

Jotmans Hall Primary School

Literacy Policy



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Approved by the Governors:

*English is the language of the future.....
the most important tool you'll ever need,
no matter what career you choose. You
have the right to English. Make it your
right!"*

Benjamin Zephaniah

Policy for English at Jotmans Hall Primary School

Aims and objectives

The study of English develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. The use of written and verbal language in the classroom enables children to communicate ideas, views and feelings creatively and imaginatively. As they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry, play-scripts, non-fiction and media texts, children gain an understanding of how language works. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

The aims of English are:

- to enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their audience;
- to encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard, and respond appropriately;
- to enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands;
- to develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used;
- to enable children to explore and evaluate their own and others' thoughts, feelings and beliefs, through a range of drama activities;
- to develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- to encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through immersion in challenging, texts and discussions;
- to help children enjoy writing and recognise its value;
- to enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction;
- to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work.

Teaching and learning style

At Jotmans Hall Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons. Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding of English. English is taught daily through a variety of approaches including; whole class, group work, investigations and individual tasks. Children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources to support their learning. Children use digital literacy in English lessons where it enhances their learning, such as drafting their work and using multimedia to study how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Wherever possible we encourage children to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

There are children of differing ability in all classes at Jotmans Hall Primary School. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. During lessons, a range of strategies are used to ensure appropriate levelled learning takes place. We use classroom assistants to support some children and to enable work to be matched to the needs of individuals.

However, there may be a few identified children follow their own highly structured literacy program, delivered by trained adults throughout the week.

Purpose of Study

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to write and speak 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.

Our medium-term/short-term plans are adapted from the framework and give details of the main teaching objectives for each unit. These plans define what we teach, and ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each unit covering a range of genres.

Our short-term planning details the learning objectives, teaching input, the differentiated activities, including support where appropriate, success criteria and assessment against the learning objectives. This is written on a weekly basis and is very much a working document that shows good on-going assessments.

We include a whole school weekly extended writing session, called the Big Write, which covers different genres and allows children to re-visit writing objectives and starts with a focused grammar and punctuation session.

Guided reading occurs daily outside the literacy session and is based on a rotation during the week within the class. Children are grouped according to ability and when not reading with the teacher, children are given a purposeful activity to do independently eg: spelling games, comprehension questions, reading journal work and story-writing.

All teachers have high expectations in the presentation of work in all areas of the curriculum. Handwriting plays an important part and is taught at least weekly. This is based on the spelling patterns/phonics children have been learning and all children are taught from Reception, the cursive script.

The EYFS

We teach Literacy in the EYFS as an integral part of the school's work. We relate the Literacy aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance, alongside the Primary Framework. We give all children the opportunity:

- to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations;
- to respond to adults and to each other;
- to listen carefully;
- to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills;
- to explore words and texts;

- to encourage application of phonics skills in their independent writing.

Literacy tasks will be incorporated within various aspects of homework throughout the terms.

Handwriting

Children are encouraged to write in the fully cursive style as soon as they enter Jotmans Hall Primary School, if they do not already do so. Handwriting practice takes place at least weekly across the school. By the time children are in Year 5 they are expected to write with a pen and by Year 6 they are expected to write in cursive script for all their work. (Please see Handwriting Policy).

Spellings

Spellings are taught systematically through dedicated lessons during the week. However, spellings are also taught and discussed as they arise in specific lessons or when identified as a class need.

In Term 1 and 6 children are assessed using the GL single word spelling test which is age appropriate. The results are recorded and used to track children's progress.

The statutory list of words (from the new curriculum) that the children should learn has been separated into year group lists. The children are given part of the list, termly, to learn at home and practice at school.

Assessment and Recording

Assessment is under review this year due to changes in the national curriculum. (See Assessment Policy).

Children are actively encouraged to participate in self-assessment of their progress in all aspects of literacy, especially writing.

