



Literacy / English Policy

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Nominated Governor: Doug Green

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The November 2014 Ofsted Inspection report made the following comments about Literacy at Heltwate:

There has been significant improvement in the way adults assess and record information about pupil's progress in English and Mathematics. The school can now demonstrate that pupils make good and increasingly outstanding progress from their individual starting points.

What the school needs to do to improve further.... Ensure that all subject leaders adopt the effective monitoring procedures and practices that are being used by the Literacy leaders so they can quickly identify any pupils at risk of not making expected progress and take steps to make sure they catch up.

The monitoring of the teaching of literacy across the school is particularly vigorous, it involves lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and pupil progress meetings.

The teaching of phonics across the school is a particular strength because teachers' skills in this area are very effective. As a result, pupil's reading skills have rapidly improved. This in turn allows them to build their skills in other subjects.

As a result of good teaching and well planned activities pupils make good, and for some, outstanding progress in developing literacy and communication skills.

Pupils throughout the school continue to make good progress, particularly in English and Mathematics.

Prior to this revision the policy was reviewed and updated in 2013- 2014

Policy Statement

Literacy/English should be an integral part of all lessons with focus on children achieving the highest level of literacy possible, and to become as independent as possible when leaving school.

Environment

Heltwate School provides a rich learning environment in which all children can learn and achieve and enjoy their education. Resources are well planned and used to support all levels of ability. Expectations are high to ensure behaviours in class allow for all children to learn.

Reading

Aims for Reading

- To encourage children's interest in books by creating an inviting atmosphere in which to read with a range of different books available. Classrooms to also have an area in class with both age appropriate and level appropriate books for children to access.
- To encourage appreciation of books; this is reflected through appropriate care, treatment and storage of books.
- Reading information within the environment is deemed to be essential so pupils will be provided with opportunities to read in meaningful situations and to respond appropriately to what they have read.
- Pupils to be heard reading on an individual/ small group basis at least once a week to ensure their progression in reading skills. Guided reading to be taught once each half term to develop comprehension skills through fiction and non-fiction reading material.
- Reading fluency and accuracy will be developed using both 'Letters and Sounds' and the National Curriculum, where a phonetical approach is an integral tool, incorporating blending for reading and segmenting for spelling.
- Comprehension will be paramount and pupils will extract information from text or illustrations according to their level ability and this will be monitored through individual/ small group work.
- Staff to have up-to-date training in how to support children's reading, using a phonics approach as the primary method, where suitable for individual children.
- Alphabetical knowledge to be taught using a phonics scheme in the lower school with continued support for students as they progress to upper school.

- Literacy co-ordinators will update staff regarding new reading materials to enable staff to match or differentiate the resources available to the needs of their pupils.
- Staff will provide INSET for parents and Teaching Assistants in order to clarify the Literacy Policy and to demonstrate profitable and pleasurable 'book sharing' strategies.
- Pupils will experience a variety of texts and will be taught to appreciate a range of styles, genres and themes, including those of other cultures. This will be planned for by class teachers within their literacy lessons and through cross-curricular links
- Pupils will be given the opportunity to read with others in collaborative situations.
- Alphabetical knowledge, dictionary skills and literacy terminology will be taught.
- All pupils will be offered the opportunity to attend book fairs.
- All pupils will be enrolled on the computerised library system and will be encouraged to borrow books for use in school once they have shown the ability to care and look after school property.
- Pupils will be taught to access information using the Library, computer software and the Internet.
- Reading will be cross-curricular and not necessarily take place during literacy sessions.
- Pupils will be able to access reading materials through use of symbols e.g. Communicate in Print

Implementation for Reading

- Timetabled literacy lessons for all classes (based on EYFS development matters, the National Curriculum and Letters and Sounds) Literacy/ English lessons now follow a program called, 'Cornerstones' up to year 9. After year 9 pupils follow an accredited route.
- Timetabled phonics lessons for classes in Lower school and the younger children in Upper School, or those in Upper School needing additional support.
- Colour groups to timetable themselves into the library where appropriate
- Regular 1:1/ small group reading sessions, (preferably once a week)
- Regular reading books or phonic work to be sent home for children to share with parents where appropriate, plus a reading diary or record sheet to encourage parent/ school links
- Guided reading to be planned for at least once per half term for all children working from the primary curriculum
- Staff INSET for new resources and training
- Reading leaflets to share information with parents about strategies used to support reading at Heltwater
- Access to wide range of reading resources, both fiction and nonfiction which should include newspapers, comics, effective interactive wall displays, Internet access, CD ROM's, DVDs, Big Books, play scripts, plus access to the public libraries
- All classrooms should develop attractive reading areas where space allows
- Guided Reading will be implemented, Phonics and Literacy lessons
- To have annual whole school 'Book Day' to encourage a love of reading
- Children to be taught using a Phonic scheme developed from Letters and Sounds. Although it is noted one scheme does not suit all, we chose the best approach to enable children to access different schemes to suit their age and maturity level. (Schemes include: Jolly Phonics, Floppy's Phonics and Dockside)
- Teaching will be geared to the level of ability for each pupil. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately and pupils may not reach expectation as stated in the National Curriculum.
- A guide to support children who are non-verbal has been implemented throughout school
- A literacy assessor will ensure rigorous levelling of children in Phonics, Reading and Spelling using set materials.

