

# Downs Way School English/Literacy Policy

## Rationale

We provide a consistent framework for the teaching of English not only as a subject in its own right, but also within a cross-curricular framework. Children have access to a wide range of opportunities that are designed to maximise development and achieve high standards. We involve children in their own learning - sharing objectives with them. The emphasis should be on what the pupils can do. Although good spelling should be seen as important, we believe it is better to encourage children to write than to discourage them by over correction.

## Writing

### Aims

We aim to:

- Ensure the children have a consistent approach to phonics using Jolly Phonics, Letters and Sounds and 'Phonicsplay'.
- Ensure children have a suitable technical vocabulary to understand and discuss their writing.
- Ensure there is a consistent approach to handwriting
- Enable children to write with confidence, fluency and understanding
- Enable children to understand, use and write a wide range of non-fiction texts
- Enable children to understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot
- Develop children's powers of imagination, inventiveness, and critical awareness
- Provide children with a wide range of writing experiences
- Give children opportunities to broaden their vocabulary
- Provide a consistent approach to enable children to reach their full potential
- Develop children's ability to write with confidence, fluency and understanding
- Encourage children to plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing
- Encourage the use of grammatically correct sentences and accurate spelling and punctuation

## Spelling

Children need to understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately. Decisions about an individual child's spelling needs are based on an analysis of their writing.

### Organisation

- Training in visual memory
- Teaching of high frequency words and weekly testing of these words
- Differentiated spellings learned at home and regular testing in school
- Look, cover, say, write, check system used
- Practise of commonly occurring words
- Learning of spelling rules and terminology
- Investigative approach to spelling rules

## **Handwriting**

We have an agreed style of handwriting and our aim is for all children to have a fluent, legible and neat style of writing which is joined by the end of Year 2.

### **Resources for Handwriting**

- Assortment of pencils and fibre tip pens
- Paper specifically lined for correct sizing and accurate placement according to developmental stage
- Triangular pencil grips to help develop correct grip
- Copy of 'Developing Early Writing' for each class (DfES)
- Copy of sample script for each class

### **Handwriting experiences**

Every class practises handwriting at least three times each week beginning in EYFS with mark making.

#### Early Years/Foundation Stage

- Writing readiness is encouraged through the 'Write Dance' programme
- Individual letter shapes are taught with joining stroke once children can form letters correctly. Double sounds such as 'ee' or 'oo' are always written joined. Teachers own writing is joined. From Term 2 children learn to write their names in a joined script and then widen their experience of joined letters from there.

#### Year 1

- Handwriting practise is linked to Word Level work, teaching individual letters and blends in whole words.
- Lead in and joining strokes are demonstrated.
- Children are encouraged to join their writing when they feel confident enough.

#### Year 2

- Teachers use a joined script when writing for the children and expect the children to join all their writing as well.
- Handwriting practise continues to be linked to WORD level work.

Assessment of handwriting is an integral part of the assessment of writing and attainment is monitored throughout the year.

## **Reading**

Reading is more important than 'pronouncing words correctly', although this is important. We feel that meaning, understanding and enjoyment should all be central and present from the moment a child enters school. A narrow approach can have a severely limiting effect and children's development.

### **Aims**

We aim to:

- Establish a strong Home/School link in reading
- Ensure children enjoy reading and love books
- Ensure the reading experiences children have stimulate their enthusiasm and develop their imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness

- Ensure that high expectations lead to a rich and varied experience of genres and approaches to texts, including a range of non-fiction texts
- Ensure that materials used meet the needs and interests of the children, providing good quality and variety
- Enable the children to read with confidence, fluency and understanding
- Enable children to read aloud to inform and entertain others and to read silently for their own benefit for a sustained period
- Enable children to use a raft of reading cues including phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual information as well as monitoring their own reading and self-correcting. This will mean developing strategies for information retrieval including skimming and scanning as well as skills of comprehension and prediction
- Develop book knowledge and technical vocabulary so children can understand and discuss their reading
- Develop an awareness of plot, character development and setting which will be linked with writing skills
- Develop an awareness of patterns and rhymes
- Develop an understanding of cultural differences and similarities through multi-cultural literature
- Provide a consistent approach to reading to enable children to reach their full potential
- Assess and monitor children's progress in reading either by the teacher or the children themselves using target setting and regular planned assessment opportunities
- Link reading with writing, speaking and listening to give children opportunities to widen their vocabulary

#### **Resources for reading**

- Classroom book corners
- Teachers' own collection of books to read to children
- Year group collections of Big Books with group readers and associated activities for each week
- Central stock of graded books for individual reading
- Reference library for children and teachers
- Dictionaries and atlases in each classroom and selection topic based reference books changed regularly
- Computer programs for reading skills
- Computer programs for phonic skills.
- Story tapes and CDs in each classroom
- Phonic games in each classroom
- Phonics videos and DVDs centrally stored
- Reading posters
- Volunteers who hear individual reading

New books are chosen very carefully for quality in style and content as well as equal opportunities, multi-cultural elements and cross-curricular links. We operate a system of

continuous monitoring of the condition of books and aim to replace them before they become too shabby.

