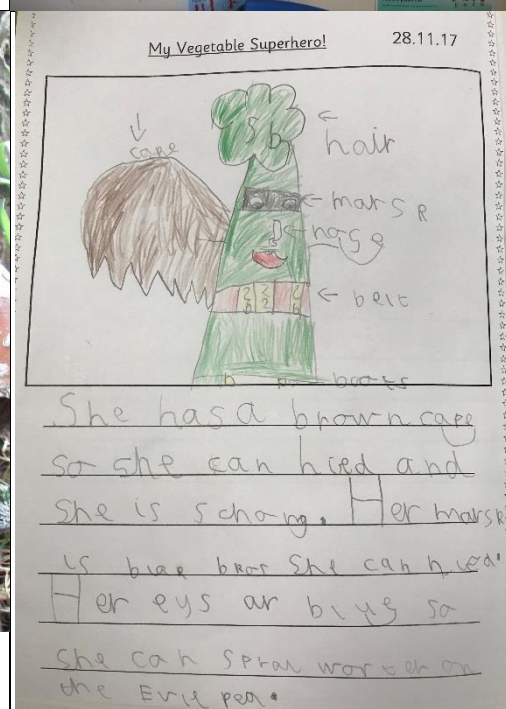
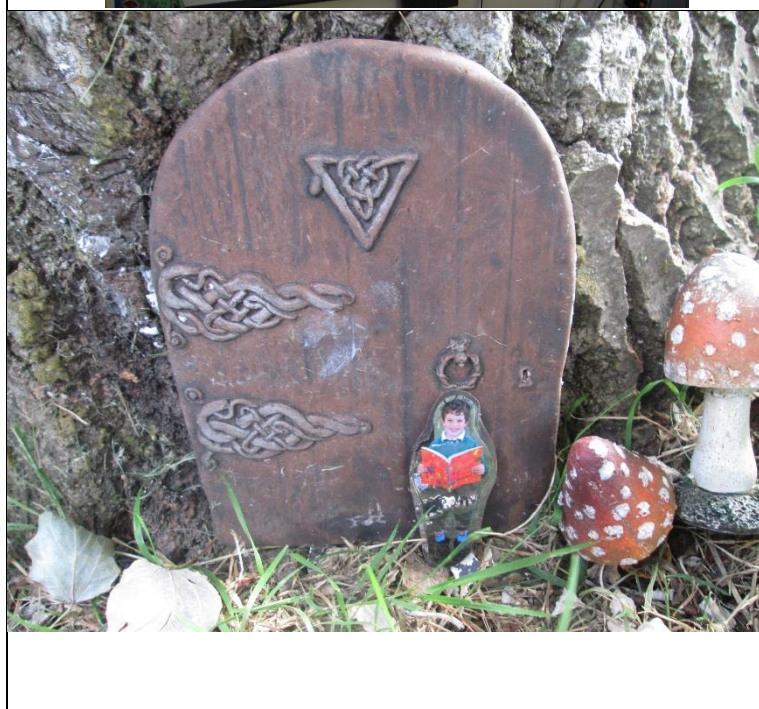
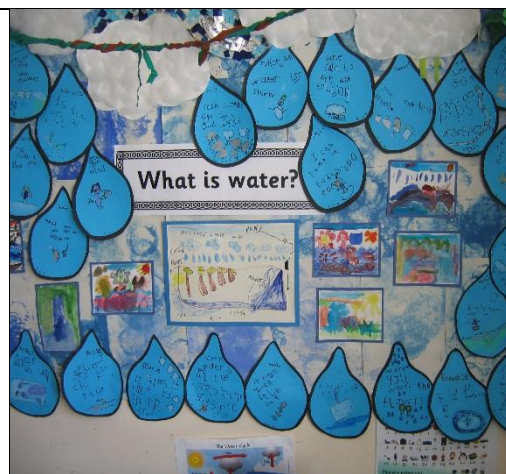
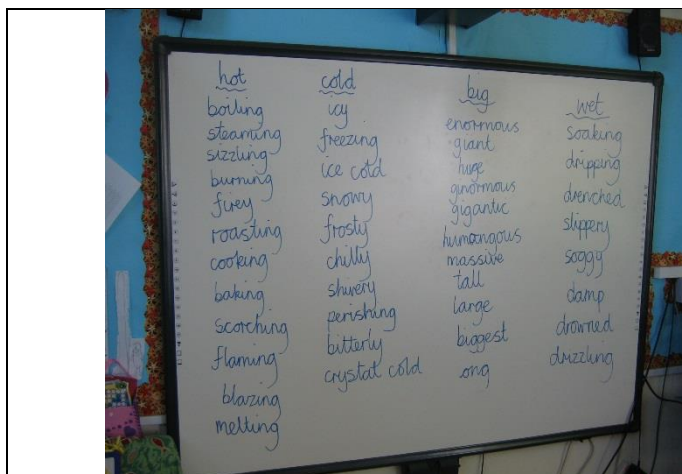


West Rise Community Infant School

English Policy



Policy updated: October 2023

Review date: October 2024

Updated by A Muttitt in consultation with the staff of West Rise Community Infant School

This policy document sets out the schools aims, principles and strategies for the teaching of English. It includes an overview of the particular aspects of speaking & listening, reading, writing, phonics, spelling and handwriting. In order to take account of new initiatives and learning and teaching strategies, the policy will be updated on a regular basis.