Teachers assess children's work in English continually. The daily assessments that teachers made as part of every lesson allows them to adjust their teaching and planning for subsequent lessons.

At present, our formal writing assessments use levelled objectives to assess pupils' writing and these levels are recorded to track progress. Year-end assessments enable teachers to set targets for the next school year and help teachers to summarise the progress of each child for end-of-year reports. During the year, reading is assessed using a combination of formative and summative assessments. (See Marking and Feedback Policy.)

In the Autumn Term, assessment is via the NGRT Reading Test. The results are recorded and used to track the children's progress.

At the end of Year 6, children undertake the relevant, national tests.

The Literacy Co-ordinators keep samples of moderated children's writing across the year groups. However, a child's level is determined over a number of pieces of writing across a range of genres. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in English in each year of the school. Teachers meet regularly (in year groups and whole school) to review pupils' work against the objectives and expectations outlined at each step within the new assessment without levels programme. This ensures a consistency throughout the school.

Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are linked and applied to every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

Mathematics

English contributes significantly to the teaching of mathematics in our school. Children are encouraged to read and interpret problems in order to identify the mathematics involved. They explain and present their work to others during lessons and they communicate clearly through the developing use of precise mathematical language.

Digital Literacy

The use of computing enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. Younger children use digital literacy as a source of information and as a way of enabling them to present their completed work effectively. Older children use the Internet when researching a topic and use different software to present their work. Children use the planning and proofing tools available on the computer when checking their draft work. We encourage all children to use digital literacy as a resource for learning, when they feel it is appropriate.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The teaching of English develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions raised in a variety of texts and experiences. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The organisation of lessons allows children of differing abilities and backgrounds to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and results.

We encourage younger children to take part in class and group discussions on topical issues. In their science work, they talk about things that improve their health and about rules for keeping them safe around the school. Older children research and debate topical issues and events. They discuss lifestyle choices and meet visitors who work within the school community. Planned activities within the classroom encourage children to work together and respect each other's views.

Teaching English to children with special educational needs and disabilities

At Jotmans Hall Primary School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. English forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. All staff provide help with communication and literacy through:

- using texts that children can read and understand;
- using visual and written materials in different formats;
- using digital literacy and other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative communication such as communication in print;
- using translators and amanuenses.

EAL (English as a second language)

EAL learners are given the opportunity to engage 1:1 or small group sessions with a member of staff who has specific training in this area.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, belief, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Jotmans Hall Primary School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher and Governing Body:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching.

Literacy Co-ordinator:

- to have an impact on raising standards of attainment for Literacy across the whole school;
- ensure the effective implementation of the Statutory National Curriculum for English;

- adapt and use the Primary Framework for Literacy and the New Curriculum across the whole school that meets the needs of our children;
- to monitor the whole school and individual needs to be able to assess individual professional development opportunities and needs;
- to maintain the availability of high quality resources;
- to maintain an overview of current trends and developments within the subject;
- to ensure, together with the Headteacher, a rigorous and effective programme of lesson observation monitoring;
- to ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of children's work samples and moderation of assessment levels is in place;
- to ensure a regular and effective programme of analysis of short-term planning is in place;
- to ensure there is regular reviewing and monitoring of children's individual reading and writing targets;
- to effectively manage any funding designated to Literacy.

Class Teachers:

- ensure the effective implementation of the Statutory National Curriculum for English;
- adapt and use the Primary Framework for Literacy across the whole school that meets the needs of our children;
- make effective use of assessment for learning within Literacy
- ensure work is differentiated to enable all children to reach their full potential.

Teaching Assistants:

- to support the class teacher in the effective implementation of Literacy;
- to attend training as identified to enable high quality intervention to be delivered.

