

South Witham Academy's Curriculum Intent and Implementation for English



Intent

It is our intention when teaching the English curriculum that our pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become lifelong learners and linguists. We strive to ensure that all our pupils receive a well-rounded learning experience when reading, writing, speaking and listening which will equip them with the fundamental tools to achieve in the school and beyond. It is our intention to immerse pupils in the wonders of quality texts to instil a love for reading, a passion for discovery and a confidence to explore their imagination.

English is a core subject of the National Curriculum and a prerequisite for educational and social progress as it underpins the work undertaken in all other areas of the curriculum. The acquisition of language skills is of the utmost importance to us here at South Witham Academy. Confidence in basic language skills enables children to communicate creatively and imaginatively, preparing them for their future journey through education and beyond.

Implementation

Our English curriculum creates opportunities to develop reading fluency and comprehension with a focus on key reading strategies and skills: develop grammar and punctuation knowledge and understanding to use and apply across the wider curriculum, explore the writing structure and features of different genres, identify the purpose and audience, plan and write an initial piece of writing with a clear context and purpose before evaluating the effectiveness of writing by editing and redrafting.

Reading attainment and motivation

Reading starts within our EYFS provision focusing on pre reading skills such as listening games and reciting nursery rhymes. This gives them the solid foundations to learn their letter sounds in reception when children progress through our systematic synthetic phonics scheme: Read Write Inc. which is then taken into Year 1 and carried into Year 2 if needed. Throughout the school, English lessons are based around books of different genres, which aids children in their learning. In addition, throughout the school year the importance of reading is enhanced through World Book Day, author and poet visits, Book Fairs, reading certificates for the amount of reads at home to further enrich our English curriculum. Also, children have access to our school library, taking home a class library or school library book.

Each week, we spend time enjoying reading for pleasure in our classrooms during a dedicated reading for pleasure time. When we read for pleasure, pupils are able to choose the books they wish to read and enjoy, choose to read topic books related to our wider curriculum or pick a book from our class or school library.

Additionally, three times a week, pupils share a story in their classrooms and adults read a class book aloud to the children to further promote a love for reading. This may be a text linked to a topic or an author enhancement opportunity based on children's likes and preferences.

On a weekly basis, adults read a chosen book to a class which is not their own to enable the love and passion for reading to spread. Hearing how other adults read aloud, if different adults use gestures when they read or alternative voices, keeps the love of reading fresh and exciting.

Language Acquisition & Vocabulary Development

We endeavour to ensure we provide our pupils with a 'language rich' environment; we do this with our links to the Class and School Library, which ensures we have a wide range of texts displayed around our school, to correlate with our wider curriculum. We work closely with book fairs in raising the profile of reading to ensure we share the importance of reading with our parents, carers and wider community. Within our classrooms, we explore ambitious vocabulary across the wider curriculum to ensure we acquire an understanding of a breadth & depth of language through the use of our knowledge organisers and working walls.

At South Witham Academy, we aim to share our vision of high aspirations for all of our pupils through our high expectations across the wider curriculum; by setting these high expectations, our pupils are aware of the standards we expect in all lessons and learning opportunities.

As children's reading develops at different rates, teaching is tailored to each child and their ability. Children will read daily in the classroom, either in shared reading, one to one reading or guided reading groups. Children are encouraged to read a range of books in school and at home and communication between staff and parents is encouraged.

We aim to bring reading to life and give it purpose by using music, drama and performance.

Writing

It is our vision that every child will learn to write by being given real and exciting materials and opportunities. We will share excellent writing to inspire children to emulate different styles. We encourage children to read their work for enjoyment, to read it aloud to others and provide audiences for writing. We want children to have an understanding that writing has a real purpose and that word choice and style can bring about change.

Narrative writing topics are based on quality stories and the children are given time to immerse themselves in the text and get to know the characters and story format. Children are encouraged to read a wide variety of genres, they have access to this through a well-resourced reading scheme which they read at home with parents and also in school with staff.

Through non-narrative units, the children learn the features of a range of text types. They apply these in a variety of exciting contents, which are often cross-curricular. Our subscription to First News inspires pupils further to develop a passion to know more about the world in which they live as well as current 'child-friendly' news.

The knowledge and skills of punctuation and grammar are discretely taught and then applied in a relevant context.

Spelling

Spelling rules and strategies are taught through a weekly spelling lesson and assessed through weekly tests, as well as children's spelling in the context of their writing. A structured scheme is used to aid pace & progression.

Handwriting

The foundations of handwriting begin with our EYFS developing their fine motor skills: engaging in pre-writing activities such as painting, threading, using pincer tools and manipulating play dough. We teach children at South Witham Academy to write using a cursive script from year 2 and before if their ability allows. We know that using a cursive script helps most children become more confident, fluent writers and also helps improve spelling.

At South Witham Academy, we believe that good presentation skills are important as we want children to value their own work and for others to do the same. By introducing and teaching a consistent cursive script, our aim is then for children to be able to focus upon the content of their writing rather than on the mechanics of handwriting. We aim for our children to develop a clear cursive handwriting script that they are proud of; earning their pen licence as recognition of that.