

# English Policy



At Downview, we aim to inspire children to develop a love of language and equip them with the ability and skills to read, write and communicate with confidence.

At Downview Primary School, we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills and that through our English curriculum we can help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively through spoken language and creatively through written language. They will develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. We aim to inspire children to enjoy and appreciate literature.

Literacy is at the heart of all children's learning enabling them to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas.

## Purpose

- To promote a shared love and understanding of literacy and develop a rich and varied vocabulary.
- To establish an entitlement for ALL pupils; at Downview Primary School we believe that every child has the right to a broad and inspiring Literacy curriculum.
- To establish high expectations of all pupils, enabling all children to reach their full potential.
- To promote continuity and consistency across the school.

## Aims

To encourage children:

- to be effective, good listeners and competent communicators;
- to express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts both fiction and non-fiction using appropriate technical vocabulary;
- to foster an interest in words and their meanings, and to develop a growing vocabulary in both spoken and written form;
- to enjoy and engage with and understand a range of text types and genres;
- to be able to write in a variety of styles and forms showing awareness of audience and purpose;
- to develop powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness in all areas of literacy:
- to use grammar and punctuation accurately
- to understand spelling patterns and rules
- to use phonic strategies to read and spell
- to produce effective, well-presented written work in fluent and legible handwriting.

## **Teaching and Learning**

We believe that children learn best through cross-curricular, first-hand experiences and varied teaching styles, ensuring that explicit Literacy objectives are taught and supported by the use of quality texts, within meaningful and creative contexts.

At Downview, we believe in first-hand experience to enhance the teaching and learning of English. Visits and visitors are regularly welcomed into the school such as authors, storytellers, librarians, Steyning Book Shop and drama groups such as the Rainbow Theatre Company.

Children visit places that are linked to their topic which give them first-hand experiences, dressing up days also motivate them as speakers and writers. Drama strategies are also used to develop and improve the quality of writing; for example Frieze Frame, Hot Seating, Thought Fists and The Echo Game.

## **Planning**

The National Curriculum 2014 forms the basis of teaching and learning. All children receive at least the minimum entitlement of a daily English lesson. Teachers use the National Curriculum end of year expectations as a starting point for creating their medium term literacy plans. Quality texts are then used to deliver year group objectives, helping the children to bridge the gap between behaving as a writer and behaving as a reader.

Throughout the school the 'Talk for Writing' P. Corbett approach is used.

Teachers work towards independent learning and differentiate when required for optimum learning. Teachers employ a range of multi-sensory teaching strategies to support learning and make learning memorable.

Literacy skills are taught and reinforced through a cross curricular approach. ICT is used where it enhances, extends and complements literacy teaching and learning.

## **Speaking and Listening**

At Downview we believe that children need to have the opportunity to 'talk it' before they 'write it'. The 'Talk for writing' approach supports this.

Teachers and all adults in school model speaking clearly, using Standard English and all children are encouraged to participate in pairs, small groups and class discussions.

Listening is also modelled, as is the appropriate use of non-verbal communication, respecting the views of others.

Learning takes place in a variety of situations and group settings. For example, these could include reading aloud as an individual, working collaboratively on an investigation, reporting findings as a newscaster, interviewing people as part of a research project, acting as a guide for a visitor to school or responding to a text in shared or guided reading.

Our children will build language experiences from: recounting events, participating in discussion and debate, talk for writing- retelling stories and poems, expressing opinions and justifying ideas, listening to stories read aloud, presenting ideas to different audiences, taking part in school performances, responding to different kinds of texts, listening to ideas and opinions of adults and peers, role-play and other drama activities across the curriculum.

## The Writing Process

Children are encouraged to use different styles of planning throughout the school. This guides and scaffolds their writing. Many **think-pair-share** opportunities are encouraged so that the children talk through their ideas as part of the writing process: immersing in a quality texts, analysing features of text, retelling, shared writing, magpie-ing language, planning, drafting and crafting, writing, reading work aloud and then finally editing and proof-reading.

Teachers promote writing and look for ways to inspire and motivate pupils so that they see themselves as 'writers'.

