

English at Killigrew Primary and Nursery School

The English curriculum at Killigrew Primary and Nursery School is 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.

Writing

When teaching writing, we use planned teaching sequences that move between 'experience moments' and writing lessons. This is because we know that some of our pupils do not have a wide range of life experiences, so bringing immersive 'experience' moments into school supports all pupils and enhances cultural capital.

We also place teacher modelled writing at the heart of teaching grammar, text, and sentence level skills. By breaking grammar lessons into smaller chunks and teaching them under a highly visual framework, we provide all pupils with structure for independent writing. We place emphasis on authorial intent in writing, from Reception upwards. We know that this supports our children in both their reading and their writing.

The writing units we teach are varied, and this allows us to select an exciting array of fiction and non-fiction units of work. We carefully track the coverage of different genres of writing from Reception up to Year 6 to ensure that pupils can achieve all the objectives from the National Curriculum. The genres are chosen to reflect the needs of our children: pupils are sometimes less confident with non-fiction writing, so this is represented in our selection. We use frequent opportunities to review, refresh and enhance learning from topics covered in previous year groups in our unit selection.

We use 'The Write Stuff' writing approach (by Jane Considine) to supplement and enrich our teaching of the National Curriculum for writing.

Spoken Language

Our English curriculum emphasises the importance of language acquisition to support writing as we know that the ability to communicate effectively is a skill that is important for life-long learning. More recently, we noticed that the children entering our Early Years setting had less confidence when communicating with each other and talking about language. Therefore, each unit of writing offers a continuous focus on the learning and sharing of language which supports this school driver.

Spelling

Another key driver for our English curriculum is the teaching of spelling. We prioritise spelling, as we know that the ability to spell accurately will support our children to be successful throughout their life. We also know that the groundwork for accurate spelling is laid throughout the children's primary school journey. Our approach to teaching spelling focuses on the morphology and etymology of words, meaning children learn where words come from, and that they are made up of smaller parts called morphemes. This approach supports spelling by ensuring pupils understand the meaning of words and it encourages recognition of familiar parts in new words. Children have explicit teaching of phonics and spelling in standalone lessons. In addition, phonics and spelling is constantly modelled in writing, and children are supported to apply their understanding of taught graphemes and morphemes. When marking books, teachers focus on identifying the most important spellings that needs correcting.

Reading

Finally, we prioritise reading because we know 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 read 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, our reading framework and progression map identifies key reading objectives that must be covered within our reading lessons. We also know that it is important that our children understand the link between spoken word and the words on the paper. Thus, 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 libraries provide a wide range of quality texts to enhance cultural capital and facilitate cross-curricular links. Our classroom book corners are purposefully ordered, with carefully chosen texts that the children can choose and enjoy. We encourage reading at home and children record their home reading in their reading record.

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

Implementation

Writing

We teach writing daily for an hour. Before starting and during a unit of teaching, teachers use both summative and formative assessment to consider what the pupils know, what they need to learn and what skills might need additional reinforcement. Through teacher modelling and shared writing practice, National Curriculum objectives are rehearsed within the context of the writing.

Planning is adapted as needed for children with a SEND, but they work on the same context and intended outcome as the rest of the class. Before starting the planning process, teachers consider how the children could innovate their writing at the end of a taught sequence so that pupils can develop their own imagination and apply their learning independently.

The range of engaging texts and images linked to the writing themes enable us to immerse children in the context of their writing. We allow them to verbalise and rehearse the structure of texts, and we include drama and role-play activities to support this. We know that seeing a good example of a finished piece of work is important, so we allow the children to see a model text frequently so they can see how grammatical and contextual features are seamlessly interwoven in a finished piece.

There is a thorough edit and improve process before the children publish their work, which encourages children to take responsibility for their own writing and support others to think carefully about their work too. Our children know that their first draft is never their finished draft because they are taught how to proofread, edit and improve. Their published piece of writing is the finale of this process.

Spelling

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

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

Spelling lessons focus on morphology, etymology and orthography. Through this approach, children develop a deep understanding of how words are built, how their structures relate to meaning, and how spelling patterns are influenced by word origins. Pupils explore the building blocks of words, uncovering the relationships between meaning and spelling. This knowledge empowers them to spell more accurately, recognise patterns across words and apply their understanding to both familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary. We use the scheme 'Spelling with Grammarsaurus' to support our teaching of spelling.

Following teacher marking, pupils also focus on carefully selected spelling errors and independently rehearse the spelling of these words using the teacher model. These are recorded in their book and allow pupils to identify which part of the word was incorrect for future spelling of the word.

Therefore, within a process of regular review and repetition, both in spelling lessons, during home learning, within marking 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

When using a pencil in Early Years and KS1, 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 phonics lessons for Reception and Year 1. In addition to this, the children in Early Years and Key Stage One have small group 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 our writing sequence, we also 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 regularly. Each class has a library visit once a week.

Spoken Language

In line with our progression map, we ensure that children 'talk about' language in every writing and reading lesson. To supplement this, we constantly reinforce two other important aspects of spoken language acquisition from Early Years upwards: the skills of 'talking to' others and 'talking with' others.

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 ensure that the children have several opportunities to present to a group and talk to a larger group of people in assembly times. We plan enrichment activities like the 'Killigrew Speech Cup' to encourage children to present, with purpose, to a large audience. When appointing children to positions of responsibility, part of the application process is to present to an audience of pupils and teachers.



Speech Cup Final

Impact

Outcomes in our books evidence an ambitious, thorough, and engaging English curriculum, which supports our children to make excellent progress regardless of their starting point. Children take pride in their written work and our English books evidence our pupils' application of Killigrew values.

A whole school approach to planning and teaching all aspects of English means that our lessons build very effectively on prior learning and systematically review and check previously taught content. Because ambitious objectives for spoken language, grammar, composition, handwriting and spelling are specifically identified in our frameworks and progression documents, progress 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.

Teachers confidently assess the pupils learning at termly check points using formal summative assessment processes. They engage in shared moderation to check the integrity of their assessments. Detailed assessment frameworks support this process.

Teachers use formative assessment information to constantly adapt their teaching. Pupils who are falling behind are identified early and a programme of structured intervention starts promptly, following the key principles for effective intervention. If intervention takes place outside the classroom, it always follows best practice as referenced in the Education Endowment Foundation's recommendations on 'The effective use of TAs in delivering structured interventions out of class.'

Our pupils talk confidently about their English curriculum and share their love of reading. Pupil and teacher voice outcomes are used routinely to enhance practice. Pupils are proud of their achievements and know what they need to do to make their work better.