



Literacy Policy

Prepared by: Sam England, Emily Woolley & Steph Waumsley

Governor responsibility: Quality and Outcomes Committee

Link Governor:

Date of Policy: Feb 2023

Review Date: Nov 2023

Policy Statement

At Heltwate School, we aim for all students to leave having achieved the highest standard they can reach. We strive to support pupils to achieve their long term goals and aspirations expressed by the pupils themselves and their parents/ carers within their EHCP and Individual Learning Plan (ILP). A key aim for all our pupils is to achieve the highest standard of English, according to their needs, to enable them success in their next phase of growing up.

English across the school must be accessible for all and we work to ensure that teachers are empowered and have the materials to enable all children to experience high quality English activities and lessons where communication is supported for all children at all times.

Curriculum Pathways

There are different Curriculum Pathways across Heltwate and Heltwate St George's. English across the school needs to be accessible and relevant for all learners, so we ensure that teachers are empowered and have access to a range of resources and materials to enable all children to experience high quality English activities and lessons, relevant to the Pathway, and to ensure that communication is supported for all children at all times.

Cornerstones is adapted to meet the requirements of the Pathway and will include objective statements from a range of areas including: EHCP (and differentiated track backs) Academic framework- Reading and Writing (Taken from Development Matters and National Curriculum 2014), Letters and Sounds and Accreditation Units.

Each Pathway has a document to follow, demonstrating how the English Curriculum should be taught. This document gives clear direction as to what lessons should be included on the class timetable. It allows the school to have a clear framework to show progression, differentiation and different primary focuses depending on the needs of the individual, whilst remaining flexible.

Aims

- To encourage individual development based on EHCP outcomes and Academic frameworks
- To encourage and promote a love and enthusiasm for reading
- To develop reading skills based on a phonetic approach, whole word recognition.
- Reading signs and symbols and pictures
- Reading for meaning
- To read for different purposes
- To experience a range of stories and complete work based on them in exciting, hand-ons approaches
- To develop fine motor skills through a range of multi-sensory activities
- To produce purposeful marks and understand that they convey meaning
- To develop a positive approach to writing
- To use a variety of means for recording their responses (picture, symbols, ICT, writing)
- To develop independence through key reading and writing skills

- To develop functional reading, writing and speaking and listening skills, where appropriate.

Teaching and learning

PECS and symbols:

Children in school may use PECs to support their communication in school. Where appropriate, they may use the PECs folder to exchange symbols as regular parts of the day including: register, snack, dinner as well as learning to use it as their voice to express their wants and needs.

Whilst some children have PECs, most children are supported by the use of symbols. Symbols are on display in all classrooms. Class teachers use symbols on their IWB to support understanding. Objects are used alongside symbols to develop vocabulary. Teachers often use symbols on their worksheets so children do not have some much dependence on adult support- we aim for our pupils to be as independent as possible.

Reading

At Heltwate, we approach reading in a holistic way that encompasses different approaches to support the Curriculum Pathways that enable children to experience success. Reading for pupils takes on a variety of forms depending on the Curriculum Pathway and needs of the individual. When we talk about reading at Heltwate this means:

- access and exposure to high quality texts
- encouraging interest in books through a sensory approach
- developing early reading skills using a phonics programme
- guided reading and appreciation of books
- Reading to an adult
- Using functional signs and symbols

For example classes on the Engage Pathway include lessons using sensory stories, movement songs and rhymes including singing bags. The whole school English Curriculum document details the approach to reading for each Pathway.

Each class has a reading area in their room with access to texts including fiction, non fiction and poetry. Some Pathway classes also enjoy a range of reading beyond books including learning songs and rhymes. Children are encouraged to appreciate books and this is reflected through appropriate care, treatment and storage of books. Any children working at Phonics Phase 5 at the Heltwate site begin Guided Reading when deemed appropriate by the class teacher. Guided Reading and Functional literacy is part of the pathway for learners at the St George's site. Students in KS4 and KS5 may reach a stage where they need to be able to recognise functional signs and symbols to support their transition to college and into adulthood. This approach is embedded in the Curriculum Pathway and is part of daily lessons.

Heltwate school has an 'Interactive library'. It has a range of books from touch and feel books, noisy books, books with flaps etc. to provide for a range of needs. We also have 'Now Press Play' audio books which encourage interaction and listening to instructions.

The library contains a range of banded books schemes both at Heltwate and St George's. Some teach children about the basic story patterns and have repetitive lines to encourage joining in and making predictions. Some books are phonetically plausible and are labelled for the teacher to choose a focus for the reading session. It is important for individual targets to be based on reading skills as well as comprehension, often this can be supported by work using 'Colourful Semantics'.

Students read or share a book with an adult from their team once a week. Sessions are recorded in a reading journal appropriate for each Curriculum Pathway. Children on the Engage Pathway choose a book of interest from the book corner and share it with an adult and the adult encourages the child to look at pictures and to listen for short periods of time. Whereas students in KS4 might choose books related to their personal interests.

