



Emmaville Primary School

English Policy

English Co-ordinator: Beth McPherson

Rationale

English underpins all learning at Emmaville. In every aspect of the curriculum, English can be found; therefore, it is essential that we provide opportunities for children to progress and succeed and this is done through a carefully implemented English curriculum. English is a key skill which is essential for all aspects of everyday life, including independent learning and the world of work. The National Curriculum states that skills in English are essential to participating fully as a member of society. Therefore, our aim is to provide high quality teaching and learning experiences so our children become enthusiastic, confident and independent users of language in the spoken and written word.

Reading

Aims and Objectives - Intent

At Emmaville Primary school, we aim to encourage all children to:

- be avid readers and develop a love of reading for pleasure
- read with confidence, fluency and understanding
- be able to use a full range of reading strategies (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to read accurately
- listen to and enjoy a wide range of literature, experiencing different genres and authors
- express their own opinion, and give considered responses to what has been read or listened to

Approaches to learning - Implementation

The way in which children learn to read changes and progresses as they move throughout primary school; however, there are certain elements which are apparent in every year group.

- Across all classes in school, there is a dedicated reading slot to give all children the opportunity to listen to and engage with a high quality text, many of which are taken from Pie Corbett's reading spine.

- Each class places an importance on the acquisition of new vocabulary and 5 tier 1 and 5 tier 2 words are explored each week
- All classes have the opportunity to liaise with the local library. Foundation Stage have visits from the library into school and classes in KS1 and KS2 visit the library on a half termly basis
- The school library is timetabled to be used by each class on a fortnightly basis

Phonics

At Emmaville, we recognise that the quickest and most effective way to teach children to crack the "code" of reading is through systematic synthetic phonics. We use the Read Write Inc. programme to teach our children to learn to decode and read effectively.

In Read Write Inc. Phonics pupils:

- Decode letter-sound correspondences quickly and effortlessly, using their phonic knowledge and skills
- Read common exception words on sight
- Understand what they read
- Read aloud with fluency and expression
- Spell quickly and easily by segmenting the sounds in words
- Acquire good handwriting

Read Write Inc begins in Reception with the alphabetic code. Children start the formal teaching of phonics in their second week of Reception, and learn one new sound per day and this continues through into Year 1 and 2. The children rapidly learn sounds and the corresponding letters needed to represent them, with a simple mnemonic to help grasp these quickly. Pupils also have frequent opportunities to read high frequency words with irregular spellings (common exception words). Rigorous and frequent assessment enables pupils to be grouped homogeneously, according to their progress in reading.

Within these sessions, pupils read books that are closely matched to their increasing knowledge of phonics and the common exception words. This ensures that children experience success and gain confidence that they are readers. They have the opportunity to re-read and discuss the books read, to increase confidence and comprehension skills. Children who are on the phonics programme also take home a book which is closely matched to their phonic knowledge, as well as a language rich book which is to be read with a family member.

Embedding the alphabetic code early on means that pupils quickly learn to both read and write simple words and sentences. Our aim is for pupils to complete the phonics programme as quickly as possible; as soon as they complete it, the sooner they will be able to choose books to read at their own interest and comprehension level.

Any children still requiring phonics input in KS2 will receive this on a 1-1 or small group basis. These children will practise their phonics skills using books which are phonetically decodable, but are designed for children in KS2 so that their self-esteem and confidence levels are not affected.

KS2 Reading

In KS2, all children will have the opportunity to practise their reading skills on a daily basis. At Emmaville, we use Accelerated Reader (AR) which is a powerful tool for monitoring and managing independent reading practise. Accelerated Reader is introduced to children in KS2, who are can access reading and a range of books independently. AR enables teachers to target instruction and accelerate reading growth for students of all ability levels.

AR focuses on the principle that reading progress is directly linked to practise. Children will take STAR assessment four times throughout each academic year and from this, an optimal reading level is determined. This suggests a range of book levels for each student called the "zone of proximal development" or ZPD. These assessments also enable teachers and students to generate target areas which need addressed to improve reading skills further.

Any child who is not working in line with age related expectations will receive further intervention and will be listened to on a 1-1 basis.

Once a child has read a book in line with their ZPD, they will take a quiz on a class Ipad. They receive instant feedback from this quiz, and earn points which can be tracked across the year.

Children in KS2 who are not yet able to access the AR programme will receive support from a teacher or a teaching assistant during designated AR time to improve their reading skills further.

As well as Accelerated Reader time, children in KS2 take part in whole class guided reading sessions. These sessions will be underpinned with a focus on different aspects of reading to explore the content domains found in the National Curriculum:

- Vocabulary
- Inference
- Prediction
- Explanation
- Retrieval
- Summary

During whole class guided reading, teachers model being a fluent reader, and demonstrate to the class by "thinking aloud" the skills to be a reader. For guided reading, the text chosen should be at a slightly higher level and questions are carefully planned. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide variety of materials including newspaper articles, video clips, extracts from longer books and more.

