

English Curriculum Statement



Intent

At Oaklands Infant school, we believe that literacy and communication are at the heart of all children's learning, equipping them with key life skills. Through our English curriculum we will support children to develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively through written and spoken language and enable them to become successful, life-long learners. We are committed to ensuring all children have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a rich variety of literature, helping them to develop a love for reading as well as value the importance and many benefits of reading.

We are dedicated to ensuring that all our pupils are able to read fluently and with good understanding whilst developing the habit of reading widely on a regular basis for both pleasure and to gain information. Reading enables pupils to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know, enabling them to access the whole curriculum.

We will encourage children to be effective, competent communicators and good listeners, providing them with a range of opportunities to express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a wealth of varying text types, both fiction and non-fiction, using appropriate vocabulary. We will support children to foster an interest in words, understand their meanings and to develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written form. Children will be immersed in a literature-rich environment to engage and enjoy a range of text types and genres. Children will be given opportunities to write clearly, accurately, and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, showing awareness of audience and purpose across the curriculum.

Our curriculum has been carefully planned to be progressive and sequential building on prior learning which is evident in our progression map. The statutory objectives are interwoven between the topics, ensuring a cross-curricular approach. Weekly short-term plans are created using our progression map and adapted to meet the needs of the children to ensure that it supports and stretches all children's learning. Our curriculum is regularly reviewed and adapted so that it is relevant to the needs of our pupils and reflects the world they live in.

We strive to ensure our pupils leave us with the appropriate language and literary skills to enable them to communicate effectively and fully access the whole curriculum, so that they are ready for Key Stage 2 and beyond.

Implementation

Reading

Oaklands Infant school sees the enjoyment of reading and the skills involved as a core teaching priority and it is given high status in planning, teaching and the wider learning environment. All children are given opportunities to read daily through a consistent system of one-to-one, group, whole class, guided and independent reading opportunities across the curriculum. Children are exposed to high-quality, carefully chosen texts which are introduced from Foundation Stage onwards through cross-curricular learning, drama, and storytelling. To support children with their understanding of texts, we have implemented five clever canines called the Pawsome Gang. Each of these child-friendly canine characters supports different reading skills: vocabulary, prediction, retrieval, inference and sequencing. Reading is promoted by teachers and adults who read daily to the children and engage new readers within a language-rich environment. At Oaklands Infant School, opportunities are provided for children to develop a love of reading through fun and exciting activities to participate in at school or home such as: reading bingos, readathons, visits from authors/illustrators, parent readers, reading events with our local community, stimulating reading spaces (both indoors and outdoors) and focused book weeks. Children have access to class and year group libraries

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where they can choose from a vast range of reading materials to read at home to promote reading for pleasure. Classrooms and learning spaces also have stimulating reading areas for children to read during the school day.

Each week children take home two reading books, the first of which develops phonic knowledge and skills to build fluency. These books follow the Sounds Write Initial Code units followed by the Extended Code units. The second book will be book-banded and will support their reading comprehension and wider reading skills; these books include narratives, poetry, playscripts and non-fiction. Reading at home is regarded as an important part of reading development. Parents are encouraged to hear their children read regularly and respond to their child's reading through home-school reading records which are monitored weekly. Parents are regularly supported to read effectively with their child through parent workshops, support materials, videos and the school website.

Children are heard reading aloud regularly in school during whole-class guided reading and phonics sessions as well as individually at least once per fortnight. SEND pupils are heard read 3 times per week.

Phonics

Children at Oaklands Infant School are taught phonics using the Sounds Write scheme. All teaching and support staff are trained by Sounds Writes consultants to ensure fidelity to the scheme and a consistent teaching approach. Phonics is taught daily from the first full week in school at the beginning of Reception. These are teacher-led, whole class 30 minute sessions. Reception classes start with 10minute sessions that quickly build over the year. These are varied, fast-paced, multi-sensory and engaging opportunities to develop decoding skills and essential phonic knowledge. During each phonic session, all children will read and write whole words, and throughout the week they will all read and write whole sentences. Progress is carefully monitored and assessed in order to inform planning through the use of the Sounds Write Diagnostic Tool and regular teacher assessment. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to practice and secure skills learnt within the learning environment, reading decodable texts across the curriculum. SEND pupils participate in all lessons with their peers and are supported by teaching assistants in a manner that is dependent on their individual needs to help them access the sessions. Additional phonic interventions using the Sounds Write Scheme follow-up lessons run throughout the school to support pupils who need extra support in applying their phonics in reading and/or spelling.

