



MEADOWFIELD SCHOOL

ENGLISH POLICY

Introduction:

English is a core National Curriculum subject and therefore every child and young adult within the school is entitled to access it. All pupils of all abilities access English (inclusive of language and literature) that is appropriately differentiated to meet their needs.

This policy document will articulate our school approach to the learning of English, including specific reference of our approach to reading, writing, spoken language and phonics alongside our ethos of Total Communication.

We refer to and follow current statutory requirements and guidance in all aspects of our English curriculum including the current Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015).

Meadowfield School is dedicated to raising the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural [SMSC] understanding of its pupils and promoting British Values in their SMSC development. Opportunities to explore all aspects SMSC and Fundamental British Values [FBV] are embedded across the curriculum, including English.

Aims:

- To ensure all pupils can access the English curriculum and frameworks at a relevant level, giving support when required to ensure that a range of experiences, skills and knowledge are progressively covered, encompassing lateral consolidation as well as linear progression.
- To identify opportunities and promote literacy across the whole curriculum.
- To enable pupils to progress at a rate that is aspirational yet within the context of their needs.

- To facilitate opportunities to promote and encourage independence, collaborative and pupil-led learning throughout all strands of English.
- To explore a range of learning styles to ensure that learning experiences have the greatest impact possible on learning.
- To make English an enjoyable subject by ensuring that topics are relevant, interesting and age appropriate by offering wider opportunities to promote enjoyment in English i.e. theme days, special visits, competitions, visitors and events.
- To emphasise the application of the skills learned within English to everyday life.
- To study appropriate literature and recognise its importance to the world we live in.
- To encourage pupils to explore, test and demonstrate their English skills with their peers.
- To offer experiential learning (including outdoor learning and off-site visits) when appropriate.

Total Communication

Meadowfield uses a Total Communication approach within school, meaning that communication is encouraged and supported in all aspects of our curricula. This means that we celebrate and equally respect all the forms of communication that our pupils use including eye contact, facial expression, body language, vocalisations, hearing, touch, smell, taste, speech, symbols, photos, drawings, objects, written work, art, music, contextual clues, signs and gestures. These are supplemented through the use of relevant technologies and augmentative devices such as voice recognition software and eye-gaze technology. We use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Synthetic phonics programmes (Sounds-Write) to facilitate meaningful communication.

Curriculum Offer and Planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage teaches Communication and Language and Literacy daily through a mixture of planned play and adult directed activities. The Early Years support all communication and literacy through modelling spoken and written language, teaching symbol supported communication, using Letters & Sounds Stage 1 activities, singing songs and rhymes and developing rhythm through music.

Lower School currently focuses a minimum 5 hours per week on English, the Secondary Department 5 sessions and the Sixth Form Department allocate 3 sessions per week.

Lower School focuses on teaching synthetic phonics to pupils with a range of alternative approaches such as See and Learn, Letters and Sounds and Sounds-Write. The Secondary Department focuses on improving English skills alongside gaining accreditation for all pupils. In the Sixth Form, Functional Skills English is taught as a discrete subject. It is designed to equip pupils with reading, writing and spoken language skills needed in everyday life such as reading menus, completing application forms - both paper versions and online - and compiling C.Vs. Pupils not able to access the Functional Skills programme will access either the IMPACTS curriculum or will work towards Welsh Joint Board qualifications.

Assessment and Monitoring

All pupils are base-lined when joining the school, in addition to this the base-line is confirmed every year as a measure for progress. Such progress is monitored daily through formative short term lesson plans, where staff teams monitor progress throughout the duration of the lesson. Such progress is collated and tracked through the use of Pupil Asset termly. Effective marking, advice and feedback is given to pupils throughout the day in line with the Feedback and Marking Policy. This ensures pupils are reaching their full potential and where appropriate, next steps are discussed with individual pupils.

Summative assessment is undertaken throughout the whole school year for Secondary and Sixth Form pupils. Qualifications are obtained through the Welsh Joint Education Committee Entry Pathways, ASDAN Personal and Social Development and OCR Entry Level Certificates.

Regular moderation is planned to develop consistency of marking, improve accuracy of assessment data and increase relevance of data to drive intervention strategies. Moderation takes place through termly pupil progress meetings, teacher moderation meetings and county moderation opportunities.

Parents, governors and other stakeholders are regularly informed of pupil progress and have the opportunity to discuss progress with staff at parent consultation meetings, Person Centred Reviews as well as a formal written report sent out annually.

