



# Maharishi School

CONSCIOUSNESS-BASED EDUCATION

## Primary Phase English Policy 2024 - 2025

Start Date: September 2024

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Signed by:

Headteacher

Lisa Edwards

Date Sept 24

Chair of Governors

Ian Birnbaum

Date Sept 24

## **Intent**

The potential for order is present everywhere; orderliness is an expression of harmony and balance; this policy is to enable their expression in the development of writing and language.

Through language, not only do we communicate our knowledge, ideas and feelings, but we also structure and make sense of our experiences; in this sense, language is a tool for both our thinking and learning.

### **MAHARISHI'S KEY PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO ENGLISH**

#### **➤ Intelligence**

Intelligence can be enlivened and applied through these principles:-

- link inner values with outer values in the pursuit of knowledge for a purpose
- develop each student's ability to discern finer and finer parts in the context of bigger and bigger wholes
- help pupils to look for and recognise universal patterns
- adapt teaching to take account of the individual character of each pupil's own intelligence.

#### **➤ Knowledge**

Knowledge can be enlivened, structured and organised through these principles:-

- teach knowledge in the context of human purpose
- develop knowledge holistically by connecting everything that is taught to the Self of each pupil

#### **➤ Experience**

Experience can be enlivened, extended and deepened through these principles:-

- integrate knowledge with experience in the development of Complete Knowledge
- extend each pupil's own experience in relation to knowledge taught and in conformity with their own nature through appropriate applications and practical work
- involve all the senses and organs of action in constructing learning experiences – where safe and practical.

➤ **Expression**

Expression can be enlivened and enhanced through these principles:-

- encourage pupil expression at the start of each learning cycle to stimulate the desire for growth
- consolidate learning through the expression of knowledge and skill

encourage the expression of fullness of life, through a wide range of expressive modes

### **Teaching English in Maharishi School**

Much of our English work at Maharishi School will be text based, with children enjoying a wide and varied range of texts and genres. Key skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening will be developed and consolidated upon, before children are then stretched and challenged through a range of exciting learning opportunities.

- Teaching and learning styles will reflect and support the overall development of English with emphasis on modelled, shared and guided writing.
- A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used to give all children the opportunity to develop their literacy skills.

- Children will be given a chance to work within a variety of learning situations including: whole class, guided work, independent work, group work, paired work, problem solving, hot seating, discussing, risk taking and investigating.
- Differentiation through support and challenging activities will be given to support and extend.
- Drama and role play will be used to widen understanding in English and across the curriculum and promote confidence in speaking aloud in front of others.
- Learning Support Assistants will be used to support and guide groups and individuals of all abilities.

### **Implementation**

"What we put our attention on grows stronger."

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

### **Planning**

English lessons are taught daily; in our Reception class, planning is based on each child's ongoing formative assessment, the Early Learning Goals are met through a range of genres, using a wide variety of texts and resources. In Key stage 1 and 2 we use a wide variety of texts and resources through a range of genres to meet the required learning objectives, such as Hamilton Trust and Talk for Writing. EYFS to Year 2 follow Red Rose Phonics which is taught daily. In addition to this, all classes from Year 1 deliver weekly Reading Comprehensions, Guided Read sessions, SPaG lessons, partake in spelling tests and independent Big Writes.

### **Key Areas within English:**

## **Phonics**

In order to ensure that our pupils become fluent and confident readers, it is essential that daily phonics lessons are taught everyday up to and including Year 2.

All pupils within the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 receive phonics teaching in line with our scheme, Red Rose Phonics. From Reception onwards, pupils receive daily phonics lessons, targeted at their current level of attainment, and are encouraged to apply this learning in their reading and writing. Pupils continue to receive extra phonics teaching on a small group basis until they are confident with using and applying the skills taught within phase five.

Within Reception and Key Stage 1 a new phoneme is taught daily, every lesson also incorporates speed writing and recognition of common exception words and high frequency words. Pupils who are making slow progress are identified through formative assessment during lessons and intervention is immediately put into place, alongside the usual phonics teaching. Children are sent home with reading books which are fully decodable and match the sound being taught. Supplementary readers, which are 90% decodable, are sent home later to reinforce the sounds.

Discrete phonics teaching continues into Key Stage 2, and for as long as necessary, for pupils who require extra support and learning time to focus on securing their phonics knowledge.

We work within all Key Stages to ensure that all pupils who would benefit from extra phonics teaching receive it. Any pupil, who has not reached the expected phonics level by the end of Year 1, as assessed by the national screening check, receives additional phonics intervention in Year 2 and beyond if necessary, so that they can keep up with their peers.

## **Speaking and Listening**

We encourage children using a variety of different sized audiences to contrast purpose. Speaking and listening will sometimes be taught discretely, but more often it will be taught throughout all areas of the National Curriculum. In life, first we learn to listen, then to speak and we apply these two skills in daily life more than reading and writing so we value the benefits of nurturing these skills.