Writing

Aims for Writing

- Writing is a developmental process so whatever level individuals achieve their writing will be highly valued
- Pupils will learn to write in order to communicate meaning to a wide range of audiences
- Drama and role-play activities will be used to stimulate creative writing opportunities.
- Children will be able to choose to write in their free time
- Children will have the opportunity to complete free writing in diary work activities in lower school and as open ended tasks in Upper School
- Pupils will use a range of strategies to develop their spelling skills including phonic lessons, use of word books and encouragement to use dictionaries
- Pupils will learn to punctuate their writing to increase meaning according to their level of understanding
- Pupils will be encouraged, where possible, to re-read their writing and self-correct or support-correct their errors
- When writing, pupils will be encouraged to use a wide range of vocabulary
- Pupils will be taught to write for a range of purposes at text level
- Writing will be cross-curricular and, where appropriate, take place in purposeful activities outside of Literacy sessions
- Children will learn from the scheme of work which covers objectives taken from the National Curriculum using Hamilton Trust as a guide or from EYFS development matters in the Lower School and for children working in the Lower Upper School classes.

Implementation for Writing

- Staff will follow the scheme of work for Literacy, using objectives from the National Curriculum using a program called, 'Cornerstones' for our scheme of work
- Staff will follow plans from Jolly Phonics, Floppy Phonics and Dockside to teach phonics, which will aid the development of spelling skills. Teachers may also adapt 'Letters and Sounds' rather than using a published scheme.
- Children with phonics awareness will have a word book or use of dictionaries to aid spelling
- Common exception words to be taught in target time and as guided reading in Phonics planning. If appropriate, classrooms to display or have visual charts for these words
- 'Communication in Print' will be used to support writing activities
- A multisensory approach to written work will be encouraged, (teaching must be directed through all the senses to increase and reinforce learning potential. Therefore, the pupil's pre-literacy skills must be encouraged / developed first including auditory discrimination skills, visual discrimination skills, visual memory skills, gross / fine motor control)
- Pupils will be taught to use a range of punctuation strategies
- Teaching will be geared to the level of ability for each pupil. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately and pupils may not reach levels as stated in the National Curriculum, Letters and Sounds and EYFS Development matters guidance.
- Children with physical needs will be taught how to access writing through a whole text approach.
- Children will be encouraged to use ICT on the interactive whiteboard to select choices, to order elements of sentences or whole texts and to have a deeper understanding of writing in a range of settings
- Communication devices will be used to ensure non-verbal children can share their understanding and ideas
- Writing will be developed for all children incorporating the school ethos that all children can achieve and teachers will ensure resources are personalised for the children in their class
- A guide to support children who are non-verbal has been implemented throughout school
- A literacy assessor will ensure rigorous levelling of children in Phonics, Reading and Spelling using set materials.

Phonics

Aims for Phonics

- Children to have access to a phonics program that follows guidance from, 'Letters and Sounds'
- To teach systematic phonics
- To develop children's reading, (oral blending), and spelling, (segmenting), strategies
- To support children to become more confident with their literacy skills in both reading and writing
- To develop children's speaking and listening skills
- To encourage children to have strategies to use independently to support life skills
- To develop reading and writing of common exception words
- Develop children's ability to recognise individual letters and groups of letters
- Develop children's ability to know which letter(s) are representing which sounds
- To develop children's ability to blend individual sounds together to read real words
- Develop a desire to read and a sense of achievement as reading skills progress
- To encourage children to become independent readers and writers
- Where appropriate, children should use phonics as their primary approach to decode unknown words and for children to read phonetically irregular words quickly and efficiently to speed up their own decoding.