Subject Leader's Responsibilities

Subject leaders will undertake monitoring on a regular basis, identifying a focus and liaising with colleagues to provide quality assurance. This includes work sampling, observation,

audits, and liaison with other professionals. The subject leader will undertake peer observations of English across the school and uses work scrutiny to review samples of work, identifying strengths and weaknesses and actions for future improvements. Subject leaders will communicate initiatives and current developments in the subject to classroom practitioners as well as offer support to other colleagues in the delivery of English. The effectiveness of the Subject Leader will be determined through self-evaluation to be completed annually and monitored throughout the academic year. An annual report will be delivered to the board of governors every academic year.

Our Approach to Reading

The ability to read is essential to pupils if they are to access all areas of the curriculum and meet the demands of the world beyond school. It is also important that pupils are able to gain pleasure from reading. Many pupils find reading very difficult and may join the school with negative attitudes to reading due to a prolonged history of failure. Some pupils are able to decode but have little understanding of what they have read. We therefore place great emphasis on the teaching of reading and comprehension as well as installing a love of reading through enabling pupils to be successful as readers. For pupils with more severe learning difficulties, reading may be restricted to the use of essential words, symbols and picture cues.

Pupils are given opportunities to develop their reading skills in a variety of ways with exposure to all text types. English schemes of work over a year will include different non-fiction text types and a range of fiction genres, poetry and plays; encompassing all strands of spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning. Texts are chosen to appeal to the age and interests of the pupils. Non-fiction text types include application forms and C.V.'s to support transition from school to college or the workplace.

Combinations of shared, paired, guided and independent reading opportunities are employed alongside assessment. These opportunities develop a range of reading strategies, including knowledge of context, phonics, grammar, word recognition and graphics. Small group weekly literacy sessions based on addressing specific needs are used to provide intervention for those requiring it. Additional individual programmes of support for pupils

experiencing more serious and prolonged difficulties are devised by the class teacher with the support of the English subject leader and Phonics and Reading Co-ordinator.

Approaches to reading at Meadowfield:

- Activities that involve rhythm – greetings session with call and response names, activities where pupils clap or stamp out each syllable. Also note the importance of singing and repetition in this.
- Pupils with speech are encouraged to copy, blend and recognise words e.g. *mon-key* (always start with ensuring that pupils finish word), *ta-ble*. These activities develop early oral blending skills. They can be built upon with simple cards with symbols and eventually simple sentence building activities. Pupils can undertake phrase completion activities – use 2/3 word phrases “smelly socks” written on two pieces of paper, “bucket and spade” on 3 pieces of paper.
- Communication sessions with PMLD pupils will take the form of intensive interaction sessions. These sessions contribute to the development of early literacy skills.
- For those pupils without speech, reading activities can be undertaken using pictures; matching beginnings and ends of words on a picture card, also matching symbols to real objects. As pupils progress they move on to dividing phrases into words not syllables – can do 1:1 correspondence activities where pupils listen to a phrase or sentence and point to a counter for each word. This is quite an advanced skill that requires pupils to be aware that words have different lengths and comprise a varying number of syllables.
- Stories and rhymes that have repeated words or phrases are also used giving pupils the opportunity to finish lines/phrases and/or add words allowing pupils to finish the lines “We’re going on a?”
- We encourage working from left to right to promote understanding of the conventions of reading and writing.
- Pupils are encouraged to play with sounds – we encourage vocalisations.
- Photographs/pictures of activities and events are a useful tool. Pictures can capture the full attention of very young children and our pupils and teach the skill of extracting meaning from illustrations to help them make sense of the text. This continues to be used by our pupils as we read stories to them and is an important skill for those who are not going to read or write conventionally.

- Object cues and objects of reference are used for more profound pupils. Objects of reference support early communication skills and prepare pupils for symbol-supported learning
- Many pupils will read symbols. Symbols are important in supporting communication and reading skills. They are also used for timetables and sequencing skills such as dressing, meal times.
- We use strategies to access literature through means other than reading – call and response, drama, television, audio and visual technologies, storytelling and therapeutic singing – are all important even though they may not lead to conventional literacy.
- Some pupils access phonics in a more conventional way. Whilst we encourage pupils to read words, some learners are supported with the use of symbols to aid in the contextualisation of the word or sentence.
- Hearing loss has a serious impact on speech perception. We use additional strategies that can support communication – signs, gestures, facial expressions.
- We recognise that the teaching of phonics needs to be consistent and sustained throughout. ‘Sounds-write’ approaches are embedded across the curriculum and our pupils are encouraged to transfer, practice and refine skills in a range of contexts.
- Our pupils develop a range of sight vocabulary which will be increasingly linked to life skills such as social sight signs. The recognition of this sight vocabulary is essential to our pupils as they prepare for life beyond Meadowfield. However, “look and say” methods do not develop de-coding skills i.e. ways to break up the word and read it.
- The Accelerated Reading programme is used within the Secondary Department. This program tests reading comprehension. Pupils select books on their reading level, read independently, and take an independent comprehension test on the computer. This programme gives teachers the information they need to monitor pupils' reading practice and make informed decisions to guide their future learning.
- Books Beyond Words is an intervention used in the Sixth Form and is aimed at supporting pupils who find pictures easier to understand than words. It acts as a communication tool and is used to help pupils better understand and talk about everyday situations and experiences they would otherwise find difficult to understand in words. The Books Beyond Words scheme encourages pupils to share ideas and builds confidence talking within a small, secure group.