Writing

Teachers look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as 'writers' through a topic-led approach using high-quality texts. Teachers establish the purpose and audience for writing and make teaching objectives explicit to pupils so that they know why they are studying a particular text type, the kind of writing activities they are to undertake and what the expected outcome will be. Children will be given particular objectives to achieve success in different genres. Children are given opportunities to self-mark, peer-mark and respond to their next steps for learning. Following the Marking and Feedback Policy, children are given specific 'fixing time' to improve their writing.

Subject-specific texts that link to work being undertaken in other areas are also used in English lessons to support the wider curriculum. Teachers use shared writing to model the writing process. Shared reading and writing provide a context for discussion and demonstration of grammatical features at word, sentence and text level. Activities are differentiated through the use of writing frames, spelling banks, collaborative work and peer or adult support, as well as providing prompts and scaffolds to support independence. Children are encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards a stamina for writing. By writing for different purposes and in different genres, children are taught to plan, edit and evaluate their writing. Each class has a range of materials to support the writing process including working walls, phonic sound mats and sets of age appropriate dictionaries, thesaurus and word banks.

Pupils are given regular opportunities to publish and share their writing. This is celebrated through displays in classrooms and around the school, sharing with other members of staff as well as being made into books for the whole class to continue reading.

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SEND pupils are supported through interventions such as colourful semantics on a weekly basis. They are also given further opportunities to practise sentence writing during some of the Sounds Write follow-up activities.

Each half term, home-learning grids are sent home for each year group linked to the topic being taught in school. A range of activities are provided that give children the opportunity to practise their writing skills further. Victor Vocabulary lists are provided which contain topic related and Tier 2 vocabulary that will support their learning in class that half term.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught and practised 3 times per week following the PenPals handwriting scheme which is carefully planned to be sequential and progressive. Children are rigorously taught correct letter formation from the very beginning of their time in school. Children are taught to sit properly in order to have the correct posture for writing, hold a pencil in the correct tripod grip and develop a legible and partly joined handwriting style by the end of Year 2. A mixture of whole class, small groups and individual teaching is planned for and delivered each week using specific handwriting books.

In order to ensure pupils transfer what they practise in their explicit handwriting sessions into all written tasks, teachers model on the board during the writing process, talking through how some letters are formed. Pupils are regularly reminded of what we are looking for in their writing, and practise any letters where necessary during immediate feedback given. When working with groups or individuals, adults have a whiteboard and pen to hand to carefully model. Letter formation is also addressed in some aspects of phonics lessons, reminding children that this letter is always formed this way.

Interventions take place across the school including letter formation and fine and gross motor sessions where necessary. There are specialist resources to support children that have a special educational need around handwriting including: writing slopes, special pencils and intervention sessions if required (Occupational Therapy: Children, Young People & Families Department Intervention Programme). Pupils can be rewarded with a 'Laurie' achievement for showing pride in their presentation.

Grammar and Spellings

Through the Sounds Write scheme, children are taught to spell using their phonic knowledge that includes the Year 1 and Year 2 statutory common exception words through the appropriate unit. In KS1, spelling sets are allocated (and sent home) and tested each half term. Pupils who are not secure will continue with these spellings in the next half term. When writing across the curriculum, children are encouraged to apply their phonic skills. Applications of these common exception spellings are carefully monitored and marked off on a spelling list in pupils' books. SEND children or children who are not secure in the previous year groups spellings will be given differentiated spelling lists. Children are taught to use punctuation and grammar in context, following the objectives set out in the National Curriculum. The correct terminology is used and pupils are encouraged to use this language when discussing the structure of their writing.

Speaking and Listening

Teachers provide a wide range of contexts for spoken language throughout the school day which are carefully matched to the skills on the progression map. Teachers and other adults in school model speaking clearly. This includes clear diction, reasoned argument using imaginative and challenging language and use of Standard English including the correct use of tenses. Listening is modelled, as is the appropriate use of non-verbal communication, respecting the views of others. Teachers are also sensitive in encouraging the participation of reticent children. All children will feel that their ideas and opinions are valued even if they differ from others. Spoken language outcomes are planned for in all areas of the curriculum. Learning takes place in a variety of situations and group settings such as: Show and Tell opportunities in all year groups, Book Flash and topic presentations in KS1, re-telling of stories and poems, participating in discussions, debates, expressing opinions and justifying ideas (often through PSHE Jigsaw scheme), role-play and drama activities across the curriculum, opportunities for speaking to an audience including class assemblies, Christmas play, Year 2 leavers play, care-home visits, parent tours and pupil voice through curriculum surveys.

