

CALTHWAITE C of E SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

Introduction

We believe that the study of English has a pre-eminent position in our school, because all the language skills learnt through English are essential to participate fully as a member of society. We feel that nurturing positive reading habits in particular, are vital in developing children culturally, emotionally and intellectually.

Aims

We aim to ensure that all pupils:

- can read easily, fluently and with good understanding;
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, both for pleasure and information;
- acquire a rich vocabulary;
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their style to suit a variety of purposes;
- can use collaborative discussion in order to learn.

Spoken Language

From the start of their time at Calthwaite School, spoken language is encouraged, in order to help children develop cognitively, socially and linguistically. They are made to feel that their 'voice' is important and valued, and are given the verbal and auditory skills to cope with this. This is achieved through:

- emphasis on BLP approaches to learning, incorporating opportunities for developing collaboration, interdependence and empathy through listening wherever the curriculum allows;
- frequent opportunities to present and discuss their independent successes, experiences and concerns through group, class or whole school contexts as appropriate;
- modelling, encouraging and supporting restorative language as a core strategy when dealing with social and behavioural issues;
- verbal self and peer assessment which is managed to be constructive and supportive;
- development of social skills, showing courtesy to peers, staff and visitors through praise systems.

Spoken language is also deemed as vital as a precursor to effective writing, and as crucial in helping to develop pupils' skills in reading comprehension and text reflection. Therefore, the following measures are taken to maximise this:

- 'Talk for writing' techniques are used, using books, multimedia resources, visitors, innovative objects & artefacts, drama, debate and trips as stimulants for rich discussion and vocabulary building, prior to extended writing tasks.
- Discussion through 'Guided Reading' is used as a principal way in which to stretch reading competence, through leading questioning and extending pupil responses through talk.

Reading

Reading is one of the primary foci of Calthwaite C of E School, as detailed in the School Improvement Plan. We feel it is the bedrock of learning. A confident, positive attitude and approach to reading is vital for our pupils' success, now and for the future. This applies not just to reading competence itself, but also in its power to unlock knowledge and enthusiasm about the world, and in its ability to demystify social, emotional, moral and cultural issues in a safe, secure way.

Decoding

- Initial decoding skills are taught in a daily thirty minute phonic session through a variety of approaches, principally: learning letters or letter clusters that represent sounds or phonemes, through exposure to daily phoneme flashcards and phoneme mats; recognising and reading phonemes in words and within sentences; writing phonemes.
- Children are taught about phonological awareness; that words can be separated in three ways and at three levels, by syllables, by onset and rime and by phonemes. Following half termly assessments, children are grouped within the Letters and Sounds phase accordingly.
- As children become more confident as readers, they are encouraged to continue to use strategies like segmenting, blending and context clues to tackle decoding challenges. All staff encourage and support self-correction when working with pupils, in order to ensure accuracy and to develop decoding skill.
- Children read 1 on 1 to develop decoding skill. Frequency is dictated by the current decoding competence of the pupil. Eg: pupils in R-year 1 read with an adult most frequently. By upper ks2, pupils read independently, unless decoding competence is a key area for improvement, in which case they are targeted by the class teacher/TA to read with more frequently. 'Reading' punctuation, and reading with expression, (to ensure reading for meaning) is key in all 1 on 1 reading. Reading with an adult is a weekly home learning task for pupils in all years to complete, irrespective of ability.
- At R and year 1, guided reading sessions focus heavily on accurate decoding.
- Half an hour each day, the whole school is grouped by phonics/spelling ability, to help and to ensure pupils are grouped appropriately according to their ability, irrespective of age, to help feed into building a robust phonic knowledge.
- Children read texts which have been categorised using 'book bands'. The book band reflects their level of decoding ability. Book banding exists right up to confident year 6 level, in order to help signpost appropriate reading material for all. (In the later levels, this is driven by content as well as text difficulty). Once decoding is secure, the higher book bands are used with some flexibility, to reflect the pupils' reading enthusiasms and interests, though this is closely monitored to ensure their text choices will still help to develop their reading ability.
- Children read independently frequently. Once a day is normally a minimum. As often as possible, teachers model reading habits by visibly reading and enjoying a book too.

