

John T. Rice Infant and Nursery School

English Policy



English Policy

Introduction

At John T Rice Infant School we firmly believe that the learning of English is a significant life skill and that the development of strong learning foundations will enable our children to listen, speak, read and write confidently throughout their school career and on into adult life. English is taught, of course, as a core curriculum subject. However, the key skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing are practised and extended throughout the day in a wide range of cross curricular contexts. Through the English curriculum, we will help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through spoken and written language and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners. We want children to enjoy a range of literature and work hard to promote a love of reading.

INTENT

Aims

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- 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 literacy heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussions 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.

Objectives

In English the children will be taught the age-appropriate objectives from the National Curriculum programme of study for:

- Spoken Language
- Reading
 - Word reading

- Comprehension
- Writing
 - Transcription
 - Composition
 - Vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation

IMPLEMENTATION

Teaching & Learning

Our Curriculum

At John T. Rice our English Curriculum is based around high quality texts. Every Half Term contains a “Wow experience” either in school or a visit out of school.

Speaking & Listening

Speaking and listening activities are encouraged within English whenever possible. These are linked to the learning objectives for Spoken Language taken from the National Curriculum for English. It is essential that these skills are developed so that children are able to express themselves confidently, clearly and fluently using a variety of vocabulary. Talk is valuable in the development of a range of skills and a good starting point for reading and writing. It is also necessary in developing social skills. At John T Rice Infant School we employ a number of different approaches to facilitate this, including circle time, talking partners, ‘talk for writing’, role play, puppets, class discussion, social stories intervention programmes, family boxes and class reading spoons.

Speaking and listening opportunities are provided daily in English sessions and across the curriculum.

Reading

At John T. Rice Infant School, early literacy in EYFS and KS1 is learnt through developing work on speaking and listening, early reading and phonics, and in line with the Communication and Language and Reading and Writing strands of the Early Years Curriculum. Our aim is for children to leave as competent readers and having a love of books.

In Foundation 1 children take home a wordless book in the Summer Term to support the development of vocabulary and story language.

In Foundation 2, reading books are issued once the children have been taught the first 2 sets of sounds (phonemes) in accordance with the Supersonic Phonics Friends scheme. Our early reading books have been carefully chosen, containing phonetically regular words that children can sound out and read independently and are closely linked to the relevant phonics phase.

Once children have mastered the phonic skills and are familiar with a wider range of phonemes, they progress onto books that have been 'Book Banded' to a specific reading level. At this stage, we introduce different reading strategies and a wider range of texts. We encourage children to read with expression and confidence, making informed choices about the books they select. Daily whole class Shared Reading sessions are also used to specifically focus on; prediction, word reading, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. During this time Teaching Assistants carry out 1-1 reading, these sessions focus on the specific skills of reading (grapheme/phoneme correspondence and blending the sounds in words).

Our reading scheme books form only a small part of the reading experience at John T. Rice. We aim to foster a love of reading through providing quality books and resources that children can share and enjoy both at school and at home. The importance and joy of reading is reinforced continually through rich and stimulating curriculum experiences. We believe that free access to books of all kinds is important in the development of the child's interest in, and appreciation of reading. All classrooms have inviting reading corners, we also have a purpose built library, children from Year Two take on the role of librarian and help care for the books and foster a love of reading for the children who visit.

Parents and other family members are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's reading development. We have set up a successful home 'reading reward scheme' which encourages pupils to read at home and in return they can collect awards for the amount of times they have read. At FS and KS1 a 'Reading Record' is maintained where all adults hearing the child read will write the progress made with the book and teaching staff will communicate how the child is getting on and what to do to develop his/her reading skills further. Children are also able to choose books to share at home through our 'Open Door' Scheme. These books are a mixture of fiction and non-fiction books chosen from our school library. Parents are invited into school once a week to change their child's library book with them and to then stay and read with them in school. We also run a range of reading enrichment events such as The Big Bedtime Read, virtual and in person author visits, trips to the library, Extreme reading event and sponsored read events.

Writing

At John T Rice Infant School we believe that the learning of writing skills should be embedded across the curriculum. The key skills of planning, composing and evaluating, spelling, handwriting & presentation, and grammar, punctuation and vocabulary are therefore taught explicitly in the context of English lessons, but also indirectly through cross-curricular writing tasks.

