

Hollymount School



English Policy

Updated July 2020

Reviewed July 2023

English Policy

Readers as writers and writers as readers.

Aims

- To ensure that **all** pupils have access to the National English curriculum.
- To create a whole school ethos in which speaking and listening, reading and writing are all highly valued.
- To raise levels of attainment and achievement in English throughout the school.
- To provide pupils with the tools they need in order to allow them to make progress in their oracy, reading and writing skills.
- To give pupils daily opportunities to express feelings, thoughts and ideas through appropriate contexts and genres.
- To give pupils experiences of real-life communication skills and to ensure they understand the importance of audience and purpose.
- To ensure all pupils understand how they can improve their work and to share and celebrate their success.

Intent

Speaking and listening

At Hollymount, we believe in the importance of speaking and listening skills across the curriculum: the development of oral communication skills is highly valued. Hollymount children have the opportunity to build up their public speaking skills throughout their time at school so that they speak with clear intonation and in a manner suited to the purpose. By the time children leave Hollymount, they leave as active listeners, who treat others opinions with respect. They are willing to take part in debates and can respond to what other people have said appropriately and fairly.

By the time children leave Hollymount School, they have a wide and varied vocabulary. This includes the 'Language of Education'; key subject specific vocabulary; and a range of descriptive language – which they know how to use effectively. Children are able to use this vocabulary to successfully navigate the wider world that exists outside school.

Reading

By the time children leave Hollymount School, they leave as readers. Readers who have developed a lifelong love of reading; and readers who read because it is how they can learn more about the world around them. By the time the children leave Hollymount School, we will have provided them with the tools to fully and confidently access the secondary curriculum and we firmly believe that the ability to read underpins all other areas of learning.

At Hollymount, we believe that children's cognitive demand must change in order to 'master' the skill of 'deeper' reading. By which we mean, not just decoding but

comprehending. When responding to a text, it is essential that they can justify, reason and back up their answers with evidence or opinions. At Hollymount, we believe there are three elements that need to come together in order to access this deeper level of understanding: knowledge of the world, stylistic knowledge and retrieving and summarising information. A “thinking out loud” approach underpins our reading pedagogy in order to bring these three elements together. Through this approach, our children develop into confident and independent readers, with high levels of enjoyment and comprehension.

Writing

At Hollymount, we want our children to be able to write at length for a range of audiences and purposes, with a positive attitude. We want them to take on the role of a writer and understand how to fulfil the role successfully using a variety of tools. The “thinking out loud” approach which drives our reading lessons, flows seamlessly into our writing lessons. Hollymount children can approach their writing as readers in order to carefully consider the authorial choices they are making. We believe that our children should be able to talk confidently about their writing in order to discuss their work reflectively and act upon feedback that they have received - as well as giving meaningful feedback to their peers.

Implementation

Speaking and listening

The Pedagogy of Language Handbook outlines how the teaching of language is implemented across Hollymount School. This is done in two key ways: through explicit daily teaching and a variety of drip feed strategies.

1. Explicit teaching

Children are explicitly taught certain language in a structured, systematic way three times a week, however, the length of time spent explicitly teaching varies depending on the key stage. EYFS and KS1 teach the language in three blocks of 10 minutes, where as in KS2, they teach the language in three blocks of 15 minutes. The language to be taught focus on concept words (nursery and reception only); The Language of Education; key English vocabulary; and key Maths vocabulary.

2. Drip feed teaching

At the start of each foundation subject, children are taught one new word using the word wizard approach (as well as revisiting the new word taught in the previous lesson). This will be a topic specific word which is going to be used within the lesson. At the end of lesson, children will have the opportunity to review the word after it has put into context. At the end of each foundation unit, teachers facilitate the opportunity for children to draw all their learning together in order to assess their understanding of (and connections between) the new vocabulary learnt.

Reading

1. Teaching and Learning

High-quality 'reading lessons' start in Nursery where children focus on letters and sounds phase one. This concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and is divided into 7 aspects, including general sound discrimination, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and oral blending and segmenting. Their love of reading is nurtured and developed by introducing them to traditional nursery rhymes, songs and stories.

The Phonics Handbook outlines how phonics teaching starts more formally starts in reception (using the RWI programme) and continues until children can decode confidently. Children only come off the RWI programme when they have reached the grey group. This means they can read 80+ words a minute and can attempt to read with intonation to show comprehension. It is expected that this will happen in year 2, although we accept this may not be the case for all children. Phonics and reading lessons are taught at the same time across the school to allow children to fit into whichever group best suits their ability.

After children complete the RWI phonics programme, there is an increased focus on their comprehension skills. In years 2 and 3, children undertake a comprehension programme of study to bridge the gap between RWI phonics and KS2 Comprehension X. This programme of study involves developing their comprehension skills whilst inspiring a love of reading. Whilst we continue to review the set 2 & 3 speed sounds, we work systematically to develop specific reading comprehension skills, which are based on 5 'reading pups'. Each character represents a specific reading skill, such as Rex Retriever, Predicting Pup and Inference Iggy. Towards the end of year 2, children begin to make explicit links between these the 'expert tips' used in KS2.

