



Katherine Semar Schools

# ENGLISH POLICY

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## **INSPIRE CURRICULUM**

At Katherine Semar Schools we have developed the INSPIRE curriculum, which is underpinned by what we believe makes an outstanding curriculum for our children; offering them opportunities to question, be challenged, investigate, experience, communicate, create and understand. Learning is developed in a cross-curricular approach wherever appropriate and the children are given real contexts for their learning which motivate them by creating a real purpose for learning.

## **OUR AIMS IN ENGLISH – What do we want to do?**

At Katherine Semar Schools we believe ensuring children's competency in speaking, listening, reading and writing is fundamental to our role, not only because they are vital skills in themselves but because of the world of possibilities they open up. Once a child can read, write, speak and listen effectively they can access a world of knowledge. The four aspects of our English curriculum are also vital skills for life and effective communication, in all of its forms, is the key to becoming a happy citizen who contributes to our society.

In-line with the National Curriculum 2014 we aim to ensure pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

## **OUR IMPLEMENTATION – How will we achieve our aims?**

### **Phonics**

- Phonics is our prime approach to the teaching of decoding and encoding to enable reading and writing.
- Our systematic, synthetic phonics programme, which meets the validation criteria, is used with fidelity and empowers children as young readers and writers. Phonics teaching and learning should be a highly positive and successful process for all. To achieve this, we ensure lessons are engaging, purposeful and interactive.
- Phonics is taught discretely each day from the beginning of Early Years to the point children are ready to transition to learn more traditional spelling patterns.
- Phonic sessions are whole class sessions, differentiated to ensure all children are effectively supported and challenged to develop their reading and writing skills. All children are exposed to the age-related content as identified by the National Curriculum. This is followed by differentiated opportunities for children to practice and apply learning at an appropriate level, based upon effective assessment.
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- Phonics sessions are engaging, interactive and multisensory, with children being 'active' participants in the learning for the majority of the session. This is achieved through use of active learning structures, carefully chosen games, and strategic use of resources to ensure children are busy reading (blending) and writing (segmenting) following clear adult models.
- Wherever appropriate a context is provided for reading and writing.
- Each lesson follows the four-part teaching sequence: Revisit/Review, Teach, Practice, Apply.
- One day a week focuses on the teaching of new tricky words and includes an extended written application of the week's learning.
- Although phonic lessons follow the four-part structure, in the very initial stages of the children's phonics learning (approximately weeks 1-3) in the Early Years, the content of the different lesson parts varies slightly from the one adhered to once blending has begun to be established. At this early stage many children need to secure oral blending as well as grapheme recognition and formation in preparation for reading and spelling words. (see Phonics the KS Way for further detail)

## **Spelling**

- Spelling is taught regularly and consistently from Early Years to Year Six.
- Early Years and Year 1 begin by learning to spell common exception words correctly (words which cannot be phonetically encoded).
- From Year One, children begin to learn how to apply spelling rules and patterns, including exceptions to those rules. These patterns and exceptions follow the expectations of the National Curriculum 2014. (see KS Phonics and Spelling Progression)
- We believe spelling is taught most effectively as part of interactive, engaging sessions, which take an investigative approach wherever possible.
- Success and progress in spelling is celebrated through weekly spelling tests in KS2 and half termly 'Big Spell' spelling assessments across the school, which allow children to earn certificates for their achievements.
- Appropriate interventions are put in place to support children who are identified in pupil progress meetings as not making the progress they are capable of.

## **Reading**

### **Literature and Poetry Spine**

We believe that to become competent, engaged, excited readers, children need to be exposed to a broad range of high-quality texts. To guarantee this, we have developed both a literature (fiction) and poetry spine which runs throughout the school and includes all of the texts children access through whole class teaching. These include a wide range of genres, narrative types and authors.

In EY/KS1 we also have half termly, high quality enrichment text which support current learning.