In EYFS, writing is about how children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken word and the written word, and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing, children ascribe meaning to marks and attempt to write for various purposes. The appropriate developmental age in EYFS curriculum informs planning for learning activities. A wide range of writing/mark making materials are always available for the children in their child-initiated learning and play both inside and outside. Children are introduced to Talk for Writing through word and language games, role play and storytelling.

The development of writing skills at KS1 progresses by building on the basic skills learnt at EYFS and very much with an emphasis on Talk for Writing. Children are introduced to many different genres and opportunities are given for extended writing. 'Hooks/Wows' are used to excite and motivate the children to write and also to give a purpose for their writing. Tasks are planned for and scaffolded according to need, by the provision of written structures/templates (where appropriate), by the use of IT, or by the intervention of a supporting teacher or adult.

Phonics

Early reading is taught using synthetic phonics as the main approach. Children are systematically taught the 42 phonemes (sounds) using a multi-sensory approach.

In F2 and Key stage 1 there are daily phonic sessions where the children are encouraged to blend the sounds for reading and segment the sounds for writing. At JTR we follow the Supersonic Phonics Friends validated scheme. Additionally, children are taught the 'common exception' words (those which are not phonetically regular) set out in the Primary National Curriculum. By combining these elements, children have the tools and skills to be able to read and write independently at an early age and are given lots of opportunities to apply their phonic skills throughout a rich and varied curriculum.

When the children have mastered this 'Basic Code' (one way of writing each of the 42 sounds) we continue to teach some of the alternative graphemes used to represent the sounds (the 'Extended Code'), moving on to specific spelling patterns. This forms the majority of phonic work in Years 1, 2 and beyond. Sound mats are used to enable the children to select the most appropriate grapheme to use when writing. We continue to teach the 'common exception' words and also introduce key spelling strategies. Phonics is formally assessed termly for on track children and half termly for the bottom 20% of children using Phonics Tracker. This is to monitor progress towards the Year 1 Phonics Check in June and to assess if children are falling behind and require additional support.

Spelling & Grammar

Spelling and Grammar is identified on teaching sequences and taught as part of our English and Phonics sessions. Through the SSPF's scheme children are taught spelling rules in year 1 and year 2, linked to the National Curriculum objectives. Common Exception words are taught daily linked to our Supersonic Phonics Scheme.

Handwriting

The overarching aim for Handwriting in the national curriculum is within the English objectives. Children need to be taught to:-

- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences

We believe that a flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with speed, confidence and creativity.

Handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of sequential growth. There are five main stages:

1. Readiness for handwriting; gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation

This involves:

- Developing fine motor control
- Having the correct posture and paper position
- Holding the pencil with a tripod grip (froggy fingers)
- Writing from left to right and from top to bottom
- Starting and finishing letters correctly
- Forming letters of the correct size
- Being able to form upper and lower case letters

2. Beginning to join

This involves using the language of ascenders and descenders and knowing how letters link together.

3. Securing the joins

This involves drawing on all previous experience and securing the joins so that each letter is correctly joined.

4. Practising speed and fluency

This involves the children becoming much more independent. They will use the knowledge that they have about joins and become quicker writers so that composition does not take as long.

5. Presentation skills

This will be the stage where the children refine their handwriting.

Scheme

At JTR we follow the Supersonic Phonics Friends validated phonics scheme which also provides a series of handwriting resources which compliment the scheme called 'Curly Cal and his handwriting Pals'.

Curly Cal and his Handwriting Pals

The creators of Supersonic Phonic Friends have developed a series of handwriting resource to complement their phonics scheme called "Curly Cal and his Handwriting Pals."

Using this resource, supports children to remember the shapes of letters and the way in which they are formed. This is done through the actions and the alliterative pictures depicted with each letter. Letters are created through joining lines and curving shapes in a particular way. The letters have a specific start point and set directional pushes and pulls of the pencil to reach the specific end point. This is why the letters are taught in letter families rather than the order of the alphabet and why they have a green leaf where to start and a red leaf where to finish.

We have three special characters to support the children in their learning, Len, Cal and Zippy and 3 letter families to teach the children how to form the letters in print.

