



**GREAT FINBOROUGH
CHURCH PRIMARY**

Literacy Policy

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Great Finborough Church Primary

English Policy

Introduction

At Great Finborough Primary School we believe that the development of language and Literacy skills is of the highest priority. In studying Literacy, pupils develop skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening, thus enabling them to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, and to communicate with others effectively. By studying Literacy, pupils will also develop an understanding of how language works through analysing patterns, structures and origins. This policy summarises our approach to the teaching of Literacy at Great Finborough Primary School. It is a statement that will ensure systematic and consistent practice throughout the school and result in improved results and pupils leaving Great Finborough Primary School as confident, independent and literate learners. Our policy recognises the current thinking on the National Curriculum as well as harnessing aspects of other creative and innovative approaches in order to provide a broad and balanced scheme of work which provides for all children at their own level.

Our Aims

We aim to develop in the children we teach an enthusiasm for literacy in all its forms and the confidence to express themselves both orally and through the written word. We will do this by:

- Offering an exciting and accessible curriculum
- Developing the skills of each child to the highest level
- Producing confident children able to understand and use appropriately the varieties of language available to them
- Nurturing confident children who leave the school with a passion for reading and Literacy itself.

The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum clearly outlines what must be taught within each Key Stage. Great Finborough Primary School teaches children to understand a range of genres, building on children's understanding year after year and ensuring continuity and progression in the teaching of Literacy. Alongside daily Literacy lessons, we adopt a topic-based approach to Literacy. Genres are matched to topics to provide a relevant stimulus for text-level work and word and sentence level objectives are mapped alongside to ensure coverage is met. This means that the children are equipped with the skills and tools needed to write fluently for a range of meaningful purposes throughout the years. Literate pupils should be able to read, write and converse with confidence, fluency and understanding. At Great Finborough we do this by ensuring pupils engage in:

- Shared, guided and independent writing
- Shared, guided and independent reading
- Spelling, phonics and handwriting
- Speaking and listening

While we believe that all aspects of the teaching and learning of Literacy are closely interconnected, for purposes of clarity this policy has been divided into separate subject sections as in the National Curriculum – reading, writing, spelling and handwriting, speaking and listening. At Great Finborough we recognise the importance of looking at how children learn. Within a lesson there will be clear learning intentions, success criteria, opportunities to build on and connect to prior learning, time for reflection and

self and/or peer assessment, including opportunities for the children to make decisions on future learning.

Speaking and Listening

At Great Finborough, we believe that children should be given every opportunity to express themselves verbally. Children should be encouraged to talk in a variety of situations and to varied audiences. This is a taught skill and teachers need to put aside time to ensure that children acquire and practise the necessary verbal skills. Teachers should model appropriate syntax for children to use and always expect children to speak/answer in complete sentences. Speaking and listening is an integral part of not only Literacy lessons, but the whole of the school day. Some starting points to teach speaking and listening:

- Speaking Frames
- Talk Partners
- Drama and role play
- Story Time / Audio Stories
- Hot Seating
- Language Games and Puppets
- Collaborative Work
- Creative Space
- Circle Time

Reading

Reading is a skill essential for life and we want our children to leave school with a love of reading. Reading is a habit and that habit needs to be grounded in what we do at school. Children need to see adults loving books, so school staff are encouraged to share their love of reading with the children. This of course includes magazines, newspapers and online reading as well as traditional books.

Components of Reading

Shared Reading:

Teachers read with pupils a range of texts focusing on comprehension and specific features in relation to objectives. This is an opportunity for teachers to model the act of being a fluent reader. Teachers demonstrate to the class by 'thinking aloud' the skills required to be a reader. For shared reading, the text chosen should be at a level slightly higher than the majority of the class and the teacher should plan differentiated questions around the text that encourage the children to enjoy, understand, discuss and analyse the written word in a supported environment.

Guided Reading:

We have guided reading outside of Literacy lessons. Each child has a guided reading session supported by their teacher and maybe a follow-up activity, as well as stimulating and meaningful activities linked to reading in those sessions where they are not working directly with the class teacher.

In the Foundation Stage, children are given the opportunity to explore books in small groups. This may involve books without words where the children are encouraged to tell the story, learn how to handle books, discover the directionality of print, look at and learn high frequency words and talk about familiar stories.

