English Policy 2014-2015 Birkenshaw CE (C) Primary School

1. Mission Statement

At Birkenshaw CE C Primary School 'our Christian ethos is at the heart of everything we do'. We provide an education of the highest quality built on the ten values of:

Co-operation, Compassion, Empathy, Happiness, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Self-Worth, Tolerance and Trust.

We are a warm and supportive school, where everyone feels valued and respected in a happy, safe and stimulating learning environment. We aim to serve the community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. We pride ourselves on high standards and encourage everyone to become confident, lifelong learners, so that they are equipped to become well-rounded individuals who communicate well with others and participate fully as a member of society.

'English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils 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, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils 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; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.' **National Curriculum for English 2014**

At Birkenshaw Primary, we aim to deliver a high quality English Curriculum that provides our learners with a deep love and understanding of English language and literature. We believe the development of English skills is central to improving a child's life chances. We strive to ensure that children can communicate clearly in spoken and written form in a coherent and engaging manner. Rich texts, both classic and contemporary, are at the heart of our teaching and a love of reading is promoted throughout the school.

We have strong links between the teaching of English and our school values; we believe Co-operation, Compassion, Empathy, Happiness, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Self-Worth, Tolerance and Trust are central values that underpin our school and are the foundations on which children can build a lifelong enjoyment of learning.

Our curriculum provides a rich range of contexts in which to deepen children's understanding of these values. In English, children are taught to respect the views of others through role-play and discussion; they are encouraged to co-operate, share ideas and justify their thoughts, speaking coherently and confidently. We encourage children to empathise with both their peers and people in the wider community and the world and to respect each other's strengths and knowledge. Children are taught to demonstrate compassion or tolerance with each other when children have misconceptions or struggle to understand a concept or idea. Through our teaching of English we aim to foster and develop a child's self-worth, to enable them to become confident communicators and trust the skills they are developing for their present and future happiness.

Teachers use a variety of inspirational teaching methods to engage children in work, bringing topics to life through real life contexts wherever possible. Creative writing opportunities are promoted and enjoyed throughout the school and children have the chance to meet and work with a variety of poets and authors throughout each academic year. Curriculum coverage is carefully monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and English co-ordinator, to ensure all staff are delivering a quality English curriculum in line with our mission statement.

National Curriculum 2014

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that good quality English teaching is at the heart of all learning across the curriculum. The new English Curriculum is split into 4 main areas:

- Spoken Language
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. (SPaG)

The new National Curriculum is divided into 3 Key Stages: Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6). By the end of each Key Stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. For each Key Stage, detailed teaching guidance is given under the following headings:

- Spoken Language
- Reading - subdivided into the following categories:
- Word reading
- Comprehension
- Writing – subdivided into the following categories:

- Transcription
- Spelling
- Handwriting and presentation
- Composition
- Grammar and punctuation

Spoken Language

At Birkenshaw Primary, we believe that the development of strong speaking and listening skills is fundamental to the teaching of English across the curriculum. Our approach is firmly based on teaching how language changes in different contexts. We believe children need to develop strong oracy skills to enable them to internalise language patterns and appreciate how language changes to suit different situations. This enables our children to manipulate language for different audiences and purposes. To do this, teachers provide a range of purposeful contexts to use a range of spoken language through role play, discussion, debate and drama. The strong emphasis on spoken language is evident in Early Years and continues throughout the school. Teachers model the effective use of Standard English, increasing children's repertoire of vocabulary and sophistication of spoken language. 'Talk for Writing' techniques are used to help children comprehend the inherent links between spoken and written language.

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to *'speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English'* **(p10)**

To this end, they should be taught to:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge
- Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

This focus on the spoken word gives children the ability to cope with written language by discovering:

- How it works;
- That meanings are shaped by lexical and syntactic choices;
- That language changes in different contexts;

- That there are differences between written and spoken English and Standard and Non-standard;
- That spoken language has rules;
- Creative thinking and self-expression.

