

# **Colehill First School English Policy**

**September 2017**

*Colehill First School is a Rights Respecting School. As such it is committed to upholding children's rights and promoting their responsibilities under the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The contents of this policy are fully in keeping with this commitment.*

## **1. Introduction**

**All children at Colehill First School have an entitlement to the fullest possible development of their abilities in English, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.**

The principal aim of the English curriculum at Colehill First School is to enable all of our pupils to develop to the full their ability to understand the English language in spoken and written form, and to use the English language to communicate effectively and confidently. Children are given carefully planned opportunities to express themselves through English, using imagination and creativity. We aspire for our learners to be confident, clear and articulate speakers; fluent, accurate and thoughtful readers and skilful, imaginative and confident writers who can adapt to a wide range of genres and audiences.

2. Aims As part of the English curriculum, we aim for all pupils to:

- Listen carefully and actively with sustained attention
- Respond appropriately as listeners
- Speak confidently and articulately, with appropriate intonation, clear diction, accurate grammar and style and with due regard for their audience
- Read fluently with accurate decoding, good comprehension and appropriate expression / intonation, from a wide variety of texts at an age-appropriate level.
- Read for enjoyment and to elicit information.
- Write for a range of purposes and audiences using clear, grammatically correct and accurately spelt English at an age-appropriate level.
- Write with expression at an age-appropriate pace using a varied vocabulary chosen with care to communicate effectively with the reader
- Write with a chosen style that is fit for purpose.
- Develop neat, legible, fluent joined handwriting with clear ascenders and descenders.
- Respond thoughtfully to their own writing and that of others, including peers and authors
- Apply their English skills in speaking, reading and writing appropriately across the wider curriculum.
- Foster a love of the English language and an enjoyment of the subject in all of its forms.

- Achieve age-expected standards in line with the National Curriculum

### **3. The National Curriculum**

At Colehill First School, we deliver the above aims and the requirements of the National Curriculum in England (2014) through the following approaches to speaking and listening, reading and writing.

3.1. Speaking and Listening We recognise that 'fluency in the English Language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (The National Curriculum for England 2014). Our taught curriculum provides planned opportunities for speaking and listening across all subjects and in every year group. These opportunities enable our learners to:

- Speak clearly and convey their ideas confidently using appropriate forms of English, notably Standard English;
- Explain and justify their ideas with reasons;
- Ask questions of one another and of adults to check understanding;
- Develop their vocabulary and foster a love of widening their vocabulary;
- Discuss one another's ideas, exploring differences of opinion, agreeing and negotiating ideas as appropriate;
- Evaluate and expand upon the ideas of others;

- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and reasons. The curriculum offers regular additional opportunities for pupils to speak as part of a presentation or performance to class peers, the wider school community and parents.

3.2 Reading We recognise the crucial role that reading plays in enabling pupils to acquire knowledge, building upon what they already know, and we note that 'through reading, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.' (National Curriculum for England 2014) We recognise that 'reading also feeds pupils' imaginations and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.' (National Curriculum for England 2014).

Our taught curriculum provides planned opportunities for pupils to:

- read widely from a variety of high quality texts to foster a love of reading and of literature.
- make regular use of our well-stocked, inviting library in accessing such texts
- read regularly in class through independent reading, shared reading and guided reading.
- talk about books they are reading and recommend books and authors to one another.
- read frequently at home with opportunities with opportunities for parents / carers and school staff to share observations of pupils' reading between home and school.
- Learn systematically about the phonic structures around which our language is based, and use phonic knowledge to decode and encode words for reading and spelling. ~This is

achieved through Letters and Sounds, taught daily in Reception, years 1 and 2, and 'No Nonsense Spelling' taught weekly in years 2, 3 and 4.

- make use of ICT to enhance reading experiences and to learn from the English language as presented via the World Wide Web as well as on the printed page.

3.3 Writing We believe that writing is essential to thinking and learning and we strive to promote enjoyment of this complex skill. We know that 'teaching pupils to develop as writers involves teaching them to enhance the effectiveness of what they write as well as increasing their competence.' (National Curriculum for England 2014).

