English Policy
Phonics, Reading and Writing

December 2019
HEARTS Academy Trust

English Policy

Rationale

This policy provides a set of principles on which we base our practice reflecting the requirements of the New National Curriculum 2014.

Aims
Through our curriculum we aim for pupils to be
- able to speak, read and write with confidence, fluency, understanding and enjoyment. We prioritise reading because we understand that it is the key to all learning.
- able to think clearly and articulate their thoughts in speaking and writing
- confident and reflective users of language, able to analyse and evaluate features of language.
- develop their knowledge and understanding and use of spoken and written English and Reading across a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills
- develop as people, applying the HEARTS values to their own lives.

Values

Happiness – reading is taught in a way which allows children to enjoy the pleasure of stories, poems, plays, non-fiction, instructions, talking books, e-books, labels, signs and much more. Children are given good quality literature to read and have a range of texts read to them by adults. Our book corners and library provide a variety of reading material for children to take home and engage in. Writing supports pupils thinking and helps build resilience in tackling the challenges of transferring thoughts and feelings to words.

Esteem – the structured teaching of basic skills encourages confidence in tackling texts from the early years in school. Peer and self-assessment of writing enables children to take pride in their work. Positive attitudes to, and a curiosity about, diverse characters, settings and vocabulary support pupils’ healthy and hopeful thinking. Effective displays and learning environments celebrate pupils’ successes and model high expectations of what all can achieve as well as an excitement about the written word.

Achievement- individual achievement is recognised with regular basic skills assessments, individual targets and the celebration of success. All adults have high expectations of what all children can achieve and the highest achievements are displayed as models to others.
Respect and Responsibility - pupils are taught the value of books from an early age and the well-kept book corners and displays of new materials encourage a love and respect of books. Pupils are taught to be responsible, look after their book bags, the reading trolleys and general areas of the school. Positive relationships, healthy attitudes and respect for all are key features of texts chosen. Texts reflect key aspects of HEARTS values.

Truth – pupils are encouraged, through guided reading and individual reading, to discuss and evaluate books and reading material and give honest and evidence-based assessments of what they have read. The discussions that we have around literature focus on key aspects of honesty and empathy and the attitudes that we value.

Spirituality and service – pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and contemplate quietly when listening to stories and poems. A range of creative resources are used as stimuli for writing and children are given time to reflect on them. Pupils are encouraged also to reflect constantly on what reading teaches them about themselves and the world that they inhabit, including our relationships with, and attitudes to, others.

Implementation

Subject Organisation
In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Communication and Language and Literacy are covered throughout all of the foundation curriculum in the course of a week through each of the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

In Key Stage 1 and 2 the English Curriculum is delivered using the National Curriculum 2014 guidelines. All KS1 and KS2 classes have five core English sessions per week. Each class also has additional lessons appropriate to the year group including Phonics, Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation and handwriting lessons.

We believe that all children should fulfil their potential in learning and we therefore reinforce a “can do” attitude and approach to learning. We expect that the large majority of pupils progress through the curriculum content at the same pace. Depth of understanding is prioritised, alongside high expectations of every child, including those with additional needs.

Teaching and Learning
Early Years Foundation Stage
Communication and Language and Literacy are covered throughout all of the foundation curriculum in the course of a week through each of the prime and specific areas of learning and development. Communication and language learning follows the prime area of learning and literacy learning follows the specific area of learning. Opportunities are provided for children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings. Children frequently share and enjoy a wide range of texts and their environment reflects the importance of language. Pupils are provided with opportunities to see adults writing and are given ample opportunities to
participate in guided sessions, as well as being encouraged to experiment with writing themselves.

**In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2** effective planning ensures:

- that there is progression and continuity related to previous learning
- that there are achievable learning outcomes for all of the pupils.
- a focus on developing basic skills in reading and writing
- that new vocabulary is taught explicitly and then reviewed and applied regularly in spoken language, reading and writing
- that the teaching provides support and scaffolding to enable all children to make progress
- that the teacher's and additional adults' time is employed effectively throughout the lesson;
- that lessons are delivered through a variety of teaching and learning styles to ensure active engagement in learning
- that the learning needs of individual children are met to enable them to make good progress. This includes providing different resources, opportunities additional practice to consolidate their learning

**Cross Curricular Opportunities**
Teachers will take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. This gives pupils opportunities to review and apply knowledge from Foundation lessons, to learn and apply subject specific vocabulary and to use familiar words in new contexts. Planning includes regular opportunities for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. English lessons will generally follow the theme of the Termly topic. Reading and writing skills are also taught within Foundation lessons, to ensure these skills are embedded throughout, and writing levels remain consistently high across all lessons in a day.

