



Guyhirn Church of England Primary School & Pre-school

Member of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust

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English Policy

Our Vision

Agape – To live, to learn, to love together

Through our Christian values we aim to inspire all of our school community to show equality and tolerance to all in a safe, challenging environment.

Developing resilient, aspirational and compassionate individuals who are enthused by all faiths and lifestyles showing faith and belief in one another.

“Live in agreement with one another. Do not be proud but ready to mix with everyone. Do not think yourself better than others.” - Romans 12:16

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks it out.” - Proverbs 18:15

“Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbour as yourselves.” - Matthew 22:37

Our Values

We are a small, family centered Church of England Primary School that is committed to promoting our Christian values of Thankfulness, Compassion, Creativity, Peace, Hope, Endurance, Forgiveness, Tolerance, Kindness, Respect, Trust and Friendship each linked with the core value of Love.

We are determined to create an inclusive culture of learning where everyone will be challenged in their thinking, to succeed to the best of their abilities and strive to become lifelong learners.

We will empower our children to become respected citizens to enable them to make valuable contributions locally, globally and to contribute to our world's sustainable future.

ENGLISH CURRICULUM

Purpose of study

Our English curriculum teaches pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are seen as essential to being able to participate fully as a member of society.

Aims - spoken language, reading and writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation

The overarching aim is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. Our curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they are able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

Spoken language

Our curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. We know that spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing and we therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Through our curriculum, pupils will develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. This is in conjunction with our Talk For Writing approach throughout the school. They are assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others, and teachers

ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils are also taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils are enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils are able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Reading

In YR and Y1, children practice reading the words on the page by reading texts that are fully aligned to our phonics programme. These are different to what you might read at home because they are phonically controlled to ensure they are practising previously taught sound-spelling correspondences. It is vital that children develop their code knowledge to automaticity, so they will practice reading from the same decodable text for several days until they are completely fluent. In addition, they listen to texts read to them from our reading canon to ensure they experience a rich reading diet that develops their vocabulary and background knowledge. As their code knowledge increases, children begin to read aloud texts from the reading canon. When learning to decode, children will take home a phonically controlled text to practise the mechanics of reading, and they will also take home a language-rich text to share with a family member. Once children have learnt sufficient code, the texts they take home will be selected by them with support from their class teacher.

Being able to read quickly and fluently unlocks comprehension of the written texts. Anything that occupies our attention limits our ability to think; if we have to spend too much time thinking about how to decode the words on the page, we will have reduced capacity to consider the meaning of those words. In order to optimise reading fluency, all children read aloud in whole class reading lessons. This may be individually, through echo reading or repeated reading. All children read the text as secondary readers, while the primary reader is reading aloud to maximise the amount of reading done by every child in every lesson. We pitch the texts above the national reading level for each age group in order to develop children's ability to read effortlessly over large sections of academic text as they progress through the school. We set our expectations high and anticipate that children will meet those expectations.

Reading is more than lifting the words from the page; children need a rich vocabulary and background knowledge to help them understand the words they are reading. Our reading canon has been carefully selected to ensure all children develop a broad and deep vocabulary and background knowledge to develop their reading comprehension. We also read in all curriculum areas to further develop this.

Across the whole school, specific reading techniques are used to ensure that all children join in with reading aloud. These include repeated reading and close reading of sections of text. Additional scaffolding may be required for the slower graspers, for example, the teacher informs the child in advance which part they are expected to read, and children may pre-read the text with an adult ahead of the whole class lesson. Teachers plan in advance which child reads which part of the text in order to push the faster graspers with more complex vocabulary or allowing opportunities for fluency for the slower graspers. As well as whole class reading aloud, there are regular opportunities for 'close reading' and 'art of the sentence' where children are expected to answer questions and write specific sentences about the passage of text they have just read. After writing, the class then have an in-depth discussion about the passage they have just read. Teachers also carefully select vocabulary to teach explicitly and implicitly from the text and children are given plentiful opportunities to pronounce the word and use it orally in a variety of contexts. We give children child-friendly definitions and do not promote guessing definitions. We run our reading lessons in this way in order to expose children to high-quality literature and develop their fluency and prosody, as well as to increase their vocabulary breadth and depth.

Writing

Writing is probably the most complex process that we ask children to perform. A runner does not learn to run a marathon by running long distances at the beginning of their training; they build up slowly and develop their running technique over time. Equally, a pianist must learn and practice scales repeatedly in order to perform complex compositions. In the same way, children need to learn basic grammatical skills to automaticity before they can confidently compose extended pieces of writing to a high standard. At Guyhirn C of E Primary School, we focus on teaching six text types: recount, report, instructional, explanation, discussion, and persuasive texts. The text types are introduced and revisited in a specified sequence to reduce cognitive load. Additionally, the core grammar knowledge for each phase (KS1, LKS2, UKS2) is specified and carefully sequenced so that children have plentiful opportunities to learn the skills and practice them to automaticity. Once children are ready to apply these skills, they draft extended pieces.