Writing

The National Curriculum states that children should develop the stamina and skills to write at length; use accurate spelling and punctuation; be grammatically correct and experience writing across a range of text types.

We aim to develop children's ability to produce well-structured, detailed writing in which meaning is clear and engages the reader. A working knowledge of syntax and grammar is built on year after year, and children can draw on this knowledge to increase the standard of their writing. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Teacher's model writing strategies and use appropriate writing frames or scaffolding to support the less able.

The children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using a variety of quality texts as a model. There are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by multi-media teaching tools such as drama techniques and film clips. Creative writing mornings are built in once every half term. Led by the English co-ordinators for KS1 and 2, a creative writing stimulus is shared with the whole school in an assembly, children are invited to share and discuss their ideas in response to the stimulus before going back to class and completing their writing. The aim is to expose the children to a range of different text types that may be explored and to focus their writing on engaging the reader. These pieces of writing are collated in a 'Writing Log' that goes through school with the children to show progression. The 'Writing Log' may also have any other pieces of cross-curricular writing that the class teacher wishes to include.

In all English lessons, the teaching of writing follows the sequence of:

Immersion and orientation

This is the stage of the unit where children are immersed in the text type. Children will become familiar with the language rhythms and patterns that are involved within the text. It is impossible to write a sentence without being able to say it. Through 'Talk for Writing' techniques, children are encouraged to engage with the text through discussion and role-play opportunities. Key vocabulary is identified and displayed so that children can 'unpick' the text and fully understand it.

Exploring and highlighting

This is the part of the unit where children are encouraged to look closely at the text, analysing language patterns and playing with words and structure. A writer's toolkit may be created as children look more closely at grammatical features and begin to understand what success criteria would be needed to write in the same style. Children may explore other similar texts, looking at underlying structures and language features and beginning to see how they could imitate them in their own work.

Imitating and Inventing

Now that children have internalised the main structures and techniques in the text type, they can start to imitate and invent a piece of writing that emulates the original – they may continue the story line, create a new character, alter settings or time or merge to plot lines. At this stage, children will be moving towards more independent writing, still referring to success criteria. They will be encouraged to write in the same text type but will have more freedom to choose a topic or idea that interests and intrigues them.

Spelling

The ability to spell correctly is inherent in the idea of fluent communication of the written word. We want our children to become fluent and effective writers; and we believe accurate spelling is a means to that end. Competent spellers have to expend less time and energy trawling their vocabularies for known spelling patterns and can spend more time thinking about engaging the reader by precise and varied word choice.

A good spelling programme gradually builds pupils' spelling vocabulary by introducing patterns or conventions and steadily applying them in a range of contexts. Spelling strategies need to be taught explicitly and applied to high-frequency words, cross-curricular words and individual pupils' words. Proof-reading should be taught during shared and guided writing sessions and links should be made to the teaching of handwriting.

Pupils in KS2 have a half hour dedicated session weekly dedicated to the teaching of spelling (Support for spelling), grammar, handwriting (Nelson) and Comprehension (Rising Stars). However, teaching of all these components is naturally embedded into all aspects of the curriculum.

Grammar

Grammar is most effective when taught in the context of reading and writing; either in the context of the structure of a text or the writing needs of a child. We believe that effective grammar teaching takes place in meaningful contexts. Children have commented on how they like knowing how language works and feel better equipped to enhance their own writing once they have mastered their word classes and can analyse existing texts with more confidence. Teachers understand the importance of using the correct meta-language to ensure their children are capable of doing this.

Phonics

At Birkenshaw Primary School we believe that the teaching of phonics is vital in order for children to become competent readers and writers.