Implementation of Phonics

- Staff INSET to ensure all staff are aware of new strategies and resources
- Timetabled phonics sessions (1-2 per week in lower school, at least 1 each week for lower upper school classes)
- Resources to be checked and monitored regularly to ensure they are available for all staff and children to assess
- A variety of Floppy's phonics book including fiction, non-fiction and traditional tales
- Base- line assessments to take place at the start of each academic year to ensure planning is aimed at the correct level to suit the majority of the class
- End of phase/term/ year assessments to monitor progress
- Children to be heard reading every week by a member of staff and, where possible, this reading session should integrate fully decodeable phonics books to consolidate learning
- If it is deemed suitable, homework activities will be sent home to parents.
- Resources in library to support each phase to be used by class teachers as and when appropriate
- Assessments to take place on a minimum termly basis to assess progress against a baseline assessment
- Teaching will be geared to the level of ability for each pupil, where possible. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately and pupils may not reach levels expected as stated in the National Curriculum.
- Children who are non-verbal to be encouraged to use a range of phonic programs to ensure they can assess new learning.
- ICT to be used to enable all children to show their understanding whether verbal or non-verbal
- A guide to support children who are non-verbal has been implemented throughout school
- A literacy assessor will ensure rigorous levelling of children in Phonics, Reading and Spelling using set materials.

Information about Floppy's Phonics

- Systematic synthetic phonics program
- Included oxford reading tree characters who the children are familiar with
- Each phase is supported by lesson plans, resources and reading books (fiction, non-fiction and traditional tales)
- Work is made more exciting by an interactive whiteboard activity CD ROM which is available for all teachers to install onto their computers
- Assessments to take place using the resources from the pack at the end of each 'book' (set of sounds)
- Other resources to be used as and when appropriate for the individual class

Information about Dockside

- Systematic phonics program which follows methods and orders of teaching stated in Letters and Sounds
- It is a 'second chance structured phonics scheme' and is therefore aimed at children who have experienced phonics previously
- It is aimed at older children
- It aims to get children from non-readers to NC level 3, (in a mainstream setting)
- It follows a step by step progression
- It has cumulative progress
- Teaches children to blend and segment for effective reading and spelling
- It has no assumptions of what learning is already known
- It has age-appropriate content
- Gives clear and direct support with planning and assessment
- Other resources to be used as and when appropriate for the individual class

A range of Guided Reading books are located in the library. These include Rapid Readers with teaching materials and Scholastic Guided Reading packs. There are also a number of plays which can be read as part of Guided reading.

Hand writing

Aims for Handwriting

- To teach pupils to form individual letters correctly
- To enable pupils to write neatly, clearly and fluently (whether printed or joined)
- To encourage pupils to take care and have pride in their presentation of their written work
- Where appropriate, pupils in final years of Lower School and the Upper School to start using a joined up style of writing, where appropriate
- Where appropriate, pupils in the Upper School will start using a pen

Implementation for Handwriting

- An agreed style of writing to be used throughout the school using guidance from Debbie Hepplewhite, (see appendix)
- Pupils will articulate the instructions for each letter formation as it is written, (see appendix for guidance on correct wording as letters are formed)
- Handwriting and formation of letters to be taught within phonics lessons with children practising on different media to form letters, (in the air, on one another's backs, in rice, in paint, on the interactive whiteboard and finally on paper)
- Children who are developing their fine motor skills use fine motor skill sheets and take part in other activities including jigsaw work and threading to encourage fine motor skill progression
- Sessions of letter formation and handwriting must be regular, particularly during the early stages and during the transition to joined writing
- Staff members will be expected to form and join letters according to the policy when writing in children's books
- Handwriting books will be provided when suitable for individuals and work sheets will include guidelines to show how to form letters when children are learning/ practising.
- Teaching will be geared to the level of ability for each pupil, where possible. Work and activities will be differentiated appropriately and pupils may not reach levels as stated in the National Curriculum therefore adapted 'Development Matters' guidelines will give an assessment.