## HANDWRITING

**Our aim is to encourage children to form letters correctly and write legibly, neatly, fluently and with increasing speed.**

At Downview, we broadly follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme with a few agreed adaptations. This is displayed for staff and children in every classroom. Teachers and Teaching Assistants use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme to model good handwriting at all times, e.g. when writing on the whiteboard and labels for displays and when marking books.

We believe that the skill of handwriting needs to be taught and modelled daily as it is **not** a natural skill. Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Initially children should practise with larger movements to 'feel' the letter formation and progress onto smaller movements, developing their pencil grip and control. As a fine motor activity; hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting and this controls the direction and shape of each letter developing children's kinaesthetic "muscle memory" of spellings.

Handwriting is taught explicitly, in short frequent sessions and wherever possible, alongside phonics and spellings. It is modelled by the teacher then supervised. Teachers demonstrate correct letter formation, (lower case and capital letters,) letter families, number formation, and letter joins regularly and children practise by carefully copying and repeating. Children are observed writing to ensure correct practice. Children self and peer assess, looking for consistency.

We follow the guidelines and expectations of the National Curriculum for Handwriting 2014: Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are provided with a wide range of activities and opportunities to develop fine motor control and hand-eye coordination.

### Reception expectations:

- Begin to form recognisable letters.
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are formed correctly.

### Year 1

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

In Year 2 children are taught to join using the progressive guidelines from Nelson. Interventions are put in place for those few children who are not yet ready for this and need further support.

### Year 2

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

In KS2, taught handwriting consolidates formation and joining through words and sentences.

### Years 3&4

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

### Year 5&6

Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.
- Maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.

In KS1, handwriting is taught 3 to 5 times each week and is combined with phonics / spelling and reinforced across the curriculum. For most children in KS2, handwriting is practised at least twice a week. Children requiring additional support receive focused interventions where necessary.

In Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 children practise in handwriting books and in Years 5 and 6, they write on the lines in their Learning Journals.

All children write in pencil in Learning Journals. Pens are then introduced in KS2 when children can form and join most letters correctly.

Teachers have high expectations of presentation.

- Each classroom will display work produced by the children that is deemed to demonstrate the high quality and the expectation for that year group.
- Visualisers are used to look at and celebrate the children's efforts.

Rewards and incentives to promote excellent handwriting include:

- Effort stickers.
- Moving to a gold face in the classroom.
- House points.
- Raffle tickets from Mrs Williams.
- In Year 5 and 6 Pen Licences are issued to children who are consistently joining their handwriting and whose work is presented to an acceptable standard.

# SPELLING

## AIMS:

- Children should be able to:
- Blend and segment sounds.
  - Learn that segmenting words into phonemes for spelling is the reverse of blending phonemes into words for reading.
  - Spell words by using the grapheme-phoneme correspondence knowledge as **the prime approach**.
  - Use a range of approaches to learn and spell tricky words/ common exception words and patterns in words.

## ENTITLEMENT:

- Whole class teaching of specific spelling patterns.
- Whole class teaching of specific spelling rules and conventions.
- Whole class teaching of topic/cross curricular related spelling.
- Applying spelling skills across the curriculum.
- Daily discrete phonics teaching, in KS1.
- Discrete phonics teaching as part of an intervention group where gaps in phonological knowledge have been identified.
- Dictation is used to embed spelling and phonics.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

"Letters and Sounds" plus some Ruth Muskin phonemes are used to teach phonics in the Foundation Stage and throughout Key Stage 1. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 are taught spellings from the 2014 curriculum: these include statutory and non-statutory words. Teachers plan their teaching of spelling by using the Downview Spelling Scheme of Work which groups words into tricky / common exception words and spelling patterns for their particular year group. Spellings and handwriting are sometimes taught together to reinforce learning.

Teachers provide a wide range of contexts for reinforcing both spelling patterns and tricky words /common exception words throughout the school day across the curriculum. When children write they are encouraged to find words to help them spell but also to "dot" under words to show spellings they are unsure of and will come back to proof-read later, so as to not break the flow of writing.

Learning takes place in a variety of situations and group settings. For example, these could include working independently to practise tricky words, possibly using ICT; working collaboratively on an investigation and participating in short, focused whole class activities. A multi-sensory approach to spelling is used to cater for a range of learning styles: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Games and investigations are also used to reinforce, explore and practise spellings.