**The Use of ICT**
Opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning in English are included in planning. Visual resources such as video clips are used regularly as stimuli for writing and discussion. Additionally, iPads or laptops are regularly used in lessons, following E-safety guidelines. Children can research topics, create written documents using a variety of Apps, or research relevant subjects.

**Speaking and Listening**
Speaking and listening are at the heart of language not only as foundations for reading and writing but also as essential skills for thinking and communication. They are also critical to extend pupils' receptive and expressive vocabulary

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- Use speech appropriate for different purposes, particularly focusing on the use of Standard English.
• Understand the effect of speech on the listener.
• Use talk to develop and express ideas and use discussion in order to learn
• Communicate meaning effectively.
• Follow verbal instructions accurately.
• Understand the importance of good listening and how to respond during discussions.
• Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for spoken language
• Develop inference skills through listening activities
• Model and articulate ideas before writing

Speaking and Listening Implementation
We provide quality and varied experiences of language so that pupils develop their vocabulary and grammar and understanding for reading and writing. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

Reading
We are determined that every pupil in our schools will learn to read. We prioritise reading because we understand that it is the key to all learning.

We aim for pupils to be able to:
• Become fluent, confident, enthusiastic, critical and independent readers.
• Have an interest in words and their meanings and develop their vocabulary through reading.
• At early stages of reading, use phonics as their primary method of reading unfamiliar words
• Use a range of strategies which will help them to read with meaning, fluency, accuracy and expression.
• Use appropriate reading strategies to retrieve, interpret and infer information.
• Reflect on their reading and offer a personal response to a wide range of texts.
• Appreciate the tools of the writer and the techniques used to involve the reader in the text. Build these strategies into their own writing.
• Appreciate the work of individual authors, illustrators and publishers.
• Read regularly with adults both at home and at school.
• Access a wide range of quality reading materials in a variety of genres, which reflect different cultures including classroom materials, and materials in school and public libraries
• Use ICT based reference materials for information
• Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information

Reading Implementation
• Early reading is taught through a rigorous and sequential approach to systematic synthetic phonics.
• At early stages of Reading, we focus on ensuring that children gain the phonics knowledge and development of vocabulary needed as the foundation for future learning.
• At early stages of reading, we teach children to use phonics as their primary method of reading unfamiliar words. We then teach pupils to use a range of further strategies
which will help them to read with meaning, understanding, fluency, accuracy and expression.

- In English lessons, we choose high quality core texts which allow children to explore our HEARTS values, widen their experience and expand their vocabulary. They become very familiar with these texts exploring them in depth through drama, discussion and character analysis.

**Reading Lessons**

Specific Reading lessons are used to teach fluency and comprehension skills. In EYFS and Year 1, whole class reading is included in English lessons, Topic lessons and in class story sessions. Reading skills are taught explicitly in Phonics sessions (see below) and in individual reading sessions. In Year 2, Reading lessons further develop decoding and fluency skills along with more formal skills in comprehension. These lessons introduce children to a similar format to the format used in KS2, ensuring a smooth progression between Key Stages.

In KS2, an additional four reading lessons are taught every week, with a focus on widening vocabulary, reading to fluency and developing age appropriate comprehension skills. During word discovery lessons, the teacher will use pictures, drama and known synonyms to decipher the language in the text together. In fluency lessons, the pupils practise reading with expression, engaging the reader and applying their phonics knowledge to decode unknown words. In these sessions, the children access high quality texts which, whenever possible, link closely to texts or topics that they have previously studied or are currently studying, either in English or foundations lessons. This makes it easier for them to activate prior knowledge.

- During the final two reading comprehension sessions, the children are taught how to answer questions based on the text they have been looking at. The reading skills required for this have been broken down into four sub-groups: retrieval, inference, language knowledge and structure. Children are encouraged to build upon prior knowledge to make links.
- Reading skills are also incorporated into English lessons at every opportunity and modelled texts are specifically designed to widen the children’s vocabulary. Children also use their reading skills when analysing a text or a film.

**Individual Reading**

- Reading to adults encourages the children to develop their reading ability. Children read to an adult every day either at home or at school and comments are recorded in a Reading Record. They read to an adult as one of their homework tasks.
- Early Readers read books which are phonically decodable using the graphemes they have been taught, following the progression taught in phonics sessions. This allows children to apply their knowledge of Phonics to reading a book. The main scheme used for this is **Oxford Reading Tree, Floppy’s Phonics**. We use additional books from the Pearson Bug Club scheme that are matched to the GPCs children have been taught.
- Children also have the opportunity to borrow books from the school library. This is a free choice which encourages reading for pleasure and pupils to carry out additional research to support their classwork or homework.
Adults reading to children
Adults read to their class daily from high quality texts chosen to represent a range of genres including stories, rhymes and non-fiction and a range of significant authors and to develop pupils’ vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading

Phonics
Early reading is taught through a rigorous and sequential approach to systematic synthetic phonics. Children are taught to use their knowledge of phonics as their method to read unfamiliar words.