Independent Reading

Our aim is for all children to become independent, confident readers with a passion for and enjoyment of books; therefore, we encourage children to read and engage with books as regularly as possible.

Reception

Children in Reception take home three books: the book which they have been reading in RWI sessions, a reading book which matches their phonic knowledge and a free choice picture book to share as a family. Comments about their reading behaviours and skills are recorded in a reading record at school and at home.

Key Stage One

Children in Key Stage One take home a book which matches their phonic knowledge and supports their developing comprehension as well as a free choice picture/short chapter book to share as a family. Children who have finished the phonics programme will be able to access these picture/short chapter books independently.

Key Stage Two

As children move in to Key Stage 2, the aim is to develop independence and fluency. A greater variety of texts are made available to allow for more depth, choice and enjoyment. Each classroom has a bookshelf full of age appropriate reading material which children are encouraged to engage with and enjoy. Each book is labelled with the relevant AR book level so children know which books they should read to encourage maximum progress. Children in KS2 who still need support with basic reading skills will be provided with a phonetically matched book but will also have a book to read for enjoyment.

Love of Reading

At Emmaville, we want our children to understand the importance of reading for opening up many possibilities throughout their lives, but we also want children to show a passion for reading. We aim to do this through offering a range of opportunities including regular author visits to school, visits to the library and providing children with a wide range of books and reading materials to enjoy. In Foundation and Key Stage 1, we have placed a great focus on the importance of sharing books together and listening to stories. We have recently purchased 400 new picture and short chapter books for this purpose, as well as sending out "Rhyming rucksacks" and "story suitcases" complete with puppets and a hot chocolate treat.

Cross Curricular Links

Reading is the most significant cross curricular skill there is. A child's competency in reading will often affect their interest in, and ability to achieve in other curriculum areas. Book festivals, visits from authors, poets, story tellers and actors all take place to promote an interest in reading.

Classroom library stock contain a wide range of literature: non-fiction, fiction, plays and poetry. This is a changing selection which can be supplemented by books from the school library.

Non-fiction books associated with ongoing work in the classroom are readily accessible and attractively displayed for the children. Dictionaries and thesauri are also available and the children are encouraged to use them wherever possible.

Assessment - Impact

Assessment of reading is carried out in a number of different ways across school.

- Any children who are working on the phonics programmes are assessed on a half termly basis and regrouped accordingly; however, transition between these groups can be flexible depending on the rate of progress of an individual child.
- Any child who is not working at the expected level in phonics will receive additional 1-1 intervention to support their phonic knowledge.
- All children in Year 1 will take the Phonics Screening Check, and anyone who does not achieve the pass mark will retake the Check in Year 2.
- Children in KS1 and KS2 take the NFER reading assessment which will give a reading age. Any children who are not working at the level they should be will receive targeted reading support and have access to Lexia or Reading Plus programmes.
- In guided reading sessions, teachers continually assess all reading behaviours and provide immediate support and intervention where necessary.
- Teachers use *GAP* (Gateshead assessment profiles) to help make a judgement every term about where individual children are working within their year group.

Writing

Aims and Objectives - Intent

At Emmaville Primary school, we aim to encourage all children to:

- Be motivated as storytellers and writers
- See writing as enjoyable and purposeful
- Deepen their understanding about the art of writing over a range of contexts
- Show an awareness of audience and refine their skills accordingly
- Edit and improve their writing
- Develop the necessary writing skills to be a competent writer (spelling, grammar, punctuation, writing)
- Widen their range of vocabulary

Approaches to learning - Implementation

Writing is a key life skill which enables children to express themselves, communicate with others and access other areas of the curriculum. It is a complex process which requires motor

skills to manipulate pencils and pens, a command of sentence and text structure, grammar and punctuation, an ability to edit and evaluate both their own and others writing, a knowledge of how spoken language translates to the written word, an awareness of purpose and audience across different genres and involves a competency in spelling and handwriting.

At Emmaville Primary School, we structure our English lessons around Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing approach (T4W). One of the main drivers behind this approach is that children "cannot create from nothing" so it is important that we equip children with a range of rich vocabulary and text structures in order for them to be able to create.

All teaching units begin with a "cold task". This is where the children have a go at writing the text type to be taught, with minimal input from the class teacher. This provides the teacher with a clear idea of what the children already know and identifies gaps to be taught during the teaching sequence.

The general teaching structure of T4W can be split into the three Is:

- Imitation
- Innovation
- Independent application

Imitation -

Each unit begins with a creative hook to grab the children's interest and establish the purpose of the unit. Children will then orally learn a model text which has been carefully written with an underlying text structure appropriate for the age and development of the children. A range of further activities will be carried out during the imitation phases to deepen understanding including drama, short burst writing, analysing images and discussion. Unfamiliar vocabulary is explored and added to the ongoing word banks.