- Len's Ladder letters
- Cal's Curly letters
- Zippy's Zigzag letters

Early Years Foundation Stage

Learners in the EYFS have planned opportunities to develop fine motor skills and mark make in a wide range of mediums within engaging and motivational contexts. In F2 handwriting will be taught as part of daily morning job sessions, daily phonics sessions, weekly handwriting carousel and weekly mark making mornings. Great emphasis will be placed on teaching the correct posture, position and grip from the beginning and this should be carefully monitored and corrected where necessary.

EYFS Aims

- To use the correct pencil grip.
- To produce a controlled line which will support letter formation.
- To write letters using the correct sequence of movements.
- To understand how letters are formed and used to spell words.
- To write their own name.
- To form numbers correctly.

Pre-Handwriting skills

- Each FS class and the outdoor learning environment has a 'Funky Fingers' area where children are provided with activities to help to improving their finger strength and fine motor skills
- FS1 children take part in daily 'Squiggle While you Wiggle sessions to improve gross and fine motor skills and to encourage the children to begin to make large and small scale movements linked to the handwriting patterns
- FS2 children take part in daily 'Dough Disco' sessions to help to improve finger strength and fine motor control
- FS children are given the opportunity to mark make within a range of media both inside and outside

- Each FS class and the outdoor learning environment has a designated mark making area where children are provided with a range of media with which to mark make
- Mark making opportunities are available throughout both the indoor and outdoor continuous provision
- Children have access to a range of large scale outdoor equipment to support the development of pre-handwriting skills and to help children to develop their core strength.

Handwriting

In the FS children will be taught to:

- Air-write before writing on a larger scale, slowly encouraging letters to decrease in size and sit on the line.
- Use name cards to enable them to see what their name looks like and how the letters of their name are shaped/formed. In F2 they will practise their name writing each morning on white boards.
- Hold their pencil correctly and how to have the correct writing posture.
- Form numbers correctly, starting at the top.
- Form lower case letters with the correct orientation, starting in the correct place and finishing with a lead out, following the SSPF's scheme. Skills are taught then consolidated and practised through a variety of other learning opportunities throughout the week.

Key Stage One

Handwriting will be taught explicitly in short regular sessions throughout the week following the SSPF's scheme. Handwriting will also be taught through phonics sessions and other writing activities during the week. When children are consistently forming all upper and lower case letters correctly (ascenders and descenders) they will then be taught to join.

During Key Stage One, children will be taught to:

- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' linked to the SSPF's scheme (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Handwriting Families	
Len's Ladder Letters 1	l t i u y j
Curly Cals Letters	c o a d g q e f s
Len's Ladder Letters 2	r n m h b p k
Zippy's Zigzag Letters	v w x z

- Understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Form capital letters correctly.
- Children who need additional practice will take part in additional handwriting interventions with a Teaching Assistant.

Expectations

- Pencils must always be sharp.
- Pencils/pens must always be held correctly (see left-handed section).
- Correct posture must be used.
- Staff must be role models at all times and demonstrate the style they teach, particularly during shared writing.
- Good handwriting and presentation are to be maintained in all subjects.

Left-handers

Left-handers should have no greater difficulty in learning to write well than right handers. They will automatically move the paper slightly to be a more comfortable angle so that their writing is visible. They should be reminded to start on the left of the page. Left-handers will be consistently reminded about the correct pencil grip and will be encouraged to hold the pencil higher up to maximise the visibility of their writing.

Assessment of handwriting

Assessment of handwriting is an on-going process and will take place formally and informally during the regular, focussed handwriting sessions and across other curriculum areas. Teachers will use on-going assessment to identify which letters, groups of letters or joins require additional practice.

Cross Curricular opportunities

We believe that children learn best in a creative, cross-curricular and integrated context. As staff we will therefore seek to make cross curricular links with the learning taking place in English with that in other areas, both at the planning stage as well as in response to formative assessment.

Use of ICT

All use of ICT is led by our Internet Access/E-Safety policy. We have the intention that all children are Infant IT literate by the time they leave KS1. We believe that computers and other forms of IT can play a key role in supporting learning in English. Children have access to Chromebooks, iPads and audio recorders to support learning. From a teaching perspective,

teaching staff use a range of IT to support and enhance learning such as; interactive whiteboards, SMART Board and digital resources including Education City and Purple Mash.

Planning

Our long-term planning is based on a two-year planning cycle with a different theme each half term and a planned in 'wow'.

Key Stage teams meet half termly to complete the medium-term planning. To ensure that the topics provide adequate coverage and progression through FS, Year 1 & 2, the subject leader has written a progression map containing details of the intended learning outcomes. This provides the basis for the medium-term planning.

