & listening activities (talks)	30 minutes
Total	7 hours 30 minutes

- Although the literacy hour is, mostly, part of the daily routine, there will be times when this will need to be suspended e.g. to complete a book, to block in drama or to hold a debate. These deviations from the usual pattern of working should be shown on medium term plans.
- Medium term planning should be undertaken in collaboration with the teacher of the parallel class and should be shared with the co-ordinator before the term begins, so that suggestions can be offered on resources or other issues before term commences.

These should be kept in the filing cabinet in the staff room.

RESOURCES

Infant Department

Oxford Reading Tree Scheme
All Aboard Reading Scheme
All Aboard – analogy, rhyme and initial sounds
Sunshine Starters Books
Sunshine group readers
Sunshine adventure books
Sunshine Spirals
Fiction and Non-fiction books in each classroom
A large selection of Big Books
Nelson Handwriting Scheme
Dictionaries in each classroom
Wonder World – non-fiction scheme
Ginn 360 – group reading
Scholastic – group readers
Language in action

Junior Department

Extensions of Oxford Reading Tree Scheme
Every year group has a complete set of Literacy World by Heinemann
Letts Literacy Hour Books
'More ways to teach Drama'
'English Alive' by Collins in each classroom
Dictionaries and Thesauruses in each classroom
Reference books and Fiction books have been amalgamated with the new Community Library stock
Bookshop stock
Fiction books and Non-fiction books in each classroom
Group reading books and play scripts for use in Literacy hour
'Spelling Made Easy' by Violet Brand –books for each class in the juniors
Nelson Handwriting Scheme
Simon and Schuster books for Year 6
Skyways Reading Scheme for Year6 (later levels)
Five and Ten Minute Thrillers
Rocket books for Year 4
Dorling Kindersley Non-fiction Reading Scheme – Year 6