### **Partnered Reading (EY/Y1)**

Children in EYFS and Y1 participate in three partnered reading sessions a week using phonics bug books closely aligned to their phonic knowledge. Children read a text three times, each time with a different focus: to decode, to develop fluency and to comprehend (See Partnered Reading the KS Way document)

### **Whole Class Guided Reading (Y2- Y6)**

We understand that reading is about much more than simply decoding words on a page and want all children to have the opportunity to read and understand high quality text. We have developed three types of whole class reading sessions; Class Novel – explore, Class Novel – fluency & close read and Linked text. A combination of these types is used across a week to allow the children to practice fluency, extend vocabulary, develop comprehension skills and engage in active discussion where they co-construct meaning from a text. Class teachers select which combination best suits the current needs of their class.

## Individual reading – infants

- We believe individual reading offers children the essential opportunity to practice their developing skill with a skilled adult.
- Children in the infant school read with an adult in school at least two times a week.
- Children who need more frequent individual reading practice also read with our high quality school reading volunteers
- There is also the opportunity to read to our reading dog.
- We believe that to become proficient readers, children need access to a vast range of appropriately challenging texts. To achieve this we have invested in a range of high quality reading schemes, including eBooks which offer an excellent range of decodable texts of different genres and styles to appeal to all readers and develop the broad range of reading skills.
- **Phonically decodable books** Children will initially learn to read using phonically decodable books which are closely linked to their phonic knowledge. These books are numerically ordered to match the order in which phonemes are taught within our daily class phonic sessions. Children will be encouraged to reread these books to develop fluency and automaticity.
- **Rainbow readers** Once a child is secure in their phonics and applying this confidently to their reading they will progress to Rainbow Readers. These books are arranged into themes, with each colour of the rainbow being linked to a different theme e.g. books with yellow stickers are all about adventure. Children will select books from any of the themes they wish and will be given a rainbow to colour so they can keep a record of their choices. This record will be used by the child and the teacher to discuss their book preferences and to further develop independence and enjoyment in reading and selecting books.
- **Young Readers Books** in this section are organised by author, enabling the children to begin to develop library skills. Children will be able to select books by authors of their choice but will also be given a leaflet of recommended reads to support them in their decision making and help them to begin to recognise their own reading preference
- We understand the importance of regular reading practice at home. Children take a school reading book home each day and we work with parents to encourage them to read at home every night. Approaches to secure this vary depending on the needs of the cohort but may include reward schemes, written and oral reminders, parent workshops etc.

## Individual Reading - Juniors

- We have invested in a range of high- quality text, both modern and classic to support the children in developing a rich vocabulary, alongside developing stamina and a broad range of reading skills.
- **S books Books** in this section are organised by author, enabling the children to begin to further develop library skills. Children will be able to select books by authors of their choice but will also be given a leaflet of recommended reads (Gold star) to support them in their decision making and help them to further understand their own reading preferences. Books at this stage require a higher level of reading stamina than the Young readers and the vocabulary and sentence structure is increasingly more complex. The content of these books is suitable for children from lower key stage two onwards.
- **S+ books** At this stage children are confident, avid readers who have developed effective library skills. Books in this section are once again organised by author and children will be able to select books by authors of their choice. A leaflet of recommended reads (Gold Star) will be available to support them in their decision making and ensure children continue to read high quality, challenging text. The content of these books is suitable for children in upper key stage 2.
- 'Reading champions' and school reading volunteers read regularly with children who have been identified as requiring regular opportunities to read individually. This may be to support fluency, comprehension or enjoyment.

- We understand the importance of regular reading practice at home. Children take a school reading book home each day and we work with parents to encourage them to read at home every night. Approaches to secure this vary depending on the needs of the cohort but may include reward schemes, written and oral reminders, parent workshops etc.

### **Reading for pleasure:**

#### **Daily Story time**

- We believe that reading for pleasure is an essential part of developing young readers and all children across the school enjoy hearing high quality text, including classic literature, being read aloud daily. In KS2 this is likely to be whole class novel whilst in EY/KS1 this is usually a high-quality enrichment text.

#### **Library**

- Our welcoming, well-stocked library offers children daily access to a vast range of high-quality books that they can choose to take home, for their pleasure, in addition to their individual reading book.
- We have a qualified librarian who supports children in selecting books, encourages them to review books and purchases books requested by the children.
- We have a staff book club who actively read and discuss new/ recommended books to ensure our provision remains up to date, relevant and engaging.

#### **Classrooms**

- EY/KS1 classrooms have welcoming, well stocked book collections from which the children can select a book to take home and share with their family.