Delivery of reading lessons in KS2 hooks on 'expert tips', which originate from the Comprehension X scheme. Year 3 children are still unable to undertake the Comprehension X Scheme (as this is only aimed at years 4, 5 and 6), however, they use the expert tips within their reading lesson. Years 4, 5 and 6 all start with the delivery of Comprehension X in the Autumn Term. When the scheme is completed, the children then continue to use the 'expert tips' within their reading lessons. Further information about this can be found in the Reading Handbook.

All children are exposed to a rich, varied reading diet, which includes a range of special books (selected from Pie Corbett's reading spine) and key authors. This is either through their reading lessons or as whole class texts - which are read purely for pleasure.

2. Cross curricular links

Reading and high-quality texts are woven into every aspect of Hollymount's curriculum, as is evident within the Curriculum Handbooks. Reading links are highlighted within all foundation subjects 'Knowledge and Skills Progression' documents.

Within KS1, reading and high-quality texts actively drive their curriculum. Each foundation subject within the KS1 curriculum is linked to a key text, which provides the vehicle to teach the knowledge and skills the children need to know.

Within KS2, the foundation subjects which drive the current topic (e.g. history or geography) also have a key text. Reading lessons are taught as part of the foundation sequence of learning which focus on this key text. This is done in addition to the morning reading lessons.

3. Home school partnership

It is expected that all children read at home daily, although we enforce a minimum of 3 reads per week. Children who read 3 times or more at home during the week are rewarded with house points. However, those that don't read at least 3 times at home will have a breaktime detention. All children are given a Home-School Reading Diary at the start of the academic year in which their reading can be documented.

Children on the RWI scheme (regardless of age), will be given a phonetically decodable book as their home reader. They are given one of these books once a week, which they are expected to read three times (to match the three reads they do of one text within their phonics lessons). Children are also able to choose a story or fact book to take home and share with their families. These aren't phonetically decodable but aim to promote a love of reading in the children and allow comprehension skills to be further developed.

When they come off RWI, children are supported in choosing age-appropriate texts by following a series of book bands within each year group. The children progress through the book bands at the teacher's discretion. Once these book bands have been completed, the children become free readers within that year group.

Within the children's Home-School Reading Diary, there is space for the children to record which books they read. If they read 25 books, they will have filled their bronze bookshelf. 50 books fills their silver bookshelf and 75 books fills their gold bookshelf. Each bookshelf is rewarded with a small prize and certificate, which is given during whole school assembly.

Writing

1. Teaching and learning

Writing at Hollymount Schools is taught by focusing upon a knowledge and skill-based curriculum. Unit plans start with breaking down the key knowledge and skills being taught within the unit and then teachers explore which audience and purpose is going to best showcase the knowledge and skills being taught. Our 'progression of writing knowledge and skills' allow children to continuously build upon their knowledge and skills so that they can approach written pieces of work with a variety of 'writing tools'. Sequences of learning; opportunities and models for greater depth; and an age expected model are all thought through within the unit plan. Throughout the sequence of learning, teachers ensure that writers have plenty of opportunity for deliberate practise as well as opportunities to reflect and discuss their written work.

Within units of work and their sequences of learning, teachers employ a range of strategies to allow children to access their learning. The 'Box Method', use of Literacy and Language texts, Talk for Writing and ACE activities are all used within Hollymount classrooms and are expanded upon in the Writing Handbook.

In order to fully become 'writers as readers', the children use the expert tips from their reading lessons within their writing lessons. This helps them to make connections between

authorial choices they have learnt about in their reading lessons and how they could use them within their writing to suit a range of purposes and audiences.

Grammar teaching largely takes place within written sequences of learning where it can be applied within context. However, there are some year groups where grammar is taught discretely, particularly when there is a large amount to cover or there is a big jump in curriculum expectations, such as years 2 and 6.

2. Cross curricular links

We expect the same high standards of writing evident in English lessons, to also be evident within foundation lessons. When planning for the wider curriculum, teacher plan for a range of cross curricular links. Writing content with English lessons often reflects learning that has either previously been taught in foundation subjects, or is currently being taught. By using the knowledge learnt in foundation subjects to inform English writing, children are given a further opportunity to demonstrate that they 'know more and remember more'.

3. Spelling

Spelling is taught alongside Read Write Inc phonics in the Early Years. Children are taught to segment words into their individual phonemes. Gradually alongside this approach, other support methods such as the spelling of red (exception) words, listening to syllables and the use of mnemonics are introduced to enable all children to start to become successful spellers.

KS1 follow a structured programme for spelling supported by the "No Nonsense" spelling scheme – a scheme used by KS2. The programme has been designed, by our KS1 staff, to ensure coverage, consistency and progression. It is designed to be taught alongside, and also bridge the gap between, Read Write Inc and the "No Nonsense" programme of study taught for spelling in KS2. It provides a structure for the teaching of spelling in KS1, alongside best practise approaches and resources for teaching and learning.

The "No Nonsense" spelling scheme is used from Year 3 to Year 6 to support the teaching of spelling. This follows a holistic approach to spelling which encourages children to apply what they are taught in a meaningful way.