- Throughout the school, pupils' progress in English and phonics is included in discussions that take place at Progress Meetings and when target setting on Educational Health Care Plans [EHCP]. This ensures that challenging targets are set so pupils make expected progress over time.
- Statutory requirements for reporting on reading and writing progress in English are met in consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principals and Heads of Department who refer to data on Pupil Asset when making statutory returns on pupil progress.

Our Approach to Writing

Meadowfield School aims to equip pupils with the skills and opportunities needed to write in order for them to feel valued as writers and appreciate others' writing. Through experiencing writing in both a physical and cognitive way, pupils will be able to develop and refine their writing and handwriting skills. Pupils will recognise writing as a form of communication and source of enjoyment. Providing pupils with the opportunities to write for real audiences will make writing a meaningful, legitimate activity and will promote confidence and a sense of achievement.

Aims

- To provide the means and resources necessary so all pupils are able to access writing either through mark-making, using symbols, choice boards, sensory writing, adapted computers, ICT, story boards, writing frames, speech bubbles, Sounds-Write sessions or Write Dance.
- To provide pupils with opportunities to make writing a source of enjoyment and achievement and to promote SMSC and Fundamental British Values [FBV] by providing visits to a range of appropriate educational establishments and theatres.
- To use author visits/visits by dramatic production companies to the school as a springboard for whole school writing projects.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to write clearly, accurately and confidently for a range of real audiences e.g. thank you or appreciation letters for visits undertaken; requests from official bodies for information; writing to local MPs or newspapers on issues of local or national importance; diary writing; invitations to peers or parents to

attend school productions and events; questionnaires to parents; a pupil newsletter; competition entries.

- To encourage, support and develop independence in writing.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to produce extended writing to develop their ideas in depth and detail.
- To promote the evaluation of pupil's own work, in addition to responding constructively to others' writing.
- To encourage the development of a consistent, clear handwriting style and to be aware of the importance of presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively
- To encourage pupils to take risks and play with language.
- To ensure pupils understand the conventions of writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling, in addition to a range of varied linguistic and literary techniques.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to plan, draft and edit their writing.
- To provide meaningful marking with constructive advice that will help pupils rectify errors and improve their work in future.
- To develop typing skills to support writing as a life skill.
- To give encouraging, constructive and immediate feedback to pupils on their written work.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to observe teachers' writing on a daily basis.
- For teachers of all subjects to promote and encourage writing within lessons.

Interventions

Sounds-Write- a Department for Education acknowledged synthetic phonics programme designed to equip pupils with reading, writing and spelling skills.

See and Learn –

First Phase Interventions: Individual 1:1 phonic intervention with Phonics and Reading Co-ordinator.

Second Phase Interventions: Daily 1:1 phonic intervention with specifically trained class Teaching Assistant.

Write Dance – This is a progressive music and movement programme developed for the teaching of pre-writing and writing skills. This programme uses music and movement to

introduce handwriting to pupils; improving their motor skills and providing a strong foundation for writing.

Communicate in Print

Widgit – Using symbols and pictures to write

Guided Writing sessions

Sensory programmes

Colour-coded sentence writing

Clever Fingers

Clicker 7

Books Beyond Words - an intervention aimed at supporting pupils who find pictures easier to understand than words. This scheme encourages pupils to share ideas and builds confidence talking within a small, secure group.

British Sign Language

Augmented communication devices

Use of writing slope, pencil grips and writing pens

Our Approach to Spoken Language

Overall the school aims to provide pupils with the opportunity to generalise knowledge, skills and understanding within a variety of contexts. The ability to speak and listen is fundamental to pupils' language and social development. It is an essential tool for all areas of the curriculum, as talk underpins learning and thinking. Developing early spoken language is recognised as the early foundation blocks for progression in phonics, reading and spelling.