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Assessment and Monitoring

The Sounds Write Diagnostic tool is used as identified by the class teacher. It is used for specific children to identify barriers of learning which will lead to the interventions they need. PM Benchmarking is used to accurately track and assess pupils' reading progress for children reading orange book band and above, ensuring consistent and accurate levelling in reading. Teachers decide when is appropriate to assess the children but this must be done at least once a term. Year 2 children participate in the optional National SATs reading assessments throughout the month of May. Pupils who may need additional opportunities to practise their phonics skills also take part in Sounds Write follow-up sessions. Pupils and their needs are identified using the diagnostic tool from the scheme and appropriate activities are then chosen and delivered several times throughout the week. Progress is regularly reviewed. Reading intervention programmes, such as '90 Second Reads', also run with a particular focus on developing fluency. These mostly take place in year 2 and are led by support staff.

Children in Foundation Stage complete an independent piece of writing for their Baseline assessment in the autumn term and again in the summer term. Children are given other opportunities to write independently in their 'Have a Go Holly' books and during adult led writing tasks which are used to assess children's writing. Children in KS1 are assessed on their independent writing through Hot Tasks each half term (more frequently in Year 2 from March) that link to the topic and cover a range of writing genres e.g. letters, stories and recounts. KS1 use their year group frameworks to assess independent writing. All year groups have termly moderating meetings; these meetings are held within year groups and/or with other schools from Corvus Learning Trust. We also invite the year 3 teachers from Oaklands Junior School to join our end of year 2 moderations in the summer to ensure accurate and consistent judgements are agreed upon. KS1 children are assessed on reading and writing their common exception words each half term. These records inform future planning and are also shared with parents. Children in Year 2 are assessed on applying these spellings through dictation of sentences half termly. Year 1 children participate in the Phonic Screening Check in June as well as any Year 2 re-takes.

Children who have gaps in their knowledge receive appropriate support and intervention. Key children are identified in each class and interventions are put in place such as: follow-up lessons from Sounds Write, extra opportunities for 1:1 reading and comprehension, as well as fine motor and letter formation groups.

On a half-termly basis the subject leads, supported by the Trust's Primary English Lead, undertake a range of monitoring activities. These include book looks, learning and environment walks, lesson drop-ins, pupil voice surveys and planning scrutiny. These help us to identify what is working well across the school and inform any next steps. CPD opportunities are arranged where necessary, either for whole school or on an individual basis. These may include online training through The National College, and sessions led by the Schools Learning Alliance.

CPD

Sound and accurate staff subject knowledge allows the intentions of our English curriculum to be delivered successfully. We continually strive to build upon the good understanding of the expectations of the curriculum that our staff have. All staff are encouraged to raise questions, seek support and request further training if needed in order to ensure everyone is confident in what they teach. Good practice is shared between staff. The English leads meet with the other leaders from the Trust at least once a term. Information from these meetings is then shared with staff. All new staff are trained in the use of Pawsome Gang to support reading, our PenPals handwriting scheme and they will complete official Sounds Write training as a priority. Refresher in-house training for phonics is led by the Phonics Lead, as well through online support using the Sounds Write videos and resources. Meetings or training are carried out (when applicable) with all staff to refresh their skills across the English curriculum or to update them on curriculum or government changes.

Transition

In the summer term, all classes have a thorough handover with the next year group including Year 2 to Year 3 at Oaklands Junior School. During these meetings, key information is shared about children's learning which includes reading, writing and phonics. All assessment is passed on such as reading Benchmarking, phonics assessments and writing frameworks. Teachers share year group's strengths and any gaps in their learning or areas of the curriculum that children aren't secure with. Foundation Stage have handover meetings with local pre-schools and parent meetings take place before the new cohort of children start with us in the autumn term.

SEND

Children identified with additional needs or disability are given the opportunity to minimise the barriers to learning by the implementation of reasonable adaptations to the lesson content, methods of recording, grouping, resources, time allocation or supervision as well as methods for assessment and evaluation. Pre-teaching, interventions and additional practise time may need to be provided to embed learning.