The writing outcomes are based on content from the text read and discussed in the whole class reading lessons or from previously taught content in foundation subjects. Again, this is to ensure the focus is on thinking about grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary choices, rather than making up content, which is something children do naturally when we use rich texts. In early years, the focus is on oral language development, however children will be exposed to writing through encoding the sounds they hear in their phonics lessons. There are opportunities for writing within continuous provision, but children will not be expected to write extended pieces until they are developmentally ready. This planning process begins with identifying the purpose for writing - to entertain, to inform, to persuade or to discuss. The skills needed for each writing purpose are built and the children have time to practice and consolidate this learning. Children are taught explicitly how to plan their

writing and extensive time is spent re-drafting, so that all children carefully consider the choices they are making. This ensures that every child can become a competent and successful writer. We believe in improving the writer not improving a single piece of writing. The cycle of drafting, responding to feedback and redrafting is repeated until children publish a piece of extended writing. This enables the taught grammar and punctuation to become embedded, so that children think carefully about their language choices and apply this in new pieces of writing across the curriculum. The true assessment of a child's writing ability comes when teachers observe how they are applying the English learning in other curriculum areas, as well as future English writing

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and glossary

We use 2 statutory appendices provided by the government - one spelling and one vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. The curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than 1 meaning.

Pupils are taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use standard English. They are also taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and 'language about language' appropriate for their age. Teachers help pupils to develop the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language.

Spoken language

Overall, through our curriculum, the pupils are taught to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

Content - Year 1

During year 1, teachers build on work from the early years foundation stage, making sure that pupils can sound and blend unfamiliar printed words quickly and accurately using the phonic knowledge and skills that they have already learnt using the Sounds Write programme. Teachers ensure that pupils continue to learn new grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and revise and consolidate those learnt earlier. The understanding that the letter(s) on the page represent the sounds in spoken words underpin pupils' reading and spelling of all words. This includes common words containing unusual GPCs.

Alongside this knowledge of GPCs, our curriculum ensures that pupils develop the skill of blending the sounds into words for reading and establish the habit of applying this skill whenever they encounter new words. This is supported by practice in reading books consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and skill and their knowledge of common exception words. At the same time we ensure that learners hear, share and discuss a wide range of high-quality books to develop a love of reading and broaden their vocabulary.

Pupils are helped to read words without overt sounding and blending after a few encounters. Those who are slow to develop this skill have extra practice.

The expectation is that pupils' writing during year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.

The curriculum is structured such that pupils entering year 1 who have not yet met the early learning goals for literacy will continue to follow the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they develop their word reading, spelling and language skills. However, these pupils follow the year 1 programme of study in terms of the books they listen to and discuss, so that they develop their vocabulary and understanding of grammar, as well as their knowledge more generally across the curriculum. If they are still struggling to decode and spell, they complete a diagnostic test urgently to determine which unit to cover again using the Sounds Write programme.

Teachers ensure that their teaching develops pupils' oral vocabulary as well as their ability to understand and use a variety of grammatical structures, giving particular support to pupils whose oral language skills are insufficiently developed.

Content - Year 2

By the beginning of year 2, the curriculum is structured so that pupils are able to read all common graphemes. They are able to read unfamiliar words containing these graphemes, accurately and without undue hesitation, by sounding them out in books that are matched closely to each pupil's level of word-reading knowledge. They are also able to read many common words containing GPCs taught so far [for example, shout, hand, stop, or dream], without needing to blend the sounds out loud first. It is the aim that pupils' reading of

common exception words [for example, you, could, many, or people], are secure. Pupils increase their fluency by being able to read these words easily and automatically. Finally, pupils are given ample opportunities to retell some familiar stories that have been read to and discussed with them or that they have acted out during year 1.

During year 2, teachers continue to focus on establishing pupils' accurate and speedy word-reading skills. They make sure that pupils listen to and discuss a wide range of stories, poems, plays and information books; this includes whole books. It is our view that the sooner that pupils can read well and do so frequently, the sooner they will be able to increase their vocabulary, comprehension and their knowledge across our wider curriculum.

In writing, the curriculum gives pupils at the beginning of year 2 good opportunities to compose individual sentences orally and then write them down. They are encouraged to spell many of the words covered in year 1 correctly. They should also be able to make phonically plausible attempts to spell words they have not yet learnt. Finally, they are able to form individual letters correctly, establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning.

It is important to recognise that pupils begin to meet extra challenges in terms of spelling during year 2. Increasingly, they learn that there is not always an obvious connection between the way a word is said and the way it is spelt. Variations include different ways of spelling the same sound, the use of so-called silent letters and groups of letters in some words and, sometimes, spelling that has become separated from the way that words are now pronounced, such as the 'le' ending in table. Our curriculum ensures that the pupils' motor skills are sufficiently advanced for them to write down ideas so that they are able to compose orally.