When children are totally familiar with the text, they will work with the class teacher to co-construct a writing toolkit of key features of that text type and box up the underlying pattern to establish the structure of a piece of writing.

Innovation -

In the innovation stage, the original model text which had been learnt, is then changed and adapted. At EY and KS1, this could be a very basic substitution; for example, the main character or the setting could be altered. At UKS2, this could be a lot more complex and children are encouraged to move further away from the original. The class teacher models the writing process, building on a piece of shared writing day by day and the children will then mimic this process in their own writing, editing and improving at the end of each session.

As this stage of the writing process it has been heavily supported, the expectation is that this should show a great improvement from the cold write. However, it is important to recognise that this piece of writing is not classed as being totally independent.

Independent application -

During the independent application stage, this provides the children with the opportunity to show what they now know. The children will be provided with a hook or stimulus, which is

different to the one used during the previous stages. Children are then expected to recreate the planning and writing process, but with less teacher intervention. Therefore, this is independent writing and demonstrates the children's own writing skills. These pieces can be used for teacher assessment.

Across each year group, a balance of fiction and non-fiction genres are covered to ensure a balanced writing curriculum, as well as poetry units. Although it is called Talk for Writing, there is clear cross over with reading skills, and teachers use English lessons as an opportunity to teach skills in all areas of the English curriculum. Grammar is taught in context through all T4W units, using the correct technical vocabulary. Although the T4W principles are the same throughout each year group, the structure of lessons will differ as children progress.

In all the classes, the learning environment will support the writing process:

- display elements of T4W on washing lines or display boards (story map, toolkit, boxing up etc)
- working wall to support learning ('magpied' words, key grammar focuses)
- reading accessible resources (sound mats, word mats, dictionaries, thesauri, magpie books, editing pens).

All classes also place a focus on cross curricular writing, giving the children the opportunity to apply the skills they have learnt in English in different areas of the curriculum.

Spelling

At Emmaville, most children from Year 2 onwards follow the RWI spelling programme. This is an interactive programme which teaches spelling patterns set out in the National Curriculum, and consists of five fifteen minute sessions per week. It helps children to learn spellings with common patterns and uses rules in order to help recall spellings as well as teaching exceptions to these rules. Individual workbooks allow children to practise their spellings and structured activities follow from the routines children have practised in RWI phonics in Reception and KS1. Children also have logbooks to give ownership of the spellings they need further consolidation with at home. Children are regularly assessed and grouped to support their attainment in spelling.

During writing lessons, different strategies for spelling are reinforced including phonics, syllables, visual strategies and considering the root word plus prefixes/suffixes. Common exception words for each year group are displayed in the classroom environment as well as dictionaries which are relevant to each year group.

Handwriting

It is essential that children learn good handwriting habits and correct letter formation right from the beginning of Foundation Stage. Children take part in a lot of fine motor and gross motor skills to prepare them for good pencil control. They are taught to sit properly at the

table in order to have the correct posture for writing, hold a pencil correctly and form letters correctly using RWI mantras.

In Year 1, children practise handwriting in RWI sessions and in discrete handwriting lessons. They are introduced to joined handwriting using the Letterjoin programme and practise pre-cursive letter formation. RWI mantras are still used to reinforce this, but a simple "whoosh" is added to the start. Those children that are ready may begin to start to join their handwriting.

From Year 2-6, the children continue to have discrete handwriting practise using Letterjoin to support this. Children from Year 4 upwards use a handwriting pen, and some children in Year 3 will make the transition from writing in pencil to pen. Teachers model handwriting and correct letter formation at all times to children when doing shared writing.

Assessment - Impact

Assessment of writing is carried out in a number of different ways across school.

- Informal assessment is ongoing and forms part of every lesson. Teachers provide feedback to pupils on a daily basis, either verbally or in written form. This feedback focuses on how success criteria has been achieved and next steps to improve.
- Children are encouraged to self and peer assess their work on a daily basis, always looking for ways to improve.
- Teachers use *GAP* (Gateshead assessment profiles) to help make a judgement every term about where individual children are working within their year group.
- Assessments are carried out on independent pieces of writing, and independent tasks at the end of a unit are compared to the start of a unit to clearly see the progress made.

The role of the coordinator

- To take the lead in curriculum development in consultation with the head teacher, staff and governors;
- To monitor the teaching of English in the school, ensuring that there is sufficient coverage and progress in the subject;
- To lead curriculum meetings;
- To attend English network meetings and relevant courses;
- To support staff by providing information on training;
- To ensure that there are appropriate resources to support the English curriculum;
- To carry out lesson observations and book scrutinies to ensure policies are implemented and followed.

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