



Loving one another, building each other up

English Curriculum – Spoken Language

The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Essential characteristics of excellent communicators (taken from Chris Quigley's Essential Curriculum)

- An exceptional talent for listening attentively so as to understand what is being said.
- A rich and varied vocabulary that gives clarity and interest to conversations.
- Clear speech that can be easily understood by a range of audiences.
- An excellent grasp of the rules used in English conversation, such as tenses and the grammatical structure of sentences.
- A highly developed ability to tell stories that capture the interest and imagination of the audience.
- A delight in initiating and joining conversations.
- Respect for others when communicating, even when views differ.

Essentials for progress

	Milestone 1 Year 1 & 2	Milestone 2 Year 3 & 4	Milestone 3 Year 5 & 6
To listen carefully and understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sift information and focus on the important points. • Seek clarification when a message is not clear. • Understand instructions with more than one point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in discussions, making relevant points. • Ask for specific information to clarify. • Understand the meaning of some phrases beyond the literal interpretation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how to answer questions that require more than a yes/no or single sentence response. • Recognise and explain some idioms. • Understand irony (when it is obvious).
To develop a wide and interesting vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use subject specific vocabulary to explain and describe. • Suggest words or phrases appropriate to the topic being discussed. • Identify homophones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use time, size and other measurements to quantify. • Use interesting adjectives, adverbial phrases and extended noun phrases in discussion. • Use vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic being discussed or the audience that is listening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use adventurous and sophisticated vocabulary. • Explain the meaning of words, offering alternatives. • Use a wide range of phrases that include determiners, modifiers and other techniques to add extra interest and clarity.
To speak with clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak in a way that is clear and easy to understand. • Demonstrate good phonic knowledge by clearly pronouncing the sounds within words. • Identify syllables within words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use verbs with irregular endings. • Use a mixture of sentence lengths to add interest to discussions and explanations. • Use intonation to emphasise grammar and punctuation when reading aloud. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vary the length and structure of sentences. • Ask questions and make suggestions to take an active part in class discussions. • Comment on the grammatical structure of a range of spoken and written accounts.
To tell stories with structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure stories have a setting, plot and a sequence of events. • Recount experiences with interesting detail. • Predict events in a story. • Give just enough detail to keep the audience engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring stories to life with expression and intonation. • Read the audience to know when to add detail and when to leave it out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrate detailed and exciting stories. • Use the conventions and structure appropriate to the type of story being told. • Interweave action, character descriptions, setting and dialogue.

To hold conversations and debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take turns to talk, listening carefully to the contributions of others.• Vary language between formal and informal, according to the situation.• Add humour to discussion or debate where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make relevant comments or ask questions in a discussion or debate.• Seek clarification by actively seeking to understand others' points of view.• Respectfully challenge opinions or points, offering an alternative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negotiate and compromise by offering alternatives.• Debate, using relevant details to support points.• Offer alternative explanations when others don't understand.
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