Children's spellings are regularly assessed and they are highlighted, (in each year group's colour) and recorded in the child's Individual Spelling Downview Record. In Reception and in years 1 and 2 the common exception words are also assessed and then tracked on a class record.

### How is Spelling Assessed?

- Through the child's on-going work and within  $\frac{1}{2}$  termly unaided, assessed pieces of writing stored in portfolios.
- In Years 2-6 weekly spelling test. Years 3-6 practise spellings four times each week and are tested (away from the point of teaching), on the fifth day.
- Years 2-6 also practice spellings in their CGP '10 minute weekly workouts' and in their 'Targeted Questions' (GPS) books.
- Spellings are tested each half term and updated in their Individual Spelling Downview Record.

### Spelling Environment

Weekly spellings **and** words that children have **learnt** are displayed or made easily accessible so the children can proof read and check spellings. Teachers rigorously encourage children to proof read their writing so that once a word / spelling pattern has been taught most children are expected to spell it correctly or to self-correct it (if spelt incorrectly.) Teachers mark and signal in pink /purple to show the words that the children need to practise spelling. Teaching engages children and shows them that accurate spelling matters.

In Years 1-6 during the first half of the autumn term the spelling curriculum from the previous year is reviewed and reinforced. (These are then regarded as non-negotiable spellings and the majority of children are expected to spell these correctly). Once the Year Group Spellings List has been taught, children will practice individualised spellings and teachers will reteach/recap spelling patterns during the appropriate Literacy lessons.

### Spelling Homework

Weekly spellings are set throughout KS1 and KS2 to support home -school learning. Spellings are based on prior attainment, the phonological need and progress made with the children's learning tested regularly to ensure that spellings are appropriate for the ability of each child.

KS1 - Five spellings per week

Lower KS2 - Five to 10 spellings per week

Upper KS2 -10 spellings per week

### GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

Through reading quality texts the teaching of grammar (including grammatical terminology) and punctuation is embedded in accordance with each year group's expectations. Through rigorous proof-reading the children are encouraged with their teachers, peers and when working independently to gain an increased knowledge of the English language and to check their writing in line with this. Weekly discreet grammar teaching is also taught through the CGP booklets in Years 2 to 6 (and used for planning in Year 1.)

## The Teaching and Learning of Reading

Teachers promote and value reading as an enjoyable activity and a life skill. Teachers plan for a **range** of comprehension strategies that allow pupils to engage with text in a variety of ways to suit different learning styles. Children are encouraged to read a **range** of books, genres and texts.

In **Shared reading** the teacher models the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader providing a high level of support. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies, oral response and collaboration. **Quality texts** support the theme or topic and allow the teacher to expose the children to rich language, grammar and to genres to support their writing. Children are encouraged to “**magpie**” phrases and language. **Longer, quality texts** are read to the class which may be above their own reading ability to immerse the children in a rich and varied reading experience.

In **Guided Reading** texts are chosen to match the ability of the group but still provide an element of challenge. Guided reading provides a forum for pupils to demonstrate what they have learned about reading. Children have half termly reading comprehension tests to assess individual progress, in addition to teacher assessment notes made during **Guided Reading**.

Teachers plan for **independent reading** activities during sessions of Literacy teaching. Texts are selected so that pupils can access them without support. The focus for the reading is to provide practice and develop personal response to text. Children are encouraged to re-read **familiar** texts to develop confidence and fluency and read in other subjects including ICT.

**Paired Reading** provides the opportunity for younger children to read with older children. The older child is supportive and helpful, giving praise and help where needed. The younger child gains experience in reading aloud and an opportunity to talk about what they are reading.

### **Home Reading**

Parents receive guidance and support with hearing their child read at home through **The Downview Home Reading Booklet** and support from class teachers and **Parent Workshops**. In **KS1**, the core Reading scheme is **Oxford Reading Tree**, which is supplemented with other schemes such as **Rigby Star**, **Big Cat** and supplemented with other “real” books. These books are organised according to a **Book Banding** system. Year 2 start using Book Boxes (as described below) in the Summer term to prepare them for **KS2**.

