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Simonside Primary School English policy

INTENT

At Simonside Primary School, English and the teaching of English is the foundation of our curriculum. Our main aim is to ensure every single child becomes primary literate and progresses in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Staff at Simonside feel it is essential to highlight and be aware of the differing groups of learners and vulnerable children in their class. Once this information is acquired, teachers can plan and teach personalised English lessons which focus on the particular needs of each child. We recognise that each child has their own starting point upon entry to every year group and progress is measured in line with these starting points to ensure every child can celebrate success.

English at Simonside will not only be a daily discrete lesson, but is at the cornerstone of the entire curriculum. It is embedded within all our lessons and we will strive for a high level of English for all. Through using high-quality texts, immersing children in vocabulary rich learning environments and ensuring new curriculum expectations and the progression of skills are met, the children at Simonside will be exposed to a language heavy, creative and continuous English curriculum which will not only enable them to become primary literate but will also develop a love of reading, creative writing and purposeful speaking and listening.

At Simonside Primary School we intend to develop in our children:

- A positive attitude towards all aspects of English, including spoken language.
- A passion for the English language in all classes.
- The confidence to work with growing independence in the different areas of English.
- The competence to produce a high standard of work, with the majority of children meeting age related expectations or above.
- An awareness of audience.
- A fluent handwriting style containing correct joins and letter formation by the end of KS2.
- A good grasp of phonics, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.
- The ability to apply these skills to sustained pieces of writing.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy adheres to the National Curriculum (2014) for English. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff.

The English teaching at Simonside Primary School aims to provide our children with the skills and understanding of English, its grammar, spelling system and structure so that they can confidently and effectively communicate. Children are taught the conventions of English within a variety of meaningful contexts, with provision for differentiation at all levels and with opportunities to incorporate English across the curriculum.

We hope to achieve this by:

- Prioritizing reading, writing and speaking and listening at every opportunity.
- Providing stimulating environments in which all aspects of literacy can thrive.
- Developing trusting relationships in the classroom, involving good use of peer and self-assessment, so that pupils feel confident to express themselves without fear of embarrassment or criticism.
- Following a text-based learning approach within English lessons, linking texts to topics where suitable.
- Motivating children through exciting topics which they help to plan and drive forward.
- Making lessons highly interactive and productive, so children have time to do, evaluate and improve.
- Making sure that learning is personalised as much as possible to meet the needs of individual children.
- Following the Read Write Inc Phonics approach.
- Implementing the cursive handwriting scheme from as early as Key Stage One to include flicks for joining letters.
- Giving the children the opportunity to read for pleasure through the use of our well-stocked school library.
- Providing opportunities throughout the school year to promote reading and writing (e.g. Book fairs, competitions, World Book Day, parent workshops, author visits, projects involving outside agencies such as National Literacy Trust).

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are outlined in the National Curriculum English Document (2014) and in the Communication, Language and Literacy section of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014).

Reading At Simonside

Reading and exploring quality texts, developing children's knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary, punctuation and comprehension enhancing understanding. Our English curriculum is centred around high-quality texts. We believe that reading is an important life skill and we strive for all children to enjoy and value it. We recognise that enjoyment in reading arises from deriving meaning from text. A wide range of effective questioning will be used during class discussions to challenge, probe and extend children's understanding and learning. To analyse the text we respond in writing or by completing some explicit vocabulary teaching using words from the text or by answering comprehension questions. The teaching of reading is delivered through a combination of Shared Reading within English lessons and Whole Class Guided Reading outside of the main English lesson.

Phonics

We begin the process of learning to read in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where we believe that the systematic teaching of phonics is the fastest and most effective way of getting young children to start reading. By the end of Reception, it is our expectation that all children can blend sounds and that the vast majority will be reading simple books. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the focus of writing is using

phonics to write simple sentences with basic punctuation, following the Read, Write, Inc. phonics programme to deliver fast-paced phonics sessions.

The teaching of synthetic phonics continues throughout Years 1 and 2. Our programme is structured in such a way as to ensure the teaching of phonics is systematic and that progress is built on from year to year. By the end of Year 1, it is expected that the majority of children will reach the standard required to pass the Key Stage 1 phonics check. By the end of Year 2, it is our expectation that the vast majority of children will be fluent readers and will no longer need explicit phonics teaching for reading. For those children who are not at the expected level by the end of Year 1, a programme of support is designed to ensure accelerated progress in Year 2.