Aims/Principles:

- To enable children to learn phonic knowledge and skills with the expectation that they will become fluent readers, having secured word building and recognition skills.
- To ensure that the children are taught high frequency words that do not conform to regular phonic patterns.
- To ensure that children have opportunities to read texts and words that are within their phonic capabilities as early as possible, even though all words may not be entirely decodable by the children unaided.
- To encourage the children to attempt to spell words for themselves, within the range of their phonic knowledge, by building an individual repertoire and the confidence and strategies to attempt the unfamiliar.
- To help the children to apply the skill of blending phonemes in order to read words.
- To help the children to segment words into their constituent phonemes in order to spell words.
- To learn that blending and segmenting words are reversible processes.

Teaching and Learning of Phonics and Spelling in EYFS and KS1

All phonics in EYFS and KS1 is taught following the Letters and Sounds document along side the 'Jolly Phonics Programme'. We have adopted the suggested daily teaching sequence set out in 'Letters and Sounds'; *Introduction, Revisit and Review, Teach, Practise, Apply and Assess learning against criteria.* From Year 1 to year two children are streamed to allow for the high achievers to make accelerated progress and those with additional needs to gain further support.

Teaching is multi-sensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities to enliven core learning. Phonics is taught in short, briskly paced sessions and then applied to reading and writing in a meaningful context. At Birkenshaw Primary School we provide ample opportunities to reinforce and

apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum and in such activities as shared and guided reading and writing.

Assessment:

- Children are involved in the assessment of their progress and receive regular and focussed feedback on their development.
- Regular formative assessment by the class teacher should be recorded weekly on a tracking sheet to ensure progress is made by every child.
- Children will be assessed by the literacy coordinator each half term to ensure they are able to decode words at an age appropriate level.
- Benchmarks are in place to ensure that a consistent approach to the progression in phonics is applied throughout the school.
- Year One phonics screening in the Summer Term in line with government requirements.

Reading

Reading is one of the most powerful tools of learning both in and out of school. It facilitates independence and allows pupils to share experiences they may not otherwise encounter.
Reading provides opportunities for pupils to gain both understanding and pleasure from a range of texts.

To support them in this, we aim to help pupils to:

- master the basic mechanical skills of reading.
- read with accuracy, fluency and expression.
- develop and use higher order reading skills which will contribute to their overall comprehension of texts.
- understand the value of information texts as an aid to learning.
- develop a love of literature and an understanding of the pleasure reading can bring.

We currently use Reading APPs to track the progress of all children in reading. This assessment information is used to inform planning, identify targets and the levels the children are working at.
In KS1 a Reading Diary is used to pass information between home and school, this is an effective way for communication. In KS2 the Reading diary is replaced by the Home/School Diary.

Learning Environment

Every class has an English working wall:

- This evolves as the unit of work develops; it is the public display of the learning process. It clearly displays the long-term objectives as well as short term intentions of a unit.

- Success criteria are developed with the children and displayed. They are used to demonstrate to children how they will achieve the learning intention.
- Exemplified text types – these may be annotated to highlight language and structure.
- Key vocabulary.

Mind-mapping, modelled examples, key questions, re-drafting and pupils' examples may also be added to the working wall.

Assessing and Target Setting

Work will be assessed in line with the Assessment Policy. In addition to this, targets are used for each unit/genre of the Primary National Strategy Framework in each year group. Hierarchical targets are displayed so that children can see where they are currently and what they need to do in order to improve their writing. This can also be used for children to assess their own writing, asking themselves 'Have I done that?'

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

Role of Subject Leader:

The Subject Leader should be responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in English through:

Monitoring and evaluating English:-

- pupil progress

- provision of Literacy (including Intervention and Support programmes)
- the quality of the Learning Environment;
- the deployment and provision of support staff

Taking the lead in policy development

Auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD

Purchasing and organising resources

Keeping up to date with recent English developments

Meeting with their link Governor each term

Enlgish Leaders: Sarah Margetts (Writing and speaking and listening)

S.Mackrill (reading and phonics)

Reviewed : October 2015