Comprehension

- All pupils have 1 guided reading session a week, and are grouped by ability (rather than necessarily age).
- Guided reading sessions are normally driven by discussion, to stretch understanding and comprehension.
- Guided reading texts include fiction, non fiction and poetry, as appropriate for the age and ability of the group in question.
- Each class has a class reader (often topic related) to give opportunities for whole class discussion and reflection, and can be a stimulant for written work.
- A weekly 'Reading Buddying' system is in place, whereby older pupils are twinned with a younger pupil as a 'reading buddy'. Older pupils have been given rudimentary training in how to use questioning to develop understanding, with the intention of developing their own self reflection of texts, as well as that of their 'buddy'. The very weakest readers have an 'adult reading buddy' during this time.

Assessment

- Children are assessed formatively weekly, through the guided reading process, against key criteria for the level at which they are working. This assessment covers the 2 key areas of decoding and comprehension. Teachers report home the key findings of this weekly formative assessment (along with any pertinent targets) through the child's reading record, or through school email.
- Children are assessed summatively at the end of every term, using the PM Benchmark Assessment programme. This assessment focuses on decoding competence, as well as plot recall, literal comprehension, inference, and application of knowledge to a real world context. Key findings and key targets for reading improvement are shared with parents through the reading record.
- Children are assessed on their phonemic awareness/phonic ability every term and grouped accordingly within the Letters and Sounds Phases. Children making slower progress in phonics are given 1:1 intervention.
- Year 1 children take the statutory Phonics Screening Check in June, administered by the class teacher. Those children achieving below 80%, re-take the Screening Check the following year in Year 2.
- Pupils in year 6 are assessed as frequently as is deemed appropriate for the individual pupil by past SATs papers in spring and early summer, primarily as a formative AFL tool, but also to gauge performance and to allow any intervention required in test acclimatisation and understanding to be put in place.

Reading Culture

- In order to foster a strong, positive reading culture, the library has been designed as a fun, pleasurable place to spend time (rather than merely a book depository). Staff aim to take all children to the library regularly to achieve this, and aim to keep the profile of the library high, in order to ensure a love of reading.
- Frequently used and updated reading initiatives (Eg: termly RIF days (*Reading is Fun*), reading challenges, visiting authors, reader leaders, etc) are designed to help to nurture the positive reading ethos.
- If children show an interest in particular texts in the library, they are purchased (at the discretion of budget limitations and appropriateness) in order to maintain pupils' reading 'momentum' and enjoyment.
- Teachers adhere to the 'Calthwaite Canon' (a list of key children's fiction texts from our literary heritage, agreed upon by all staff), and ensure all pupils have exposure to some or

all of those texts (as appropriate, depending on the size of the text) by the end of their key stage, whether that be as a class reader, as a 1 on 1 shared text, a text recommended for independent reading, or even as a text shared as a school during assembly time.

Support/ Intervention

- Increased 1 on 1 reading for less confident readers.
- Daily 30 minute small group reading support for struggling Phase 5 phonics pupils, through group tailored reading resources.
- 'Reading Intervention' programme- Hatcher.
- Precision Teaching- High Frequency Words

Writing

Accurate and effective writing is key in ensuring all pupils are 'secondary ready'. Therefore, it is our overriding aim with writing that pupils leaving Calthwaite C of E in year 6 are able to write as fluently, effectively and precisely as possible.

Transcription

- As phonic understanding makes up 80% of spelling competence, phonic understanding and consolidation underpins teaching of English at R-Year 1.
- High frequency words are given to pupils in class 1, as appropriate to their ability, for home learning or in class, as required.
- Pupils are streamed by their spelling/phonics ability across the school, and every day, each group has an ability focused half hour session delivered by a teacher or TA. Those in the post-phonics phase complete a fortnightly spelling test which assesses their knowledge of studied rules and NC bank words.
- Staff endeavour not to 'give' pupils spellings, but rather to encourage pupils to work out spelling for themselves using strategies they know to help them. Any spellings which require staff 'giving' spellings will normally result in the word being practised through a Look, Cover, Write, Check process.
- Handwriting is addressed through teaching cursive script from reception. This is then reinforced through consolidation through twice weekly handwriting sessions in class 2. Class 3 handwriting issues are dealt with by exception for those pupils requiring individual support.
- KS2 pupils can earn a 'pen passport' once their handwriting reaches an acceptable standard.