In KS1 and KS2 children are grouped according to their ability. It is expected that they will read a text at instructional level; i.e. a text that they can read independently at 90% accuracy. The teacher will introduce the text and the learning intention for the session and discuss and/or model the strategies for reading which the children are working on. The children will then read the text

independently while the teacher moves around the group and listens to individuals read. The group will then come back together for a discussion that allows the teacher to check comprehension and to promote discussion that reinforces the learning intention for the session.

Supported Reading:

Children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are regularly heard read individually by both their class teacher, teaching assistants and any helpers working within the class. We aim that staff hear each child read a minimum of once per week and in total by adults in school as many times a week as possible. In Key Stage 2 the focus is often more on Guided Reading and comprehension tasks. However, children who need further support should still be heard individually on a regular basis by the class teacher, with a priority given to those who are still reading books from the reading schemes and not yet free readers.

Independent Reading:

Children engage in independent, sustained reading. It provides an opportunity for pupils to read and enjoy a range of texts and to apply reading strategies. In Foundation Stage and KS1, teachers keep a record of what the children are reading. In KS2 children are encouraged to keep their own record of the books they read; all children have a reading diary for this purpose. Parents are encouraged to record in these when they read with their child at home. Each Key Stage has a collection of reading books and materials for the teaching of reading. From the Foundation Stage to Year 6 the collection is levelled and kept in colour coded boxes. The levels correspond with the nationally recognised Book Band system.

Across the school, there are:

- Books grouped by colour-coded reading levels (where appropriate)
- Both a Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Library which stock a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books

Class teachers are responsible for organising regular sessions for their children to visit the library and select books to take home to share with their families. Children understand their classroom's classification system and classroom helpers are appointed to ensure the reading area stays in good condition. Every classroom should have individual book corners which include a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry books based on class topics and favourite authors. Books from a range of cultures and in a range of languages are interwoven through all collections – it may be appropriate to have some 'focus' boxes of books too.

There is also a central collection of group reading packs which are levelled according to the Book Band system. These are intended for use in Guided Reading sessions. Shared reading resources are a mixture of big books and posters found in the central resource area.

Teachers know the level/colour book that the children are currently reading and these are tracked carefully to ensure progress.

Books Going Home

In the EYFS, KS1 and KS2 children who are not yet free reader should take home:

- A book that they can 'read' with a family member and
- A second book that a family member can read to them.

In KS2 free reader children should take home:

- A library book (which can also be their reading book).
- An additional book of choice to act as a reading book (if not using a library book).

It is essential that children are provided with a wide range of decodeable books to practise reading. If children are still at a level where they are not able to read the simplest decodeable books, they may take home alphabet books or phonics flash cards to develop their understanding of initial letter sounds. Sometimes High Frequency words may be sent home too.

Teachers and Support Staff:

- monitor reading choices for home reading
- check that books are returned to school from home
- follow up any books that are lost

Reading is a habit and we can reinforce this by ensuring that all children:

- Have a Book Bag
- Bring the Book Bag to school every day with a book in it, even if it is a long chapter book and they are still reading it.
- Have a time for reading provided during the school day.
- Keep a record of books they read.

Writing

At Great Finborough we believe that good teaching reinforces the close relationship between reading and writing. It is difficult to separate the two, as both should be combined to form a well-balanced Literacy programme. The key purpose of writing is to communicate meaning and therefore all writing tasks should have an identified and clear purpose. It is expected that teachers will model all the stages of the writing process – planning, composing, revising, re-editing and redrafting and that children will then use these strategies increasingly independently as they become more experienced writers. All children should learn to write in a variety of styles – poetry, fiction and non-fiction –and for a variety of real audiences.

From Year 1 -6 teachers plan for a variety of writing skills to be covered over an academic year based on the Literacy Overview for each year group. The overview is based on year group expectations outlined presently by The Primary Curriculum and The Essentials by Chris Quigley. The overviews will be adapted throughout the course of the year to fit changes presented in The New Primary Curriculum 2014.

Time should also be made for writing to be shared aloud and celebrated in other ways too, such as class anthologies and display work. Opportunities to develop cross-curricular links should also be exploited wherever possible, as writing should not just be regarded as a 'literacy' lesson, but rather a skill that can be developed as, for example, a recount in history or instructions in science.