The adult will write comments based on the child's English target (taken from their EHCP or Reading Framework) and will comment on the level of engagement from the child. However children on the Develop or Discover curriculum may choose a book banded book or phonic book from the library which they will then read and an adult will comment on this as well as their individual reading target. Where appropriate, students also choose a book or reading material of their choice.

Sensory Provision

Sensory stories can be used in groups with resources from 'Bag Books'. Sensory stories are also made up by the teaching team for different topics (often supported by book bags) as part of Phonics sessions and can be used across the school to support engagement in and with sensory assemblies.

Use of signs and symbols is encouraged throughout the school day and can be found in areas around the classroom including, but not limited to: the class time table, names of objects in class and worksheet and activity materials. Children become familiar with these symbols and learn to have quick recognition of them. This supports children in their communication needs too.

Phonics at Heltwate

At Heltwate we follow the phonics scheme, 'Twinkl Phonics', a DfE approved program. The teaching of phonics is tailored to meet the needs of the pupils within each individual pathway and the lesson duration and quantity will vary within each pathway. The Engage pathway teaches Twinkl Stage 1 for any pupil who is not accessing specific PECs programmes. Explore and Develop pathways continue this and move on to teaching Stages 2-6. Discover pathway may use Twinkl phonics to assist with the teaching of functional literacy as necessary.

Teachers model reading and writing using fundamental phonic skills throughout the lessons each week regardless of whether they have a specific discrete phonic lesson. Pupils will be given a phonetically decodable book (Rhino Reader book), this will support the development of the children's reading, if the child has been assessed as ready to access them by their class teacher. Each term the children are assessed using the Twinkl Phonics resources and this is recorded to show levels of progress.

Children working towards accreditation in Key Stage 4 use phonetic skills as and where appropriate. This is personalised on the students' Individual Learning Plans and implemented by the class teacher accordingly.

Writing at Heltwate

At Heltwate we value every child's individual ability to write, whatever format this may take. We consider writing to be a developmental process, therefore whatever level individuals achieve, their writing will be valued. In some Curriculum Pathways, children develop their pre-writing skills using Dough Disco and Squiggle whilst you Wiggle.

'Dough Disco' and 'Squiggle whilst you wiggle' are programs that are used in classrooms across the school to encourage children to get ready to write to their full potential. These activities focus on gross and fine motor skills and include music and movement in a fun way. An assessment of children's drawing progression will take place termly to assess the children's development in this area. Children who struggle to make marks due to their poor motor skills will be encouraged to develop their own writing skills through the use of symbols and other communication devices so that all skills are celebrated. A guide for non verbal/ non writing pupils has been implemented throughout school.

In KS3 and KS4, writing activities are based around Cornerstones topics and accreditation. New vocabulary is taught alongside the topic based learning and the use of pictures and symbols are used to support new vocabulary where appropriate. Teachers include opportunities to go outside of the classroom to complete writing activities for example writing with chalk on the playground, gathering natural materials or the interactive library. Children at all levels will be encouraged to choose to write in their free time and with a variety of different resources. If appropriate children will be invited to use ICT to write including building sentences on 'Communication in Print'

Handwriting

Children will develop their fine motor skills through the 'Dough disco' and 'Squiggle whilst you Wiggle program' to support children to be physically ready for writing in coordination handwriting. Pre-writing shapes are used as a basis for children's handwriting throughout the school. Children who are taught Phonics at Heltwate are taught how to form letters using a specific guide and patten called, 'Sparkle marks'. Writing assessment based on 'Development Matters' will be included, where suitable, for some students to encourage them to hold a pencil in an effective way. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately towards individual outcomes.

Where students are already writing, they are encouraged to form and orientate letters correctly according to the relevant accreditation criteria.

Colourful Semantics

Colourful Semantics is a system for colour coding sentences according to the role of different words. It can help children to break down sentences and understand the individual meaning of each word and its role in the sentence. It can help children to better understand word order.

Each pathway has dedicated time in class to undertake work on 'Colourful Semantics' to support and scaffold children's development in reading and writing. Colourful Semantics includes work on developing vocabulary as well as sentence structure depending on the needs and abilities of the children. A scheme of work has been developed to support this.

Whole school events:

At Heltwate we value opportunities for the whole school to work together to achieve and celebrate. We encourage a love for reading each year as part of 'World Book Day'. We use this event to plan a whole Literacy week based around a theme chosen by the School Council. The work generated from this is then celebrated in the Weekly Good Work assembly. Lower School use this time to create a corridor display of the book they have been working on to share with others. Work is celebrated across both sites in the form of displays and whole school assemblies. Events are shared at home with parents via Class Dojo.

Communication and Engagement

See the related 'Communication and Engagement Policy' which is linked to Literacy.

Attainment and Assessment

We review children's learning outcomes continuously using the assessment tool, 'Earwig' which is fully accessible for parents and carers to enable them to understand how their child is developing and progressing. English is assessed under 'Reading' and 'Writing' using the school's 'Academic framework'. The outcomes for these are from 'Development matters' and progress through the English curriculum (2014).