Parent/Carers:

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents about their children's learning and the progress they are making by:

- holding parents' evenings to discuss children's progress;
- keeping information on school pupil tracker up to date so that parents can see clearly their targets, termly levels and progress;
- sending an annual report to parents in which we explain the progress made by each child, celebrate their successes and look at next steps;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework, through parent briefings and informal meetings.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We would like parents to:

- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school and ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school for taking part in activities;
- inform us if there are matters outside school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.

Resources

There are a range of resources to support the teaching of English across the school. All classrooms have dictionaries and a range of age-appropriate literacy resources. All classrooms have a selection of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have access to the Internet through their classroom computer and other technological equipment. The library contains a range of books to support children's individual research as well as fiction and poetry. Year group guided reading texts are housed in the respective classrooms and relevant questions are kept on the server. Further resources are centrally stored in the English cupboard outside Lime Class.

Outdoor Learning

Jotmans Hall Primary School aims to develop outdoor education for all of the children in our school. It can provide positive opportunities for active learning, promote skills of enquiry, problem solving, communication, co-operation, creativity and evaluation. Our school grounds provide a variety of different activities, terrains and habitats already but we plan to develop these further to support this agenda. We believe that the outdoor learning environment has much to offer children. It can afford relevant, engaging experiences that support learning in all areas of the curriculum, including Literacy and Maths. These may be presented as building on existing outdoor play, transferring activities normally carried out indoors, school projects, environmental education or off-site visits.

Inclusion Statement

At Jotmans Hall Primary School, we are aware that some children have difficulty accessing the curriculum. Therefore, in line with the Disability and Discrimination Act of 2005 and Equality Act 2010, and the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2014, resources and material will be adapted and reasonable adjustments made to make sure that this subject is accessible to all the children in our care.

Thinking Skills

At Jotmans Hall Primary School, we are using the "Let's Think" published materials, a range of games, activities and Thinking Skills books to develop thinking skills.

Learners will be encouraged to share a common language and perception, respond to challenge, think better in groups, think about their own learning and use their thinking in different situations throughout the curriculum.

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, Thinking Skills will be taught through the “Let’s Think” materials linked to Literacy, Maths or Science. It may also be taught as a discreet thinking skills lesson using games, activities or books, linked with other areas of the curriculum.

In Key Stage 2, Years 3-5 Thinking Skills will be taught through Science (Let’s Think materials) or through games, activities and books as a discreet thinking skills lesson and linked to specific areas of the curriculum.

In Year 6, Thinking Skills will be taught as a discreet lesson using games, activities and books, linked to specific areas of the curriculum.

Problem Solving Across the Curriculum

Effective problem solving and investigating is an important part of learning and teaching throughout the whole curriculum.

Children should explore types of problem solving and investigating to prompt previous knowledge, probe understanding, and promote and extend their thinking.

Problem solving activities or investigations:

- are effective (natural) strategies for learning.
- are active approaches to learning
- give children responsibility for their learning

Problem solving should permeate through all learning objectives and should not be seen as a ‘bolt-on’ activity. In shared work Teachers can use short problem-solving or investigative activities to:

- refer to previous work and pose questions to assess children’s prior knowledge.
- demonstrate and scaffold investigations and problem solving, making explicit the key strategies applied.
- use an investigation or problem to teach the objective
- model the various methods of recording (e.g. tabulation, diagrams, etc)
- teach children how to interpret, select and use information
- encourage opportunities for thinking aloud and communicating with others.

In independent time Teachers can provide short or extended problem-solving or investigative activities to:

- support children in drawing out patterns, principles, conclusions, justifying answers or identifying relationships
- promote the social context for positive dialogue

- support children in developing a wide range of strategies in order to develop the skills of working systematically, including finding all possibilities
- help children record their thinking in a variety of ways including diagrammatic representation and simple algebraic notation.

In the plenary the Teacher may use a problem-solving or investigative activity to:

- assess children's understanding of the objectives being taught
- prepare children for the next lesson or series of lessons
- provide opportunities to communicate children's different approaches to the specific problem solving activities in order to address any misconceptions