Our Phonics structure in EYFS and KS1 is based on the Early Reading Research (ERR) system and is continuously being developed as we evaluate its impact each year. We have clear expectations for pupils’ phonics progress term by term from Reception to Year 2. We carry out ongoing assessments to identify any pupil who is falling behind these expectations and provide targeted support immediately to address their needs.

The teaching of Phonics happens every day from the second week of Reception and through Year 1. Children are taught to read through 3 daily group sessions of 15 minutes in addition to reading during English lessons and individual reading practice with an adult. The sessions are fast-paced and engaging and use a strategy known as “my turn” (where teachers model how to read), “together” (where teachers and children read together) and “your turn” (where children read on their own).

Pupils are taught to recognise letters and letter combinations that represent sounds in words (grapheme- phoneme- correspondences or GPCs). They practise quick recognition of these GPCs and learn to articulate them clearly and correctly.

The next sections of Phonics lessons teach children to blend these sounds to read words, following clear modelling by the teacher and then to segment words into sounds to help with spelling and writing. Within each session, children then practise and apply these skills in reading texts using the GPCs that are being taught, in playing games using the GPCs, or in writing simple sentences focusing on those GPCs.

Children also learn to read high frequency words through regular practice in these sessions.

All children continue to develop their Phonics knowledge through regular Phonics sessions in Autumn Term Year 2. Children who are not secure in applying their phonic knowledge at the end of Year 1 will continue to have additional Phonics sessions throughout Year 2.

Any child who is not secure in their phonic knowledge by the time they reach KS2 continues to have regular phonics sessions and reads books that are phonically decodable. These children also read daily to an adult in school.
Writing
It is important for pupils to develop as independent, confident, enthusiastic and expressive writers. They should be able to use a range of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences and be confident in their choice of language style for a specific purpose. Pupils should also regard themselves as writers and value their own work and that of others.

We aim for pupils to be able to:
- Use writing as a means to communicate ideas and information to the reader.
- Use spelling, punctuation and syntax accurately and with confidence.
- Write in a grammatically accurate way.
- Have an interest in words and their meanings and be able to use a growing vocabulary effectively.
- Have a good understanding of the features needed when writing for a specific purpose.
- Understand the conventions of written language.
- Have fluent and legible handwriting.
- Be familiar with a range of structures in fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Use this knowledge to write effectively in a range of different styles.
- Understand how writers can have an effect on the reader and incorporate ideas and skills of other authors into their own writing.
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing making significant revisions where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with other children to discuss the editing of written work.
- Use ICT as a tool for writing.

Writing Implementation
In EYFS writing is taught in 4 main ways: guided, systematic, exploratory and independent. Lessons are planned for whole group teaching and to guide the children through the literacy process. The basic skill of writing is also taught in small groups weekly through the breakthrough systematic approach focusing on basic skills and muscle memory. Children are then given lots of opportunities to apply these taught skills in exploratory focused tasks and also in independent play.

KS1 and KS2
In English lessons, we choose high quality core texts which allow children to explore our HEARTS values, widen their experience and expand their vocabulary. These are used as a stimulus and model for pupils’ own writing.
We use the Pie Corbett Talk for Writing model, which uses a clearly modelled text, structured planning of writing and shared and modelled writing to guide the children.
The sequence of each writing unit in KS1 and KS2 follows a similar pattern:-
- Immersion in text: reading and exploring a quality text including role play, drama, discussion on the text. Children have opportunities to clarify and develop vocabulary, focus on relevant aspects of grammar and explore setting, character and plot.
- Planning: exploring a model text and creating a plan. In KS1 and Lower KS2 children will rehearse what they will write verbally using talk for writing
In Upper KS2 children are given the opportunities to develop a particular focus through practising specific sections of their writing.

- **Writing**: adult modelling writing, shared writing, supported and independent writing, adults giving feedback during the writing process (live marking) and supporting children to address errors and improve work as they write.
- **Feedback**: during writing week, children receive whole class feedback which helps to address misconceptions, celebrate success and target specific areas to work on in their writing.
- **Reviewing**: adult modelling review of writing, collaborative and independent review of what they have written and time to correct and improve their work.

All pupils are given many opportunities to experience different styles of writing and are encouraged to write for a variety of readerships. We place emphasis upon the process of writing as well as the finished product, so pupils are encouraged and helped to redraft work where necessary. Time is also spent in discussing with pupils the best ways in which to present work according to its purpose.

From Year 2 onwards, pupils have grammar and punctuation lessons, which are knowledge based. Aspects of this knowledge are then consolidated within English lesson so that children can apply what they have learned to a particular writing task or text type.

