

Foxton Primary School

English Policy

English Intent Statement

At Foxton, we believe that reading is at the heart of all learning and we seek to instil a love of reading in all our pupils, developing their cultural capital and introducing them to “the best that has been thought and said.” We want to develop independent, reflective readers who can read fluently and with understanding. We believe that introducing pupils to a wealth of high-quality texts provides a window into the lives of others and the diverse world around them. We also aim to provide pupils with stories which mirror their own lives and foster their sense of identity. We understand that cultivating an ability to listen and learn, to think independently and to clearly communicate ideas and opinions both orally and in writing are important milestones in every child’s development.

We believe that good readers make good writers. We think that a critical appreciation and understanding of both modern and classic children’s literature can not only inspire pupils to write but also widen their vocabulary across the curriculum, enabling them to achieve their full potential. Providing opportunities for pupils to write for authentic purposes and audiences is central to our approach to teaching writing.

Our curriculum closely follows the aims and statutory requirements of the Primary National Curriculum for English and the Communication, Language and Literacy sections of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

Spoken Language

We provide pupils with frequent opportunities to talk, discuss and share ideas within English and across the curriculum. We strive to cultivate a safe and respectful environment where all children’s views are listened to, reflecting the British values of mutual respect and tolerance. We recognise that this environment helps pupils to develop their language skills and to find their own voice, developing the necessary communication skills to equip them for the future.

Pupils are taught to use Standard English and learn how to construct sentences, speeches and arguments effectively, as well as to justify their thoughts and opinions. In Early Years and KS1, oral rehearsal is used to embed new vocabulary and to formulate ideas prior to writing. Talking partners and group discussion are used across the curriculum and there are opportunities for pupils to perform songs, poems and stories to different audiences. Through drama and focused teaching, pupils are taught to explore different scenarios using improvisation and role-play. This encourages pupils to empathise with a range of characters and deepens their understanding of texts read.

Reading

Early Reading and Phonics

We begin to develop children’s phonological awareness from the moment that they arrive at school. Phonics is taught discretely on a daily basis, using a systematic, synthetic approach in line with the guidance in the DfE’s Reading Framework document (July 2021). Progress in phonics and reading is rigorously tracked to ensure pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly identified. Pupils apply their phonic skills by reading decodable texts matched to their current level of phonic knowledge. Reading books are organised to match the order in which phonemes and graphemes

are taught. Once this knowledge is secure, pupils progress on to coloured book bands. Language comprehension and word recognition skills are taught concurrently from the start of Reception within a reading-rich environment. Pupils take home a decodable reading book as well as a library book of their choice to support the development of both word recognition and language comprehension. Parents are encouraged to read with their child every day. Reading records are used to monitor reading and as a method of communication between teachers and parents.

At Foxton, guided reading is introduced from Reception to develop pupils' word recognition and comprehension skills. Decodable books are matched to the reading ability of each group to support application of phonic knowledge. The progress of individual pupils is continually assessed during these lessons and informs planning and provision.

During whole-class shared reading, teachers model a wide range of reading strategies. Pupils are encouraged to express likes and dislikes, make simple predictions, and to ask to clarify their understanding of the text. Questioning is used to develop pupils' comprehension skills. Throughout early reading, there are many opportunities to retell familiar stories in different ways. Pupils listen to and join in with a wide range of stories, songs and rhymes on a regular basis.

Guided & Shared Reading

Guided reading continues to be used in KS2. Once pupils' word recognition skills are secure, teaching focuses on deepening comprehension skills. Guided reading lessons are planned to address different elements of comprehension, including retrieval, inference and understanding of vocabulary. Texts are carefully selected to meet the reading level and needs of the group. There are opportunities for pupils to discuss texts read and to ask and answer questions. Regular assessment is used to monitor the reading progress of individual pupils and additional support is provided for pupils at risk of falling behind.

During whole-class shared reading, teachers demonstrate fluent, expressive reading. A wide variety of different genres are explored and teachers model a range of comprehension strategies. This allows less confident readers to access and understand more challenging texts with rich vocabulary. These texts may also be used as models for writing.

Reading for Pleasure

At Foxton, we recognise how reading for pleasure is fundamental to pupils' emotional wellbeing, understanding of the world and academic success. Pupils regularly hear texts read aloud and there are frequent opportunities for independent and paired reading. Pupils are encouraged to discuss these texts with their teacher and peers. Each class has a reading area for pupils to choose and enjoy a range of books. On entry to KS2, pupils continue to be tracked through the book bands system. Once these book bands are completed, pupils' choices continue to be monitored to ensure texts are matched to their current reading level. Independent reading time is used to develop fluency and stamina. As pupils become more fluent, they are encouraged to read independently at home as often as possible. The school library has a range of fiction and non-fiction books for pupils to enjoy in class. Books from the library are used to support reading across the curriculum and are linked to different subjects and topics, including British Values. Reading is celebrated through special events such as World Book Day and Storytelling Day.

Writing

Writing

Writing is one of the primary forms of communication. It allows thoughts to be clarified, emotions to be expressed, opinions to be stated, experiences and explanations to be shared. Our aim is for all pupils to see themselves as 'writers'. Authentic purposes and audiences for writing are planned

and discussed with pupils to provide them with the motivation to write, within English and across the curriculum.

