

English – Intent, Implementation and Impact

“Reading is like breathing in, writing is like breathing out.”

Pam Allyn

English - Intent

At Thwaites School, English and the teaching of English is the foundation of our curriculum. Our main aim is to ensure every single child becomes primary literate and progresses in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Staff at Thwaites School feel it is essential to highlight and be aware of the differing groups of learners and vulnerable children in their class. Once this information is acquired, teachers can plan and teach personalised English lessons which focus on the particular needs of each child. We recognise that each child has their own starting point upon entry to every year group and progress is measured in line with these starting points to ensure every child can celebrate success. English at Thwaites School will not only be a daily discrete lesson, but is at the cornerstone of the entire curriculum. It is embedded within all our lessons and we will strive for a high level of English for all. Through using high-quality texts, immersing children in vocabulary rich learning environments and ensuring new curriculum expectations and the progression of knowledge and skills are met, the children at Thwaites School will be exposed to a language rich, creative and continuous English curriculum where reading and writing are intrinsically linked. This will not only enable them to become primary literate but will also develop a love of reading, creative writing and purposeful speaking and listening. At Thwaites School, our vision is for creativity to be at the helm of our English curriculum and for children to learn new skills in a fun and engaging way.

English – Implementation

With these aims in mind and to provide consistency in our phonic teaching to further improve results, Thwaites School follows the government validated Twinkl approach to teaching phonics in EYFS, KS1 and for those children who required further phonic intervention in KS2. We also intend to update and consolidate our library provision, emphasising reading for pleasure and providing our children with new, up to date reading books written by modern as well as traditional authors.

Reading

We have a systematic, synthetic approach to teaching phonics in EYFS and KS1 following the Twinkl programme. We place great importance on speaking and listening in our Early Years and we teach different aspects and levels of phonological awareness in our Nursery provision. We focus on sound discrimination, rhythm, rhyme, oral blending and segmenting, sound talk and enhancing our children's vocabulary. We follow a text-based learning approach during English lessons. Core Texts have been chosen for each year group. A wide range of effective questioning will be used during class discussions to challenge, probe and extend children's understanding and learning. We analyse the text either responding in writing or completing some explicit vocabulary teaching using words from the text. Teachers model writing objectives during whole class teaching, further supporting children if necessary during independent writing sessions to ensure children meet specific objectives. Opportunities will be provided to reflect and edit their work as the children follow the Thwaites School writing process. Opportunities will also be given to act on marking. In years 1 – 6 teaching will take place as a daily lesson but in Foundation Stage elements may be taught throughout the day. High standards and general English subject knowledge will be reinforced continually throughout all subjects. Children in EYFS and KS1 have access to reading books that are directly linked to their current phonic level to further develop their phonic understanding in reading. More advanced readers in KS1 and children in KS2 have access to a large selection of books spread out across the school in two separate libraries. The books are banded using a colour code that children follow as they progress to more challenging texts. Children are offered time during the school day to read for pleasure and are encouraged to read often at home, if possible, to an adult. Children also enjoy a class book that is often not linked to the curriculum but instead may be a favourite of member of staff or a recommendation from a child.

Handwriting

All children in EYFS are taught to hold a pencil correctly and form all letters correctly. From year 2, children are expected to join up their writing. All staff should model the handwriting cursive script when they write for any purpose within the classroom. All children should be expected to write in this style of handwriting whenever they write, in all subjects. In Reception the children use English books containing tramlined handwriting paper. This will continue throughout Years 1 and 2 or until the children are forming their letters correctly, including ascenders and descenders. Children will then progress onto normal lined English books when their handwriting and presentation is at the expected standard for their age.

Writing including Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

Spellings are to be taught in separate spelling sessions but also continuously throughout the school day. All children are to be taught their year group word list. Through presentations, children are taught their year groups spelling patterns. Children then use 'chunking' to learn spellings in school and at home. Children are then tested on their spellings, the majority of which will be from the learnt list with a few new words that follow the same rule. This prepares the children to apply the rule to spellings they have not learnt. In line with the new national curriculum, we ensure that each year group is taught the explicit grammar, punctuation and spelling objectives required for that age group. As well as teaching the objectives, teachers are able to embed the skills throughout the year in cross-curricular writing opportunities and aim for all children to achieve the objectives at the expected level and that some children can achieve at a greater depth standard. All year groups use the same format for assessing writing, reading and GPS which have been produced in line with the end of Key Stage assessment frameworks as published by the Department for Education. We record our assessments and track progress on our own assessment system. In order to expose children to a variety of genres which helps to utilise and embed the writing skills, teachers use a variety of recommended texts to plan, structure and teach their

English lessons. These plans are designed to show progress, teach the pertinent year group objectives, apply and consolidate these skills and develop vocabulary. Writing is taught through the use of a quality text, which exposes the children to inference, high-level vocabulary, a range of punctuation and characterisation. Each text is purposefully selected in order to promote a love of reading, engagement and high-quality writing from each child.

Speaking and Listening

By the time our pupils leave Thwaites School we aim for our children to be confident, fluent speakers who are able to use a wide range of adventurous and ambitious vocabulary in the correct context. We aim for our pupils to give well-structured descriptions, explanations, presentations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings. Our pupils will refer back to their original thoughts when their opinions have changed and give reasons for their change of focus. They will maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments with confidence. They will be able to consider and evaluate different viewpoints, adding their own interpretations and building on the contributions of others. We aim for our pupils to become good listeners who can follow instructions and ask and answer sensible questions in all lessons.

Teaching and Learning in English

Our teaching and learning strategy in English at Thwaites School is based upon the 2014 National Curriculum for English. We teach children by year groups, although we do adapt tasks to suit pupils who are working above or below age-related expectations. This will enable those pupils working below to develop basic skills, as well as their confidence and independence at a more manageable pace whilst allowing more able pupils to be challenged appropriately at their level. We have also identified those pupils who would benefit from additional English support and they are offered further opportunities to read to an adult, additional phonics sessions or take part in regular IDL sessions. Reading is not only celebrated in lessons at Thwaites School, throughout the school year the importance of reading is enhanced through World Book Day, author and poet visits and a range of trips and visits which enrich and complement children's learning. As we believe consistency and well-taught English is the core of a valuable education, at Thwaites School we ensure that the teaching of reading and writing is purposeful, robust and shows clear progression for all children.

English - Impact

The impact on our children is clear: progress, sustained learning and transferrable skills. We aim that by the end of KS2 all of our children have made considerable progress from their starting points in EYFS. With the implementation of the writing process being well established and taught thoroughly in both key stages, our children are confident writers. By the time they are in upper Key Stage 2, all genres of writing are familiar to them and teaching can focus on creativity, writer's craft, sustained writing and manipulation of grammar and punctuation skills. Our children are also confident, fluent readers and they realise the importance of reading for pleasure along with reading for information and knowledge. As all aspects of English are an integral part of the curriculum, cross curricular writing standards are also high and skills taught in the English lesson are transferred into other subjects; this shows consolidation of skills, progression and a deeper understanding of how and when to use specific grammar, punctuation and spelling objectives. When children move on from us to further their education and learning their creativity, passion for English and high aspirations travel with them and continue to grow and develop as they do.