4. Handwriting

All our children are expected to develop a neat, legible, cursive writing style as early as possible. In the nursery and foundation stage, mark making activities are provided at all times and support is given to develop the gross and fine motor skills necessary for handwriting.

The principles of the "ThinkWrite" scheme is used to support teachers in the daily planning and teaching of cursive handwriting from Year 1. Prior to Year 1, children are introduced to the correct precursive formation of single letters. From Year 1, it is an expectation that children join their letters in the cursive style. Although content will always be given a higher level of precedence in a piece of writing, children are encouraged to value the importance of presentation in all the work that they do. A comfortable, joined

handwriting style should begin to be the norm by Year 2 and secured by Year 3, except in cases of specific need in this area.

In Year 6, children complete their daily handwriting lessons in handwriting pen so that children can get used to writing in a range of mediums. They will also write up final 'finished' pieces of work in handwriting pen.

Support for learning, including ICT

All classes have a teaching assistant for at least the morning sessions and these members of staff work under the direction of teachers to support children where necessary. All teaching assistants have received training in our 'matched learning' approach, as well as undertaking regular CPD focusing on all areas of English and feedback.

The 'Waves of Intervention' model describes how different levels of intervention are used to support children at Hollymount School.

Wave 1 is good quality, inclusive teaching, which considers the learning needs of all the children in the classroom. This includes provided 'matched' work and creating an inclusive classroom environment.

Wave 2 outlines specific, additional and time-limited interventions provided for some children who are falling behind the age expected level. Wave 2 focus groups or interventions are often targeted at a group of pupils with similar needs.

Wave 3 is targeted provision for a small percentage of child who either require a high level of additional support/specialised provision in order to address their needs or is for children. These will often be those children who have an Individualised Provision Map (IPM) or Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). IPM's are the responsibility of individual teachers to write and implement and should consist of short, achievable targets specific for that child. Parents and carers are fully informed of any IPM targets and if necessary outside agency support is sought. ICT is used within the implementation of IPM's to support children with specific needs.

If a child is considered to have a specific learning difficulty in writing or reading, or whose rates of progress and attainment are a cause for concern, then teachers can refer them to the SENDco and if necessary they may undergo further assessment.

The use of software for every day writing tasks is becoming an increasing feature of our society. Children are given the opportunity to use ICT within their English lessons from the Early Years upwards. Word processing packages such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Publisher provide the pupils with a wealth of opportunities for planning and recording writing in a variety of forms and presenting their work to a high standard. Hollymount also subscribes to Purple Mash, which has a range of resources to support the teaching of English electronically.

A small number of laptops and iPads are available to each class, every day. We promote the use of 3 essential apps (Showbie, Book Creator and Explain Everything) which the children use to access, record and share a range of their English work.

Impact

Assessment

The effective daily assessment of pupils' work in progress and feedback to them (including written marking when appropriate) are fundamental to pupils' successful learning. All assessment information is used formatively, prompting pupils with clear guidance about how they have been successful and how to improve their work further. This feedback is given as near to the point of writing as possible and in the Early Years always at the point of writing, so that children can be fully involved in their successes and areas for development. Feedback given to children follows the school's Feedback Policy.

Staff formally assess their children's progress and attainment 3 times a year. Staff use the year group expectations and decide whether children are working at, below or above age-related expectations. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) then analyse this progress. Pupil Progress Meetings are held every term (during phase reviews) with staff to discuss overall progress and individual cases. Following these meetings, plans are drawn up to address any areas of concern or to provide staff with support in particular areas.

Children in the Early Years are assessed within the Early Years Foundation Stage portfolio.

Monitoring

Weekly phase meetings allow teachers to develop and review sequences of learning within English. Unit plans are shared and the sequences of learning are tracked within the children's books. These meetings allow supportive, pedagogical discussions to take place between professionals and is particularly effective in developing the practise of NQTs and RQTs. A member of the SLT will attend these meetings in order to pick up on any concerns and offer the relevant support.

Termly phase reviews allow the SLT to monitor progress against the SDP. Focused areas of English are assessed via a range of learning walks, book looks and pupil progress meetings. These focused weeks allow future targets to be set, as well as identifying what is working well within classrooms.

Moderation meetings are held in a range of contexts at Hollymount School. The moderation of reading and writing happens informally weekly within phase meetings as well as formally within specified staff meetings. As a school, staff are required to bring samples of work which reflects an agreed standard. This is moderated within groups of staff and standards are either agreed or adjusted and next steps discussed. This formal moderation also happens termly at a trust level, and annually when other schools outside the trust are invited to attend.

CPD

As part of our drive to improve the standards within English, regular CPD is provided for staff to drive forward initiatives. These are detailed within our school development plan. There are regular opportunities for staff to discuss any training they feel they require, for example, as part of termly phase reviews.

Other relevant documents

Phonics Handbook

Reading Handbook

Writing Handbook

Feedback Policy

Pedagogy of Language Handbook

No Nonsense Spelling scheme

ThinkWrite Handwriting Scheme

KS1 Curriculum Handbook

KS2 Curriculum Handbook

Quality Texts for Learning