**Cross-curricular writing**
Writing is regarded as a cross-curricular skill, and contexts and purposes for writing are often embedded in other areas of the curriculum.

In EYFS, KS1 & KS2, writing is marked in accordance with the school's marking policy. It is expected that English books are marked on a daily basis, with most of the feedback taking place during a lesson.

**Handwriting**
The *Nelson Handwriting Scheme* is taught in EYFS, KS1 and KS2. Correct letter formation following the scheme is modelled by teachers in marking and during teaching. Handwriting is also taught as independent lessons in all Key Stages, to ensure presentational standards are high and remain there. During these sessions, children practise specific joins and words that include that join. This is evidenced in their English books, to remind the children to always write in this way. Some children require intervention for handwriting, which is evidenced in a handwriting book.

**Spelling**
Pupils should develop as independent and accurate spellers who are confident to use an evolving and adventurous vocabulary in their own writing.

We aim for pupils to be able to:
- Attempt to spell words for themselves using a range of strategies.
• Write an increasingly wide range of words from memory. There are focus spelling lists for each year group linked to the New National Curriculum 2014.
• Use a variety of resources to help with spelling e.g. dictionaries, word banks, classroom environment, computer spell-checks
• Develop an understanding of spelling patterns and rules.
• Use a range of strategies to learn spellings, especially those mis-spelt in their own work.

Spelling Implementation

Spelling is taught and practiced in writing lessons and in Foundation subject lessons. In KS1 there are specific lessons focusing on spelling patterns and spelling of High Frequency words and children are given regular opportunities to practise these spellings. In KS2, children have Word Study lessons where pupils explore the meaning and origins of words as well as spelling rules. From Year 2 upwards there are 3 spelling lessons a week, working on spelling rules, misconceptions, ways to remember words and common patterns. Children are also taught words that do not necessarily follow a specific pattern but appear on the National Curriculum year group word lists. Children are tested in a variety of ways, including dictation, at the end of the week and at the end of each half term to ensure this knowledge has been retained.

In Foundation lessons, subject specific vocabulary is displayed and pupils are expected to use correct spellings of these words.

Homework

The school’s Homework Policy lays down clear guidelines with regard to English homework. The specific requirements for each year group are explained to parents at the beginning of each academic year.

Assessment

All Teachers make individual informal assessments when and where appropriate, to ensure that progress is regularly recorded and monitored. These assessments are used to inform future planning and to set targets.‘

Foundation Stage pupils are assessed through observations, activities and work scrutiny which is then recorded onto their Foundation stage profile either by written comments or given as photographic evidence.

In Reception and KS1, pupils’ progress in recognising and blending with an increasing range of Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences is assessed half termly.

In KS1, assessments of basic skills in Reading and writing are carried out half-termly and are used to inform planning. Commercially produced standardised tests are also used to assess progress in Reading. These include verbal reading tests throughout KS1 and written comprehension tests in Year 2.

In KS2
• Pupils are formally assessed at the end of each term in Reading and in Grammar Punctuation and Spelling, using commercially produced standardised tests. These tests are used to identify gaps and track progress.
• Teachers assess pupils progress in writing throughout the term against termly objectives that work towards the National Curriculum end of year expectations.
• Moderation of assessments is carried out by teachers and SLT to ensure that judgements are accurate and are used to support progress
• Year 6 pupils complete written assessments half termly.

Pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND)
Teachers follow the HEARTS Academy Trust SEND and Inclusion Policy to ensure that all children make progress in English.

Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities in English are addressed as follows:
• Pupils with special needs have equal access to the English curriculum through the use of differentiated learning strategies and tasks. These are based on individual needs.
• Specific teaching strategies are used to maximize access to the curriculum for pupils with specific needs
• Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is promoted through the use of resources on multi-cultural themes.
• An awareness of other dialects and standard English encouraged through using a range of texts.
• Gender equality is promoted by ensuring that both boys and girls have access to all aspects of the English curriculum.
• Opportunities to consider diversity in culture, gender and race are provided through discussion, texts and resources.

Partnership with Parents
We believe in the importance of working together with parents in all aspects of school life. Teachers hold workshops for parents to inform them of key elements of the English Curriculum in that key stage and give suggestions of ways that they can support their children’s confidence and progress in English. These workshops explain the important role parents play in helping their children to learn to read by listening to their child read their reading book every day and by reading and sharing books with their children regularly. We use an online platform (Dojo) to share spelling and reading resources with parents and children to keep them updated on the learning in the classroom.
Parents are updated on their child’s progress in English as well as the other curricular areas in the form of written reports each term. The written report in July contains details of a child’s effort and attainment in English over the year. Parent-teacher consultations take place twice in the academic year.

Last Review: December 2019
Next Review: December 2022