Aims and principles

English lies at the heart of the curriculum. The skills of speaking & listening, reading and writing are necessary in all that children learn. Emphasis is therefore placed on the teaching of these basic communication skills, as well as in their use in every area of the curriculum. Oral communication is fostered and encouraged, as it helps the growth of appropriate language in formal and informal discussions, structured presentations and dramatic interpretation.

‘English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach 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.’

- *National Curriculum 2014*

At West Rise Community Infant School we believe that ‘if a child can’t say it, they can’t write it’. We therefore give priority to developing every child’s ability in speaking & listening as a vital stage in the developing attainment of all English skills.

‘Children use talk to identify what they need to understand, the personal knowledge and experience to which they can relate it, and the kinds of reinforcement they need for understanding to take place.’ *Learning together through talk, The National Oracy project.*

The aims of learning and teaching in English at West Rise are:

- To foster a love and enjoyment of language and literature.

- To equip children with the skills to be able to communicate effectively in speech and writing.
- To enable the children to speak clearly and audibly with confidence to a variety of audiences.
- To develop listening, concentration and thinking skills.
- To develop confident independent readers through an appropriate focus on decoding skills, understanding and interpretation.
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through immersion in a wide variety of high quality texts.
- To develop an enjoyment of writing and a recognition of its value as a necessary skill for life.
- To provide a relevant print rich environment for children.

We aim 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’ *National Curriculum for English 2014*

Teaching and learning style

At West Rise School, we acknowledge and celebrate that children have preferred learning styles and we plan and use a multi-sensory approach. Our principal aim is to develop children’s knowledge, skills and understanding in English and to discover the pleasure of communicating their thoughts and ideas in many forms. In both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One the children are exposed to language and literacy skills all day long, with a variety of skills being taught both explicitly and incidentally.

At West Rise Infants, we believe in offering children ‘deep wells of learning’, where we give the children the time they need to use, apply and truly master taught skills. In year 1, the children have daily English sessions, giving opportunity for daily practise and overlearning. In year 2, we have extended focussed English sessions, which last throughout the morning, 2-3 days a week. These all morning sessions allow children to concentrate on predominantly speaking, listening and writing skills, with

opportunities for communicating in other subject areas given during other times of the day (such as during 'headspace' work and within 'learning journey' sessions).

We also pride ourselves on being reflective practitioners and are willing to alter our practice to meet the needs of the children. Therefore, children are grouped according to their needs. This may include small differentiated groups or whole class settings.

We are committed to providing a creative curriculum so there are always a variety of starting points (a stunning start) for the English lessons. This may include a book, poem, picture, photograph, film clip, a letter, a trip, a visitor or an incident for the children to explore, which all other literacy and wider learning may follow.

Phonic skills for both reading and writing are taught using the Little Wandle phonics scheme. These phonics sessions are taught as whole class sessions, along with handwriting and grammar. Phonics is also referred to at every point during the wider curriculum.

Speaking & Listening

The teaching of communication skills has a high priority in our school and opportunities are planned daily, whereby the children can practise and develop these skills in a fun and purposeful way. They are also encouraged to actively debate and discuss ideas through the use of 'talking partners'. All subject areas provide opportunities for pupils to share experiences and benefit from what others think, say and do. Circle-time is an example of an opportunity to develop the ability to contribute to small group and whole class discussion and to work with others to meet a challenge. This is always evident in PSHE lessons and also when having a lesson based on the wellbeing curriculum. Drama, role play and the use of ICT also allow the children to use these skills in a fun and practical way. At West Rise, we also believe in a strong emphasis on storytelling and talking in preparation for writing.

Writing

Children write every day in a range of contexts and for a variety of reasons. When planning, the teachers refer to a range of materials and curriculum guidance but most importantly the needs of the child. Activities are usually given context within the topic for that term and are often linked to a 'family challenge'. Wherever possible, writing should be prepared for by talking. This could be through talking partners, whole class discussion or group discussion. Writing should nearly always be the result of talk. Opportunities to practise talking for writing should be planned for throughout the day.