Assessment Recording and Reporting

- Assessment will be based on the National Curriculum and Development Matters statements for Literacy/ English and will be recorded with Cornerstones. Phonics will be recorded against the different phases.
- Pupils working up to year 9 will have evidence collected using Tapestry as an online learning journal.
- All staff members are expected to annotate children's work stating the amount of support given and provide children with constructive feedback. This should build on positive attributes of the work produced, but also constructively highlight areas for improvement. In EYFS classes children's work will be annotated by what they have said and done rather than writing to the child (see policy)

- Assessment will take account of all children regardless of their abilities and physical difficulties. Therefore levels on annual review will ensure children can progress and will show areas of literacy that are inaccessible to individual children due to their needs

Literacy and Accreditation

- Teachers working with students in Upper School KS4 base their literacy coverage on accredited units, following the OCR Life and Living skills modules.
- Students working in Upper School are expected to cover around 3 literacy modules per term, which allow for breadth of study and opportunity for progression through the varying entry levels as appropriate.
- The module overviews provide a starting point for teachers to then adapt and differentiate learning as needed within individual class groups
- Teachers are expected to ensure that learning covers a range of fiction, nonfiction and poetry texts
- Class teachers are required to provide lesson planning, resources and worksheets that meet the needs of individual learners
- Students' work is to be annotated in line with the school marking policy
- Evidence of students' work is to be kept in a record folder so it is easily available for moderation and scrutinies
- Work is to be moderated termly by the exams officer
- All students are to be baseline assessed during the Autumn Term against the National Curriculum. Students are then to be assessed again during the Summer Term to show academic achievement across the year
- Students in KS4 working with Rainbow Rooms also undertake accreditation. These students complete OCR Life and Living Skills modules, alongside ASDAN Life Skills Challenges in Communication. The above criteria also pertain to Rainbow Rooms' students, 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 Rainbow Rooms' literacy cycle
 - Class teachers are to assess academic achievement against the National Curriculum at the end of each term, in addition to an initial baseline assessment
 - Students within Rainbow Rooms will complete less accreditation than in Upper School. This is due to their higher level of need, more rigorous academic assessments against the National Curriculum and focus on SCERTS targets within the Rainbow Rooms. Rainbow Room students also have a higher weighting of their timetable dedicated to Lifeskills and functional skills, enabling them to access the community more successfully.

The role of the governing body

The Governing Body has:

- The duty to set the framework of the school's policy on Literacy
- Responsibility to ensure that the school complies with this policy
- Delegated powers and responsibilities to the Head teacher to ensure that school personnel and pupils are aware of this policy
- Delegated powers and responsibilities to the Head teacher to ensure all visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy
- Appoint two coordinators for Literacy to work with the Head teacher
- The duty to support the Head teacher and school personnel in maintaining high standards of work completed in Literacy
- Responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy
- Responsibility for ensuring policies are made available to parents
- Nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the coordinator and to report back to the Governing Body
- Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

The 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

The role of the coordinator

The coordinator will:

- Lead the development of this policy throughout the school
- Review and monitor
- 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 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 childrens' work. The work collected will demonstrate effective differentiation in planning
- Give new teachers a scheme of work to follow
- Monitor assessments based on guidance materials from the Deputy Head and ensure evidence is tracked on Tapestry in Lower school.

The role of the nominated governor

The Nominated Governor will:

- Work closely with the Head teacher and the coordinators
- Ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date
- Ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy
- Report to the Governing Body every term
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

The role of school personnel

School personnel are expected to:

- Comply with all aspects of this policy
- Use Floppy Phonics and Dockside to teach phonics or an adapted version of 'Letters and Sounds'
- Develop planning from schemes of work in Literacy based Cornerstones
- 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 the problem
- 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 using the following moderation tools: National Curriculum level descriptors and Development Matters and provide evidence of these in reports for annual reviews
- Teachers and support are to ensure all work is differentiated according to levels and physical needs of all children. Where possible symbols will be used to support reading and writing to ensure all children can access a full curriculum.

The role of pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Behave in a way that allows learning to take place
- To read once a week with a member of staff in class

- To take books home to read each week and return them to school in the same condition they went home in.
- To respect resources used to support learning in class
- To take part in all lessons
- To use a word book where appropriate
- To ensure they have the correct resources and are in the correct mood to complete their best work in Literacy sessions
- To take part in all literacy lessons differentiated as appropriate

The role of parents carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- Hear children read at least once a week
- If spellings are given out by a teacher in Upper School, parents are expected to support children to learn these at home
- To encourage children to read and write
- To encourage children to look after books sent home
- To be responsible for reading books that are sent home

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

Raising awareness of this policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- The School Handbook/Prospectus
- The school website
- The Staff Handbook
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- School events
- Meetings with school personnel
- Communications with home, such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- Reports, such annual report to parents and Head teacher reports to the Governing Body

Monitoring effectiveness of this policy

Annually, (or when the need arises), the effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed by the coordinator, the Head teacher and the nominated governor and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.