Meadowfield School believes it is essential that pupils are motivated and feel comfortable in communicating with those around them. It is therefore vital that a positive working relationship is established between pupil and adults to ensure that concepts in Communication, Language and Literacy are embedded and provide an opportunity to promote pupils speaking and listening skills more widely.

Spoken Language:

Aims

In order to promote high quality speaking and listening, teachers will:-

- immerse pupils in an environment that is rich in narrative and vocabulary in order to enhance and extend their experiences of language and literacy across the curriculum,
- provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to use talk for learning
- set appropriate challenges for all pupils,
- encourage the development of reading skills through speaking and listening with a keen focus on developing understanding the spoken language,
- develop pupil's oral and auditory skills to reinforce and extend reading and writing skills,
- utilise a range of augmentative communication devices to meet the needs of all pupils,
- use ICT as a means of enabling pupils to access the spoken language and to reinforce and extend their learning,
- provide a clear structure for tasks that require pupils to learn through talk; developing and encouraging responsiveness, participation and interaction,
- adopt multi-sensory teaching approaches to engage all pupils in speaking and listening.

Pupils will:-

- develop the ability to speak or communicate with confidence, clarity and fluency.
- understand and use conventions for discussion and debate,
- work collaboratively with peers to discuss reading, writing and speech across the curriculum,
- participate in a range and variety of expressive and receptive communication experiences by listening appropriately and responding accordingly,
- participate in topic related role-play opportunities to develop language use in a range of contexts,
- develop the capacity to listen and communicate in situations that challenge them to interact in more complex situations,
- initiate and maintain short conversations in their preferred mode of communication.

Our Approach to Phonics

At Meadowfield School we want to ensure that all pupils receive access to daily phonic sessions to raise attainment within the Communication, Reading and Writing area of learning by providing a high quality, systematic, synthetic phonic programme.

The school aims to provide a secure, stimulating and enriching environment where there is equal access to phonic knowledge and understanding.

Aim:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a consistent whole school approach is applied to the teaching of phonics.

Meadowfield School follows the 'Letter and Sounds' Phase 1, 'Sounds-Write, and See and Learn Phonic programmes. Rigorous assessment takes place at each Key Stage to ensure that each learner is placed on the most appropriate phonics programme for their needs. Approaches are adapted, when required, to maximise access for pupils.

Pupils working on the 'Letters and Sounds' Programme will work through activities that are designed to help:

- listen attentively,
- enlarge their vocabulary,
- speak confidently to adults and other children.

Sounds-Write is a linguistic phonics programme that is designed to be delivered whole class, small group or one-to-one. Pupils working on this programme will be taught:-

- the skills of blending, segmenting and phoneme manipulation,
- the sound to spelling correspondences they need to learn,
- the conceptual understanding needed to become fluent readers and spellers specifically:
 - letters represent sounds,
 - sounds can be spelt with one, two, three or four letters

- sounds can be spelt in more than one way
- many spellings represent more than one sound

See & Learn Language and Reading:

A programme of activities designed to help children who have Down's Syndrome learn to talk and read. It is based on research into the visual learning strengths of young children who have Down's Syndrome, and may be useful for other children who benefit from a visually-based approach to learning. Pupils working on this programme begin with First Word Pictures activities and progress onto First Written Words

High quality teaching of phonics will be planned and delivered through interactive sessions that keep pupils engaged and focussed. These include:-

- Lower School pupils receive a daily discrete phonics session where daily practice of word building, letter formation, word reading, spelling, dictation and phoneme manipulation exercises are undertaken,
- use a multi-sensory approach so that pupils learn from simultaneous visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities,
- have access to differentiated phonics and spelling work according to their need, so that all pupils are given sufficient challenge at a level at which they can experience success.

Assessment

Meadowfield School will undertake a rigorous planning, assessment and tracking process that includes:-

- a structured and cohesive approach to the planning and delivery of phonics across Key Stages in supported by the Phonics and Reading Co-ordinators in Lower School and the Secondary Department,
- a clear identification of the learning needs of pupils to ensure that the teaching approaches used promote success,

- regular formative assessment will be undertaken weekly by both the Class Teachers, trained Teaching Assistants and the Phonics and Reading Co-ordinators to ensure that every pupil makes progress.

Related policies:-

Curriculum Policy

Teaching Learning and assessment Policy

Total Communication Policy

Date Reviewed: March 2019