Examples of where speaking and listening might occur within the classroom:

- Phonics; hearing and reciting new phonemes through input, games and activities
- Stories, songs and poems.
- Describing events, observations and experiences.
- News telling/Show and tell.
- Explaining ideas and opinions in discussion.
- They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately
- Planning, predicting and investigating in small groups.
- Presentation to different audiences of varying sizes.
- Reading aloud; guided read, shared reading, storytelling and one to one reading (reading buddies and adult lead etc).
- Imaginative play, drama, hot seating and role play.
- Listening to audio material.
- Circle time/discussion time.
- SPaG activities.

## **Reading**

We aim to foster a love of reading at Maharishi Free School and we encourage children to read a wide range of books both at school and at home. From EYFS,

children begin the decoding process through their Phonics lessons. Our reading scheme begins at this stage from texts in line with Phase 1, Red Rose Phonics and continues through the phases as the children progress with their learning. All children have access to their classroom library which they are able to use to extend their independent reading, as a research tool or just to enjoy a good story. Our school library is also open to all classes to use and each class has allocated library time biweekly in which they can check out books to take home. Library books are also used as an extension of the reading scheme once children have completed that. We have high expectations of children and the progression of their reading skills. Therefore we offer as many opportunities for reading as we can. This happens in English lessons and across the curriculum.

We offer a personal competition for children to complete before they finish their time in the Primary Phase; 100 Books to Read Before You Leave. Each class recommends 15 - 20 books which include award winning authors, classic tales, neurodiverse literature, poetry, multi cultural representations and much more! The aim is to inspire the children to learn about their preferences in genres and explore a range of authors and text types. We invite the children to write book reviews on their Class Dojo page (welcoming book reviews from books outside of our selection too) and we award a termly prize of a selection of books for the best review.

All staff set high expectations so our children will achieve their full potential; respond to our pupils' diverse learning needs in accordance with guidelines in the National Curriculum by providing a broad and balanced language curriculum; aim to develop pupil's abilities and enthusiasm with an integrated programme of speaking, listening, reading and writing; provide pupils with opportunities to consolidate, practise and develop new English skills across the curriculum; challenge children to explore creativity and grow in confidence; offer enrichment opportunities to enhance learning experience; and encourage confidence and enjoyment in writing, reading, speaking and listening.

Children are given opportunities to listen to, read, and comment on books and stories during whole class sessions. This is often teacher led and the children interact and respond to differentiated questions, often during English lessons but also across the curriculum. The teacher demonstrates and encourages an interest in books and reading for enjoyment whilst developing the skills to read a range of texts fluently and with good understanding; practise, consolidate and develop English skills across the curriculum. Each teacher has their own Reading Trolley which is accessible to the class and displays some of the teacher's personal favourite reading choices as well as books covered in class. Each classroom also has its own bookshelf/library area of age appropriate of different genres and themes, and quiet corner/reading area which can all be used by the children.

During English lessons the children are given a variety of text types as a stimulus for writing. The teacher and children share the text, and the teacher models as an expert reader, drawing out the key elements of the content. Guided reading (reading for understanding) takes place weekly in each class using the Reading Explorers scheme or other resources at the teacher's discretion, to link with the lesson as required. All children are taught to speak and listen confidently and respond appropriately to different text types and genres. We aim to ensure our children leave the Primary phase having had a wide breadth of exposure to a variety of exceptional texts and with a personal love and enjoyment towards reading which will last them a lifetime.

“Being happy is of the utmost importance. Success in anything is through happiness.”

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

## **Writing**



At Maharishi School, we aim to inspire a passion for writing, where children can express their creativity. Pupils are exposed to and taught a wide variety of writing styles, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Maharishi School teachers draw inspiration for their English lessons from a range of resources including personal interests, Hamilton Trust, and adopt the Talk for Writing approach in their lessons. This follows Pie Corbett's philosophy of teaching writing through talk and using age appropriate reading texts as its basis. Within the teaching of Talk For Writing, children are given the opportunity to explore texts from different viewpoints, including grammatical aspects, creation of vocabulary, use of punctuation, composition and spelling. As their knowledge of these skills develops, pupils are encouraged to use the above Talk For Writing elements within their own writing.