Class teachers have the responsibility for creating their own weekly planning based on the needs of the children using assessment for learning.

IMPACT

Monitoring & Assessment

Assessment and Recording

Regular assessments of children's learning are made, and this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessments are used to ensure that we support and extend children in their learning, identifying areas in which we can support children by setting challenging but achievable targets.

In Nursery, a baseline assessment of the children against our EYFS progression document (based on IDevelopment Matters) is undertaken during their first half term. This data is entered onto Scholarpack for tracking purposes in order to plan for next steps in learning. In line with the school assessment timetable, children are then assessed at the end of the first Spring term and then the end of the Summer term prior to starting in Reception.

Within the first six weeks of starting school, children are assessed using the STA Reception Baseline Assessment materials and this data is submitted nationally. In addition, children are assessed against our EYFS progression document (based on IDevelopment Matters) if they have not attended a nursery, and all children are assessed at the end of each term in line with the school assessment timetable. In the summer term assessments are made against the Early Learning Goals and submitted nationally. This summative assessment is shared with the Year 1 class teacher and with parents.

Assessment, recording and documenting children's learning takes many forms and gives a rounded picture of children's progress and achievements within the Foundation Stage. Children are assessed formally and informally during child initiated and adult directed activities, and observations, sometimes supported with photographs video clips of spontaneous and significant moments are recorded on Tapestry. Children's written work, both adult supported

and independent, is collated in their literacy books. Parents are encouraged to share their child's books, celebrate their achievements and support them in their targets.

Parents receive a formal report at the end of their child's time in Nursery and Reception and this reflects their child's progress and attainment.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment, carried out by the class teacher, is an integral part of their role and is used on a daily/weekly basis to inform future planning. It involves identifying children's progress against teaching objectives, determining what a child has already achieved and what their next steps are. This formative assessment is based upon the 2014 National curriculum objectives for Reading and Writing.

Formative assessments are made on a daily basis within class, judged against oral responses made by the children, writing responses, work produced in lessons and listening to children read.

Summative assessment

Formal summative assessments are carried out three times a year at the end of each term. Teachers in F2, Year 1 and Year 2 carry out phonics assessments using phonics tracker to assess progress made and inform next year's teacher of attainment. In Key Stage 1, independent writing tasks are marked and assessed using the National Curriculum and Writing Checklists (kept at the back of individual writing books). Reading assessments are carried out using reading comprehensions linked to the phonics phase that children are working on. Teachers also use 1-1 reading to assess children's fluency and comprehension skills. These skills are assessed using the National Curriculum Checklists kept with the children's reading records.

Equal Opportunities

At John T. Rice Infant School we are aware of the need for equality of access for all children. Our staff believe strongly in creating equal opportunities for all children and work to this aim. We introduce and build upon the children's awareness of equal opportunities including the development of respect and understanding of multi-cultural, gender and S.E.N. issues.

John. T. Rice Infants is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act 2010. We aim to reduce disadvantages, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity, and promote diversity in terms of our pupils, our workforce and the community in which we work.

We will assist our pupils in achieving to their very best potential. Where pupils experience barriers to their success, we will work with them to address these in a sensitive and

sympathetic way. We will teach our pupils the importance of equality and what forms discrimination can take, and the impact discrimination can have.

We will not discriminate on any of the grounds listed below (known as the Protected Characteristics) save where such discrimination is permitted by law. The Protected Characteristics that apply to schools are:

- Age (in relation to staff only);
- Disability;
- Gender re-assignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership (in relation to staff only);
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion Faith or Belief;
- Sex; and
- Sexual orientation.

E-Safety

Whilst using a wide range of technologies to teach English, we need to ensure children are safeguarded. E-Safety encompasses Internet technologies and electronic communications such as mobile phones as well as collaboration tools and personal publishing. It highlights the need to educate pupils about the benefits and risks of using technology and provides safeguards and awareness for users to enable them to control their online experience.

E-Safety depends on effective practice at a number of levels:

- Responsible ICT use by all staff and pupils; encouraged by education.
- Sound implementation of e-safety policy in both administration and curriculum, including secure school network design and use.

This policy was agreed by staff and the Governing Body. This policy was reviewed in Spring 2023 will be reviewed again in Spring 2026.