Impact

By teaching English as we do at Oaklands, we believe we are achieving the best possible outcomes for all children. The **impact** of our teaching is evident in different ways:

Attainment - By the end of EYFS, we expect the vast majority of our children to achieve the ELGs in Communication and Language and Literacy. Our KS1 results show we are broadly in line with local and national data. The outcomes for our greater depth pupils are often above national data.

Pupil Voice – Through discussion and feedback, children talk enthusiastically about writing and reading. They are able to articulate their passion for reading and how much they value books. Pupils are proud to show their writing skills and new vocabulary they have learnt. They understand the importance of being able to communicate effectively through reading and writing, and how reading effectively helps them to learn more. They are also very articulate at explaining how they use phonics to support their reading.

Evidence in knowledge and skills – children demonstrate how they apply their phonic skills and knowledge to their reading, writing and spelling. Children are able to read fluently both for pleasure and to further their learning. Children develop a wide vocabulary and are adventurous with vocabulary choices within their writing.

As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum, cross-curricular writing improves and skills taught in the English lessons are transferred into other subjects; this demonstrates a consolidation of skills and a deeper understanding of how and when to use specific grammar and punctuation.

Our children move on from us with creativity and passion for all the skills needed in Literacy.

This 3Is statement is a working document, one which is reviewed and adapted and reflects teaching improvement as an ongoing process.

Impact – Supporting Evidence

Attainment and Progress

At the end of the academic year 2022-23, pupils at Oaklands Infant school made good, and at times exceeding, progress from their own personal starting points. Year 1 phonics data was above National average by 3% and only 5% below LEA.

Year 2 results were above national average for expected and greater depth and local authority which is an improvement since last year. When compared against their end of Early Years data, progress had increased in the percentage of expected and greater depth children but dropped slightly in the number of expected.

	Year 1 Phonics 2023	LEA	Nationals	Year 2 Reading 2023	LEA	Nationals	Year 2 Writing 2023	LEA	Nationals
Expected+	82% 47/57 children	87%	79%	83%	75%	68%	68%	67%	60%
Greater Depth	N/A			30%	26%	19%	13%	11%	8%

Pupil voice

In June 2023, a pupil voice survey was carried out with a range of students from all year group. Three quarters of pupils shared they enjoy reading, with some of the following reasons being given: *It helps me learn, It makes me happy, I find fact books interesting, I like listening to stories, I like it when I can choose the book, I have sometimes stayed up till the middle of the night to sneakily read!* Of those who expressed less of an interest in reading, this was mainly due to finding it challenging and tiring. Pupils were also more focused on the act of reading for learning rather than reading for pleasure or being read to.

Children are still able to refer to a wide range of reading opportunities throughout the school day, particularly in year 2.

There has been a decrease in the number of pupils reading regularly at home. It appears to be linked to only having one opportunity to change their reading books each the week. (Pupils receive two books per week which is less than in previous years.) The importance of re-reading and rehearsing, as well as how to discuss the books they are reading perhaps needs to be better articulated to parents moving forward.

After some prompting, pupils in KS1 could discuss the Pawsome Gang and what reading skills they linked to but this doesn't appear to have been introduced to the Foundation Stage pupils yet. Pupils still appear to be more focused on the physical act of reading and how phonics supports this rather than the range of reading skills they need to understand what they have read. This does, however, highlight how successful to implantation of the Sounds Write scheme has been in terms of their phonic knowledge.

Pupils asked for more opportunities to enjoy books to themselves or with friends, to be able to go on the Reading Bus (owned by the Junior school), buy more picture books for older children, and visits from more well-known authors.

Learning Environment

Class reading corners are inviting spaces and display books that the class have read throughout the year. Pawsome Gang characters are also displayed in most classrooms. Both libraries are well cared for and regularly used by all pupils. Pupils enjoy using the reading shed at playtimes and lunchtimes. Reading and writing resources to support learning are easily accessible for pupils *e.g. sounds mats, word banks, handwriting joins, colourful semantic grids.*

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Evidence of Knowledge and Skills

Book looks demonstrate clear progress in writing in all year groups. Writing across the curriculum is evident and is enhanced by the use of high-quality texts that link to topics. Pawsome Gang is being used effectively in KS1 during whole-class reading, with an engaging range of tasks being completed.

Expectations for handwriting and presentation differ a little across year groups, with pupils not always implementing what they are learning in their handwriting sessions. Pupils in Foundation Stage are getting off to a good start with their handwriting and the greater focus on writing during phonics sessions helps to consolidate this. Excellent progress in writing is evident across Foundation Stage as a result, and this progress should continue to be built upon into KS1.