

# **West Exmoor Federation**



## **English Policy**

**March 2008**

## **West Exmoor Federation – English Policy**

### **Rationale**

Within the West Exmoor Federation we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills and that through the English curriculum we should help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively with the world at large, through spoken and written language. We also intend to help children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.**

#### **As a federation we aim:**

- To provide a rich and stimulating language environment, where speaking and listening, reading and writing are integrated.
- To provide an environment where pupils are encouraged to construct and convey meaning, both in speech and writing, of factual, imaginary and personal experiences.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to become confident, competent and expressive users of the language with a developing knowledge of how it works.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to be reflective users of language, able to analyse and evaluate its main features.
- To foster an enthusiasm for and love of reading for life.
- To encourage pupils to have fluent and legible handwriting;
- To provide opportunities for pupils to communicate ideas through the use of ICT
- To provide opportunities for role play and drama.

#### **We hope that pupils will:**

- Be able to participate in a conversation, listening to others, responding appropriately and taking turns to speak.
- Develop the confidence and ability to speak appropriately and perform in front of varying sizes of audience.
- Be able to sustain concentration in a range of listening situations
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of genres in fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot;
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of non fiction genres and structure text in a style suited to its purpose
- Use grammar and punctuation accurately
- Have an interest in words and their meanings and a growing vocabulary
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing
- Understand the phonic system and spelling conventions and use them to read and spell accurately;
- Be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes

- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing;
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts
- Be interested in books, read for enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences;
- Be able to work confidently and increasingly independently in all areas.

### **Time allocation**

The time allocated for English is in line with the recommendations for key stage one and two. All children receive the basic entitlement of a daily literacy lesson, lasting approximately one hour.

At Foundation stage an activity linked to the communications and language in literacy strand is included on a daily basis.

In addition, it is recognised that all other subject areas will contribute to children's learning in speaking and listening, reading and writing.

### **Literacy Teaching In the Foundation Stage**

The Reception children will experience Communication, Language and Literacy as part of the six areas of development as laid out in the QCA 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage'. Through careful planning, teachers will ensure that foundation stage pupil needs are provided for through activities linked to Key Stage 1 provision and objectives.

Speaking and Listening skills are vitally important as they underpin all learning at this early stage. The Communication, Language and Literacy programme of the Foundation Stage children builds on the language skills that children bring from home. Development of these skills is encouraged through activities such as listening to stories and poems, joining in with rhymes and songs, participating in drama and imaginative play, responding to simple instructions, talking to accompany play etc. Knowledge about books is developed through activities such as retelling a story in their own words, reading a big book with the teacher, re-reading favourite stories and listening to taped stories etc. When a child is ready to begin more formal reading activities s/he will embark upon the school's reading system of coloured banded books. Emergent writing is encouraged through role play and children are encouraged to write in role. The local environment provides purposes for writing e.g. shopping lists, signs, instructions, recounts etc. When children become more aware of phonics and letter formation they are encouraged to attempt a more focused form of writing using the initial, end and medial sounds in words.

### **Speaking and Listening**

Pupils are given opportunities to speak in pairs, small groups, to the large group at assemblies and are encouraged to speak in front of their peers. They share their news, feed

back information from reading and research, and give opinions in circle time and across the curriculum.

Through the same range of activities, children are encouraged to listen to others, respect turn taking within conversations and ask appropriate questions.

Role play and drama activities may be used in literacy to encourage imagination and plot development. Pupils will be encouraged to use a range of dramatic forms to express feelings and ideas both verbally and non-verbally. Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate drama, both as participants and observers.

Pupils will be involved in larger presentations and performances at Christmas and throughout the year.

## **Reading**

- Pupils at Foundation/ Key Stage 1 are introduced to **phonics** through the Letters and Sounds Scheme. This is supported by Jolly Phonics.
- Pupils are encouraged to recognise **key words** and word patterns through a system of word trees
- Pupils are encouraged to read for meaning and through **context**.
- Pupils are introduced to a full range of texts through **shared reading** in whole class groups.
- Pupils each follow an individual **independent reading** programme monitored by class teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils are encouraged to make free choices of books based on their own interests from the library to supplement their instructional **independent reading**.
- In **group reading**, pupils of similar ability are encouraged to interpret and discuss text in more depth. This may happen within or outside the main daily literacy lesson.
- Reading skills are further developed across the curriculum.
- Pupils are expected to do regular home reading.

## **Writing**

- Teachers model writing of all genres through **shared writing** activities.
- Writing skills are further developed in group **guided writing** sessions.
- Pupils practise writing through **independent writing tasks**.
- Pupils are given opportunities to plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing
- Pupils use their writing skills to communicate across the curriculum

## **Spelling**

Spelling skills are introduced through direct teaching, investigations, studies of spelling patterns and conventions and homework.

Foundation/ Key Stage 1 pupils are introduced to phonics through the Letters and Sounds and Jolly Phonics programme and work through a progressive set of word trees to learn key words.

Older pupils learn about spelling patterns and are expected to collect lists of words in spelling logs.

All pupils are encouraged to

- develop dictionary skills to support their spelling.
- attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies.
- write an increasingly wide range of words from memory. Focus is on those words identified in Letters and Sounds (KS1) and Spelling Bank (KS2).
- use a variety of resources to help with spelling e.g. dictionaries, word banks, classroom environment, computer spell-check etc.