Baseline Expectations

- 1 to 1 reading must take place in all year groups; every child must read at least once each fortnight with their teacher (other adults may hear children read in addition to this). The Class Teacher will comment in the child's home/school reading record and offer suggested areas to work on during their reading at home
- From Years 3 to 6, daily Whole Class Guided Reading sessions take place for a minimum of 20 minutes.
- From Year 1 to Year 2, daily Guided Reading sessions are incorporated into Read, Write Inc based lessons, gauged at the children's Phonic ability.
- In EYFS Guided Reading is completed through 'Book of the Week' sessions.
- Priority 1 to 1 reading with an adult must take place as an intervention for children that are below national expectations or target expectations (numbers of children will vary per class)

Whole Class Guided Reading

At Simonside, we use a combination of techniques to develop fluency and comprehension skills. Whole class Guided Reading sessions are based around a class book and incorporate the VIPERS approach in order to develop the children's comprehension skills and to develop their ability to question things themselves. Child led dialogue is an important element of this session and these take place regularly within and outside of the main English lesson.

Shared reading takes place regularly within the main English lesson and during class novel time.

Home Reading

In EYFS and KS1, children take home a reading book based on their phonic ability (aligned with our teaching of the Read, Write Inc. Programme). Additional reading books are taken home to provide children with a range of reading material to interest them and foster their love of reading. The children change their books at least once per week (if required) and teachers initial reading records. We expect children to read at least 3 times per week at home with their families and to make comments in the reading record books.

In KS2, children take home a reading book based on their reading level. At Simonside Primary School, our books follow a 'book band' colour system and include a combination of the following reading schemes:

- PM
- Oxford Reading Tree
- Project X
- Reading Ladders
- Big Cat

Reading for Pleasure

During class library visits, children may choose their own library book to take home. Many exciting and rewarding activities are arranged in school to promote the pleasure and knowledge that can be gained from books. Some of these events include: home/school competitions (such as 'Get Caught Reading'), in-school performances by professional theatre groups, making books and using drama, dance and music to illustrate texts, as well as 'Family Reading' events. Each class has a dedicated 'novel time', where their Class Teacher spends 10-15 minutes each day reading to the children; the books read during this time are taken from the class 'Reading Spine'.

Writing At Simonside

We believe that writing should be purposeful, rich and enjoyable for all. We aim to provide children with clear contexts for writing, ensuring they have a real purpose and audience for their work.

We believe that if children can't speak a sentence, they cannot write a sentence. Speaking and listening forms a key aspect of writing and it is incorporated throughout the teaching phases. We use a number of techniques to teach writing, including shared writing, 'Talk for Writing', Alan Peat strategies, and Read, Write, Inc. These strategies involve making explicit the thinking involved in the writing process so that it can be internalised and ultimately applied by children in their writing.

In fiction and non-fiction writing, Simonside uses a common language throughout the school when discussing the structure of each text type. This ensures that the children have a clear understanding of text structures before progressing in their writing to include more complex content.

Shared/Guided Writing

Teachers at Simonside Primary School use a combination of Shared/Guided writing, where appropriate.

Shared writing takes place within the English lesson; the teacher models the writing process to the whole class as an expert writer, articulating the process. Teaching objectives are preplanned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific writing strategies, oral response and high levels of collaboration. The children join in individually or through partner work, with the writing, where appropriate.

Guided writing takes place as part of a guided session within a unit of work. During guided writing, the responsibility for writing shifts to the learner. Guided writing takes place with a group of children with similar writing targets/needs. During a guided writing session, the children will write with a teacher supporting. It is intended that guided writing provides a forum for children to demonstrate what they have learned about writing and to further develop and extend their writing skills.

Grammar and Spelling At Simonside

We firmly believe that a sound understanding of grammar will lead to an improved understanding of English and how the written and oral language works. We believe that the teaching of grammar should, as far as possible, feed into the writing activity that the children are undertaking and should not be taught in isolation. Children are taught and encouraged to use the correct grammatical terminology from Key Stage 1 onwards.

All teachers follow the expectations set by the spelling guidance within the National Curriculum Framework 2014. Spellings are to be taught in separate spelling sessions but also continuously throughout the school day. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, spelling will be taught and monitored through discrete phonics lessons. In these early stages of spelling, children are encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to make plausible attempts at unfamiliar spellings. In Key Stage 1, spelling is taught through discrete spelling lessons, as soon as it is appropriate to do so. Our younger children are taught explicitly how to spell 'tricky' words and it is expected that they will begin to apply this knowledge to their writing.