Children are encouraged to mark make right from the beginning in order to see themselves as writers and letter formation is taught and encouraged alongside this, according to the readiness of the child. Through consistent and quality phonic teaching, shared and guided writing, teachers help the children to move on towards independent writing skills. Children's next steps are identified through both formative and summative assessment and in Key Stage One. Children are given clear success criteria to work towards. Every piece of writing, although not always in designated writing books, is a chance for a child to practise their skills and the high expectations are always there. This is also the case when children are writing in 'Wellbeing books' which are not necessarily 'marked' by the teacher as they are a tool for the children to navigate the wellbeing curriculum.

Each classroom either provides the children with an inviting well equipped writing corner or an area where children can take a range of writing equipment and resources to use independently. Children are encouraged to independently practise taught skills and apply them in a variety of situations. Displays should be a balance of children's work, where possible labelled by a child, and a 'working wall' where children can find words and information to help them with their writing.

Quality phonic teaching gives children the knowledge and confidence to be able to attempt spelling the words they want to write. 'Common exception/ tricky words' are also taught in

phonics. When children are ready, they will be given spellings to learn for homework, which are tested weekly.

Grammar teaching is incorporated into phonics sessions, English lessons and reading. This is taught both discreetly and within lessons. Children are also given opportunities to practise their skills in morning activity time. Teachers follow the Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation appendix 2 document.

We use the Little Wandle rhymes during handwriting, (please see separate handwriting policy). All writing modelled by adults should adhere to this style. A variety of pencils and pens should be available for the children to write with, allowing them to find the utensil that suits their writing the best. At school we encourage the tripod grip when holding a pencil and we place enormous value on correct posture for writing.

All writing should be quality and should have the highest expectations attached to it. The same rules for writing apply both inside and out of the English session.

Reading

At West Rise School, we believe that all children should be given the opportunity to discover the love of books and the magic of reading as a way of escaping into an imaginary world or to find out more about their world. We aim for the children to be exposed to a wide range of exciting and beautiful quality texts daily.

Our initial core reading scheme is 'Big Cats' which is a phonics based scheme that is matched to our Little Wandle phonics scheme. This is introduced from the Foundation Stage and followed until the children are secure in all 5 phonics phases. After this the children move on to Oxford Reading Tree books. When children reach stage 14, they progress to Free Reader books, which are clearly levelled to ensure appropriate challenge and progress. Children will take home either an appropriately matched Rising Star or Oxford Reading Tree book. They can also take a book of their choice from the shared library to develop their reading for pleasure. Children will take part in a group reading session each week with either the teacher or teaching

assistant. They will also participate in whole class reading sessions where the focus will be on prosody and comprehension. The evidence of reading is recorded in a reading file and in the child's individual reading record. Parents are encouraged to share and enjoy stories with their children at home. We believe that we teach the reading at school, and at home the children continue to develop their love of books.

Quality phonic teaching gives children the knowledge and confidence to be able to attempt the segmenting and blending of the words they want to read. Children are explicitly taught common exception words and high frequency words through high quality teaching.

We believe children should be encouraged to use and apply their reading skills in as many situations as possible, including reading learning intentions, notices, own and others work and information around school.

Each classroom should have a stimulating, exciting and organised Class Library, where the children can enjoy books in a comfortable environment. Classrooms should all have a range of appropriate texts including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and phonic readers. Children should also be given the opportunity to explore stories from around the world and author collections. Other adults are encouraged to come in and read with children as much as possible. Male role models for reading are extremely important and should also be encouraged as much as possible.

Assessment and recording

There are structured assessment and recording procedures in place. Please see separate learning and teaching policy for more information.

Inclusion

At West Rise School we aim to identify and support all children following the guidance laid out in the East Sussex Dyslexia Policy (See Principles, Section 2, Roles and Responsibilities Section 3). We have a specialist teacher and two specialist TA's.

Children identified as having a special need in literacy will have these needs met through differentiated work and extra support in daily group work with the INA / TA with work that addresses different learning styles.

Gifted and talented children are given extra challenge to stretch their abilities as appropriate.

There are only a small percentage of EAL children at West Rise Infants, but every effort is made to ensure they have the maximum opportunity to access English as their additional language. Our EAL provision from the LEA varies as to the needs of the school. The support staff liaises closely with staff and families to ensure the effectiveness of provision. According to the needs of the child, they will provide in class support, or withdrawal, for more intensive Speaking and Listening opportunities.

All staff at West Rise Infants aim to teach inclusively, so the use of props, Role Play, Visual Aids and the practice of pairing EAL children with very able English speakers is embedded in our whole-class teaching. We also value and encourage the use of additional languages in our school, both as a celebration of diversity but also recognising that children will access English more easily if they have opportunities to form concepts in their Mother Tongue.

By the time children leave our school the minimum we aim to ensure is that they have developed a positive self-image as a speaker, writer and reader.