Components of Writing

Shared Writing:

This provides an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate writing, including the thought processes that are required. Teachers should make explicit references to genre features, as well as word and sentence level work within the context of writing. Pupils contribute to the class composition by sharing their ideas with partners, in small groups or using individual white boards. This is also the time when children are given the opportunity to discuss, verbalise and refine ideas before committing to print. With knowledge of text type from shared reading sessions, children should be able to generate a list of features that they would expect to use in any writing genre about which they have learned. This can be used by teachers and children alike as one way of assessing

children's writing and their understanding of the purpose and organisation.

Guided Writing:

Children are organised into ability groups and given the opportunity to write an independent text with the support and guidance of their teacher and group. The group work together to begin a piece of writing and then continue independently while the teacher moves around the group and supports with individual needs as they arise. It is important that guided writing sessions are used with the range of abilities represented across the classroom and planned carefully according to children's targets to promote progression in writing skills for all children.

Independent Writing:

Children should be given the opportunity for a range of independent writing activities which clearly link to whole class writing objectives. These tasks will need an identified audience, clear purpose and to cover all aspects of the writing process. Children should be given the opportunity to self-assess and peer-assess writing, based on success criteria linked to the learning objective and developed by the class as a whole, as part of the teaching sequence leading up to creating an extended piece of writing. This could be before and/or after teacher marking (based on the same success criteria). Ideally, time to review pupil and teacher comments should be built into future lessons to allow children to learn from them and input advice into future pieces of writing.

Big Write:

Based on the system of improving writing designed by literacy consultant Ros Wilson, Big Write involves focussing children on the four key elements of writing – Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation (VCOP). Children are encouraged to develop their 'writing voice' and to rehearse their ideas for writing verbally. They are taught explicitly that there are different levels of writing, and that to improve their writing they need to focus on particular techniques, first orally, then in writing. The Big Write concept begins in our school in EYFS, and is introduced as Big Talk, teaching children to expand and develop their 'writing voice' by encouraging the use of improved vocabulary, connectives, openers and intonation and expression in their speech.

Teaching Big Write involves one literacy lesson each week dedicated to VCOP, followed by one lesson of unaided writing, which the children have planned and discussed in 'Talk Homework' the previous evening. The Big Write session is kept 'special' by playing quiet music, dimming the lights and using battery operated candles on tables. Children write in silence for up to an hour, depending on their age, ability and the genre of writing for that week. They are reminded at intervals to read and check their work, to make good vocabulary choices and to include connectives. Some children have modified tasks to enable as much independent writing as possible.

Big Write is marked in detail, and the marking is shared with the children, when possible, highlighting their use of VCOP so they can see easily which aspects they used well, and which they could improve.

The VCOP session involves lots of discussion and quick-fire activities designed to encourage children to improve sentences, both verbally and in writing. Opportunities are taken during the week to encourage use of VCOP verbally, and to develop an awareness of writing voice across the curriculum.

Spelling and Phonics

In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1:

Teaching and learning of spelling in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is underpinned by the use of a high quality phonics programme, alongside the new National curriculum requirements for spelling in years 1 and 2.

Letters and Sounds will be used together with Jolly Phonics resources. A discrete period of 20 mins approximately will take place daily within EYFS and Key Stage 1.

Children will be taught:

- the grapheme- phoneme correspondence in a clearly defined sequence, using Letters and Sounds as a basis for this sequence.
- the skill of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell.
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes.

Children in EYFS and KS1 may be taught in smaller phase groups led by teachers and teaching assistants. These groups may include children from different year groups.

Throughout each phase the tricky high frequency words will be taught. These will be referred to as Tricky Words (these are words which cannot be spelled using phonic knowledge alone at the phase they are introduced).

Transition from Year 1 to Year 2

By the end of Year 1, the expectation is that most children will be secure at phase 5, though further work will be required to ensure they have the knowledge and understanding of alternative spellings for each phoneme. This is addressed in the spelling requirements for Year 2. For those children who are not yet secure at phase 5, it will be necessary to continue with daily phonics sessions.

In Key Stage 2:

Spelling is taught weekly using the new National Curriculum requirements for Spelling, which outlines statutory requirements for yrs 3 and 4 and yrs 5 and 6 as well as word lists which should be taught in these year groups. The long term plans for teaching spelling in Key Stage 2 will be taken from the Spelling appendix in the new National Curriculum for English (Appendix A)).

