

English Policy 2017

Purpose of study

A high-quality education in English will teach children 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. Through reading in particular, children have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Reading also enables children both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society. At Vallis First School we use the English Programme of Study as a basis for our planning within the subject and expect all teachers to follow this framework. English is taught on a daily basis from Reception to Y4 and is supported and enhanced through other curriculum areas. We follow a creative curriculum and wherever possible English activities are linked to current topic work.

Aims

The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all children:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

Spoken language

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that children hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Children will develop the skills to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They will be helped in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others.

All children will take part and develop their skills in discussion, drama and debate. They will respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Reading

The Programmes of Study for reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading
- comprehension (both listening and reading)

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading and is taught daily in Reception and Key stage 1 (our key documents for sequencing and planning phonics are Phonics Play and Letters and Sounds).

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. All children are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world they live in, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases children's vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds children's imagination and opens up a treasure house of wonder and joy for curious young minds. In Year 2 the children will begin reading longer books by significant authors for themselves and develop their comprehension skills from this. In Key Stage 2, children explore English through a high quality class reader that will form the basis for reading comprehension and written outcomes.

Writing

The Programmes of Study for writing at Key Stages 1 and 2 have two aspects and are explored through the use of an inspiring, high quality text that links with the creative curriculum:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

It is essential that teaching develops children's competence in these two dimensions. Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. At Vallis we use the appendices from the Programmes of Study for English and 'No Nonsense Spelling' to ensure standards for spelling are met in Key Stage 1 and 2.

Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting, taught using the Nelson Handwriting Programme across the school. Children are taught to work as real authors through planning, editing and evaluating their writing and where possible publishing their work to share with an intended audience.

Monitoring, Assessment and Equal Opportunities

See Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy, Monitoring Policy and Equality Policy.