Composition

- 'Talk for writing' techniques are used, using books, multimedia resources, visitors, innovative objects & artefacts, drama, debate and trips as a stimulants for rich discussion and vocabulary building, prior to extended writing tasks.
- Sophisticated vocabulary is regarded with prestige in the classroom, and celebrated. Aspirational vocabulary is displayed in all classrooms, and referenced and discussed frequently through varying teacher methods.
- Thesaurus use is introduced in year 2 and developed as a common tool for text to widen vocabulary and improve writing.

- Grammar terminology is taught weekly (approx.) and embedded in lessons on writing skills as often as possible, in order to make it relevant to pupils and their writing improvement, rather than as a disparate selection of terms that they need to learn.
- Punctuation is taught through weekly revisiting of pupils' key individual punctuation targets, and by heavy use of AFL to drive progress. Different classes use different methods, which are tailored to suit the age and stage of the children within that class.
- Crafting of sentence structures for stylistic effect is introduced at upper key stage 2 when the pupil is secure in accurate punctuation use, through individualised targets, exemplars and micro-tutorials.
- Pupils across both key stages have the opportunity to write in a variety of text genres and for a range of purposes, as dictated by the NC. These are often linked to topic work, to add resonance and relevance for the pupil. Staff are pupil led as much as possible, and devise tasks to suit, and relate to pupil interest.
- As often as is possible, we use the opportunity to write in 'real life' contexts. Eg: Writing stories for a story writing competition, or writing letters as an exercise to show appreciation to a class visitor.

Assessment

- All pupils are assessed formatively through marking of writing tasks, and targets for improvement are established through written feedback. Pupils across all years complete 'green pen' AFL tasks to target key areas for improvement on individual pieces of work. The writing pieces normally pertain to key topic work, or relate specifically to the pupils and their recent realm of experience.
- Pupils are prepared for the SPaG SAT by completion of test papers, but largely as an AFL opportunity to target and address gaps in knowledge, rather than as a summative assessment tool.
- Termly, staff update the online 'Scholarpack' tool, to track pupil progress in writing, in order to highlight key areas for development, and to inform reporting to parents.

Intervention/Support

- Literacy 1 on 1 extra support for half an hour a week for key underachieving pupils, targeting their individual literacy needs.
- Precision Teaching- letter reversals, handwriting etc.
- Teodorescu fine motor control handwriting programme.

ICT in English

- The internet is used regularly for research opportunities. Emphasis is given to using the internet safely and effectively.
- Laptops are available and regularly used for word processing and powerpoint presentations.
- I pads are used increasingly to complement English work, through using apps (moviemaker for eg) for pupils to develop their own narratives.*

Display

- Teachers endeavour to use some of the classroom space to display qualitative learning aids.
- Classrooms and other spaces around school are used to celebrate children's written work.

CALTHWAITE CANON

TEXTS FROM OUR LITERACY HERITAGE, WHICH ALL PUPILS AT CALTHWAITE SCHOOL WILL BE GIVEN EXPOSURE TO DURING THEIR TIME AT OUR SCHOOL.

BY THE END OF CLASS 1		
NURSERY RHYMES	MR GRUMPY'S OUTING	LITTLE RED HEN
WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT	HANDA'S SURPRISE	ENORMOUS TURNIP
THE GRUFFALO	MEG AND MOG	RAPUNZEL
THE HUNGRY CATERPILLAR	THE TIGER THAT CAME TO TEA	ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER
ELMER	3 LITTLE PIGS	ROOM ON A BROOM
HAIRY MCLAIRY	GOLDBLOCKS	JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
THE DUCK IN THE TRUCK	BILLY GOATS' GRUFF	
BY THE END OF CLASS 2		
FANTASTIC MR FOX		INTO THE FOREST
MOUSE HOLE CAT		WAY BACK HOME
AMAZING GRACE		GORILLA
MAN ON THE MOON		HOW TO CATCH A STAR
THE TINDER BOX		ICE PALACE
THE MAGIC FARAWAY TREE		THE FIREMAKER'S DAUGHTER
A GREEK MYTH		HODGEHEG
BY THE END OF CLASS 3		
THE BIBLE STORIES		SKELLIG
AESOP'S FABLES		MILLIONS
BFG		STIG OF THE DUMP
HOLES		HARRY POTTER
KENZUKE'S KINGDOM		ARTEMIS FOWL
THE WATER TOWER		THE HIGHWAYMAN
THE LOST THING		THE WEDDING GHOST

