

## **Stamfordham First School English Policy December 2015**

Reading stories is magic. Everyone knows that. Reading a good story takes us into another world where anything can happen. Lost in that other place we see words on the page, yet in our minds we live in a stronger place – the imagination. Pie Corbett<sup>1</sup>

At Stamfordham First School we want to make learning vivid and real. We want to show children the way to this magical world and to open other doors as well! English is the key to a world of new experience. It can unlock the imagination and open the door to untold knowledge. It is a foundation stone of learning.

This policy describes our aims and our practice and is defined by current national guidance on what ‘best practice’ is, in-service training, staff discussion and professional judgement.

### **Aims for our policy:**

- ✓ To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing;
- ✓ To develop in pupils an interest in and a love of books and literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum but also enrich their lives;
- ✓ To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop in children the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audience;
- ✓ Teach the basics – spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting - to liberate creativity;
- ✓ To foster in pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions and imagination both orally and in writing;
- ✓ To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

### **Planning - Teaching and Learning Strategies**

Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within Read, Write, Inc. lessons. Staff teach RWI Phonics - RWI Spelling and RWI Literacy and Language. \*See RWI Whole School Approach’

RWI teaching and learning takes place in ability groups and also within ability-led guided reading groups.

Igniting Writing takes place once a week throughout the school Rec - Year 4. This session provides an opportunity for the children to develop extended writing skills.

Learning takes place within the whole school setting.

\*See ‘English Teaching at SFS’.

## **Inclusion**

We aim for all children to participate in mainstream lessons. Work is differentiated and where necessary extra support is in place for children with S.E.N.D including an I.E.P. and adult support. Where it is felt necessary a pupil is withdrawn from class to receive specialist help.

We aim to provide a range of resources that reflect the diversity of culture and language within our school community and the wider school community. See Guidelines for further information about resources.

## **Speaking and Listening**

### **We aim for our pupils:**

- To develop a rich and varied vocabulary that will support their learning across the curriculum;
- To have the confidence to take risks in using new vocabulary;
- To speak confidently, fluently and clearly and be able to adapt their speech for a range of purposes and audiences;
- To actively listen to others and to evaluate, discuss, question and respect their opinions and input;
- To know about the fundamental links between the spoken word and writing;
  
- To develop the language to talk about language;
- To develop subject vocabulary associated with the wider curriculum e.g. Science so that children feel confident and at ease in both responding to specialist terms and in using them;
- To have opportunities to develop and use other languages including mother tongue;

### **What does this look like at Stamfordham First School?**

- ✓ **Re-telling, role-play, drama, productions, assemblies** (see reading and writing).
- ✓ **Listening to and participating** in stories, poems, rhymes and song.
  
- ✓ **Talking the text** – lots of opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing (see reading and writing).
- ✓ **Debate** – within classrooms related to topical issues and or current class focus. School Council also provides a forum for debate both in and out of school.
- ✓ **Collaborative work** – organising actively listening to one another to further the aims of the group.
- ✓ **Reporting back** following group/partner work.
- ✓ **Presentations** – Planning and carrying out presentations in various groupings with various audiences.
- ✓ **Questioning** - Children are actively encouraged to raise and answer questions, use talk partners and to express their views and opinions.

## Reading:

### At Stamfordham First School we aim for our pupils:

- To value and use books as a basis for learning, pleasure, talk and play;
- To have access to a range of high quality reading material for example stories drawn from a variety of cultures, technical magazines, newspaper articles, sports reports, catalogues etc;
- To develop a range of independent strategies for tackling print including contextual clues, grammatical cues, phonemic (sounds) cues; graphical clues (what the word looks like, its shape) self correction skills and a diverse sight vocabulary;
- To become fluent and questioning readers who are able and confident to access a wide range of texts that become increasingly challenging;
- To extend and develop understanding, as well as creativity and imagination, by exploring texts in a wide variety of ways and settings. For example through drama, art, discussion and play;
- To look beyond what is given and use inference and deduction;
- To become critical readers, who are able to evaluate and discuss their opinions about texts, differentiate between fact and opinion and discuss bias;
- To know that texts can be presented through a variety of mediums including: www, film and T.V. and be able to access and use them effectively;
- To be able to carry out research effectively using contents, index, glossary and search engine, to support work across the curriculum;
- To be able to scan and skim a page looking for key words to support research or to evidence a personal opinion.