The spelling of necessary technical vocabulary is introduced throughout the curriculum.

Marking supports self correction and learning of correct spelling.

### **Grammar and punctuation**

Knowledge of the use of correct grammar and punctuation is taught directly in line with medium term plans and through reading and writing activities. Skills are consolidated through formative marking in line with the school's marking policy.

### **Handwriting and Presentation**

Pupils are taught and encouraged to form lower and upper case letters correctly from their first days in school and as they develop, to write in a joined style.

They are taught to use a comfortable and correct pencil/pen grip and to use a Handwriting pen for some tasks in the juniors.

Pupils are also given opportunities to present their work on word processors.

Good presentation of written pieces is expected across the curriculum.

### **Teaching and learning**

The National Literacy Strategy forms the basis of teaching and learning. Teachers plan for different groups, whole class, small group, paired and individual. The teacher works towards the child's independent learning employing a range of teaching strategies, including;

- Instructing/directing,
- Modelling/demonstrating/scribing

- Explaining
- Questioning
- Discussing
- Role play and use of props
- Consolidating
- Evaluating

### **Planning**

Teachers use the agreed federation medium term and short term literacy planning format. Clear objectives are set for the lesson and shared with the pupils. Teachers differentiate according to the needs of the children and set targets for pupils to work to on a regular basis.

ICT is used where it enhances, extends and complements literacy teaching and learning.

Additional adults are used to support the teaching of Literacy. They work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of children or individuals.

### **Assessment, recording and reporting**

Marking is in line with the federation's marking policy.

Assessments are made in line with the federation assessment policy.

Children are assessed during their reception year using the Foundation Stage Profile and are formally assessed at the end of each Key Stage.

Optional tasks are used in years 3, 4, and 5 to monitor ongoing progress.

All children have progress in writing books which track progress in writing throughout the key stages and are the basis of target setting.

Teachers use assessment to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they are to do to achieve the next step

Parents are invited to target setting meetings twice a year and are sent an annual end of year report.

Analysis of assessment data is used to set curricular school targets.

The class teacher will keep individual records. These include any information that enables the teacher to deliver an effective, relevant curriculum which builds on prior attainment and meets the needs of pupils.

### **Expectations**

It is expected that pupils will achieve between levels 1 and 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 with the aim that most pupils will reach level 2b or above in all strands of the English curriculum..

It is expected that pupils will achieve between levels 3 and 5 at the end of Key Stage 2 with the aim that most pupils will achieve level 4 or above in all strands of the English curriculum.

### **Inclusion**

All children receive quality literacy teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. Where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support, to enable them to work to age appropriate objectives, a variety of interventions are available. These include the use of IEPs, TA support, and support programmes in particular Early Literacy Support (ELS), Additional Literacy Support (ALS) and Further Literacy Support (FLS).

More able pupils are planned for in line with our policy for teaching more able pupils.

This is supported by our equal opportunities policy.

### **Equal Opportunities**

It will be ensured that equal opportunities in English are addressed as follows:

Pupils with special needs have equal access to the English curriculum through the use of differentiated learning strategies and tasks. These are based on individual needs.

Specific teaching strategies are used to maximize access to the curriculum for pupils learning EAL.

Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is promoted through the use of resources on multi-cultural themes.

An awareness of other dialects and Standard English encouraged through a range of texts. Gender equality is promoted by ensuring that both boys and girls have access to all aspects of the English curriculum.

Opportunities to address issues of gender, race etc. are provided through discussion, texts and resources.

### **Parental / community involvement**

We value parent involvement in children's development of literacy and promote a home /school partnership in the following ways;

- Sharing information – newsletters, parents' leaflets, reading diaries.
- Homelearning – in line with our homelearning policy and home/school agreement
- We ask parents/carers to encourage and monitor home reading and discuss books and preferences with their children.
- Parents and CRB checked community volunteers are welcomed into the school to support children in literacy.

### **Professional Development**

Training needs are identified as a result of whole federation monitoring and evaluation, performance management and needs of children. These will be reflected in the Federation Development Plan which includes the Literacy Action Plan.

The Literacy co-ordinators will arrange for relevant advice and information, such as feedback from courses and newsletters, to be disseminated. Where necessary the literacy coordinators will organise or leads school based training.

Additional adults who are involved with intervention programmes will receive appropriate training which may be part of LEA central or school based training.

### **Resources**

Each class has easy access to basic resources for literacy such as dictionaries, thesauri and reading books at Key Stage 1.

The libraries within the federation schools contain a range of fiction and non-fiction books.

Sets of guided reading books are stored centrally and are overseen by class teachers, TAs and the SENCo.

The federation subscribes to the Library Services for Education.

Enrichment events may be organised including visiting storytellers, authors, poets, visiting drama specialists and theatre groups.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

Literacy monitoring is overseen by the Executive Headteacher who is also the literacy governor. The monitoring is carried out by the federation literacy co-ordinators. Having identified priorities, the literacy co-coordinators construct an action plan which forms part of the Federation Development Plan. This will form the basis for monitoring and will identify how this is to be implemented.