

WHYTEMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL



ENGLISH POLICY

Reviewed: July 2017

Date of Next Review: July 2019

Rationale

At Whytemead Primary School, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills. Through the English curriculum, we will help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively and equip them with a strong command of the spoken and written word. We aim to create an environment where children read for enjoyment and appreciate a rich variety of texts. To encourage independence and motivation to write, children will experience creative, exciting and purposeful contexts.

Aims and Objectives

As a school we aim:

- To provide a rich language environment, where oracy, reading and writing are integrated.
- To foster an enthusiasm for and love of reading for enjoyment and information and to encourage children to broaden their vocabulary by reading widely.
- To provide children with meaningful and engaging contexts for reading and writing.
- To encourage children to discuss and respond to writing and to behave as writers do, through drafting, editing and publishing their work.
- To equip children with a strong understanding of grammar and knowledge of literary features and conventions.
- To encourage children to apply their Literacy skills across the curriculum.
- To equip children with the necessary skills to become competent and creative users of the English Language in order to enable them to become successful in their later lives.
- To share great writing and introduce children to literary role models in order to increase aspirations.

Reading

At Whytemead, we use a synthetic phonics programme called 'Read, Write Inc.', produced by Ruth Miskin. The Read, Write Inc (RWI) method involves children learning the 44 common speech sounds and how to sound-blend words for reading. Children decode words (say the sounds and then blend)

to read, and encode words (segment the words into sounds and write the letters for each sound) to spell.

Using Read, Write Inc, the children learn to read effortlessly so that they can focus on comprehension and enjoying the texts they read.

In EYFS and KS1, all children follow a daily phonics programme so that they become confident and fluent readers who develop a love of reading. The more sounds the children know, the greater the range of texts they can read.

In KS2, children develop their understanding of phonics further by following the Babcock No Nonsense Spelling Programme. At this stage the focus is on spelling words with complex spelling patterns. English has the most complex alphabetic code with over 150 graphemes (letter groups) to learn in order to read and spell the 44 speech sounds. So each sound is written in more than one way! For example, the speech sound 'ay' is spelt ay, ai, a-e, aigh, eigh, eig and ei! Children learn homophones for each speech sound in this programme, as well as developing their vocabulary.

When using RWI to *read*, the children will:



Learn 44 speech sounds and the corresponding graphemes (letter groups eg. ay) using picture prompts.



Learn to read words using sound-blending, known as 'Fred-talk' eg. d-o-g.



Read stories featuring words they have learnt to sound out.



Apply their knowledge of sounds to reading nonsense words known as 'alien words'. For example, if a child has learnt the sound 'igh', they will be able to read real words like n-igh-t and alien words like p-r-igh-t using the same skills.

When using RWI to *write*, the children will:



Learn to write the letters and graphemes (letter groups) that represent the 44 sounds.



Learn to write words by saying the sounds and graphemes using 'Fred fingers'.



Show the sounds and graphemes in a word using 'dots and dashes' for the sounds that have been traced onto 'Fred fingers'. For example:

n-igh-t



Write simple and then more complex sentences including these words.

Here are some useful phonics websites:

- www.phonicsplay.co.uk
- www.teachyourmonstertoread.com (free to sign up)

Writing

The writing curriculum has three areas: spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG), composition, and transcription. At Whytemead, children have the opportunity to be the best writers that they can be with plenty of opportunities to draft, edit and 'publish' their writing. This process allows them to make choices about their writing and respond to peer and teacher feedback using the 'Purple Pen of Progress.' We encourage children to look at and respond to good examples of writing so that they learn to 'read as writers' and then 'write as writers do.' This approach follows the principles of 'Talk for Writing.'

Talk for Writing

Talk for Writing is based on the principles of how children learn. Children imitate texts in order to learn the key language that they need. Through exciting activities and creative contexts, children internalise text structures and language patterns before they write. Talk for Writing, developed by Pie Corbett, has three stages: Imitation, Innovation and Invention. The aim of this process is for the children to analyse what good writers do well and 'magpie' (steal) words, phrases and features to become brilliant writers themselves.

Big Writes

A unit of writing will typically begin with a creative context to motivate and inspire the children. For example, in Year 2 children were introduced to the text 'Jack and the Baked Beanstalk' as part of their unit on stories in fantasy settings. The children arrived at school to find gigantic footprints and a classroom scattered with beanstalk leaves. These led a trail to the book, a tin of baked beans and a letter from The Giant.

Children will then follow the process of imitation and innovation, before undertaking an independent 'Big Write' in the chosen genre.

Each half term, children will produce an independent piece of writing which will be added to their writing portfolio. This portfolio follows the child throughout the school.

Handwriting

In EYFS, children are taught to form lower and uppercase letters correctly using the Ruth Miskin Read, Write Inc letter patterns. From Year 1 onwards, we use the Debbie Hepplewhite handwriting scheme for joining letters. Children learn to join letters from the Summer term of Year 1. More information and free resources can be found at: <http://www.debbiehepplewhitehandwriting.com/>

Spelling

All pupils are introduced to phonics and spelling through the Ruth Miskin Read, Write Inc scheme and work through a progressive set of words. Children in KS1 and 2 receive weekly spelling homework with differentiated spellings to learn. These words draw upon the words and spelling patterns listed in the English Curriculum.