### **Reading experiences**

Daily: Literacy session

Less well supported children read with teacher or other adult

Reading at home

Weekly: Guided reading and writing with the teacher for each group in the class

Individual reading with the teacher or other adult 2/3 times

Individual: Reading at home each day. Flexible choice by the child. Dialogue in the Reading

Diary between parents and teacher to monitor the choice and response

Individual reading in school with teacher monitoring choice and keeping own reading log for each child

Group: One session per week guided reading focusing on particular skills highlighted by teacher's monitoring of progress

Whole class: Shared reading daily in Literacy lesson

### **Development of Reading**

#### Early Years/Foundation Stage

- Enthuse the children with well read, carefully chosen familiar and unfamiliar texts from a wide range of genres
- Encourage children to look at books and other printed materials in the classroom book corner and listen to taped stories in the listening corner
- Use books from both the children's and adult levels for display in topic work and to find information
- Use computer programs to search for information that is read to the children from a screen. Also talking books controlled by the mouse on the computer
- Continue with parent partnership with Home Reading Scheme
- Build on children's knowledge with the Jolly Phonics Scheme and phonicsplay.
- Individual reading at level appropriate to each child
- Reading in small groups using a group reading book

#### Year 1

- Use of Big Books and group reading activities. All children will have daily shared reading experience in the Literacy lesson
- Wide range of texts available for the children
- Individual reading on a regular basis with targets set for each child
- Individual reading at home using Home Reading Scheme which is monitored by the class teacher
- Guided reading focusing on particular skills.
- Phonics taught on a regular basis.
- A range of topic books available
- Use of computer programs to search for information

## Year 2

- Independent choice of books monitored by the teacher
- Topic linked selection of fiction and non-fiction books
- Children make own books
- Wide range of fiction - tales from different cultures, humorous, real life, mythical stories, plays, longer stories
- Reading aloud expressively
- Phonics taught regularly.
- ERIC (everybody reading in class) choosing from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Emphasis on their own choice, sharing with other children and opportunity for teacher to observe reading behaviour
- Regularly change the selection of texts
- Books all around the classroom
- Critically analysing other authors' work
- Use styles of other authors to influence our own writing
- One book to read in class and at home using reading record to reinforce close links

We link reading and writing objectives at sentence, text and word level. Techniques used include the following:-

### Shared Time

Highlighting sentences that show teaching points

Talk about tense in shared text

Talk about differences in written and spoken English

### Guided Reading Time

Find a sentence which shows how a character feels

which creates a powerful picture in your mind

which has commas in lists

Practise reading with expression

### Independent time

Re-visit a guided reading book independently and find sentences of the type required

Sentence/word wall: add words from the reading material

Cloze tasks

Compile own collection of words and extended vocabulary eg similes, synonyms

### Plenary

Read aloud a prepared text for expression and ask peers for their opinions

### Reading Independently

Activities that direct children's attention to specific aspects of reading and writing

Punctuation, text features and layout are the visual props for the unheard voice of the author

Read to internalise this

Discuss meanings of technical terms eg migrate, pollute

Use text as a model: increase awareness of vocabulary and precise meaning

**Downs Way School** contributes towards the **Red House Book Awards** via **The Oxted Book Group**. The children evaluate a selection of soon to be published children's books and vote for their favourites.

## **Speaking and Listening**

### **Aims**

To provide children with a rich range of experiences for speaking and listening.

All children will be given the opportunity to listen, understand and respond appropriately to others. They will be encouraged to take part in discussions, debates and drama.

We will provide the children with

- Opportunities to listen, understand and respond appropriately to others
- Opportunities to participate in all discussions
- A rich and varied range of experiences for speaking and listening
- Opportunities to reflect on their own and others' speech and evaluate it
- Opportunities to adapt their speech to a widening range of circumstances and increase their vocabulary
- Opportunities to take part in drama and presentations

## **Speaking and Listening Experiences**

### Early Years/Foundation Stage

- Interaction during imaginative play
- Contributing to a know refrain in a story or rhyme
- Circle time
- Following simple instructions
- Drama

### Year 1

- Make contributions to show and tell
- Individual presentations
- Circle time
- Drama

### Year 2

- Class discussions and debates
- Make individual presentations
- Read work aloud
- Drama
- Follow more complex instructions

### **Assessment and Monitoring**

Targets are set to improve standards which are monitored and evaluated through:

- Classroom observation
- Sampling children's work
- Scrutinising planning
- Analysis of assessments

### Reading

- Individual reading record is kept
- Individual home reading diary
- Group reading planning and evaluation grid kept
- Reading level assessed and children progress up the levels as judged by the class teacher

### Writing

- AAP grids highlighted for each child each term to show progress and inform planning and tracking
- Phonics assessed at the end of every phase.
- Targets set and possibly adjusted for each child starting with aspirational target set at end of Foundation Stage

### Spelling

- Weekly spelling tests of handwriting/spelling words
- Spelling assessed within writing assessments to inform tracking

### Handwriting

- Assessments within writing used to inform tracking

### Speaking and listening

- Teacher observation in classroom setting
- CMC checklist used to inform tracking

Reviewed Spring Term 2012

Review Spring Term 2014

Review in light of new Curriculum