



# Willow Bank Infant School

## Vision and Rationale for English

### The English Curriculum

#### Our Vision: What we want to see in the future

At Willow Bank Infant School, we aspire to see our children confidently develop within a language rich environment and be ready for the next stage of their education. Our English curriculum promotes language development, which enables pupils to communicate effectively and to appreciate the richness, magic and power of the written word. It enables children to see language as a source of pleasure and enjoyment and use it to develop powers of imagination, creativity and inventiveness.

#### Intent

**Programme:** We follow the Primary National Curriculum for all aspects of the English Curriculum.

Developing a love of reading and the importance of this for our children both now and in the future, lies at the heart of our English Curriculum. In the Early years, English is planned around early reading, early writing and phonics. In Key Stage One, English is planned around quality texts as the stimulus, this may be fiction (including poetry) or non-fiction.

The English curriculum at Willow Bank will:

- Promote a culture of and a love for reading, writing and oracy.
- Equip pupils with the confidence, desire and ability to develop their voice so that they may express their views and opinions both orally and in writing.
- Equip children with the necessary reading, writing, speaking and listening skills to prepare them for the next stage in their learning and life beyond education.
- Expose children to rich and varied vocabulary to help prepare them for life outside of their home town and allow them to appreciate our rich varied literacy heritage.

#### Implementation:

English teaching at Willow Bank will:

- Be progressively sequenced drawing and building upon prior knowledge and skills.
- Immerse children in high quality, language rich texts.
- Grow a love for reading where children choose to read frequently to seek information and for enjoyment
- Ensure children master the basic skills of writing – grammar, spelling, handwriting and punctuation – so that they can communicate precisely and effectively and to liberate their creativity.
- Actively involves children in the integrated skills of oral language, reading and writing and in discussing and comparing a wide variety of texts and forms of English on a daily basis.
- Provides children with opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding by writing at length for a range of audiences and purposes across the curriculum.

**Timetabling:** English is taught daily with additional session for the discreet teaching of phonics, guided reading and handwriting.

#### Reading

Our reading curriculum is shaped to provide children with the skills to read easily, fluently and with good understanding as well as growing a love for reading. It develops children's understanding of vocabulary and in Year Two it begins to look at the technique's authors use to show meaning, build atmosphere and add clarity.

#### Our children develop a love of books and language through:

- Reading well-chosen literature, which gives them a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.
- Being given opportunities to read aloud and to share books, becoming immersed in language and hearing a wide range and depth of language.
- Visiting our well-stocked library, which the children get the chance to visit once a week during their timetabled session.

- Our home/school reading scheme, which is progressive and in line with our RWI phonics programme. Children are assessed regularly to ensure progression is accurate.
- Author visits are an exciting part of our school calendar. We invite authors and illustrators to our school during National Book Week and the children take part in workshops with them.
- We promote the reading challenges set by Wokingham library as well as setting them ourselves.

**Timetabling:** We have daily story times across all year groups. In Foundation Stage, they use a repeated story approach, which enables the children to become more confident and familiar with a greater number of words. Hearing the patterns and rhymes in the story helps them to build connections between sounds and words and learn how language works. This approach also begins to develop their comprehension skills, with is the essence of reading.

Year Two begin guided reading session in the Autumn Term and Year One begin in the Spring Term. The children have three sessions a week and read texts that are matched to their phonic ability. Year Two also have a discreet reading comprehension lesson once a week.

In addition to this, children are provided with opportunities to read during the day both within the English lesson and in the wider curriculum.

**Reading aloud:** In school, children are heard read aloud at least twice a week; this is in addition to their guided reading session. At home we expect children to read with an adult at least 5 times a week. This could be reading aloud or sharing a story.

### Writing

We believe in immersing our children in texts through reading and analysing the skills of an expert writer. This is important as through this emersion, children become aware of the language skills of a writer and use this as a model for their writing. Using this model, children develop greater competence in the conventions of spelling, punctuation, sentence structures and text organisation. At Willow Bank we use the 'Talk for Writing' approach to inspire and build confidence in their ability to write. It enables the children to become independent writers and through lots of talking and action, they are able to write for a range of audiences.

Through our curriculum, children develop:

- a strong command of the written and spoken word
- the ability to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts and purposes and audiences.
- the confidence and competence to produce high quality writing
- a good understanding of grammar and punctuation and its use in effective written communication

- Outcomes are planned with a real purpose in mind. These are shared with the children regularly.
- As part of planning, previous knowledge and next steps are identified and shared with the children.
- The use of cold and hot tasks allows us to assess the children's starting points and this is used to inform our planning. These tasks highlight clearly the progress the children are making.

### Phonics and Spelling

At Willow Bank Infants we teach phonics to all our children using the Read Write Inc. phonics programme. This programme involved a systematic approach which adheres to five core principles, which the staff follow.

These are;

- For teachers to know the **purpose** of every activity.
- For teachers to be **passionate** about teaching phonics so they can engage children emotionally.
- To teach at an effective pace.
- To ensure every child **participates**.
- To **praise** effort and progress – not ability.

Key Stage 1 Pupils have individual access to the Spelling Frame website both in school and at home. It includes lists of words from the National Curriculum and provides opportunities for the children to learn spellings using games, tests and practice activities.

**Timetabling:** Phonics is taught daily for 30 minutes sessions.

- Children are taught the alphabetic code: the 150+ graphemes that represent 44 speech sounds.
- They rapidly learn sounds and the letter, or groups of letters, they need to represent them, in three sets of Speed Sound Lessons.

- In these lessons the children have the opportunities to develop their listening skills, blend sounds to read, segment words to spell and decode unfamiliar words.
- This knowledge is taught and consolidated every day.
- High frequency words that are not phonically regular are taught as 'tricky' words and practised frequently.

### **Speaking and Listening**

- Spoken language underpins children's development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. It underpins the development of reading and writing.
- Opportunities for oracy, including discussion, explanation, persuasion and instruction are offered throughout our wider curriculum. E.g. assemblies, school plays, whole sentences in maths.
- We promote a common respect for others' opinions.
- We provide opportunities to recite poetry by heart.
- We prepare children for the next steps in their education by ensuring their speaking and listening skills are well developed. They have many opportunities to speak in assemblies and plays at the Junior school.

### **Handwriting**

We work towards children developing a continuous cursive script where handwriting is legible and fluent when writing at speed. Children move from writing simple individual letters in Foundation Stage, to adding an exit line to each letter in Year 1 and finally joining the letters to form a more flowing script by the end of Year 2.

- When the children are first introduced to letter formation, this is modelled within phonics sessions. This encourages grapheme-phoneme correspondence.
- In Key Stage 1, handwriting is taught through the introduction of letter families, allowing children to understand the common letter formation shared by certain groups of letters.

### **Impact**

Children are assessed using a range of approaches, with the aim that all pupils including the weakest writers and readers, make sufficient progress to meet or exceed age related expectations.

Assessment of English at Willow Bank will:

- Happen daily with the use of whole class feedback sheets. These are an essential element of the 'plan – do – review' cycle that teachers use to inform their planning. 'Spotlight' children are identified and quickly supported in order for them to meet the learning intentions.
- Allow ongoing formative assessment that identifies what children have learned and allow teachers to adapt the learning journey accordingly. (Cold and Hot tasks)
- Support children in becoming more self-aware and learn to edit and adapt their learning.
- Provide responses for the children that compliment, not necessarily match, the teaching sequences in order for next steps to be most relevant for the individual child and ensure rapid progress.
- Provide a summative assessment for reading, phonics and writing – statutory end of key stage assessments and the Phonics Screening Check.