Our taught curriculum provides planned opportunities for pupils to:

- communicate their ideas effectively in writing with an age-appropriate awareness of audience and purpose;
- spell and punctuate words and sentences with increasing accuracy, drawing upon their knowledge of letters and sounds;
- use an increasingly wide range of grammar correctly at an age appropriate level.
- write fluently developing clear, neat, efficient joined handwriting
- expand the range of their writing, making full use of an increasingly wide range of grammar and an increasingly wide vocabulary.

#### **4. Curriculum Provision:**

4.1 Foundation Stage The Reception children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We give due priority to developing pupils' communication and language competency, with opportunities to develop secure early reading and writing skills. This underpins children's future life long learning.

In reception the daily routine will include planned and spontaneous activities which:

- develop speaking and listening around real, purposeful contexts and imaginary contexts;
- make use of ICT to enhance communication and language
- develop the gross and fine motor skills which underpin successful early handwriting;
- involve pupils and adults sharing and enjoying a range of rhymes, songs, stories and books;
- provide a print rich environment with multiple opportunities for oral language and written communication;
- develop early reading skills in ways that allow all groups of pupils to progress rapidly;
- provide purposeful shared, guided and independent reading and writing opportunities linked to the wider EYFS curriculum;
- enable the vast majority of our pupils to achieve age related expectations by the end of their time in EYFS.

There is fluidity in learning provision between Foundation Stage and Year 1, ensuring that transition is smooth and continuity and progression are effective.

4.2 Key Stage 1 At the beginning of Year 1, EYFS assessments are used to plan learning which transitions smoothly and seamlessly from the Foundation Stage curriculum into the National Curriculum. The teaching of English in KS1 will include:

- Specific reading, writing, phonics/spelling and grammar lessons, following the objectives of the English National Curriculum
- Speaking and listening opportunities, e.g. role play, pair talk, drama and hot seating, when appropriate preparing pupils for the writing process
- Word level learning, with discrete teaching of phonics and spelling;
- Sentence level learning using high quality texts to develop grammatical awareness and punctuation skills;
- Text level learning, again using high quality texts in a range of genres which develop comprehension and composition skills;
- Letter formation and handwriting taught and modelled using Colehill cursive script
- Immersion in a print rich environment that promotes a reading culture and develops children's oral and written communication
- Opportunities for pupils to prepare for the process of undertaking statutory assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, without distorting the curriculum so that it becomes test-driven.

#### 4.3 Key Stage 2

At the beginning of Year 3, outcomes from the KS1 teacher assessments and the statutory NC test results are used to inform staff, enabling a smooth transition in planned learning from KS1 to KS2.

The teaching of English in KS2 will include:

- Specific reading, writing, spelling and grammar lessons, following the objectives of the English National Curriculum
- 'genre overviews' to identify the success criteria for each unit of writing content, making meaningful links between pupils' own writing and high quality examples of written texts
- word level content with explicit teaching of spelling strategies / rules and phonics where required
- sentence level content, using high quality texts, to develop age appropriate grammatical awareness and punctuation skills;
- text level content, involving pupils reading from a range of genres to develop comprehension skills and to scaffold their own writing;
- writing using a range of text types, both in English and in cross-curricular writing, modelled to promote sustained composition;
- handwriting and presentational skills taught and modelled using the Colehill cursive script

- Immersion in a print rich environment that promotes a reading culture, both in terms of reading for information and reading for enjoyment
- speaking and listening opportunities across the curriculum, linked to higher order thinking skills and enabling pupils to use their spoken language skills to describe, explain, justify, persuade, reason, argue and convince.

#### 4.4 Phonics

From EYFS, pupils are introduced to, and follow, the ‘Letters and Sounds’ programme. Phonics is taught discretely in Foundation Stage and KS1 in daily lessons of 20-30 minutes length. It is also taught, where necessary, to groups of pupils in KS2. Letters and sounds is a key phonics approach which ensures that young children are well-placed to read and spell words with fluency and confidence by the time they reach the end of KS1.

4.5 Spelling Dedicated time is also allocated for teaching and investigating spelling patterns, in addition to word level content in the main English lesson. Children are encouraged to practise their spellings through investigation and this is recorded in their Spelling Journals, used from year 1 onwards. Word banks (given and created), along with dictionaries, are used to support children’s spelling at the point of writing.

4.6 Grammar This includes grammatical awareness, sentence construction, punctuation and higher-order grammatical skills. This is taught directly where appropriate and also through quality texts, modelled examples and investigation.

