

English at Killigrew Primary and Nursery School

Intent

The English curriculum at Killigrew Primary and Nursery School is unapologetically ambitious and provides our children with the English skills that they need to be successful in later life. We teach the National Curriculum statutory objectives and extend these to offer additional challenge to all children regardless of their starting point. This ambition is reflected in our detailed progression documents for spoken language, composition, grammar, handwriting and reading.

In our curriculum overview, we carefully select a balance of writing genres. In the latter stage of each term, we plan for our children to be able to apply their cross curricular learning in their English lesson. We know that, by this time, children will have a rich and detailed knowledge of the foundation subject they have been studying. In the earlier part of the term, we focus on other contexts to engage and inspire the children, often taking their lead in terms of the context for the finished piece of writing.

Through the careful choosing of the stimulus for fiction and non-fiction genres, we ensure that the voice and contributions of writers from different cultures and backgrounds (including BAME groups) are fully represented in order to enhance every child's cultural capital.



Rainforest reading materials

We carefully timetable English learning, taking into account our key drivers that we have established over time, and through detailed assessment of our current school assessment information.

We focus on spoken language acquisition, as we know that the ability to communicate effectively is a skill that is important for life-long learning. In addition we have noticed that, more recently, the children entering our Early Years setting have less confidence when communicating with each other and talking about language. Therefore, we carefully plan each unit of writing so that it offers good opportunity to develop and revisit spoken language objectives.

Another key driver for our English curriculum is the teaching of spelling strategies. We prioritise spelling, as we believe that the ability to spell accurately will support our children to be successful throughout their life. We also know that the groundwork for successful spelling is laid throughout the children's primary school journey. We have identified that our pupils benefit from frequent repetition of spelling objectives and that our teachers must have high expectations in terms of applying taught skills in writing. This is why the weekly targets we set for the children are spelling based linked to their English lessons.

Finally, we prioritise reading because we believe that in today's modern world our children are used to picking up and reading snapshots of information on social media and thus may lack the stamina to read at length. This is evident when our pupils complete fluency tests using longer and more complex texts.

We also know that the language they are exposed to online may be less developed than they might read in a book, so we have a responsibility to ensure that they are taught ambitious words within our English curriculum and the reading material we provide. Therefore, all of our English planning identifies key reading objectives and indicates age appropriate (but challenging) reading stimulus materials.

We also know that it is important that our children understand the link between spoken word and the words on the paper. Therefore, we support them to focus for longer and talk with confidence about what they have read or heard. We ensure that all adults model targeted and purposeful talk about books. We know that we must enhance our children's breadth of vocabulary and curiosity about language, whilst also helping them to rehearse and formulate full sentences to justify their opinion. Through excellent teacher modelling, we support children to summarise paragraphs of text and make links between the different texts they read. Our classrooms and libraries provide a wide range of quality texts to enhance cultural capital and facilitate cross-curricular links. We encourage reading at home through our 'Reading Around the World' passport.

Through planned events like our poetry busk, Take one Picture, themed writing weeks and World Book Day, we ensure that the whole school comes together to celebrate their English learning. By inviting our parents to enjoy a number of these events, we engage the whole school community.



Poetry Busk

As a teaching team, we also enjoy looking at English work from different classes and we plan moderation opportunities throughout the school year.

Implementation

Writing

We teach writing daily through an integrated teaching sequence of three phases.

In Phase 1, through choosing a range of engaging texts and images linked to the theme of the final piece of writing, we immerse children in the context of their writing. We allow them to verbalise and rehearse the structure of texts, and include drama and role-play activities to support this. We often use Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing to embed the structure of texts and to rehearse spoken language skills. We know that seeing a good example of a finished piece of work is important at this stage, so

our teachers write this for the children, incorporating important grammatical and contextual features.

In Phase 2, we teach key grammatical concepts through specific objectives. In our mid-term planning format, we identify what grammar objectives are required to meet at least age related expectations, what challenge would look like and which objectives may need regular review. Through teacher modelling and shared writing practise, these objectives are rehearsed within the context of the writing.

In Phase 3, we teach the children how to plan to innovate their learning so far, whilst making sure that they are still able to demonstrate the grammatical knowledge they have acquired. Our children know that their first draft is never their finished draft because they are taught how to proof read, edit and improve in two distinct steps. Their published piece of writing is the finale of both stages of this process.

Spelling

We use the Read Write Inc. scheme to teach both phonics and spelling in standalone lessons throughout the week. In Early Years and Year 1, children have a daily phonics lesson in streamed groups for thirty minutes.

From Year 2 upwards, we teach spelling either twice or three times a week for thirty minutes. We also prioritise small group or one to one interventions for any children who are finding their phonics or spelling learning more difficult.

Therefore, within a process of regular review and repetition, both in spelling lessons, during home learning and as an integral part of English lessons, we make sure that our children become proficient in all aspects of the statutory spelling curriculum.

Handwriting

The basis for excellent handwriting starts in our nursery classroom where our pupils learn how to handle equipment and tools, including pencils for writing. Following this, we teach the children the importance of an appropriate sitting position for handwriting and the correct grip and angle when holding a pen or pencil.



Nursery fine motor skills

In Early Years and Year 1, using a pencil, the children learn how to manage the formation, direction, position and size of non-joined letters and how to leave an appropriate space between words. The Read Write Inc. rhymes to support letter formation help internalise handwriting patterns.



In Year 2, we introduce a consistent school system of cursive joins and we aim for all children to maintain the use of neat and cursively joined handwriting throughout a piece of writing by the end of Year 3.

Reading

The teaching of reading is a key part of the Read Write Inc. lesson programme for Early Years and Year 1. In addition to this, the children in Early Years and Key Stage One have guided reading sessions, with a focus on comprehension strategies. In Key Stage Two, our pupils follow an alternating timetable of either a thirty-minute spelling or reading lesson. Therefore, we teach reading as a discrete lesson two or three times a week. In Phase 1 of the integrated writing sequence, we revisit and consolidate reading skills. To build stamina for sustained silent reading, we also timetable a period of quiet reading each day, and every teacher reads aloud to the children at least once a day.

Spoken Language

Within Phase 1 of the writing sequence, the teacher models spoken language skills as detailed in our progression maps. We split these skills into talking to others, talking with others and talking about words. Children have many opportunities to practise these skills with talking partners and during group discussion activities. Through our careful planning of all curriculum subjects, we have ensured that the children have several opportunities to present to a group and talk to a larger group of people in assembly times.



Performing to an audience

Impact

Outcomes in our books evidence an ambitious, thorough and engaging English curriculum, which supports our children in making excellent progress regardless of their starting point.

A whole school approach to planning means that our English planning builds very effectively on prior learning and systematically reviews and checks previously taught content. Because ambitious

objectives for spoken language, grammar, composition, handwriting and spelling are specifically identified and linked to different genres of writing, progression is evident within planned objectives and outcomes.

In lesson observations, children show high levels of engagement and are curious about their learning. The teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and their enthusiasm for the subject is evident.

Our pupils talk confidently about their English curriculum and share their love of reading. They are proud of their achievements and know what they need to do to make their work better.



World Book Day Classroom Doors