### What does this look like at Stamfordham First School?

- ✓ **RWI Phonics and Literacy and Language**
- ✓ **See 'The Teaching of Reading at SFS'**
- ✓ **Storytelling and sharing of good quality whole texts**, on a daily basis.
- ✓ **Retelling familiar stories.** As well as teacher led classroom activities we have story telling activities with invited storytellers who perform and involve both parents and children in storytelling.
- ✓ Teachers read a new **class novel** every half term/term depending on content and level of complexity.
- ✓ **Lots of talk and discussion** about reading in a variety of contexts, both formal and informal, for example assemblies, book club, carpet sessions or just having a chat about a favourite author or 'bit'.
- ✓ **Structured early learning programme** – The teaching of early reading skills begins in Stampsers.
- ✓ **Regular use of books** from the school non-fiction library and opportunity to read.
- ✓ Detailed systems to track and assist those children who need additional literacy support throughout

- ✓ **Hot seating** to enliven and enrich children's understanding of character and character relationships;
- **Re-enacting stories** through: role-play, use of puppets and productions;
- **Reading for enjoyment!** Time is set-aside for children to read books of their own choice during the school week;
- **Reading for real purpose** i.e. to research information;
- **Reading across the curriculum** linked to well-planned stimulating class topics;

Time is set aside for **sharing books in different settings** depending on the needs of the child and the teaching and learning purpose. For example:

- ✓ Individual reading with an adult for pleasure, as well as learning.
- ✓ Volunteer Reading Help – outside volunteers work with individual children on a one to one basis.
- ✓ Paired/individual reading for personal interest or to carry out research
- ✓ Group reading to revisit a text led by a teaching assistant.

Sharing books in any context is special and we aim to create an environment and atmosphere that is conducive to the sharing of ideas, thoughts and enjoyment of books;

- **Regular modelling of good reading practice** through whole class shared and guided group sessions;
- **Regular and differentiated teacher/teaching assistant led guided reading sessions** that focus upon explicit learning goals that are shared with the children;
- **Language rich environments** - well presented displays and word banks in classrooms that reflect cultural diversity, bring language to life and record children's developing vocabulary for later use;
- **We expect and encourage children to read regularly at home.** Reading is seen as an integral part of pupil's homework. They are provided with a folder and home/school reading record. All parents are encouraged to write in the home school reading record and in doing so maintain a dialogue with the school, aimed at helping their child learn to read. Time is set-aside for children to change books as and when this is needed. Support is given in choice of books for younger children or where it is needed; A reading club takes place for a short period of time on a weekly basis, for those children who do not read the minimum of the recommended four times a week.

### **Writing:**

"If you do not want to read then you are unlikely to be someone who wants to write; for writing stems from reading." Philip Pullman.<sup>3</sup>

"It has become evident that around sixty percent of the population will never read widely enough, regularly enough, at a high enough challenge level or with enough pleasure to subconsciously absorb higher order structures and consciously apply them in their writing." Ros Wilson.<sup>4</sup>

All children's lives are a red-hot resource of experience, a seedbed for their writing. We have to help children become magpies and steal from their own lives – to use places they know, people they know, events they know, feelings they know... Pie Corbett<sup>5</sup>

**At Stamfordham First School we strive to create an environment that will promote both reading and writing. We want to turn children onto books so that they will be part of that 40 per cent that are able to take what they learn from their reading into their writing. However in order to ensure that all children learn to be confident writers, including those whose reading does not fully support their writing, we teach key writing skills explicitly and systematically.**

**We also want to motivate children to write:** 'We want children to be surprised and intrigued so that they are on the edge of their seat wondering what writing task will come their way<sup>6</sup>.'

**We aim for our pupils to:**

- Build upon what they learn through talk and reading by teaching and consolidating writing skills in both Read, Write, Inc. and Igniting Writing;
- Have a clear understanding of Audience and Purpose and to be able to adapt their writing accordingly;
- Be able to draw upon their experiences as a basis for writing "to become magpies." To this end we provide a wide range of extra curricular activities and trips that are linked to the wider curriculum;
- Be willing to take risks in their writing to make mistakes and learn from them;
- Recognise the role of and be skilled in planning, drafting proof reading, editing and publishing;
- Become increasingly independent when proof reading and editing their own work and to be able to work with a writing partner/group in a supportive and effective way to improve on first drafts;
- To distinguish between writing that is public and writing that is personal;
- To be able to spell accurately and to have a range of strategies for tackling unknown spellings;
- To write with a legible, fluent and joined handwriting style by the time they reach Year 3 and improve on this as they progress through Year 3 and 4;
- To think about and know about what they want to write before they begin;

**What does this look like at Stamfordham First School?**

Writing takes place within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum. Teachers plan towards a writing outcome which may be fiction or non-fiction that is linked to the wider curriculum. Extended writing is encouraged and developed at all times.