However, this is not the only area of assessment. We value all areas of English including Communication and have our own frameworks for each student as an individual which are based on their EHCP outcomes. These outcomes cover the four areas of need from the SEN Code of Practice (2015) and include:

'Cognition and learning' (Including basic English skills e.g. writing their own name, reading a menu)

'Sensory and physical development' (Including holding a writing implement, making gross motor marks in sensory materials)

'Communication and Interaction' (Using PECs to make an exchange, learning single sounds, singing key vocabulary and will include targets from Speech and Language therapists, where appropriate). All areas are equally valuable and will hold different weight for different individuals.

Students in Key Stage 4 and Post 16 then work on targets linked to Preparing for Adulthood which are supported by Accreditation outcomes. These assessments are monitored, with observations and evidence throughout and where possible in a cross curricular way to ensure fun, excitement and new experiences for all.

Students in KS4 and KS5 also undertake a range of accredited work depending on their Curriculum Pathway.

In KS4 Students complete OCR Life and Living Skills Home Management, ASDAN PSHE Short Course and AQA Step up to English. This is an examined route for those students who are working at the appropriate level. For other students pre-entry Unit Assessment Awards are available.

Students complete OCR Life and Living Skills modules, ASDAN Life Skills Challenges in Communication as well as AQA Step up to English.

The above criteria also pertains to students working on the Discover at Heltwate curriculum journey, alongside the following:

- Class Teachers are to use OCR and ASDAN modules to accredit work being produced, whilst following the Heltwate School's adapted Cornerstones Curriculum.
- Class Teachers are to ensure all National Curriculum objectives are being met within the Discover at Heltwate curriculum journey cycle
- Class teachers assess academic achievement against the National Curriculum at the end of each term, in addition to an initial baseline assessment
- Students on the 'Discover' Pathway at Heltwate are likely to complete less accreditation than in Upper School. This is due to their higher level of need.

In KS5, the Stepping On Pathway integrates vocational and life skills along with PfA. Students work through accredited routes using EQUALS and ASDAN. A functional approach to literacy is incorporated in these routes with Literacy for Information, Life and Leisure and Literacy for the Future. Students have practical experiences of Literacy, Reading and Writing e.g., form filling, shopping lists, signs in the community, reading menus.

There are lots of opportunities for students to engage in developing these skills in the community and wider school context. For example, OC Munch Box Cafe - reading and following recipes, menus, order forms, names and communicating with customers.

Role of the Head teacher

The Head teacher will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy
- Support the coordinators to ensure the policy is implemented effectively throughout the school

Role of the Coordinator

The coordinators will:

- Lead the development of this policy throughout the school.
- Review and monitor the policy.
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.
- Talk to members of staff and be approachable when asked for guidance about the Literacy/ English curriculum.

- Observe a number of lessons each year to ensure a good coverage of texts is being used and also to monitor continuity and progression throughout school.
- Collect examples of medium term plans/ phases of lesson plans which will be asked for and kept in a curriculum folder alongside examples of children's work. The work collected will demonstrate effectiveness differentiation in planning and evidence of outcomes on Earwig.
- Scrutinise work using Earwig to ensure compliance, challenge and quality is evident.
- Provide new teachers with a scheme of work to follow where formal lessons take place and to support class teachers to create a range of literacy based activities for those who are not completing formal lessons.
- Monitor assessments based on guidance materials from the Deputy Head and ensure evidence is tracked on Earwig in Lower school.
- Update staff regarding new materials.
- Provide INSET depending on need each year.

Role of School Personnel

School personnel are expected to:

- Comply with all aspects of this policy.
- Where appropriate, use Story Time Phonics and Dockside to teach phonics or an adapted version of 'Letters and Sounds.'
- Develop planning from schemes of work in Literacy based on Cornerstones, AQA Step up to English, EHCP outcomes and Earwig Academic frameworks.
- To ensure lessons are supported by high quality resources, including ICT resources.
- To make use of the school resources including the library, reading schemes, literacy games, phonic boxes, puppets, big books, computers and schemes.
- Identify problems that may arise and offer solutions.
- To ask for resources to be ordered which will benefit the learning of individuals, the class, or the school as a whole.
- To complete assessment of progress and achievement using Earwig and gather data for EHCP reviews and pupil progress meetings
- Teachers and support staff are to ensure all work is differentiated according to levels of academic and physical need of all children. Where possible symbols will be used to support reading and writing to ensure all children can access a full curriculum.

Role of the School Council

The School Council will:

- Support decisions about the focus of the World Book week topic

Outside Agencies

We have invaluable support for pupils who find access to Literacy particularly challenging. These pupils, where appropriate, will receive support from:

- The Speech and Language therapist
- 1:1 support with a designated Speech and Language Teaching Assistant in school
- The Occupational Therapist

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed by the coordinator, the Head Teacher and the nominated Governor. Any necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.