In EYFS, children use their accumulative print and letter knowledge in their early writing. They spell words by identifying the phonemes and then writing the grapheme. Pupils develop and build upon this over time and begin to write short sentences with words with known letter-sounds correspondences, and begin their understanding of punctuation using a capital letter and full stop. In Reception, teaching also focuses on physical development, including the development of a comfortable grip, with good control, when holding pens and pencils. Children at this age start learning how to plan their writing through familiarity with rhymes, familiar books and the ability to retell a longer story. Children are encouraged to learn new vocabulary and articulate their ideas in well formed sentences. Pupils are encouraged to use talk to organise their thinking and to work out solutions to activities. Teaching at this age focuses on sentence structure and tense, the use of phrases and clauses and also includes styles such as fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Reception English lessons aim to inspire a love of reading and writing with a can do approach. To begin, 'Drawing Club' initiative introduces key vocabulary and composition concepts. Children draw and talk through their creative ideas while the teacher scribes alongside. Children use their phonetic knowledge to write captions and codes alongside their drawing and storytelling. They focus on a book per week with a specific lesson focusing on character, place, and narrative. In the summer term Reception children are

introduced to the Talk For Writing approach in preparation for Year 1. They take a more in depth look into story structure, guided and independent writing.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, children write in short bursts (short burst writing; Talk For Writing), while developing the skill set to complete at least one larger piece of independent writing each half term. Each pupil has their own independent writing folder, where all of their independent writing is kept as they progress through the key stages. This allows our pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and to take pride in their writing, giving them a sense of fulfilment.

We have an annual writing competition which encourages children to become authors, be imaginative and explore their originality. The theme changes annually and has included some of the children's work to be published in books or be included in local magazines.

Spelling lists are given to the children on a weekly basis and are learnt in preparation for a weekly test. Children are encouraged to use the words from these statutory lists within their writing.

At Maharishi School, our aim is for all children to develop an orderly, legible, fast flowing and effortless style of handwriting, which they are proud of. From Reception, a strong emphasis is given to developing children's gross and fine motor skills to support handwriting. Children are supported to use a correct pencil grip and are taught to write recognisable letters in print form. Red Rose letters and sounds letter formation patterns are taught to ensure correct letter formation. Precursive is introduced from Year 2 and continues throughout school with children being encouraged to use cursive as a natural progression when they are ready.

## Aims

- To teach handwriting as a specific neuro-movement memory and not solely by the hand-eye coordination method.
- To teach children to write with a flowing hand, which is legible, swift and pleasant to look at.
- To support the development of correct letter formation, spelling and to aid in the elimination of letter reversals by the learning of movement and, from year 2 onwards, the correct joining of letters.
- To ensure that children of differing abilities are provided with appropriate and achievable goals.
- To assist children in taking pride with the presentation of their work.
- To appreciate handwriting as an art form.
- To display excellent examples of handwriting in every classroom and around the school.

### **Impact**

"Knowledge leads to Action, Action leads to Achievement; Achievement leads to fulfilment."

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

### **Assessment**

Both writing and reading are assessed termly using the Lancashire assessment grids; KLIPs. A copy of these grids should be kept for every child in the class teacher's assessment folder. They should be highlighted termly and in a different colour each term to show clear progression. A copy of the grid should be kept for every child and

at least one piece of independent writing should be put into the teacher's assessment folder at the end of each **half** term (these should contain fiction and non-fiction pieces). At the end of each term, these independent pieces of writing are used to aid the class teacher's judgement along with writing from various genres and from across the curriculum. The class teacher should use their knowledge of each child's attainment and ability from independent reading, shared reading, reading comprehensions and guided reading records to highlight the KLIPs and inform their judgement. Progress Test in English (PTE) is also used to assess the pupil's writing level using an online test. This is used in conjunction with teacher assessment to form the overall judgement at the end of each school year.

In EYFS and KS1 (and KS2 if needed) the phonics phase that each child is working within is assessed and tracked termly. Clearly showing progression and identifying where further intervention is needed. In EYFS, assessment predominantly takes the form of observation by all adults working with the child. The Reception Baseline Assessment is used to gauge each child's ability at the start of the school year. The RBA and teacher observations are used to plan teaching and learning at the start of the school year. At the end of the Reception year, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The class teacher assesses whether the child is meeting 'expected' levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels 'emerging'. This information is used to inform a transition discussion with the Year 1 teacher to aid planning for their further learning. Assessment information is shared with parents via parents evenings and reports to ensure effective holistic learning and intervention. Phonics interventions are also put in place additional to the classroom based lessons for the children who fail the Phonics Screening Check.

All children have the opportunity to regularly self and peer assess and use the school coloured pencils system; red for friend, purple for you (Upper Key Stage 2 use purple pens to self assess) to highlight when this has been done.

All English work is assessed using Live marking; feedback, misconceptions, advice and support are addressed and offered instantly; the child gains a clearer, immediate understanding of expectations and it allows the teacher to check that each child has the correct level of challenge: additional stretch can be given where appropriate. Live marking can be written for example a T can be written to identify a target, or verbal for example if a child has needed help within the lesson, the adult giving the help will indicate this by initialling the work VF (Verbal Feedback).