For pupils who do not have the phonic knowledge and skills they need for year 2, they complete a diagnostic test urgently to determine which unit to cover again using the Sounds Write programme. However, teachers still use the national curriculum year 2 programme of study for comprehension so that these pupils hear and talk about new books, poems, other writing, and vocabulary with the rest of the class.

Content - Years 3 and 4

By the beginning of year 3, we aim that pupils are able to read books written at an age-appropriate interest level, and that they are able to read them accurately and at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on understanding what they read rather than on decoding individual words. We make sure that they are able to decode most new words outside their spoken vocabulary, making a good approximation to the word's pronunciation. As their decoding skills become increasingly secure, the curriculum ensures that pupils are directed more towards developing vocabulary and the breadth and depth of their reading, making sure that they become independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and frequently. The curriculum and approach develops their understanding and enjoyment of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction, and learning to read silently. The curriculum also ensures that they develop their knowledge and skills in reading non-fiction

about a wide range of subjects, learning to justify their views about what they have read: with support at the start of year 3 and increasingly independently by the end of year 4.

The curriculum further develops pupils' ability to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy and with good sentence punctuation. Our approach seeks to consolidate pupils' writing skills, their vocabulary, their grasp of sentence structure and their knowledge of linguistic terminology. The curriculum is designed to develop them as writers, teaching them to enhance the effectiveness of what they write as well as increasing their competence. The approach makes sure that pupils build on what they have learnt, particularly in terms of the range of their writing and the more varied grammar, vocabulary and narrative structures from which they can draw to express their ideas. As a result by the end of year 4 pupils are increasingly able to understand how writing can be different from speech. Joined handwriting are the norm for our pupils by this age, and pupils will be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.

The curriculum makes sure that pupils' spelling of common words are correct, including common exception words and other words that they have learnt. Because of our focus on strategies in literacy, pupils are able to spell words as accurately as possible using their phonic knowledge and other knowledge of spelling, such as morphology and etymology. As a result most pupils do not need further direct teaching of word reading skills in year 4: they are able to decode unfamiliar words accurately, and need very few repeated experiences of this before the word is stored in such a way that they can read it without overt sound-blending. We ensure pupils can demonstrate understanding of figurative language, distinguish shades of meaning among related words and use age-appropriate, academic vocabulary.

As in key stage 1, pupils who are still struggling to decode will complete a diagnostic test urgently to determine which unit to cover again using the Sounds Write programme. As far as possible, however, these pupils still follow the year 3 and 4 curriculum in terms of listening to new books, hearing and learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and discussing these.

Specific requirements for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form a strong part of our curriculum. In years 3 and 4, pupils become increasingly more familiar with and confident in using language in a greater variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and purposes, including through drama, formal presentations and debate.

Content – Years 5 and 6

By the beginning of year 5, the curriculum ensures that pupils are able to read aloud a wider range of poetry and books written at an age-appropriate interest level with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace. They will be read most words effortlessly and to work out how to pronounce unfamiliar written words with increasing automaticity. If the pronunciation sounds unfamiliar, they have ample opportunity to ask for help in determining both the meaning of the word and how to pronounce it correctly.

The curriculum ensures that pupils are confident to prepare readings, with appropriate intonation to show their understanding, and are able to summarise and present a familiar story in their own words. The approach involves reading widely and frequently, outside as well as in school, for pleasure and information, read silently, with good understanding and inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words.

The curriculum aims to make sure that pupils are able to write down their ideas quickly. The approach ensures that their grammar and punctuation are broadly accurate. During years 5 and 6, teachers continue to emphasise pupils' enjoyment and understanding of language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and writing. Pupils' knowledge of language, gained from stories, plays, poetry, non-fiction and textbooks, is used to support their increasing fluency as readers, their facility as writers, and their comprehension. As in years 3 and 4, pupils are taught to enhance the effectiveness of their writing as well as their competence.

We see it as essential that pupils whose decoding skills are poor complete a diagnostic test urgently to determine which unit to cover again using the Sounds Write programme. However, as far as possible, these pupils still follow the upper key stage 2 programme of study in terms of listening to books and other writing that they have not come across before, hearing and learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and having a chance to talk about all of these.

The curriculum ensures that by the end of year 6, pupils' reading and writing are sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum in year 7, across all subjects and not just in English, (although there will continue to be a need for pupils to learn subject-specific vocabulary). The approach ensures that they are able to reflect their understanding of the audience for and purpose of their writing by selecting appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Teachers prepare pupils for secondary education by ensuring that they can consciously control sentence structure in their writing and understand why sentences are constructed as they are. We ensure that pupils can understand nuances in vocabulary choice and age-appropriate, academic vocabulary. The approach involves consolidation, practice and discussion of language.

Specific requirements for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form part of this curriculum. In years 5 and 6, pupils' confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language are extended through public speaking, performance and debate.