From the start of their writing journey in Reception, pupils are encouraged to mark-make and apply their growing phonic knowledge to write simple words, captions and sentences. Meaningful and engaging writing opportunities are provided throughout the learning environment. Story mapping is used to support the oral retelling of key stories and to embed story language.

Writing is taught using a 3-phase approach in line with the teaching sequence for writing. Units of work are mapped out for each year group, to ensure pupils experience a range of genres and write for a range of purposes. During the first phase of the teaching sequence, pupils are immersed in the language, themes and features of the text type. A range of teaching approaches are used, including shared reading, short-burst writing, discussion and role-play. Pupils are encouraged to “read as a writer”, selecting ideas and vocabulary from shared texts to use in their own writing. During the second phase of the teaching sequence, pupils are given the opportunity to practise the specific elements of grammar required to meet the needs of the intended audience and purpose for writing. The final phase of the teaching sequence is used to plan, draft and edit the extended written outcome. Shared writing is used to demonstrate application of the skills taught throughout the teaching sequence. Different techniques may be used, including teacher demonstration, teacher scribe and supported composition. Spelling and handwriting are taught discretely to give pupils sufficient fluency and legibility to enable effective composition, although teachers also model the application of phonics and spelling during shared writing. Wherever possible, pupils’ written outcomes are shared with the intended audience and feedback given. Throughout the teaching sequence, the English working wall is used to capture the learning at each phase and to scaffold the writing journey.

Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

Wherever possible, grammar is taught within the context of writing. At the start of each English unit, the purpose and audience for writing is shared and discussed with the class. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the effect they wish to create for their reader and how this might be achieved through vocabulary choices and specific grammar features. These techniques are then explored through quality texts during the first phase of the teaching sequence. Pupils are given the opportunity to practise using these elements of grammar during the second phase of the teaching sequence. Pupils then apply this learning within their extended written outcome during the final phase of the teaching sequence. Discrete teaching of grammar may also take place to reinforce specific skills identified from ongoing assessment.

Spelling

EYFS & KS1

The skill of encoding (representing phonemes with graphemes) is an integral part of our phonics teaching programme and begins in Reception. Pupils are taught to orally segment words into phonemes and to represent these phonemes with graphemes. Strategies for spelling common exception or “tricky words” are also taught. This knowledge is systematically taught through the phonics teaching phases so that by the end of Year 1, pupils are familiar with the range of grapheme choices for each phoneme. This knowledge is consolidated in Year 2, as pupils become more accurate in their spelling choices and develop their understanding of spelling rules and conventions in line with the statutory requirements in the National Curriculum spelling appendix. Dictated sentences are used within phonics lesson to ensure pupils apply their spelling knowledge within writing. Pupils are given time to proof-read and correct their spellings through marking and feedback. Individual phonics records are updated regularly to swiftly identify pupils who require additional support with spelling. At home pupils can practice spellings learnt in Class 2 by logging onto Readwriter.

KS2

Individual phonics records are used to identify pupils who require extra support with phonics and spelling at the start of KS2. In Year 3 pupils revise the Common Exception Words learnt in Year 2 and progress onto the Year 3 / 4 spelling list. This is continued into Class 4 when the Year 5/6 spelling list is introduced. Pupils are regularly assessed on these spellings and will work on the spellings that are relevant to their level of spelling. If any spellings are misspelt in their writing pupils will be asked to re-write the words to help reinforce their spelling. Spelling intervention s support pupils who are working on spelling lists below their year group.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught discretely from Early Years onwards, where gross and fine motor skills are developed. There are weekly handwriting lessons in all classes. Letter formation is taught using “formation families” across EYFS and KS1. Pupils are encouraged to apply their handwriting skills whenever they are writing. Handwriting lessons are weekly in KS1. Pupils begin to join their writing in Year 2, following the Penpals Scheme, and this is continued in Year 3. Interventions are available for pupils who need additional support with their handwriting.

Assessment of English

Assessment of English is continuous and progress is tracked using the Insight system. Pupils regularly complete independent pieces of writing on the novel or topic they have been studying in class. This writing is assessed by their teachers and used to update the Insight system. At the end of each term, pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 complete a PIRA reading paper, which provides teachers with information on children’s comprehension of reading texts. These forms of assessment enable teachers to provide addition support to pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

British Values

At Foxton, we develop and promote British Values throughout our school and within our curriculum. In our English curriculum, there are many opportunities for our pupils to learn about democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance. Stories, poetry and other writings from other cultures are shared with pupils alongside texts that explore themes of diversity, tolerance and discrimination. We hold discussions and debates where pupils are encouraged to build respectful arguments and respect the views of others. There is a safe and respectful space for discussion, where asking questions, clarifying understanding and sharing different perspectives and viewpoints is encouraged and valued. Pupils have the opportunity to work with others in paired or group situations. This helps them to understand that different people have different views and also promotes the British values of mutual respect and support for one another. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their own voice through purposeful speaking and writing tasks. Pupils are encouraged to persevere with their learning and develop resilience across the curriculum.