Where necessary, some pupils will consolidate the phonic knowledge and skills from Key Stage 1.

Children will develop different strategies for memorising high (Tricky Words) or subject specific vocabulary. The children may continue to use the system taught in Key Stage 1 of Look Say Cover Write Check.

The long term plans for teaching spelling in Key Stage 2 will be taken from the Spelling appendix in the new National Curriculum for English. (Appendix A))

Application of spelling in writing

Children should be able to spell an ever-increasing number of words accurately and to check and correct their work. This process is supported through:

- shared writing: the teacher demonstrates how to apply spelling strategies while writing and teaches proof-reading skills
- guided and independent writing: the children apply what they have been taught. This is the opportunity to think about the whole writing process: composition as well as spelling, handwriting and punctuation
- marking the children's work: the teacher can assess their progress and their ability to understand and apply what has been taught, then identify targets for further improvement

- teaching and practising handwriting: learning and practising a fluent joined style will support the children's spelling development

Grammar

In response to the recently introduced Year 6 SPaG assessment (and the proposed Year 2 grammar test 2016) the teaching of grammar has become more rigorous throughout the school. Teachers will use and display the correct grammar terminology both in Key Stage 1 and 2. For example, although the term 'wow' words may be used with the younger children to encourage use of ambitious vocabulary, the correct terminology of adjective or adverb is also used. Each year group has a list of words they must cover. Grammar teaching should be an integral part of Literacy lessons and cross curricular activities. It can also be used in stand-alone lessons, as a session starter as well as an independent activity.

Assessment

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment and Marking Policy. Key to this is the premise that children will improve most effectively if they understand the aim of their learning; where they are in relation to this aim, and how they can achieve the aim (or close the gap in their knowledge). Effective assessment techniques can increase both motivation and self esteem.

Short term assessments are made as part of every lesson and involve sharing learning goals with pupils.. Teachers keep formal daily assessment records (e.g. spelling test results, progress reports, checking against lesson objectives) and marking comments provide information and feedback. Daily plans are adjusted accordingly.

Medium term assessments measure progress against key objectives and individual or group targets are set accordingly. 6 pieces of independent writing will be collected from each child throughout the year, on a half- termly basis. This will form the main evidence required for Summative assessment although their class Literacy books will also be used for obtaining a child's level.

Long term assessments are made towards the end of the school year which, used in conjunction with the ongoing AFL, help assess progress against school and national targets. In the foundation stage, a foundation profile is built up during their first year.

Children are given writing targets with clear steps to success. These are self-assessed in discussion with their class teacher.

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in Literacy according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted and more able children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

Parental Involvement

We value parental involvement in their child's development of literacy and promote a whole school partnership in the following ways:

- reading record book
- homework tasks

- inviting parents to hear readers in school
- regular Parent's Evenings; sharing successes and targets
- updates about methodology and new developments – Phonics workshops etc
- involvement in national/local events e.g. World Book Day

The Role of the Subject Leader

- This subject is overseen by the subject co-ordinator, the curriculum leader, and the Head Teacher. The role of Literacy Subject Leader is as outlined by the general school policy and job description and includes:
- to prepare a policy evaluating and reviewing as necessary;
- to co-ordinate and lead the implementation of the policy throughout the school;
- to monitor and support the teaching of Literacy throughout the school;
- to monitor and maintain the condition and availability of resources within the school's budget;
- to keep up to date with developments and use appropriately;
- to keep samples of children's work and teachers' plans in order to monitor teaching, progress and continuity;
- to provide INSET activities when necessary;
- to liaise with colleagues in school and outside agencies as appropriate, in order to further develop the opportunities for pupil engagement.

Monitoring and Reviewing

- The Subject Leader is responsible for monitoring standards in Literacy; this is an on-going process. Literacy is further monitored in the following ways:
- The curriculum leader and Head Teacher report to the Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body in relation to this subject.
- Pupils work is seen termly during pupil progress meetings, where random pupils' work is sampled and scrutinised.
- Staff discusses the subject annually to develop a subject action plan and targets for the next year.
- Information from monitoring sessions and the action plan are stored in the Literacy curriculum file.

Policy Review

Policy to be reviewed as required.

Siobhan Howson
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