

The Royal (Crown Aided) First School



English Policy

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| Date reviewed: | January 2022 |
| Date of next review: | On going |
| To be reviewed by: | English Subject Lead |

This is a live strategy and the English Subject Lead is responsible for maintaining its accuracy. Any required amendments should be sent direct to the English Subject Lead.

Introduction

At The Royal School, we understand the importance of a well-rounded, fulfilling curriculum to prepare our pupils for the next stage of education, and for their present and future role as global citizens. English is an integral part of learning at The Royal School, as it develops children's ability to listen, speak, read and write for a wide range of purposes. Our school vision encourages children to be positive participators in their community and this requires strong and effective communication skills. We encourage children to communicate purposely, creatively and imaginatively, through the use of written and verbal language. We support children's agency across English by developing a sense of responsibility to participate in their own learning through purposely selecting contexts for learning that are purposeful and interesting to children within each class.

The Royal School Curriculum uses the National Curriculum of England to outline the knowledge and skills base of the English curriculum.

Our school mission and vision shape all areas of The Royal School Curriculum.

Our **mission statement** describes how we do things at The Royal School on a daily basis. We are:

Loving to learn, Learning to love, guided by God.

Our **vision statement** describes where we are heading and outlines our purpose – the reason why we do things at The Royal School.

*At The royal school our vision is to light up our communities and the world through being - **big thinkers** – **resourceful** - **independent and resilient** - **generous of spirit** - **honest** and - **team players***

Our school mission statement and vision statement encapsulate the ethos that is held consistently by all members of our learning community. It was created and developed by us all over the period between 2016 and 2020, and it underpins everything that goes on at The Royal School, including the development of The Royal School Curriculum.

We have a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) in our school, and our vision although unique to our context draws from concepts for curriculum development in Guy Claxton's and Bill Lucas' "Seven Cs" (Claxton & Lucas, 2015). Alongside this, The Royal School Curriculum draws from curriculum ideals for the future of education developed by the OECD in the 2030 Education project (OECD, n.d.)

| The Royal School Vision within the English curriculum | | |
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| | How does this show in our curriculum and pedagogy? | What does this mean to the Royal School English curriculum? |
| Big Thinkers | <p>We are committed to learning and children will get the opportunity to try things over again many times and learn from both mistakes and successes.</p> <p>Our curriculum supports us to be expert communicators of ideas.</p> <p>Our curriculum gives us the opportunity to be reflective, think deeply, practise different types of thinking and develop metacognitive skills.</p> | <p>Children are encouraged to use a growth mindset and keep trying with their literacy tasks. Mistakes are welcomed as learning opportunities.</p> <p>We plan opportunities for children to harness creativity and develop their own ideas.</p> <p>Children are encouraged to share their ideas, work collaboratively and follow areas of interest.</p> <p>We provide opportunity for children to think deeply and critically, and reflect on their ideas and outcomes.</p> |
| Resourceful | <p>Our curriculum helps us to look after the things that we have.</p> <p>It gives us opportunities to be curious and develop our own line of questions.</p> <p>We often get the chance to go from an idea to reality (being creative).</p> <p>We know that today matters for every pupil and regardless of age we can create and contribute to change with our own ideas.</p> | <p>Children are encouraged to communicate through poems, stories, songs, playscripts, narratives and oral language.</p> <p>We have an extensive library which gives children opportunities to research what they are curious about and what excites them.</p> <p>Children are respectful of resources, especially books.</p> |
| Independent and resilient | <p>Our curriculum gives us the opportunity to try things for ourselves and be confident as learners.</p> <p>We value learning from mistakes, and it builds our confidence to try something again.</p> <p>We encourage opportunities for self-discipline.</p> <p>We say yes to challenge.</p> <p>We don't say "can't," we say "not yet"</p> | <p>We view writing as a process and encourage children to self-assess, edit and improve their own work.</p> <p>Children are challenged to have a go at tasks independently, especially during Sparkle Writing activities.</p> <p>We value mistakes in literacy and improve our writing continuously using a purple 'fix it pen'.</p> |
| Generous of spirit | <p>Our curriculum gives opportunities for us to give of our time and talents to benefit others.</p> <p>We learn to look for those whose voice may not be heard and use our time and talents to give a voice when we can.</p> <p>We believe that the opportunities to recognise social injustice and to think creatively about working towards social justice is part of a balanced education.</p> <p>We believe children can contribute to society as children – they do not need to wait to participate.</p> | <p>We plan opportunities for children to write in real life contexts to bring change, learn new things or communicate with others.</p> <p>Children share their learning with others and help their peers learn new skills and deepen thinking.</p> |
| Honest | <p>Our curriculum gives opportunities to be honest with ourselves (looking after our own well-being and mental health) and to be honest with others to promote and facilitate collaboration.</p> | <p>We encourage children to be reflective and self-assess their work and peer assess the work of others.</p> <p>Children celebrate their success and look for ways to further improve their literacy skills.</p> |
| Team Players | <p>Our curriculum promotes team building skills to work together so that all achieve</p> | <p>Children collaborate on shared outcomes, such as group stories, poems and playscripts.</p> <p>Children share and discuss ideas in whole class, group and pair work.</p> <p>We encourage children to support and champion each other's success.</p> |