4.7 Reading We promote a positive reading culture throughout the school by creating cosy book areas in classrooms, an attractive and welcoming school library, engaging book displays and promoting the written word at all times and across all subjects. Children read a wide range of texts as individual readers, in guided groups, and as a whole class. Children are able to take home colour banded reading books to read to their parent/carer regularly. Parents make a comment in their child’s home-school reading log, and teachers and other adults comment via the log when the child reads in school.

### **5. Classroom approaches: Reading Reading is taught through:**

- Whole class reading that develops listening skills, a love of story and reading for pleasure and information
- Shared reading that immerses children in the pattern of story and features of text types.
- Guided reading that targets children’s reading skills.
- Independent reading in school.
- The reading environment. The print rich environment encourages children to interact with displays, to follow instructions and signs, promoting functional language. Within the

classroom the reading area is attractive and inviting, books are clearly accessible within labelled categories, by author or by genre. Themed displays are encouraged along with opportunities to write book reviews and show homemade books. Books are also displayed and promoted around the classroom and the whole learning environment of the school.

- The school library provides reference and reading materials for children and teachers. The school encourages all children to join and use their local library, just a stone's throw away from the school gate.

6. Classroom Approaches: Writing We believe that writing should be a creative, developmental process both at a functional and an imaginative level. All attempts at writing are valued and we recognise that all children have potential to be highly successful writers. Compositional and transcriptional skills are taught alongside the creative aspects. Immersion in reading, talk and preparation for writing is essential to the writing development process.

### **Writing is taught through:**

1. Shared writing that is modelled by the teacher with valued contributions from the children. 2. Guided writing that targets children at their point of writing. 3. Opportunities for developmental writing. 4. Independent writing. 5. Role play and drama, which are used to stimulate creativity in the composition of writing.

Throughout the school, children need opportunities to develop their confidence and practise their writing skills. All writing activities should have a purpose and quality should be promoted through pupils' writing books, and sometimes also publication or presentation to another audience. Writing is modelled through immersion in high quality texts from a range of trusted and well-known children's authors. Independent writing is supported through the use of dictionaries, word banks, writing frames or plans and, of course, success criteria.

6a. Handwriting The school has agreed a cursive joined script that is developed as appropriate from Year 1.

7. Classroom Approaches: Speaking and Listening Effective speaking and listening skills are fundamental to children's development and confidence in this area is a precursor to be success in many other areas of learning. Oral skills are directly taught, modelled and sensitively encouraged in whole class and small group settings. Opportunities across the whole curriculum are planned for and developed. Children play an active part in presentations (including class assemblies), topic talks, group discussions, debates and drama activities on a regular basis. There is good progression in the skills taught and assessment of significant achievements in speaking and listening. Digital videos and photos are a means of capturing progress and evaluating and improving learning.

8. Assessment At Colehill First School we set individual writing targets, which are then discussed with children so that they are clear how they can make progress across the next 5-7 week period. Progress and attainment in reading are recorded during the guided reading sessions on record sheets and feedback is given to parents via reading logs. Half-termly English assessments are carried out across the school using a school-wide assessment system. These are monitored regularly by the English and assessment leaders to check assessment is effective and to cross-check data entered on tracking spreadsheets.

9. ICT Information and Communication Technology is used to enhance learning and support effective teaching. All classes have an interactive whiteboard and computer and there is a computer suite available with at least one computer between two children. There are a range of writing and teaching programs on all computers to support the teaching and acquisition of English skills.

10. Entitlement/Equal Opportunities This policy supports and reflects our Equal Opportunities policy. We provide positive role models for girls and boys across culture and class through practice and resources. The school will ensure that:

- All children cover the content made statutory by the programmes of study within the EYFS Curriculum and National Curriculum.
- Children access the curriculum at the appropriate level, thus ensuring progression and differentiation.
- Suitable resources and learning environments will be available to enable children to access the learning required. Differentiated activities facilitate learning for less able pupils and extend learning for more able pupils.

### **11. Special Educational Needs**

- Children facing barriers to learning will be assessed by the SEN leader as required and specific provision will be made for them as detailed in their Provision Plans.
- Parents will be kept informed and encouraged to assist in helping their children with achieving specific learning outcomes or goals.
- The needs of children on Provision Plans are met through in-class support, the deployment of support staff, referral to and support from a range of outside agencies / professionals as appropriate.