#### **Enrichment**

- We fully embrace World Book Day, dressing up, creating characters , holding poetry competitions and welcoming authors and poets
- Weekly mystery readers visit the infant classes (parents/ Y6)
- A weekly reading morning is held where parents come into class to share a book with their child

### **Writing**

#### **Talk 4 Writing**

- The school has developed a 'Talk 4 Writing' approach to many aspects of teaching writing. This supports children to internalise a 'living library' of high -quality texts (fiction, non-fiction and poetry) which they can draw upon in their own writing.
- The teaching sequence follows a pattern of; *imitation* where children learn a text, are immersed in it through role play, music, and concrete experiences, and engage with the written text on the page; *innovation* where children are supported to develop their own version of the text using carefully scaffolded innovations; and *invention* where children utilise all of their experience of our broad and rich language curriculum to invent their own texts.
- Each year group has their own Writing Checklist which highlights the prior and current writing expectations.

#### **Grammar and punctuation**

- Grammar and punctuation are taught regularly and consistently from Early Years to Y6.
- Year group writing checklists include grammar and punctuation expectations.
- The current grammar and punctuation being taught (linked to the year group writing checklist) is modelled in the year group's high quality model texts.
- Grammar and punctuation is taught both implicitly as part of the talk for writing process (imitation stage) and discretely.

## Handwriting

- We believe good handwriting is the result of regular, focused and high quality teaching sessions combined with consistent high expectations across all writing.
- We use the Penpals handwriting scheme across the school.
- In KS2, children work towards earning their handwriting pen and then pen licenses'.
- Children are encouraged and supported to take ownership of their own learning by offering them focused next steps for their writing. With support, they identify areas for improvement and work to demonstrate these in all of their writing.

## Speaking and Listening

- We understand that speaking and listening are at the heart of communication and thus children's ability to engage with others. Children do not become effective speakers and listeners by accident and thus we have an **oracy progression** which ensures the direct teaching of effective speaking and listening skills are embedded in our school right across the curriculum.

## Challenge and Support for all Learners

- We understand that every learner develops differently and adapt our provision continuously to ensure every child receives the correct balance of support and challenge in order to achieve their very best. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability as we build strong relationships ensuring each child will thrive.

## OUR MONITORING – How will we monitor the effectiveness of our English policy?

At Katherine Semar, we believe that the most effective way to monitor the impact of our English policy is to utilise and triangulate a broad range of moderating activities, involve our stakeholders, and apply these regularly, consistently and robustly. Through our annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Review cycle, we employ the following monitoring activities in English:

- **Lesson Observations and Learning Walks**
  - Senior Leaders and Subject Leaders regularly undertake planned and unplanned lesson observations and learning walks. These have a clear focus and feedback and findings are used to inform individual and whole-school Continuing Professional Development (CPD), School Development Planning and future monitoring activities.
- **Internal and External Assessments**
  - In line with the school's assessment policy, each year group undertakes a range of internal and external assessments as appropriate to their age and stage of development. Data from these assessments is used to inform planning, teaching, interventions and adult support to ensure all children are making maximum progress.
- **Moderation**
  - We engage in termly opportunities to moderate writing with colleagues from within the school as well as working with networks of local schools.
- **Book Scrutinies**
  - Book scrutinies are carried out by subject leaders, Senior Leadership Team and whole staff.
- **Pupil Progress Meetings**
  - Pupil progress meetings are held between class teachers and senior leaders, at least termly. These review the progress of each child as an individual and ensure quality first teaching and relevant interventions ensure every child makes maximum progress.

- In addition, subject leaders closely track the lower attaining readers across each cohort to ensure effective provision and maximum progress.

- **Governor Visits**

- As part of the Governors' Monitoring, Evaluation and Review cycle, lead governors in each subject make regular visits to school to monitor progress towards the school development plan.
- Monitoring activities include a range of teaching and learning observations, discussions with subject co-ordinators, meetings with pupils, visits to subject specific celebration assemblies, book scrutinies and subject leader reports.

- **Pupil interviews**

- Senior staff, subject co-ordinators and governors take regular opportunities to listen to the views of pupils in relation to their experience of English at our school and their feedback actively informs subject development through our curriculum action plan.