Aims and Objectives

Our overarching aim for English is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through exploration of high quality, challenging texts. Children are encouraged to become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry, playscripts, non-fiction and media texts. We expand the children's knowledge and understanding of how language works by drawing on high quality examples of effective language. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking, reading and writing across a range of different contexts.

The aim of the English curriculum at The Royal School is to enable pupils to:

- speak clearly and audibly in ways that considers their audience and purpose;
- acquire a wide vocabulary, understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language;
- use discussion in order to learn. Pupils should elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas;
- read confidently, fluently and with good understanding and appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge;
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information;
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audience;
- to help children enjoy writing and be enthused by writing for purpose;
- to increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work;
- to apply literacy skills across the wider curriculum.
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Teaching and learning in English

At The Royal school, English is interwoven throughout the topics and is taught as part of a cross-curricular, topic-based curriculum. The lessons vary in format, for example, children may participate in whole-class shared reading or writing activities or lessons may be specifically planned small group work activities which meet an individuals or small group's needs. The Royal School identifies key vocabulary linked to each topic and teachers model and expose children to challenging vocabulary through spoken language, reading and writing activities. Spelling, punctuation and grammar lessons are embedded into the topic-based approach, but are also taught discreetly to secure the skills.

High standards of English are maintained across all subject areas. Children are exposed to a wide range of text types, including non-fiction, fiction, poetry, playscripts and use a range of resources such as interactive

boards, dictionaries, thesauruses, ipads and individual whiteboards to support their work. We further children's learning through drama activities, performances, specific literacy days and opportunities to speak/sing in front of different audiences in class/ whole school performances.

Children record their English learning in a topic-based 'learning journey' book, which contains learning across the different subjects. A clear lesson objective is shared in each English lesson and success criteria are used regularly, often written with the children. Key vocabulary and working walls are used for reference and to model concepts, skills and key vocabulary.

Children are taught in mixed ability classes. Teachers plan to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. Teachers are careful not to restrict children and often differentiate by outcomes or facilitating different support and challenge. Through differentiation and the support of Teaching Assistants, all children receive high quality teaching and appropriate support in order for every child to reach their full potential.

English Curriculum Planning

English is a core subject in the National Curriculum. We use the National Curriculum as the basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programme of study for English.

Teachers carry out the curriculum planning in English in three phases: a long-term overview across the year, a mid-term topic-based plan and weekly planning. Key texts and genre types are identified and noted on the long-term plan to ensure appropriate pitch and balance of learning across each term. Medium term plans also detail which text types and key genres will be covered and the English learning expectations for the unit. Teachers weekly plans outline learning intentions for the week and the planned learning opportunities. Teachers upload their planning to Teams in the week prior to teaching and annotate these documents as part of a reflective planning process.

Assessment

Teachers assess children's work in English continually. The daily assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson allows them to adjust their teaching and planning for subsequent lessons. Teachers match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Target Tracker statements are used continually as an assessment aid by teachers to measure progress against the key objectives and to help them plan for the next sequence of lessons.

Teachers and teaching assistants at The Royal school use instant, 'in the moment' feedback through discussions and give most next steps orally, although some written comments may be used to praise and

extend learning. English outcomes are marked in line with our school marking and feedback policy. Children are encouraged to use self-assessment and self-correct work using a purple pen.