### **We teach writing as a sequenced activity:**

- **Reading** examples
  - **Focused teaching** of particular aspects for example highlighting effective vocabulary - adjectives
  - **Summarise learning** e.g. 'adjectives can bring a setting to life but don't use too many within the sentence – make them earn their place!'
  - **Demonstration** – show pupils how to write, using the focus
  - **Shared composition** – pupils compose with the teacher as a scribe, focusing and challenging their suggestions.
  - **Supported writing within guided ability groups** – mini rehearsals, e.g. using whiteboards to practise a feature
  - **Supported/Independent writing** – trying it for themselves.
  - **Review** – polishing the writing
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- ✓ **We establish a real purpose for writing from the outset** e.g. 'We are going to develop and record some questions for 'Barnaby Bear' to take on holiday with him and find the answers to.' Or 'We are going to gather information and opinions about the success of the Home Zone and write to the council to express our views.'
  - ✓ **Provide stimulating first hand experiences** beyond the reading model:
    - ✓ We capitalise on children's own experiences and add to these by taking children on regular class visits linked to well planned and stimulating topics.
    - ✓ We use drama, art and role-play as starting points for writing.
    - ✓ We publish children's writing and poetry in books and anthologies.
    - ✓ We involve children in writing scripts for various school performances – including adapting known stories and plays.
  - ✓ **Create the right atmosphere for writing** – we do not settle children down to write unless they have already generated ideas for writing - as above.
  - ✓ **Provide regular helpful feedback**
  - ✓ Teachers and children work together to; review, revise and improve their writing using a shared marking/editing code. From Reception, pupils are introduced to the principle of 'editing' e.g. adding in a word using 'green' editing pens. This skill is then developed year on year with the aim that by Year Four children will be confident in reviewing and revising their work.

Our aim is to create a dialogue with the child that is pro-active and helpful in establishing next steps.

### **Spelling** "Teach the basics to liberate creativity"

Spelling is learnt as we use it. We aim for pupils to:

- To explore words through their reading and writing and develop an interesting and wide vocabulary;

- In doing so develop their ability to recognise common spelling patterns, roots, prefixes and suffixes and derivations;
- Develop a number of strategies in order to spell correctly;
- Use mistakes in their own writing to identify and practise common spelling errors;
- To be able to use 'look, say, cover, write, spell' - to learn and practise correct spellings.

*Spelling is taught specifically through Read, Write, Inc. Phonics with the younger children and Read, Write, Inc. spelling with the older/more able children.*

#### **What does this look like at Stamfordham First School?**

- K.S. 1 pupils work are encouraged to **'have a go'** in their first drafts and refer to class word banks when writing.
- All classrooms have relevant **word banks** and **dictionaries** that are displayed in visually interesting ways.
- Children learn to spell through **active investigation** of words and patterns i. e. moving around the classroom to find a word group that your word belongs to)
- From Reception, children are actively encouraged and taught to **proof read their writing** for spelling errors.
- Spellings/Word Investigations are routinely set as part of **homework** from Year 1 onwards and, as appropriate, children have a weekly spelling test.
- We **link handwriting to common spelling patterns**.

#### **Handwriting:**

We aim for all our pupils to:

- Have a legible, joined handwriting style by the end of Year 2;
- To know when it matters to use 'best handwriting';
- To have the confidence to experiment and develop their own individual style using what they have learnt about how to write clearly and well;

#### **What does this look like at Stamfordham First School?**

- In the early years there is a **big emphasis upon fine motor skills**, starting and finishing in the right place. We also encourage parents to model lower case letters with the correct formation.

#### **We use the Nelson scheme as the basis for our teaching.**

- Throughout teaching we make strong references to Nelson patterns and **start each lesson with a pattern**.
- We encourage young children to **copy under** model words and sentences rather than transfer from a board or separate sheet.

- We **link** handwriting to common spelling patterns.
- We take the view that handwriting should be **taught little and often** – 3 X 15 minutes in Reception and KS1 and 2 X15 minutes in KS2.
- The **teacher models** the expectation.
- In KS2 and when appropriate pupils work with **handwriting pens** in separate handwriting books supervised by the teacher or TA.
- **Ability groups** are very relevant.
- Sessions are **very quiet** or silent.
- Children are expected to **use what they learn** in these lessons particularly when redrafting to a final copy.

**Assessment and Record Keeping** (Also see Stamfordham First School Planning, Assessment and Record Keeping Policy)

**Teachers regularly set Guided Reading targets** and related objective that are shared with children in this context.

**Formative Assessment/Record keeping** – as described in marking and editing above. Also see Assessment policy.

**Summative Assessment:**

- ✓ Every 8 weeks - Read, Write, Inc. Phonics assessments.
- ✓ Year 2 SAT's test.

***Whole school monitoring and evaluation, tracking, sampling – see assessment policy***

### **References and Bibliography**

**1/5/6/8 Pie Corbett** - How to Teach Fiction Writing

**2 Stamfordham First School Teaching and Learning Policy**

**3 Ted Hughes** - from How to Teach Fiction Writing

**4/7 Ros Wilson** - Strategies for Immediate Impact on Writing Standards