### **Book Boxes**

In **KS2**, each class has a set of **Book Boxes** containing quality texts, levelled according to group ability. Teachers will select books to ensure the children are having access to appropriate authors and a variety of genres including picture books, fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The children are expected to read the books in each box over the period of a half term. All books will be sent home to share as well as reading them daily at school. The importance of re-reading familiar texts is encouraged and your child/children may return to favourite texts.

## School Library

In addition to reading the books selected by their teacher the children can borrow books from the **School Library** which is supervised on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday lunchtime by Year 6 librarians. If your child/children require more guidance, they can attend Library Club on Thursday lunchtime when it is supervised by a teacher. The **fiction** books are organised in the **School Library** according to our own grading system. All of the books are catalogued according to the content and level of challenge. **Non-fiction** books are organised using the **Dewey System** in line with County Libraries. Children are also encouraged to choose books that someone else could read to them. When taking books home, children are encouraged to keep them for a few days and discuss the content with adults at home.

## Home Reading Diaries

**Home Reading Diaries** are used in EYFS and KS1. **Reading Journals** are used in KS2. **Individual Reading Records**, for children needing extra support, are maintained in school to monitor individual 1:1 reading with an adult during the school day. This may be with the Teacher, a Teaching Assistant or Adult Helpers. The children's individual reading progress is also recorded during the week on the class guided reading records.

## Reading in the School Environment

Each class also has a set of age appropriate dictionaries, thesaurus and word banks and a rich collection of texts and books in class **book corners**. There are signs, labels, captions, displays and writing on notice boards around the classrooms, corridors and hall. Children may also read in the school library during Monday-Thursday lunchtimes.

## Inclusion

All children receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated. In addition, where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support, to enable them to work towards age appropriate objectives, focused interventions are put in place in order for all children to achieve. Teachers plan programmes, including Precision Teaching and monitor progress of these pupils on ILP's with the teaching assistants and SENCO.

## Parent and Community Involvement

We value parent involvement in children's development of English and promote a home school partnership in the following ways;

- Sharing information - newsletters, parents' reading and writing booklets, half termly literacy overviews and home reading diaries
- Reading and writing workshops for KS1 parents
- Homework - in line with our homework policy and home/school agreement
- We ask parents to encourage reading and discuss books and preferences with their children
- Parents and DBS checked community volunteers are welcomed into the school to support children with reading.

## **Assessment**

Marking and feedback is pertinent to individual needs and made in relation to the learning objective and the child's individual target at the back of their books, in accordance with our marking policy. Marking is progressive and encourages the children to reflect on it, edit the content/quality of their writing and proof-read for spelling and punctuation. Learning Journals are used through-out the school. In addition children are given opportunities to choose what they want to write about during Free Writing/ Exciting Writing. An unaided writing assessment takes place each  $\frac{1}{2}$  term and stored in a writing portfolio to demonstrate progress. Writing is moderated by all members of the teaching staff in year group meetings and at our termly agreement trialling/moderation. Reading and Writing is also assessed across other schools in our FAB locality meetings.

## **National Testing**

Currently, in Year 2, children's reading and writing are assessed against the "Interim standards" and reading tests are used to support teacher assessments.

In Year 6, the children take part in SAT's Reading, Writing and GPS, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling, tests and are assessed against the Year 6 expectations. Reading and GPS tests are externally marked.

## **Foundation Stage**

Children in The Foundation Stage are continuously assessed on the objectives in The Foundation Stage Profile. This includes Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening.

## **Professional Development**

Training needs are identified as a result of whole school monitoring and evaluation, analysis of data and identified priorities. This forms the basis for any monitoring activities and will clearly identify when, who and what is to be monitored and how this will take place e.g. classroom observation, planning scrutiny, work sampling, model lessons, coaching etc. **These will be reflected in the School Development Plan, which includes the Writing and Reading Action Plans.**

The Reading and Writing Co-ordinators and Senior Leaders will arrange for relevant advice and information, such as feedback from courses and newsletters, to be disseminated and Reading or Writing Co-ordinators and UPS groups organise and lead school based training.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

**The effectiveness of this English policy is monitored throughout the year by:**

- Monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning by Senior Leaders and Reading and Writing Co-ordinators
- Book scrutiny: Sampling of children's work
- Target setting across year groups
- Pupil interviews/ pupil voice
- Visits from the inspectorate or Local Authority advisory team, consultation with staff.