Assessment weeks are scheduled in the penultimate week of each half-term, whereby children complete tasks designed to provide teachers with accurate and fair assessments of their progress. This week is known as Sparkle Week, and children present their learning to their teacher, peers and school community. To support children in both developing a sense of responsibility for their own learning and verbalising metacognition, children co-construct with the teacher a context for assessment leading up to Sparkle Week. This means that children have actively participated in considering what the learning objectives have been over the previous term and how best they can show the objectives. Alongside the statutory requirements for English and other subject areas, Sparkle Week allows assessment towards our wider school vision. Parents are often invited to see the learning that has taken place and have the opportunity to look through the children's books. Further assessments are made using ongoing work in learning journey books, comprehension box tests, PM benchmarking, phonics assessments, spelling check-ins and independent pieces written in children's Sparkle Books.

Children begin using Sparkle Books for independent writing tasks in Reception and this book follows children through their school life so that progress can be seen over a period of years. From Year 1, teachers plan at least 1 Sparkle Write per half term, which varies in writing type and purpose. The Sparkle Writing should be completely independent as an unmarked final piece of work which is celebrated with the child.

Teachers meet termly to moderate assessments and review pupils' work against the objectives and year group expectations. All teachers also have access to an online moderation platform called 'Pobble' and teachers use this to moderate their own judgements. We moderate samples of written work across schools within the Windsor First Schools Cluster.

Homework

In line with our homework policy, children are expected to complete daily reading at home. All children have a reading journal to record both reading at home and with an adult in school. In addition, spelling practise and other activities are set depending on the age of the child. Homework provides pupils with the opportunity to consolidate or extend the learning that has taken place in class. The class teacher is responsible for ensuring English homework, reading books and spelling lists are matched appropriately to the ability of the child.

Speaking and listening

Staff at The Royal School view 'Speaking and Listening' as the foundation of language development and crucial to the development of all subject areas. Children are encouraged to develop effective

communication skills in readiness for later life. We aim for children to be able to speak clearly, fluently and coherently, to be able to listen attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy and contribute to group discussions effectively.

To ensure the children develop confident and articulate speaking and listening skills we:

- model high standards of spoken and written English at all times and expose children to extensive vocabulary;
- give our children confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value their conversations and opinions;
- encourage a respect for the views of others;
- model polite and attentive speaking and listening in our day-to-day interactions;
- provide purposes and audiences for talk within a range of formal and informal situations and in individual, partner, group and class contexts;
- provide opportunities to perform to a larger audience in assemblies and performances;
- Provide a range of experiences where children can work collaboratively and participate in opportunities to reflect on talk and explore situations through role play, hot-seating, drama and discussions.

Children's progress in spoken language is tracked using Target Tracker and monitored by the English Subject Lead and the Head Teacher.

Teaching Reading

At The Royal School, we teach reading through our English lessons, guided reading lessons, shared reading and 1:1/ small group reading sessions. Teachers planning exposes children to a wide range of texts including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, playscripts, fairy tales and the children are encouraged to read a range of literature throughout their taught sessions. To foster the children's love of reading and enable them to enjoy a wide range of literature, we encourage all children to choose their own library books each week. The children can choose and swap their library books as they wish and they have access to a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and picture books. Children also enjoy special literacy days throughout the year such as World Book Day, Christmas story day and a poetry recital.

Phonics and the KS1 reading scheme

Upon entry in Reception, formal teaching of phonics begins and the children are taught the skills of segmenting and blending daily. We follow Lesley Clarke's abridged version of Letters and Sounds to teach phonics and children practise reading in these daily sessions (See Phonics and Early Reading Policy for details). Our book band reading scheme is aligned to the phonics phases and the books progress in line

with the children's phonetic ability and later comprehension skills. Children's reading books from the scheme match the phonics phase that they are working within. Children read with a teacher or learning support assistant at least twice a week, and children who are struggling to make the expected progress are read with as much as possible. We are introducing Wriggly Reader Intervention scheme to support progress in reading and phonics for children who need intervention. All teachers and teaching assistants receive regular phonics training and guidance from the English subject lead.

In line with our homework policy, children should read every night and have their reading record signed by a parent or caregiver. In KS2, children may record their own reading in the reading record. The reading book is changed regularly after children have discussed the text with an adult.