In Key Stage 2, spelling rules are taught in discrete spelling sessions (at least 4 per week) and consolidated within the main Literacy lesson. From Year 2 upwards, it is expected that children take home weekly spelling lists to learn. These lists are differentiated to address the individual needs of the children.

Handwriting At Simonside

High standards of handwriting are expected across all subjects. It is an expectation that all children demonstrate good posture when writing and hold their pencil/pen accordingly.

In Early Years, children practise manipulative skills to prepare them for writing. They are taught to hold a pencil effectively and form recognisable letters. To support children in their early stages of writing development, we have devised 'phrases' to remind the children about correct letter formation. These phrases, along with accompanying images, are displayed in every Reception and Key Stage 1 classroom.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, handwriting should be modelled daily and taught discretely at least twice a week in Key Stage 2. During this session, teachers should model the formation of letters and letter joins for the children to practise. Teachers should ensure that writing in the classroom and in pupils' books mirrors the agreed style and provides a model for the children to aspire to.

Assessment Reading

- In the EYFS, pupils' achievements are ongoing and are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Assessment for Learning is well established in all teaching, and formative assessment occurs daily through oral feedback
- In Years 1, 3, 4 & 5, children are assessed using the National Curriculum objectives. Year 1 children also complete the phonics screening test in June each year. Children who do not meet the standard in Year 1, resit this in Year 2
- In Years 1 to 6, children complete a termly assessment using the online STAR assessment system (including the 'Early Literacy' assessment for those in Year 1). The results of these assessments are used to inform teacher's planning and overall assessments
- Children in Years 2 and 6 complete past papers regularly and in May they sit the national SATs

Writing

- In the EYFS, pupils' achievements are ongoing and assessed against the Early Learning Goals. All teaching staff use AFL techniques in each lesson and formative assessment occurs daily
- In Years 1, 3, 4 & 5, children complete a half-termly writing assessment and this is assessed against the objectives from the National Curriculum 2014. This will form the main evidence required for assessment, although their class work will also be used to obtain an accurate assessment of children's individual writing skills.
- Children in Years 2 and 6 are assessed against the outcomes from the relevant Interim Teacher Assessment Frameworks
- Internal and external moderation of writing assessments take place regularly as part of our assessment procedures

Monitoring

The Subject Leader should be responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through monitoring and evaluating:

- He/she takes the lead in policy development designed to ensure progression and continuity of English throughout the school
- He/she provides support for colleagues in their development of planning and the implementation of the scheme of work
- The subject leader also gives support in assessment and record keeping activities
- The subject leader assists in the monitoring of progress and standards in English, takes responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for English and keeps up to date with developments in English education and disseminates information to colleagues as appropriate
- In association with the Senior Leadership Team, the subject leader will analyse data and monitor teaching and learning. Using this information, the subject leader will identify priorities and set appropriate targets. They should plan and deploy resources accordingly to meet these targets

Parental Involvement at Simonside Primary School

We recognise and value the role of parents/carers in their child's education and, as such, place great emphasis on the importance of developing strong, homeschool links. We appreciate the impact that parental involvement can have on accelerating

a child's development in all areas of English and actively encourage parents/carers to become involved with their child's education at Simonside by supporting their child at home or in school.

As well as regular reporting to parents/carers, Simonside seeks opportunities to involve parents through a number of activities, including: home-school competitions and events where parents are invited to work alongside their children in the classroom. We also actively promote events and parental engagement through our school Twitter feed and through each child's Seesaw account.

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

INTENDED IMPACT

The impact on our children is clear: progress, sustained learning and transferable skills. By the end of KS2 the majority of our children have made considerable progress from their starting points in EYFS. With the implementation of the writing journey being well established and taught thoroughly in both key stages, children are becoming more confident writers and by the time they are in upper Key Stage 2, most genres of writing are familiar to them and the teaching can focus on creativity, writer's craft, sustained writing and manipulation of grammar and punctuation skills. Our children are also becoming more confident readers and they realise the importance of reading for pleasure along with reading for information.

As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum, cross curricular writing standards will also improve and skills taught in the English lesson are transferred into other subjects; this shows consolidation of skills and a deeper understanding of how and when to use specific grammar, punctuation and grammar objectives. We hope that as children move on from us to further their education and learning that their creativity, passion for English and high aspirations travel with them and continue to grow and develop as they do.

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