Assessing Reading

We use Target Tracker to track progress and establish next steps in all subjects, including reading. We also use PM Bench Marking and comprehension boxes establish indicative reading comprehension ages. We use individual phonics assessment sheets and phonics trackers to track progress in phonics. Each time a child moves up a book colour band, their progress is recorded on the book band reading tracker, which is saved in each class Team Online. We also use evidence from listening to children read, their oral comments and ideas about what they are reading and discussions from guided reading sessions to inform our judgments.

Writing

Teachers at The Royal School embed writing opportunities throughout our topic-based curriculum and children write for a range of purposes and audiences. Teachers use guided writing sessions to model writing skills and explicitly teach children how to compose, amend and revise their writing. Children are encouraged to become critical readers of their own writing by using self-evaluation and practise checking their work independently for sense, accuracy and meaning. Children self-correct using a purple pen so teachers can see where they have amended their work.

Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar, spelling and punctuation are taught in the context of the topic-based curriculum as well as through discrete lessons. Following the expectations of the National Curriculum, teachers ensure spelling and grammar rules are taught and progress is tracked using Target Tracker. Children are taught spellings weekly and they have practise spelling practise books to learn their spellings at home. Teachers at The Royal School use 'Spelling Check-ins' and assessments taken from children's independent writing to assess progress in spelling.

Handwriting

Children at The Royal School are encouraged to write in a clear, fluent and legible handwriting style and teachers uphold high standards of presentation in all written work. Handwriting is explicitly taught and we use the online resource Letter-Join as a teaching tool. Spelling and handwriting are sometimes taught together to reinforce the visual and motor elements of both skills.

In line with the recent guidance published by The Department for Education (DFE, 2021)., children entering EYFS from 2021 onward will begin learning to read and write letters using print. This is to simplify the process of children learning to recognise and form their own letters. From Year 1, those children who have previously been successful using a pre-cursive/ cursive style will continue this approach, however, the teacher may choose to use print letter formation for Year 1 children who have found the pre-cursive approach challenging in EYFS. Towards the end of Year 1, the children will begin to learn some simple joins. In future years, the children who began print in EYFS will continue with this in Year 1 until they transition to cursive. In Year 2, children will learn to join their handwriting into a cursive style and we expect continual cursive to be the style for the majority of work in Year 2. When neat, correct and cursive handwriting is mastered in Year 3, the children begin to use a handwriting pen. For specific children in KS2 that have not mastered continuous cursive handwriting, their individual needs will be assessed and a decision made as to whether it is beneficial to continue teaching the cursive style of handwriting.

Teaching English to children with special needs

At The Royal School, we are committed to inclusion and strive to remove barriers to learning. We identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment, such as tailoring lessons to meet their needs, differentiation or allocation of resources or adult support. For children with Special Educational Needs, teachers consider the literacy targets on children's Individual Education Plans (IEPS) and ensure targets are closely matched to the child's area of need.

Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas

The skills that children develop in English are crucial to every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their learning. We use all other subject areas as vehicles for learning English and use the contexts of these subjects to broaden children's vocabulary range. Within the Mathematics curriculum, children are encouraged to read and interpret problems, explain and reason their mathematical thinking and use precise mathematical vocabulary. In addition, ICT is used across the school for research and for children to

present their learning in different ways. Children are able to use different software to present their learning and practise writing for different audiences and purposes.

Resources

We are extremely fortunate to have a well-stocked library which is full of picture books, guided reading books and topic specific books. Topic books are stored centrally and used to complement the topics being taught in class. Classrooms also have mini-libraries which usually contain books linked to the topic, dictionaries and thesauruses. Teachers are responsible for rotating the books within classroom libraries and ensuring there are always exciting, appropriate books within the classroom. Ipads and laptops are stored centrally. We have specific phonics mats and prompt sheets available in all classrooms and these are also saved centrally in the Phonics file on Teams. We also use our excellent outdoor environment as a stimulus for writing, wherever possible.

Monitoring and review

The English subject lead and head teacher take responsibility for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in English, through book looks, lesson observations and supporting governor visits. The role of the English subject lead also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of English, keeping informed about current developments in the subject, and providing direction for the subject across the school. The head teacher alongside the subject lead analyses the tracking data for their subject from the termly tracking summary. The data is then used to identify areas of professional development and identify target areas which feed into the school development plan. The quality of teaching and learning in English is monitored and evaluated by the Subject Lead and Headteacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of lesson observations.

Equality statement

The Royal School is committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. All pupils have access to the curriculum, and the right to a learning environment, which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping.

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